



Jewish Studies at Rutgers

SUMMER 2022
ISSUE NUMBER 26

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life
Department of Jewish Studies

The Bildner Center Celebrates 25 Years

A generous gift from visionary philanthropists Allen and Joan Bildner made it possible to establish the Bildner Center at Rutgers. The Center's founding demonstrated the university's commitment to the growth and vitality of Jewish studies scholarship, Jewish culture, and Jewish life on campus and in the broader community. As a unit of New Jersey's flagship state university, the Center is also dedicated to educating the public on the complexity of Jewish civilization, enhancing cultural diversity, and reducing prejudice.

In preparation for our milestone twenty-fifth anniversary, we reflect on highlights from the past year at the Center and in the Department of Jewish Studies. Our programs demonstrate our dedication to the Center's founding principles and also complement the university's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Last year's programs covered a broad range of topics, including Holocaust history, Orthodox identity, disability and dance, LGBTQ+ communities, social justice, and multiracial Jewish identities.

We invite you to join us for a wide variety of programs during the 2022–2023 academic year as we honor the Bildner Center's rich past and toast to a bright future. More details about our twenty-fifth-anniversary plans will be shared this summer. We look forward to celebrating with you!

SAVE THE DATE

THE ALLEN AND JOAN BILDNER
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF JEWISH LIFE



25th-Anniversary Kickoff Event

Sunday, September 18, 2022
Douglass Student Center



A Jewish Journalist's View of the World

Gal Beckerman
Award-winning author
and Senior Editor
The Atlantic

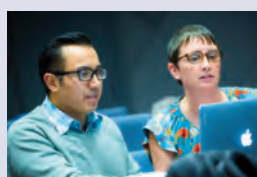
ACADEMICS

Renowned faculty nurturing
outstanding students



2022 End-of-Year
Celebration

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER



Educating future
generations
about the
Holocaust
through teacher
training

VISITING
SCHOLARS
Enriching
intellectual life
on campus and
in the broader
community



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Lectures, mini-courses, and
cultural programs



Yerusalem
Audience Choice Award Winner
2021 Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

RUTGERS

School of Arts and Sciences

Exploring the Diversity of Jewish History, Culture, and Experience

The **Bildner Center** connects the university with the community through its ongoing sponsorship of free public lectures, panel discussions, and other cultural and educational events. These annual programs are made possible by generous endowment gifts from the community. A resource for Jewish cultural engagement and inclusion and also for Holocaust education, the Center trains public school teachers on the history of the Holocaust and genocide. The Bildner Center enriches intellectual life on campus by supporting faculty working in the field of Jewish studies, bringing internationally renowned visiting scholars to Rutgers, and providing student support and internships. The Center enhances Rutgers' mission of fostering academic excellence and creating a beloved university community.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

Remarkable American Stories



ONCE WE WERE SLAVES: THE EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY OF A MULTIRACIAL JEWISH FAMILY

The Toby and Herbert Stolzer Annual Lecture

Laura Arnold Liebman
Reed College

The transformation of an early American family of mixed Jewish and

African descent, from enslaved and Christian in Barbados, to wealthy, Jewish, and at times white, in New York.

BY THE GRACE OF THE GAME: THE HOLOCAUST, A BASKETBALL LEGACY, AND AN UNPRECEDENTED AMERICAN DREAM

The Annual Abram Matlofsky Memorial Program



A conversation with author **Dan Grunfeld** about his family's escape from Nazi Germany and the exceptional career of his father, Ernie Grunfeld, in the NBA. Moderated by **Craig Karmazin**, CEO, Good Karma Brands, and grandson of Abram Matlofsky.

New Discoveries on World War II and Israel's Founding

X TROOP: THE SECRET JEWISH COMMANDOS OF WORLD WAR II

The Raoul Wallenberg Annual Program, funded by Leon and Toby Cooperman

Leah Garrett
Hunter College, CUNY

The remarkable story of Jewish refugees in Britain who joined Winston Churchill's top-secret Jewish commando unit.



ISRAEL'S MOMENT: SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION TO ESTABLISHING THE JEWISH STATE

The Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Lecture

Jeffrey C. Herf
University of Maryland

A fresh look at the international politics at play in the establishment of the state of Israel.



Reframing Disability in the Arts

DANCE AND DISABILITY IN ISRAEL

The Henry Schwartzman Endowed Program

Gili Hammer
Hebrew University of Jerusalem



PHOTO BY ELAD DEBI

A window into Israeli integrated dance, which challenges the way disability is presented in the arts. Gili Hammer also delivered the Henry Schwartzman Endowed Faculty Seminar, "Movement as Politics: Disability Dance and the Politics of Corporeal Aesthetics."

