

THE MELTON CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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.

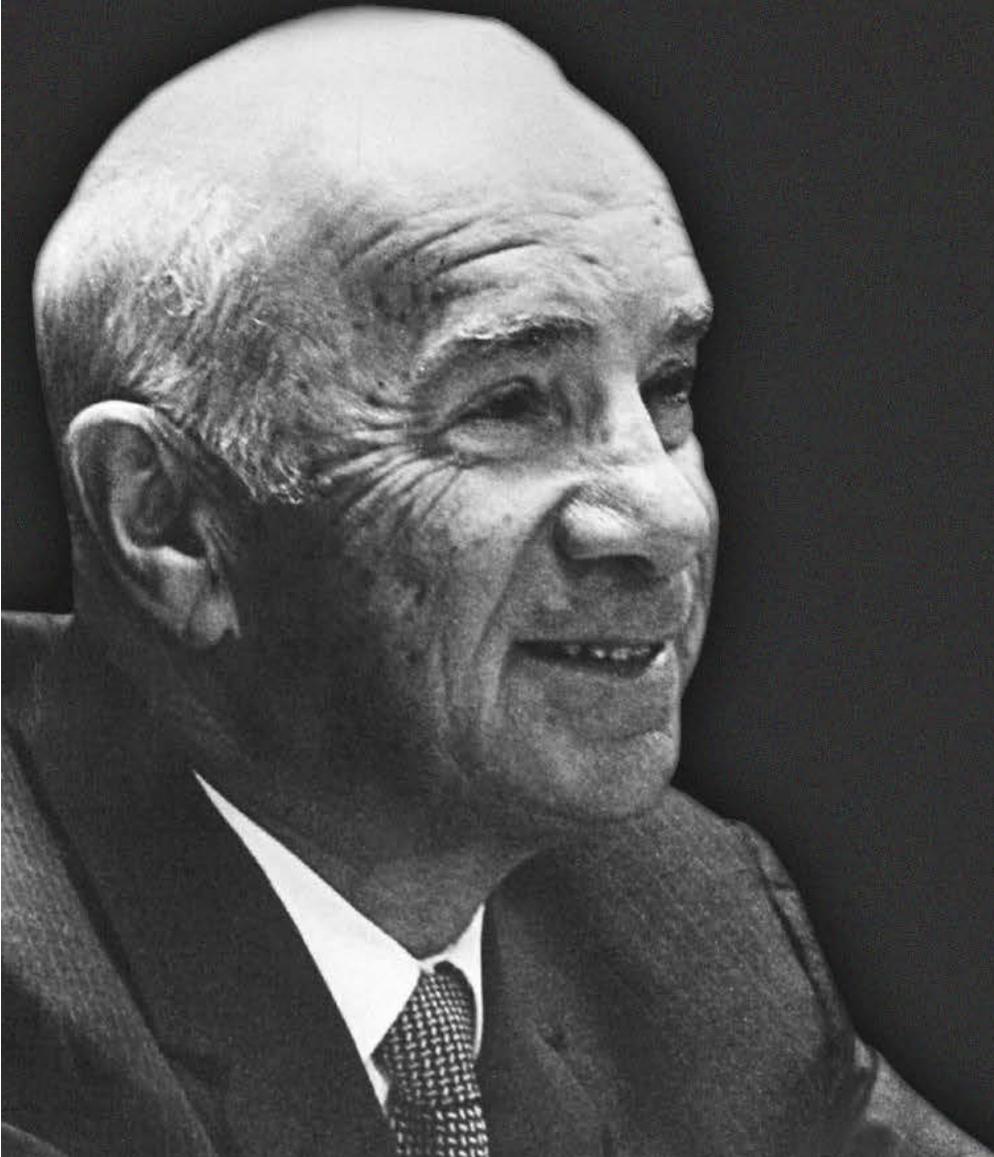
Jewish studies at The Ohio State University comprises one of the largest and most diverse programs in the country, offering an impressive selection of courses, a multidisciplinary faculty and a wide range of events. Melton faculty are internationally recognized in their respective fields, including history,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

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 Ohio State



Samuel M. Melton

DEAR FRIENDS

Some years the Melton Center has a focused set of programs that touch on a common theme. That will be the case this coming year, when we celebrate **50 years of the Melton Chair in Jewish History** and **40 years of the Melton Center** by looking at the last half-century of Judaism in American life. Other years our offerings have been more eclectic. That was certainly the case this past year, as you will discover by perusing this annual report.

