

THE MELTON CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Raphael Stigliano positions the reconstructed bima for the permanent installation at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. **Story on pg. 8**
photo: Handhouse Studio archives



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

ABOUT THE MELTON CENTER

Thanks to the generosity of Samuel M. Melton, the Samuel M. Melton Center for Jewish Studies was established at The Ohio State University in 1976.

Jewish studies at Ohio State comprises one of the largest and most diverse programs in the country, offering an impressive selection of courses, a multidisciplinary faculty and a wide range of events. Melton faculty are internationally recognized in their respective fields, including history, philosophy, political science, music, English, Near Eastern languages and cultures, Germanic languages and literatures, classics, art and education. Ohio State has one of the largest Judaica library collections in the country, with a full-time Judaica librarian and over 300,000 volumes.



Samuel M. Melton

DEAR FRIENDS

While I was away on sabbatical during the past year, the Melton Center had another amazing series of events! Two of these had been in the planning for several years and finally came to fruition. I refer to the stunning wooden synagogues program with artists Rick and Laura Brown and architectural historian Professor Tom Hubka; and the extraordinary **Fusions Continuum** concert with Tayseer Elias and his group. We are especially grateful to the Cummins family for supporting the wooden synagogues event through the **Diane Cummins Community Education Fund**.

Last year, 2013-14, also featured a terrific program on Jewishness and ecology through the **Bloch Scholarship** program; the **Thomas and Diann Mann Distinguished Symposium**, supporting four great speakers discussing conversion into and out of Judaism, talks on the history of anti-Judaism, life in the Catskills and the concept of love between God and the Jews. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the innovative and popular **Feibel Lecture on Judaism and the Law** with Professor Leora Batnitzky, who spoke about the legal issues surrounding conversion.

All of these programs are made possible by the generous support of our donors, and in that spirit we are delighted to acknowledge the initiation of a new speaker series: **The Annual Thomas and Diann Mann Lecture on Jews, America and Israel**. The inaugural Mann lecturer was Dr. Mitchell Bard, who spoke to a community audience about the significance of the Arab spring for Israel and America, and to a group of Ohio State students on the issues concerning Israel on American college campuses. We are happy to be partners with the Mann family in this important endeavor.

The Melton Center also distributed tens of thousands of dollars in undergraduate and graduate scholarships, fellowships and prizes to our outstanding students, as we do every year through the support of our generous donors. Our world-renowned faculty, too, won awards and celebrated accomplishments in publishing and teaching.

Perhaps the most exciting development at the Melton Center is the arrival of six new faculty members in Jewish Studies who will expand our course offerings and areas of expertise to the advantage of both students and the larger community. We are thrilled to welcome Professors David Brakke, J. Albert Harrill, Alexander Kaye, Lynn Kaye, Hannah Kosstrin and Isaac Weiner to Ohio State and the Melton Center.

It was a big year to miss but I am looking forward to another exciting series of events in 2014-15. I hope to see you all at Melton Center programs.

With warmest wishes for a shanah tovah,
a happy, healthy, educational and
peaceful new year,

Matt Goldish, Director

meltoncenter.osu.edu





Magen David Adom and Melton Center Partner through Bloch Scholar

Allegra Lewison does not shy away from the sight of blood. As a high school student in Parkland, Florida, she shadowed her neighbor, the assistant fire chief of the Coral Springs Fire Department, when he went on ambulance runs.

A chance encounter at an accident scene cemented Lewison's decision that medicine was her calling.

"I always knew that I wanted to volunteer in the medical field," said Lewison, a third-year student majoring in neuroscience with a minor in Hebrew. "After I went out on my first run I knew that emergency medicine was for me."

Last summer, Lewison spent six weeks in Israel volunteering with **Magen David Adom** (MDA). MDA is Israel's equivalent of the American Red Cross. It is a statewide national ambulance, emergency medical disaster relief and blood services agency.

"The first 10 days were one big crash course in emergency medicine," said Lewison. "We learned how to check vitals in situations like trauma, accidents, mass casualty incidents, CPR and triage, and we studied the Hebrew words most often used in emergency situations."