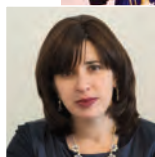
Cosponsor: Department of Dance, Mason Gross School of the Arts

Collaborations in Arts and Culture

EXILE: MUSIC OF THE EARLY MODERN JEWISH DIASPORA

A musical performance with commentary featuring period-instrument ensemble **Incantare** and **Rebecca Cypess**, Rutgers Department of Music.

Presented by *Mason Gross School of the Arts*. Cosponsors: *Bildner Center, Department of Jewish Studies, and others*



AN EVENING WITH CULINARY HISTORIAN MICHAEL TWITTY

A conversation with the award-winning author of *The Cooking Gene* and *Koshersoul*, whose work speaks to the intersections of his Black, Jewish, and gay identities and the relationships between food, culture, and social justice.

Presented by the *Center for Social Justice Education & LGBT Communities*. Cosponsors: *Bildner Center, Department of Jewish Studies, and others*

Online Learning Opportunities BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu

Virtual Mini-Courses

- **Innovative Orthodoxies**
Adam S. Ferziger, Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar, Rutgers University
Michal Raucher, Rutgers University
- **The History of Jewish Farming on Four Continents in the Modern Era**
Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Allen and Joan Bildner Center Visiting Scholar; Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- **The Saint, the Queen, and the Joker: An Introduction to Sephardic Folklore**
Ron Lasri, Jerome and Lorraine Aresty Visiting Scholar, Rutgers University
- **Women in Yiddish Literature**
Anita Norich, University of Michigan

Digital Exhibit

- **Jewish Agriculturalism in the Garden State**
Developed by **Jonathan Dekel-Chen**

Public Talks

- **Recordings of many recent public programs are available online.**

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

Award-Winning Films and Discussions in Our Virtual Cinema and in Person at Rutgers Cinema and Princeton Garden Theatre

Sponsors enjoyed an in-person reception and screening of *Mazel Tov Cocktail*, followed by a talk with the film's director.



Above: Mark and Frankie Busch with Rabbi Bennett Miller



Above: Karen Small, Joanne Tischler Stern, Sue Kheel, and Sharon Karmazin



Right: Lee Livingston, Len Littman, and Billy Geller

- ★ 15 International Films ★ 8 Filmmaker Talks ★
- ★ N.J. & East Coast Premieres ★ Family-Friendly Options ★
- ★ Free Shorts ★ Lunchtime Film Chats ★

Opening Night Festivities: *Wet Dog* Live Zoom Talk with Author Arye Shalicar



A moving drama that explores cultural and religious identity for a Jewish Iranian teen living in a largely Arab and Muslim suburb of Berlin. Based on **Arye Shalicar's** autobiography, *Ein Nasser Hund*.

In-Person Screening Cosponsors: Rutgers Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the Department of German, Russian, and East European Languages and Literatures



Audience Choice Award Winners
Dramatic Films:
Labyrinth of Peace and *Persian Lessons*

Academy Award-nominated filmmakers **Petra Volpe** and **Vadim Perelman** gave live Zoom talks.

Documentary Film: *Yerusalem: The Incredible Story of Ethiopian Jewry* New Jersey Premiere

Live Zoom talk with filmmaker **Levi Zini**

In-Person Screening Cosponsor: New Jersey-Israel Commission

The Rutgers Jewish Film Festival is made possible by a generous grant from the Karma Foundation.



See back cover for our
Holocaust Resource Center programs.

The **Department of Jewish Studies** takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Jewish life, offering courses on the historical, social, cultural, religious, linguistic, and political life of the Jewish people from antiquity to the present. Students can major in Jewish studies or choose to minor in Jewish studies, Holocaust studies, the language and culture of ancient Israel, or modern Hebrew language. The department's core faculty, complemented by eleven affiliated faculty from eight other departments, make cutting-edge contributions to research in Jewish studies, hold positions on boards of major academic associations and scholarly journals, and gain international recognition through fellowships and awards.

Core Faculty



Michal Raucher is associate professor of Jewish studies and the department's undergraduate director. Her research centers on Jewish women and gender, with a focus on the anthropology of reproduction and Orthodox women's religious authority in America and Israel. She is the author of *Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women*.