In the autumn semester we featured two lectures about **Jews and economics** in modern Jewish life—one from a highly respected economist and one from a leading historian. Together they gave us a broad perspective on this deeply important topic. We also learned—in the annual **Feibel Lecture**—about the last category of **unreclaimed Nazi loot, the millions of Jewish books** which were extant after the war but have largely been lost since then.

In spring we led off with the new annual **Thomas and Diann Mann Lecture on Israel and America** that introduced us to the concept of the **'Holy Land'** as it is perceived by Jews, Muslims and Christians. Our wonderful **Bloch Scholarship** event brought us history and current news concerning **Magen David Adom**, Israel's affiliate of the International Red Cross. We then heard about the life and legacy of **Rabbi Stephen S. Wise** at a Department of History brown-bag event. We hosted an amazing international conference on **China and the Jews**. A second event sponsored by the **Mann Lecture** series brought us an in-depth, expert perspective on the impact of ISIS and the Iran negotiations on Israel. Finally, we learned about the background of relationships between **Jews and Muslims in modern France** in a wonderful new collaboration with the **Gaynor Lecture** series.

The center also participated in the **Melton Coalition** conference in Jerusalem concerning "The Oral and the Textual in Jewish Culture and Jewish Education." As always, we supported our students and faculty in their studies, travel and research; held educational events at the **Creekside at the Village** retirement community; and were active in other endeavors on and off campus.

The Melton Center stands at the nexus of community and campus educational efforts focused on Jewish life and culture. There are always exciting and challenging ideas swirling around at our events and stimulating us to engage more deeply with Jewish heritage. **Please join us as often as you can!**

Shanah tovah and warmest wishes,



Matt Goldish, Director





(Group photo L to R: Ido Rosenblatt, director of MDA's national medical dispatch center, Matt Goldish, Allegra Lewison, Sanford Shore (trustee of the Bloch Scholarship fund), Rabbi Dov Shahar, (MDA volunteer EMT) Photo Credit: Cari Immerman

Magen David Adom (MDA) and the American Philanthropic Tradition

This year's Gretel Bloch Scholarship event on March 29, 2015 included a panel discussion on "Magen David Adom and the American Jewish Philanthropic Tradition." Magen David Adom (MDA, the Israeli affiliate of the Red Cross) has had a network of fundraisers and supporters in the United States almost from the outset. We were educated about this philanthropic tradition by **Professor Mark Raider** of the University of Cincinnati, then learned about the day-to-day operations of Magen David Adom from **Rabbi Dov Shahar** and other paramedics who help coordinate MDA rescue operations on the ground. The event was organized by our undergraduate student, **Allegra Lewison**, who was the winner of the competitive Gretel Bloch Scholarship. This scholarship gave her funding toward her tuition, as well as a budget and Melton Center support to run a program of her choice about a Jewish-related topic. Allegra volunteered with MDA in Israel, and plans to go to medical school.



Professor Mark Raider. Photo credit Lori Fireman

Professor Raider then gave a Brown Bag lunch presentation for the Department of History the next day on campus, which was well attended by faculty, students and community members. He spoke about "The Political Theology of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise." Wise was a leading American Reform rabbi in the first half of the 20th century who touched many lives, including, as it turned out, those of some of our community members in attendance at the talk. Professor Raider explained how Wise's theology was fused with his political activism in a vision of Judaism's deep engagement with American society.

One Holy Land, Three Holy Peoples



Photo credit: Lori Fireman

On January 18, 2015 we kicked off the spring semester with the Thomas and Diann Mann Annual Lecture on Israel and America, co-sponsored by Congregation Beth Tikvah, Temple Beth Shalom and Temple Israel. The speaker, Professor Reuven Firestone, spoke on "One Holy Land, Three Holy Peoples: Islamic, Christian and Jewish Regard for the 'Holy Land' and its Impact on the Current Conflict." A record-breaking crowd was on hand to hear Professor Firestone at the Jewish Community Center. They were treated to a fascinating lesson on the history of Muslim, Christian and Jewish attitudes toward the holiness of the Land of Israel and the ways in which that history affects the Middle East conflict today.