At the end of the training period, Lewison was assigned to the Jerusalem station of MDA, and for five weeks spent her life in the back of an ambulance on the streets. She tended to fractures, pregnant women, bleeding body parts and car accident victims, as well as those who suffered strokes and heart attacks.

When Lewison returned to Ohio State she applied for and received a \$1,000 Bloch Scholarship through the Melton Center.

As fate would have it, when Lewison sent a thank you letter to Sanford Shore, attorney and trustee of the Bloch Scholarship Fund, she mentioned her volunteer work with MDA. Shore responded to Lewison, sharing his connection to MDA: he is the former president of the American Friends of MDA for northern Ohio.

"I was so thrilled to hear that Allegra was so deeply involved with MDA," said Shore.

The scholarship requires Lewison to organize a Jewish educational event. She is now working with the Melton Center, Shore and American Friends of Magen David Adom to develop a program on the work of MDA in the fall.

As for Lewison's future plans, she may take a year off after graduation and then turn her attention to medical school.



Brianna Pecsok

Students Delve into Eco-Judaism through Bloch Scholarship

Ohio State's Jewish students care about the environment. We learned this through the Melton Center's **Norbert and Gretel B. Bloch Endowed Scholarship program** over the past several years. The Melton Center awards the Bloch Scholarship each year to a deserving student who receives a tuition credit and a budget to run a program of Jewish interest chosen by the student. The Bloch Scholar works with Melton Center staff to develop, publicize and carry out a program enhancing awareness of topics relevant to Jewish studies.

This past March, Bloch scholar **Brianna Pecsok** organized a program called, "Omnivore's Dilemma: Eating Jewishly in the Twenty-First Century," along with

co-sponsors, Ohio State's Agroecosystems Management Program in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences; Office of Student Life Multicultural Center, Hillel and Ohio Interfaith Power and Light.

She invited **Nigel Savage**, founder of Hazon, the world's leading Jewish-based environmental group, to speak. Savage talked about connecting 3,000 years of Jewish food traditions with the complexities of eating in the twenty-first century.

Pecsok graduated this year with a degree in international relations and diplomacy, with minors in Hebrew and nonprofit studies.



Nigel Savage

"The environmental and Jewish communities do not overlap much, so it was a unique opportunity for both sides," Pecsok said. "I would not have been able to be a part of this great program without the scholarship."

For Pecsok, the Bloch Scholarship provided the opportunity to gain invaluable experience organizing a major event and coordinating with multiple organizations. "I want to work for a Jewish non-profit or in some type of event planning and the connections I made planning the Omnivore program were very valuable."

"The Bloch scholarship is more than a scholarship," Pecsok added. "It is an opportunity to not just receive money, but to earn it and give something back to the community."

Attorney Sanford Shore, trustee of the Bloch Fund, agrees. "The Bloch Scholarship provides students a great opportunity to get involved and make connections. It has benefits much beyond the tuition reduction."

Casey Slive, the 2011 Bloch Scholar, who graduated in 2013 with a degree in geography, also designed her program around Eco-Judaism. Her event, "Food,

Faith, and a Sustainable Future: Eco-Judaism from the Ground Up," featured Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, a leading figure in the Jewish environmental movement.

Our partner, Ohio State Hillel, supplied kosher local food, and the center's Professor Tamar Rudavsky (Department of Philosophy) provided tomato plants to help participants start their own gardens. This was also Ohio State's first Zero Waste event, meaning that at least 90 percent of all waste materials generated by the activity were diverted from the landfill.

The Eco-Judaism movement encourages individuals and institutions to recycle, eat local and sustainable foods, plant gardens, reduce energy consumption and build LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified synagogues. Pecsok, Slive and the Melton Center found many campus and community organizations interested in this topic. They partnered with us to help support these programs.

"Having a chance to organize and speak at an event on a topic I found important, and one so many people cared about, was extremely powerful," said Slive.

The Bloch scholarship is unique because it allows students to gain first-hand experience planning a large-scale event while making important connections.