Gary A. Rendsburg is Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and History and holds the Blanche and Irving Laurie Chair in Jewish History. His teaching and research span the gamut of ancient and medieval Jewish history and culture, including Bible, ancient Israel, ancient Egypt, Hebrew language, Semitic languages, Dead Sea Scrolls, and medieval Hebrew manuscripts. He is the author of seven books and has also been active in the field of digital humanities, codeveloping three websites.



Jeffrey Shandler is Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies. He is a scholar of modern and contemporary Jewish life, focusing on Yiddish language, literature, and culture; Holocaust memory practices; the role of modern media in American Jewish life; and Jewish visual and material culture. He is the author, editor, or translator of sixteen books. His essays have appeared in French, German, Polish, Yiddish, and six other languages. Shandler served as president of the Association for Jewish Studies and is a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research.



Nancy Sinkoff is professor of Jewish studies and history and academic director of the Bildner Center. She is an intellectual-cultural historian of modern East European Jewry in its broad temporal and geographic expanse. Focusing on the Jews of Polish lands, her publications include *From Left to Right: Lucy S. Dawidowicz, the New York Intellectuals, and the Politics of Jewish History*, winner of a 2020 National Jewish Book Award; *Out of the Shtetl: Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands*; and the forthcoming edited volume *Polish Jewish Culture Beyond the Capital: Centering the Periphery*.



Paola Tartakoff is professor of Jewish studies and history and department chair. Her research interests include the history of relations between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, with a focus on medieval and early modern Spain and the Mediterranean; and the relationship between history and narrative. She is the author of *Conversion, Circumcision, and Ritual Murder in Medieval Europe* and *Between Christian and Jew: Conversion and Inquisition in the Medieval Crown of Aragon*.



Azzan Yadin-Israel is professor of Jewish studies and classics. His broad research interests are reflected in the six books he has published over the past ten years: a philological study of the earliest rabbinic commentary on the book of Leviticus; a monograph on biblical and theological themes in the lyrics of Bruce Springsteen; three volumes of his *Intuitive Vocabulary* series (German, Spanish, and ancient Greek); and a book that explores how the forbidden fruit came to be identified as an apple.



Orna Goldman is language coordinator and Hebrew-language teaching instructor. She is also a translator and the managing editor of *Hebrew Higher Education*, a publication of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

Bildner Center Visiting Scholars

They enhance intellectual life on campus and in the community by teaching undergraduate courses, delivering faculty seminars, and offering mini-courses for the public (see page 3).

Allen and Joan Bildner Visiting Scholar, Spring 2022

Adam S. Ferziger, Rabbi S. R. Hirsch Chair for Research on the Torah and Derekh Erez Movement, Bar-Ilan University

Undergraduate Course: Modern Jewish Religious Movements

Faculty Seminar: A Daf (Yomi) of Her Own: Gendered Space, Digital Religion, and Transnational Post-Covid Orthodox Judaism
Cosponsors: Departments of Jewish Studies and Religion

Jerome and Lorraine Aresty Visiting Fellow, Spring 2022

Ron Lasri, Ph.D., Hebrew Literature, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Faculty Seminar: Executing Jewish Informers in Medieval Spain: History and Literature in Yitzhak Aboab's Menorat Ha-Maor
Cosponsors: Jewish Studies; History; Spanish and Portuguese; Comparative Literature; and Global Medieval Studies

DONORS, 2021–2022

We are grateful for the generosity of our donors

The Bildner Center is an integral part of the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers–New Brunswick, offering cultural and educational programs to the Rutgers community and the greater public at little or no cost.

Philanthropy makes this possible.

We need your partnership to engage a new generation and secure the future of Jewish studies at Rutgers. There are many ways to make a meaningful and lasting impact:

- Annual Gift
- Stocks and Securities
- Bequests
- IRA Rollovers

Leadership: \$25,000–\$49,999

- The Karma Foundation, led by Sharon M. Karmazin DC'67, SC&I'69, and Dina Elkins, for its ongoing commitment to the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.

Builders: \$10,000–\$24,999

- Larry RC'71 and Mira Agron
- Gene Hoffman
- Leonard Littman in support of Holocaust education and the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- Andrew J. Melnick RC'63, RBS'70, for ongoing support of Israel studies at Rutgers.

Pacesetter: \$5,000–\$9,999

- Hana and Marcel Rozenzweig in support of the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival.
- Henry and Jacqueline Schram in support of Holocaust education.
- Steinberg Family Foundation

Supporters: \$1,000–\$4,999

- Barry M. Adler AG'75
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- The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation

Friends: \$500–\$999

- Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple
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- Congregation B'nai Tikvah
- Hillary GSED'03 and Gene Corburn
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- Barbara and Gerald Essig
- Susan Goldstein GSNB'97 and Jeff Sultanof
- Gerald and Rhoda Grossman SSW'79
- Highland Park Conservative Temple–Congregation Anshe Emeth
- Roberta DC'64, GSED'92 and Robert Kanarick RC'63
- Lanny and Lee Livingston
- Stanley and Donna Messer

Support Jewish Studies at Rutgers!