Photo credit Lori Fireman



Iran, Isis, and the Changing Middle East: Implications for Israel

On April 26, 2015 we were privileged to hear **Kenneth Stein**, the William E. Shatten Professor of Contemporary Middle Eastern History, Political Science, and Israeli Studies at Emory University. Professor Stein, who was instrumental in our achievement of a chair in Israel Studies at Ohio State, spoke about "Iran, Isis, and the Changing Middle East: Implications for Israel." He addressed a very large crowd at Wexner Heritage Village and dealt with all the current developments in the Middle East from the point of view of Israel. He fielded a number of questions from the audience, and, while his message was not optimistic, people left with a sense that they were at least better informed about the news.

2015 STUDENT AWARDS

CHARLOTTE SUSAN ROTH MEMORIAL FUND ESSAY CONTEST

First prize was awarded to **Sydney Anne Sundell** for her essay, “Training A Nation,” about how professional sports has been an important unifying factor for Israelis since before the nation was a state. Sydney is a second-year student with a major in new media and communication technology, and minors in economics, dance and computer information systems.



Sydney
Anne Sundell

Second prize was awarded to **Saayee Keythan Arumugam** for his essay, “The Sin of Moses.” Saayee is a third-year student with a double major in economics and political science.



Saayee
Keythan Arumugam

In the graduate category, first prize was awarded to **Wendy Fergusson Soltz** for her essay, “Town and Gown The Complicated Triangle of Desegregation, the Private University, and Jewish-owned Stores and Businesses, 1958-1965.” Wendy is a PhD student in the Department of History, specializing in modern Jewish history.



Wendy
Fergusson Soltz

Lyndsey Renée Vader was awarded second prize in the graduate category for her essay “Choreographing Borders: Physical and Symbolic Boundaries in Contemporary Israeli Choreography.” Lyndsey is a PhD student in the Department of Dance.



Lyndsey
Renée Vader

MORRIS AND FANNIE SKILKEN SCHOLARSHIP IN YIDDISH AND ASHKENAZI STUDIES

Rachel Devorah Lieberman is this year’s recipient of the Skilken scholarship, which provides support to a student actively engaged in Yiddish and Ashkenazi studies. Rachel is a third-year student with majors in Jewish studies and psychology and a minor in nonprofit studies.



Rachel
Devorah Lieberman

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. An anonymous donor established this scholarship to help support students interested in gaining a cross-cultural experience. This year's recipient is **Katerina Rouzina**, a PhD student in Slavic linguistics.



Katerina Rouzina

THE LEAH METCHNICK GODOFSKY AND MARTIN R. GODOFSKY SCHOLARSHIP OF THE COLUMBUS JEWISH FOUNDATION

Moselle Yulish is the recipient of the Godofsky Scholarship, which awards \$500 to a student for tuition support. Moselle is a second-year student pursuing a double major in Hebrew and public affairs, with a minor in international studies (specializing in Middle Eastern studies). Melton faculty members nominated Moselle for this award. She also received a \$500 travel grant from the Melton Center for study abroad.



Moselle Yulish

DIANE CUMMINS PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN HEBREW LANGUAGE

Rachel Devorah Lieberman is this year's recipient of the Cummins Prize. Hebrew faculty members nominated Rachel for this award.



Rachel
Devorah Lieberman

THE REVA AND SANFORD LIPSON STUDENT SUPPORT SCHOLARSHIP

Jessica Leigh Friedman and **Gabrielle Ryann Lyle** are this year's recipients of the Lipson Scholarship, which provides financial support for students studying or researching the history and culture of the Jewish people. **Jessica Leigh Friedman** is a third-year student with a major in psychology and minors in Jewish studies and music, media and enterprise. **Gabrielle Ryann Lyle** is a first-year student with a major in international studies and a minor in Hebrew.



Jessica
Leigh Friedman



Gabrielle
Ryann Lyle

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



Matthew Van Zile

This year's Levine fellow is **Matthew Van Zile**. He is a PhD candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. His research focus is on the examination of literary and Biblical texts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek associated with conversion, and the way these texts are used as a nexus for cultural exchange.