"The program helped plant the seed in me that there is a tradition of environmental ethics within Judaism, which is fascinating to explore and practice," commented Slive. "The connections I made while planning the event opened doors to a job at Eden Village, a Jewish environmental overnight camp."

To find out more about the Bloch scholarship, visit www.meltoncenter.osu.edu/scholarships.

Diane Cummins Community Education Fund

17th Century Wooden Synagogue Project Reveals The Spiritual Life of Polish-Jewish History



Reconstructed ceiling of the Gwozdziec synagogue, photo: AP/Czarek Sokolowski

On Oct. 13, 2013, the Melton Center and the Columbus Museum of Art presented “The World of Resplendent Synagogues,” a multi-media community and campus program. Thomas C. Hubka, an architectural historian and professor emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Laura and Rick Brown, professors of sculpture at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, presented. The Browns are the founders of Handshouse Studio, a non-profit, educational organization whose

mission is to replicate large historical objects using only tools and building methods from the time period to learn about history that was forgotten. Professor Hubka recently published the book, *Resplendent Synagogue*:

Architecture and Worship in an Eighteenth-Century Polish Community, and the Browns led the development of the Gwozdziec Synagogue Replication Project through Handshouse Studio.

The Gwozdziec Synagogue Replication Project includes a replica of the elaborately-painted interior roof and bima from the 17th century Gwozdziec synagogue in Poland. There were more than 200 wooden synagogues across Eastern Europe destroyed by the Nazis or others in the 20th century. Today, the replicated roof and painted ceiling of the Gwozdziec synagogue reside in the new Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, in the permanent Core Exhibition, which presents the thousand year history of Polish Jews. Hundreds of students and master craftspeople from around the world worked together to complete the project, which began in 2003.

Hubka became interested in researching the synagogues because they represented the historical diversity of the people who created them. The collaboration between the Jewish community and native Ukrainian and Polish workers who built the synagogues was a large part of the story.

“I’m a cultural historian,” Hubka said. “While it is easy to look at a building and talk about the pieces, I wanted to know how and why Jews of a small town created a synagogue in 17th century Poland.”

Hubka and Rick Brown said that the Gwozdziec synagogue represents the relationship between the Polish vernacular architecture and Jewish liturgical art.

“This was institutional art by the leaders of the communities; this is the community of art that developed over 500 years,” Hubka said.

“By 1800, this art was historically within its own community,” said Rick Brown. “The architecture and art come together into one very powerful cultural statement.”

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, an ethnographer and professor of performance studies at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts, is in charge of the permanent exhibition at the museum. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett said that the premise of the museum is to look at what life was like for Jews in Poland before the Holocaust. She said that the synagogue replica is “cutting-edge museum interpretation” of how the Jewish people lived.

When asked about his impressions of Columbus, Rick Brown said, “It was profound for us. When we came to Columbus, here was an audience packed with Jewish and non-Jewish listeners with enthusiasm and graciousness about what we had done. People started to say, ‘wow this is pretty amazing’ because we retrieved this important part of history in an inventive, creative way of Jewish art and architecture. Early on we were getting indifferent and negative feedback from audiences because lot of people had family who died in the Holocaust,” Brown said. “There had never been projects about Jewish history in Poland before the Holocaust and many audiences were in a state of disbelief that we could rebuild something from history that no longer exists.”

Hubka said that the Melton Center was very helpful and thorough by bringing together the Center for the Study of Religion, Center for Slavic and East European Studies, Departments of Art, Art History, and History, and Knowlton School of

Architecture to sponsor their visit. Brown also said that because of the Melton Center, there is now interest from the Department of Art and the Knowlton School of Architecture to bring the Browns back to Ohio State to conduct workshops.

The program was co-sponsored by Ohio State’s Center for the Study of Religion, Center for Slavic and East European Studies, Departments of Art, Art History and History and the Knowlton School of Architecture.

New Creekside Study Initiative

The Melton Center worked with Creekside at the Village, an independent-living residence in Columbus, to bring academic Jewish classes to residents. The idea was born when Mrs. Candy Davidson of Creekside spoke to Melton Director Matt Goldish about the need for more educational opportunities at Creekside. This year four sessions were presented by advanced Ohio State graduate students in various areas of Jewish Studies.