For more information, contact Allison Klein at 848-932-6455 or aklein@sas.rutgers.edu, or visit our website, BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu/donate.

All gifts are greatly appreciated.

STUDENT NEWS

Graduates

Ilana Berkman
Yerim Cho
Matthew Garb
Samuel Halpern
Jackie Harris
Victoria Lewitter
Amy Rosen
Joshua Wilk

Awards for Academic Excellence and Research

Ilana Berkman '22

- Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award
- Reitman Family Award

Anya Bolden '22

- Luba Shapiro Award

Yerim Cho '22

- Bernice and Milton I. Luxemburg Award

Reese Feldman '25

- Gertrude and Jacob Henoch Memorial Award

Christine Jensen '22

(Master's, Religion)

- Betty and Julius Gillman Memorial Award
- Deborah S. and Hebert B. Wasserman Award

Samuel Lurie '23

- Louis Fishman Memorial Award
- Sandra and Stephen M. Greenberg Award

Brooke Ramos '23

- Dr. Benjamin F. and Lillian Glasser Award

Amy Rosen '22

- Baruch S. and Pearl W. Seidman Award

Jacob Sclar '22

- Gertrude and Jacob Henoch Memorial Award

Steven Weinberg '23

(Doctoral Candidate, German)

- Harold and Betty Perl Award

Students, families, faculty, and staff gathered in person for an end-of-year celebration.



Students describe Jewish studies at Rutgers: "intellectually stimulating, welcoming, inclusive."

Celebrate Our 25th Anniversary in Person

A Jewish Journalist's View of the World
Gal Beckerman, Senior Editor, *The Atlantic*
September 18

**American Shtetl: The Making of Kiryas Joel,
a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York**
Nomi M. Stolzenberg, USC
David N. Myers, UCLA
October 20

Rutgers Jewish Film Festival
October 30–November 13

**Gender, Zionism, and Orientalism in the Female
Images of Ephraim Moses Lilien, 1890–1914**
Lynne Swarts, University of Sydney
December 5 (Virtual)

**Temptation Transformed: How the Forbidden
Fruit Became an Apple**
Azzan Yadin-Israel, Rutgers University
February 22, 2023

Reading Biblical Narrative
Robert Alter, UC Berkeley
April 19, 2023

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life Department of Jewish Studies

Visit us: BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu
JewishStudies.Rutgers.edu

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Nancy Sinkoff, Academic Director
Karen Small, Managing Director
Jenny Gehrmann, Senior Department Administrator
Sarah Portilla, Program Coordinator
Darcy Maher, Communications Coordinator

HERBERT AND LEONARD LITTMAN FAMILIES HOLOCAUST RESOURCE CENTER

Free Professional Development Programs for Public School Teachers

WORKSHOPS, 2021–2022

Film Screening and Discussion: *Love It Was Not*

Maya Sarfaty, Filmmaker

Cosponsored by the Rutgers Jewish Film Festival

Jewish Childhood in Kraków

Joanna Sliwa, Claims Conference, discussed
her new book, which explores Holocaust
history from the perspective of Jewish children.

Maus: Using Graphic Novels to Teach about the Holocaust

Barbara Mann, Jewish Theological Seminary,
guided educators in how to teach this complex
text, the subject of a recent book ban in Tennessee.

TWO-DAY SEMINARS, SUMMER 2022

Introductory Seminar: History of the Holocaust

Danielle Willard-Kyle, University of Glasgow

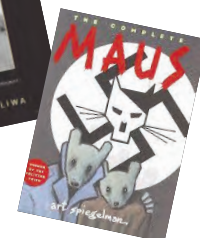
Advanced Seminar: History, Memory, and Inclusion

- **Politicization of Holocaust Memory**
Avinoam J. Patt, University of Connecticut
- **Nazi Policies Regarding People with
Disabilities***

Patricia Heberer Rice

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

** Meets the N.J. mandates for Holocaust education
and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*



Colleen Tambuscio,
Pedagogical
Consultant

Support provided by the
**Marjorie and Egon Berg
Holocaust Education Fund** and
the **Rutgers School of Arts
and Sciences**.