New PhD's in Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies

During the past five months, the first three doctoral students working on Hebrew and Jewish Studies in Ohio State's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures have successfully completed and defended their PhD dissertations:

Joseph Price (Advisor: Sam Meier) "Sacrilegious Rulers in the Ancient Near East"

Avram Shannon (Advisor: Michael Swartz) "Other Peoples' Rituals: Tannaitic Portrayals of Graeco-Roman Ritual"

Tyler Yoder (Advisor: Sam Meier) "From Fishers of Fish to Fishers of Men: Fishing Imagery in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East"

During the course of their graduate careers, all three have taught hundreds of undergraduates and have participated actively in Melton Center events. Each was the recipient of a Melton Graduate Fellowship. We congratulate Joe, Avram, and Tyler on their splendid achievements, and wish them all success in their scholarly careers.

Jewish Studies Student Association (JSSA)



JSSA-sponsored "Table Talk" program with Melton Center director Matt Goldish

JSSA main objectives:

- Provide a social environment for students and faculty to interact within a Jewish Studies context;
- Plan and implement Jewish educational events;
- Work to promote and support the study of and research in Jewish studies.

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

Diane Cummins Community Education Program

Jews, Muslims, and Frenchmen: The Promises and Perils of Fraternity



Photo credit Lori Fireman



We ended the year with a special public lecture on “Jews, Muslims, Frenchmen: The Promises and Perils of Fraternity,” with University of Cincinnati historian **Professor Ethan Katz**. This event was a first-time cooperation with the Jewish Community Center’s annual **Gaynor Lecture**, along with the JCC itself and the Jewish Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Columbus. Professor Katz, whose book on this subject is about to be published, addressed the background of the recent anti-Jewish violence in France, before a large audience. He explained that Jews and Muslims had in fact lived largely in peace in France during most of the twentieth century, but that violence has become common just in recent decades. Professor Katz handled several challenging questions from the crowd and there was a general sense of new perspective on this complex problem.



Carmel Chiswick

Jews and Economics

On September 21, 2014 the Melton Center joined with the Columbus Jewish Community Center Bookfair to host **Carmel Chiswick**, research professor of economics at George Washington University, who spoke about her new book, *Judaism in Transition: How Economic Choices Shape Religious Tradition*. Professor Chiswick, a renowned economist, spoke about how the religious choices of the American and world Jewish communities are deeply linked to their economic status and choices in ways that have generally gone unrecognized. This was the first in a two-part series on Jews and Economics.



Jonathan Karp

On November 20, 2014 the Melton Center welcomed **Professor Jonathan Karp** of Binghamton University to deliver the second lecture in our series on Jews and Economics. His talk, “Beyond ‘Capitalism and the Jews’: Economic Conceptions of Jewish History,” used a series of historical case studies to show how the political and religious shifts of modernity changed and complicated Jewish economic roles. Following on the heels of the discussion with Professor Chiswick, this talk helped us see how different the approaches of an historian and an economist can be on the same subject.



(Photo: L to R front: Babette Feibel, Barbara Feibel Robins, Don Feibel. L to R back: Ron Robins, Yitzhak Melamed, Matt Goldish, Jim Feibel) Photo credit: Tamar Rudavsky

The 27th Annual Pearl and Troy Feibel Lecture on Judaism and the Law Letters from the Ashes: Jewish Books Lost During World War II

The annual Feibel Lecture on Judaism and the Law was delivered on October 26, 2014 by **Professor Yitzhak Melamed** of Johns Hopkins University, who spoke on “Letters from the Ashes: Jewish Books Lost During World War II.” Professor Melamed, who is a philosopher, became personally involved in the quest to locate Nazi-looted books—a topic he discussed in his talk. He is currently working with Matt Goldish to launch a project that would systematically search for the millions of missing volumes. Professor Melamed talked about the legal, historical and cultural facets of the missing libraries as well as the search to locate them. The lecture was co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Columbus, and by Ohio State’s Moritz College of Law.