In autumn 2013 Avram Shannon spoke about the serpent in the book of Genesis and Wendy Soltz discussed Jews in the fight for desegregation in the South. In spring 2014 residents heard about God as the ideal parent from Tyler Yoder, and about Andalusian Hebrew poetry from Miriam Rudavsky-Brody.

The program will continue this fall.

CHARLOTTE SUSAN ROTH MEMORIAL FUND ESSAY CONTEST

Kailum Ijaz, a graduating senior, is a triple major in classics, philosophy and economics. He won first prize in the undergraduate category for his essay, "Justice and Job: The Obedience of Job as the Answer to the Problem of Evil."

Second prize was awarded to **Alec Stansbery**, a senior graduating with a major in psychology, for his essay, "The Bizarre Situations of I Kings 13."

In the graduate category, first prize was awarded to **Jonathan Leidheiser-Stoddard** for his essay, "The Poetry of Dan Pagis: Biblical Imagery, Death and Sacrifice." Jonathan is a PhD student in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures specializing in the ancient Near East.

Wendy Soltz was awarded second prize for her essay "Racism Across the Atlantic: Jewish Refugees Respond to Integrated Education in the South, 1939-1947." Wendy is a PhD student in the Department of History specializing in modern Jewish history.

MORRIS AND FANNIE SKILKEN SCHOLARSHIP IN YIDDISH AND ASHKENAZI STUDIES

Ilana Kramer is this year's recipient of the Skilken Award, which provides a scholarship to students who are actively engaged in Yiddish and Ashkenazi studies. She is a pre-dental student, with a major in psychology and a minor in Hebrew.

2013 NORBERT AND GRETEL B. BLOCH ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN JEWISH STUDIES

Allegra Lewison, a second-year neuroscience major with a minor in Hebrew, is this year's Bloch recipient. Lewison will receive a tuition credit and program budget. She will collaborate with Melton Center staff to plan, publicize and carry out a program to enhance awareness of topics relevant to Jewish life, culture or history.



Kailum Ijaz



Alec Stansbery



Jonathan Leidheiser-Stoddard



Wendy Soltz



Ilana Kramer



Allegra Lewison

GEORGE AND EMILY SEVERINGHAUS BECK FUND FOR STUDY AT VILNIUS YIDDISH INSTITUTE

The Severinghaus Beck Scholarship enables several students to attend a summer program at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute in Lithuania. The Severinghaus Beck Fund was established by an anonymous donor to help support students interested in gaining a cross-cultural experience. This year's recipients are: **John Kostelnak**, majoring in political science and history; **Monica Hamblet**, who completed her MA in Yiddish and Ashkenazi studies and is currently working toward her PhD in the same area; and **Jacob Miller** (not pictured), a mathematics major with a minor in computer information science. Next year, Miller will be finishing his major and plans on using Yiddish language to fulfill his language proficiency requirement.

THE LEAH METCHNICK GODOFSKY AND MARTIN R. GODOFSKY SCHOLARSHIP OF THE COLUMBUS JEWISH FOUNDATION AND THE REVA AND SANFORD LIPSON STUDENT SUPPORT FUND

Rachel Lieberman, a Jewish studies and psychology major with a minor in nonprofit studies, is the recipient of the Godofsky Scholarship, which awards \$500 to a student for tuition support. Rachel was nominated for this award by Melton faculty members. She also received the Lipson award for students studying or researching the history and culture of the Jewish people.

THE ELLEN E. AND VICTOR J. COHN STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR STUDY AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY

Rebecca Byrne, a third-year linguistics and Arabic major, is this year's Cohn Scholarship recipient. She spent the summer studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem thanks to this generous scholarship.

DIANE CUMMINS PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEBREW LANGUAGE

Jason Silverman graduated with a double major in Hebrew and Middle East studies. He was nominated by Hebrew faculty members for this prize.