2015 student award winners

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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The Ohio State University
306 Dulles Hall
230 W. 17th Ave.
Columbus, Oh 43210-1311

Melton Center Program Highlights

On September 29, 2014 the Melton Center and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures co-sponsored a talk, "In Praise of God, in Praise of Man: Political-theology in Arabic and Hebrew Panegyric," delivered by **Jonathan Decter**, associate professor of Sephardic studies at Brandeis University.

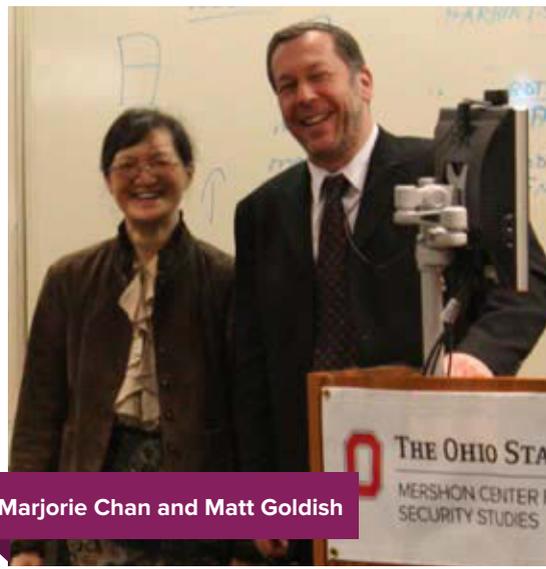
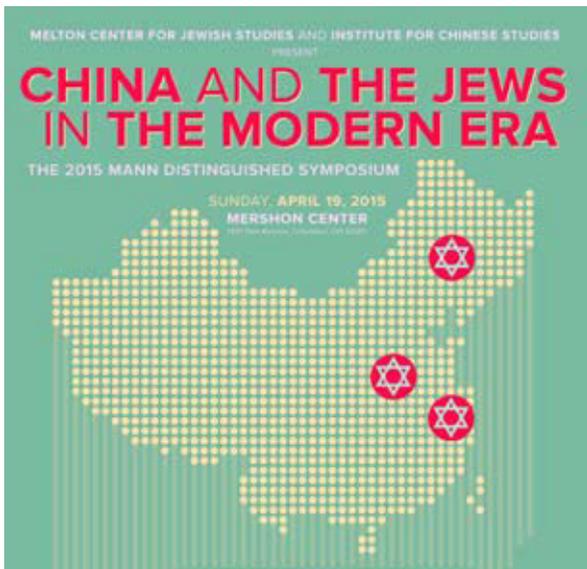
On November 17, 2014, the Melton Center and department of history co-sponsored a visit with **Charlotte Bonelli**, chief archivist of the American Jewish Committee, who spoke on her new book, *Exit Berlin*.

On December 5, 2014, the Melton Center was a co-sponsor of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Scholarly Dialogue, "The Polemics and Projects of Ramon Martí O.P.: Debating the Legacy of Medieval Iberia's Greatest Linguist," with **Thomas Burman**, professor of medieval studies at University of Tennessee, and **Ryan Szpiech**, associate professor in the Departments of Romance Languages and Literatures and Judaic Studies at University of Michigan.



2014 MELTON COALITION CONFERENCE: THE ORAL AND THE TEXTUAL IN JEWISH TRADITION AND JEWISH EDUCATION

The Melton Coalition is the cooperative project between the Melton Centers at Ohio State, Hebrew University and Jewish Theological Seminary, sponsored by endowed gifts from Mr. Samuel Melton, a" h. We run a conference every second year, rotating between the three campuses. The conference took place on the campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, December 28-30, 2014. Ohio State was proudly represented by an advanced graduate student, Avram Shannon, from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC), along with Professors Michael Swartz (NELC), Amy Shuman (English), and Matt Goldish (History). The topic of the conference was "The Oral and the Textual in Jewish Tradition and Jewish Education," and it was amazingly productive. The papers fit together very nicely and there are plans to publish the proceedings.