John Kostelnak



Monica Hamblet



Rachel Lieberman



Rebecca Byrne



Jason Silverman

2014 Graduate Fellowship Award Winners

photos: Jeffry Konczal

The George M. and Renée K. Levine Graduate Fellowship in Jewish Studies



Rachel Steindel Burdin is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Linguistics. Her research focus is on how languages change and vary under contact with each other. Her dissertation research is on the influence of Yiddish on the intonation (melody) of Jewish English speech, and how the results of that influence have changed over time.

The Samuel M. Melton Graduate Fellowship in Jewish Studies



Tyler Yoder is a PhD Candidate in Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies. Tyler's research focuses broadly on ancient Israel within the context of the ancient Near East and the prophetic and historical books. He is currently writing a dissertation on fishing imagery in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near East.



Jewish Studies Student Association (JSSA)

Back row l to r: Sarah Livingston, Leo Katsman, Mary Giardina, Daniel Freeman, Brianna Pecsok, Adam Zimmerman, Gabriel Mordoch Front row l to r: Shaina Wolfe, Allegra Lewison, Rachel Lieberman, Robyn Frum photo: Megan Leigh Barnard

JSSA main objectives:

- Providing a social environment for students and faculty to interact within a Jewish studies context
- Planning and implementing Jewish educational events
- Working to promote and support the study of and research in Jewish studies

Contact Lori Fireman
(fireman.2@osu.edu)
for more information.

Alumni Highlights

Dena Rapoport (Hebrew, history of art; 2010). Rapoport is working as a museum educator for families and teens at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Rebecca Nitzberg (Jewish studies; 2011). Nitzberg completed the Jewish Outreach Institute's Big Tent Judaism Professional Affiliate training program along with the institute's first national cohort of Jewish professionals.

Sarah Burke-Villén (Jewish studies; 2001). Burke-Villén recently started a company with a business partner and works as the event and project manager at Write, a company in Stockholm, Sweden.

Robert Covitz (Jewish studies; 2007). Covitz is the manager of institutional research and assessment at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He is currently participating in the Emerging Leadership Initiative through the Columbus Jewish Federation and is planning on pursuing doctoral studies within the next year.



Alumni Feature

Thomas Beyl, PhD, completed his BA in Hebrew at Ohio State in 2001. He is now an academic advisor at Ohio State working with undergraduate students in three separate programs: Melton Center for Jewish Studies, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures.

Beyl conducted original archaeological research on remains from the Philistine site of Tel es-Safi and the Israelite site of Tel Dan for his PhD dissertation, "Phoenicia: Identity and Geopolitics in the Iron I-IIA Period: An Examination of the Textual, Archeological and Biblical Evidence."

Beyl completed his doctorate in Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati. During his studies at HUC, Beyl had the opportunity to teach an Introduction to Hebrew Bible as a guest lecturer in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Ohio State.

In spring of 2013, Beyl received his PhD in Hebrew Bible and cognate studies and returned to Ohio State to teach a course on Egyptian and Mesopotamian myths.

About his work as an academic advisor, Beyl says, "I am especially grateful for the opportunity to work with the men and women in the Jewish studies and Hebrew programs who provide me with a very rich academic foundation."

Thomas and Diann Mann Annual Lecture on Jews,
America and Israel

THE ARAB SPRING, ISLAMIC WINTER
AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR ISRAEL



On March 26, 2014, the Melton Center launched a new lecture series focusing on the special and complex relationship between Israel and America with an emphasis on the state of affairs at universities. The series is sponsored by our long-time benefactors, Thomas and Diann Mann. **Dr. Mitchell Bard**, a foreign policy analyst who directs the Jewish Virtual Library and the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, spoke to a packed house at the Jewish Community Center about the complex and ever-changing situation in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Iran, and the implications for Israel. On the same day, Bard led a lively discussion with students and community members about the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement on college campuses across the country.

The 26th Annual Pearl
and Troy Feibel Lecture
on Judaism and Law



On April 6, 2014, the 26th annual Annual Pearl and Troy Feibel Lecture on Judaism and the Law featured **Professor Leora Batnitzky** from Princeton University, who spoke on modern Judaism and legal theory. She focused on cases concerning conversion controversies dividing synagogue and state in the U.S., Israel and Great Britain. Batnitzky is the Ronald O. Perelman Professor of Jewish Studies and Religion, and chair of the Department of Religion at Princeton.

Giving Opportunities

Beginning with Sam Melton’s investment in the establishment of the Melton Chair in Jewish History and the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at The Ohio State University, private support has been invaluable to our mission of developing and promoting the study, teaching and research of Jewish studies by faculty and students. We hope you will make your investment in our students, faculty research and programs today!

You can make your donation online by going to: www.giveto.osu.edu/igive/ or complete this form and mail it to us along with your contribution. Be sure to include fund number 306429. Many employers offer matching gifts to Ohio State. Go to matchinggifts.com/osu to see if your company participates.

Enclosed is my gift of ___\$1,000 ___\$500 ___\$360 ___\$180 \$____other

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Melton Center for Jewish Studies
The Ohio State University
306 Dulles Hall
230 W. 17th Ave.
Columbus, Oh 43210-1311

Thomas and Diann Mann Symposium CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH: CONVERSION AND JUDAISM



This three-part series approached the topic of conversion from various angles. Our partners for the series, Ohio State Hillel, the Jewish Studies Student Association, the Jewish Federation of Columbus-Atid Division, Congregation Tifereth Israel and Congregation Agudas Achim, hosted four events over the weekend of Oct. 25-27, 2013.

The first guest speaker, **Rabbi Andrea Myers**, spoke from her personal experience as a convert to Judaism. Rabbi Myers read excerpts from her book, *The Choosing: A Rabbi's Journey from Silent Nights to High Holy Days*, and answered many of the audience's questions.

Professor Shaye J. D. Cohen from Harvard University and **Professor Sylvia Barack Fishman** from Brandeis University spoke on "Nature and Nurture: Is Jewishness in our Genes?" for the second part of our series. Both lectured on campus the following day as well.

Our series wrapped up on Nov. 21 with Ohio State's **Professor Tamar Rudavsky**. She addressed a full hall at Hillel with her talk, "Was Maimonides a Convert?"



CO-SPONSORED EVENTS

On Nov. 17, 2013, the Melton Center and Columbus Jewish Film Festival co-sponsored the festival's closing film, "The World is Funny." The program included remarks and discussion led by Naomi Brenner, assistant professor of modern Hebrew literature in Ohio State's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and a specialist in Israeli culture.

On Feb. 7, 2014 the Melton Center and Ohio State's Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies co-sponsored "Eating the Bread of Angels: Transubstantiation in the Kabbalah," a lecture by Joel Hecker, associate professor of Jewish mysticism and chair of the Department of Modern Jewish Civilization at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

On Feb. 14, 2014, the Melton Center co-sponsored "The Modern Exemplarity of Medieval Spain," a lecture by Professor David Nirenberg from the University of Chicago. The program was presented by the Iberian Studies Working Group at Ohio State's Humanities Institute.

On March 3, 2014 the Melton Center and Ohio State's Humanities Institute, Department of History and Wexner Center for the Arts co-sponsored "The Ambiguity of Virtue: Gertrude van Tijn and the Fate of the Dutch Jews in the Second World War," a lecture by Bernard Wasserstein, professor emeritus of modern European Jewish history, University of Chicago.

On March 30, 2014 the Melton Center co-sponsored the opening program of the Columbus Museum Art's exhibition, "The Art of Matrimony: Thirty Splendid Marriage Contracts from the Jewish Theological Seminary Library." The featured speaker was Sharon Liberman Mintz, curator of Jewish art at the Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary and curator of the exhibit.

WHY SHOULD JEWS LOVE GOD, AND WHY DOES GOD LOVE THEM?

The Melton Center welcomed **Professor Jon Levenson** for a community talk on March 18, 2014. Levenson, the Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard University, spoke on the love of God as the central aspect of Judaism, and the dynamics of God and humanity in the Jewish tradition. The post-lecture response was given by Ohio State **Professor Sam Meier**.