Thomas and Diann Mann Symposium China and the Jews in the Modern Era

On April 19, 2014 the Melton Center—in cooperation with the Institute for Chinese Studies as well as various other institutions on and off campus—hosted a conference on “China and the Jews in the Modern Era.” We were privileged to work with **Professor Marjorie Chan** of the Institute for Chinese Studies and East Asian Studies Center, with whom we developed an amazing collaboration. The conference brought together scholars from China, Israel, Australia and the U.S., to talk about the history of the medieval Jewish community of Kaifeng Fu, the Harbin Jewish community and the Jewish refugees of Shanghai during the Second World War. We were also addressed by both the Judaic Studies and Chinese Studies librarians about Ohio State’s collections in these fields. A number of individuals from the campus and the community, including students, were in attendance. Plans for a publication of the talks are under way. The symposium was co-sponsored by Ohio State’s College of Arts and Sciences, East Asian Studies Center, Middle East Studies Center, Center for the Study of Religion, Center for Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, Department of History, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Council on Student Affairs, Jewish Studies Student Association and Graduate Students of East Asian Languages and Literatures. The symposium was made possible by generous support from the Melton Center’s Thomas and Diann Mann Symposium fund, the Sino-Judaic Institute, and a U.S. Department of Education Title VI Grant to, Ohio State’s East Asian Studies Center.



Students and faculty mingle at the student awards reception.

Faculty News



Steven Glaser

Steven Glaser, professor of music, and **Robert Walzel**, professor of music at the University of Kansas, released “Wild and Exotic Dances” (Albany Records) for clarinet and piano earlier this year. It is available on Amazon.com.



J. Albert Harrill

J. Albert Harrill, professor of early Judaism and ancient Mediterranean religions, recently published *Pavel Apoštol: Jeho život a odkaz v kontextu Římské říše*. (Prague: Mladá fronta, 2015.) (Czech translation of Harrill’s recent monograph, *Paul the Apostle: His Life and Legacy in Their Roman Context*, Cambridge 2012).



Jane Hathaway

Jane Hathaway, professor of history, received the Ohio Academy of History’s Distinguished Historian Award for 2015. The award was presented at the Ohio Academy of History meeting at Ohio Northern University in Ada, OH, on March 27. At the OAH meeting, Professor Hathaway delivered a speech entitled, “It Takes an Historian to Understand the Middle East (Doesn’t It?).”



Robin Judd

Robin Judd, associate professor of history, received Ohio State’s prestigious University Award for Distinguished Teaching.



Amy Shuman

Amy Shuman, professor of English and folklore, and director of disability studies, received Ohio State’s Distinguished Scholar award, and a Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Grant for a Symposium called, “Political Asylum and the Politics of Suspicion.”



Suzanne Silver

Suzanne Silver, associate professor of art, had a solo exhibition called, “Ludic Interventions,” at the Center for Ongoing Research & Projects (or COR&P) in Columbus. A catalogue/photographic index, “Ludic Interventions / Interventions Ludiques / Interventi Giocosi / התערבויות שובבות,” was published in conjunction with the exhibition. Professor Silver’s work was also in “Rough Edges: Women Artists and the Collegiate Press,” an exhibition at Ohio State’s Thompson Library.



Helen Fehervary

After a long and distinguished career in German literary studies, **Professor Helen Fehervary**, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, is retiring. Professor Fehervary published extensively about various German authors and many Holocaust-related topics.

Faculty, 2015-2016

David Brakke, Professor
(PhD, Yale University)
Ancient History, Religion in History

Naomi Brenner
Associate Professor
(PhD, University of California, Berkeley)
Modern Hebrew Literature

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

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

Berndt Fischer, Professor
(PhD, 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
Director of the Melton Center
(PhD, Hebrew University)
Early Modern Jewish History,
Messianism

J. Albert Harrill, Professor
(PhD, University of Chicago)
Early Judaism, Ancient
Mediterranean Religions

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

Alexander Kaye
Assistant Professor
(PhD, Columbia University)
Modern Israel, Jewish Law

Lynn Kaye, Assistant Professor
(PhD, New York University)
Jewish Law and Thought,
Literary/Critical Theory

Hannah Kosstrin
Assistant Professor
(PhD, The Ohio State University)
Gender and Jewish Studies
in Dance

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 California,
Santa Cruz)
Yiddish Language and Literature

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 California, 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

Isaac Weiner, Assistant Professor
(PhD, University of North Carolina)
American Religions, Material
and Sensory Cultures of Religions

Emeritus Faculty

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

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

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

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Rachel Lieberman



Moselle Yulish



Professor Naomi Brenner