Professors Tamar Rudavsky, Daniel Frank and Jon Levenson

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER BOOKFAIR: ANTI-JUDAISM: THE WESTERN TRADITION

On Oct. 20, 2013, the Melton Center and the Jewish Community Center Bookfair welcomed Professor David Nirenberg, a highly-regarded history scholar from the University of Chicago, who spoke on his book, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition*. In his book, Nirenberg traces the long history of anti-Judaism in the west since ancient times.

FUSIONS CONTINUUM CONCERT, AN EVENING OF ARAB AND JEWISH MUSIC

On April 9, 2014 the Melton Center and CityMusic presented a concert featuring an unusual combination of oud, cello and piano. Musicians **Tayseer Elias**, **Menachem Weisenberg** and **Uri Vardi** performed a modern repertoire of Arab, Israeli and Jewish music at the Jewish Community Center, including "Duo for Oud and Cello" by composer and Melton Center **Professor Jan Radzynski**.



LIFE IN THE CATSKILLS

On Feb. 26, 2013, the Melton Center welcomed **Professor Phil Brown**, Department of Sociology at Northeastern University and president of the Catskills Institute, and **Dr. David Gold**, a Catskills native and author of books on Sullivan County, New York. Each presented a fascinating and colorful history of the Catskills. Brown spoke on the history of the Catskills as a vacation mecca and Gold spoke on what life was like year-round for the many Jewish communities in the Catskills. The program was co-sponsored by the Columbus Jewish Historical Society.

Faculty News

Helen Fehervary, professor of modern German Jewish literature, published another volume of the writings of Anna Seghers, *Erzählungen 1924-1932*, vol. ed. Peter Beicken, in: *A.S. Werkausgabe*, ed. Helen Fehervary and Bernhard Spies (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2014).

Daniel Frank, associate professor of medieval Jewish history and literature, received the 2014 Jewish Studies Students Association prize for excellence in teaching.

Jane Hathaway, professor of history, was awarded the 2013 Harlan Hatcher Arts and Sciences Distinguished Faculty Award.

Carolina López-Ruiz, associate professor of Greek and Near Eastern cultures, published *Gods, Heroes, and Monsters: A Sourcebook of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern Myths in Translation* (ed. C. López-Ruiz;). Oxford University Press: 2013).

Amy Shuman, professor of folklore and cultural studies, received the 2013 University Diversity Enhancement Award.



New Faculty

We welcome the following new faculty members:

David Brakke, professor of history. Brakke received his PhD from Yale University. His scholarship focuses on the history and literature of ancient Christianity from its origins through the fifth century, with special interests in asceticism, monasticism, “Gnosticism,” biblical interpretation and Egyptian Christianity.



J. Albert Harrill, professor of classics and affiliated faculty member, Department of History. Harrill received his PhD from the University of Chicago. His research focuses on the early Jewish and Greco-Roman environment of Christian origins in order to interpret the New Testament writings in their ancient context.



Alexander Kaye, assistant professor of history. Kaye received his PhD from Columbia University. His scholarship focuses on the history of modern Israel, Jewish law and modern intellectual history.



Lynn Kaye, assistant professor of rabbinics. Kaye received her PhD from New York University's Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. Her scholarship focuses on the intersection of law and literature in the Talmud, the concept of time in rabbinic literature and the Sasanian Persian context of the Babylonian Talmud.



Hannah Kosstrin, assistant professor of dance. Kosstrin received her PhD in dance studies with a minor in women's history from Ohio State. Her scholarship engages dance, Jewish studies and gender studies.



Isaac Weiner, assistant professor of religious studies. Weiner received his PhD in religious studies from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research considers religious diversity for American public life, focusing especially on the challenges that have arisen when communities encounter each other in public spaces and how American law has mediated and shaped those encounters.

Faculty, 2013-2014

Naomi Brenner
Assistant Professor
(PhD, University of Calif., Berkeley)
Modern Hebrew Literature

Lúcia Helena Costigan
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Pittsburgh)
Literatures and Cultures of Latin America
and Portugal

Helen Fehervary, Professor
(PhD, University of Wisconsin)
Modern German Jewish Literature,
Critical Theory

Steven S. Fink
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Washington)
Jewish American Literature

Berndt Fischer, Professor
(Universität Siegen)
Contemporary German Literature and
Culture

Daniel Frank
Associate Professor
(PhD, Harvard University)
Medieval Jewish History and Literature,
Judeo-Arabic, Karaitica

Joseph Galron
Associate Professor
(MLS, Hebrew University)
Jewish Studies Librarian

Steven Glaser, Professor
(MM, University of Michigan, BM,
Juilliard)
Piano Performance

Matt Goldish
Melton Professor of Jewish History
and Director of the Melton Center
(PhD, Hebrew University)
Early Modern Jewish History,
Messianism

Jane Hathaway, Professor
(PhD, Princeton University)
Jews Under Islamic Rule

Robin Judd
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Michigan)
Modern Jewish History, Gender
History and Theory

Stuart Lishan
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Utah)
Jewish American Literature

Carolina López-Ruiz
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Chicago)
Greek and Near Eastern Cultures

Samuel Meier, Professor
(PhD, Harvard University)
Hebrew and Comparative Semitics

David Neal Miller
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Calif., Santa Cruz)

Gabriella Modan
Associate Professor
(PhD, Georgetown University)
Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis

Jan Radzynski, Professor
(DMA, Yale University)
Composition, Jewish Music

Paul Reitter
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Calif., Berkeley)
Modern German Jewish Literature

Tamar Rudavsky, Professor
(PhD, Brandeis University)
Medieval Jewish and Scholastic
Philosophy

Stewart Shapiro, Professor
(PhD, SUNY at Buffalo)
Philosophy of Mathematics

Amy Shuman, Professor
(PhD, University of Pennsylvania)
Jewish Folklore, Cultural Studies

Suzanne Silver
Associate Professor
(MFA, The Ohio State University)
Painting and Drawing, Jewish Art

David Stein
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of Michigan)
Adult Education, Distance Learning

Michael Swartz, Professor
(PhD, New York University)
Rabbinic Literature, Jewish Mysticism

Adena Tanenbaum
Associate Professor
(PhD, Harvard University)
Medieval Jewish Literature and
Thought,
Modern Hebrew Literature

Emeritus Faculty

Alan Beyerchen
Professor Emeritus
(PhD, University of Calif., Santa
Barbara)
Modern German History

Carole Fink,
Professor Emerita
(PhD, Yale University)
20th Century International History

Howard Fink
Professor Emeritus
(LLB, Yale University)
Civil Procedure and Legal Classics

Evelyn Freeman
Professor Emerita
(PhD, The Ohio State University)
Teacher Preparation

Donna Guy, Professor Emerita
(PhD, Indiana University)
Latin American History

Goldie Shabad
Professor Emerita
(PhD, University of Chicago)
East European Politics

Herb Weisberg
Professor Emeritus
(PhD, University of Michigan)
Jewish Voting, American Politics

Melton Center Staff

Matt Goldish
Director
(614) 292-1358
goldish.1@osu.edu

Lori Fireman
Program Coordinator
(614) 292-0700
fireman.2@osu.edu

Jared Boyd
Fiscal Manager
(614) 292-0967
boyd.150@osu.edu



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Melton Center for Jewish Studies

The Ohio State University
306 Dulles Hall
230 West 17th Avenue
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Student Award winners Rachel Lieberman and Allegra Lewison, Jewish Studies Student Association (JSSA) President Robyn Frum, and Professor Daniel Frank at the Student Awards Banquet



The Melton Center for Jewish Studies remains true to its mission statement:

- To develop, promote and support the study, teaching and research of Jewish studies by faculty and students at The Ohio State University
- To encourage an interest in the study of all aspects of the Jewish experience within the central Ohio community, and to sponsor educational programs for the general public service
- To seek outside funding to encourage the growth of the Jewish studies programs at The Ohio State University