

Samuel & Althea

# Stroum Center for Jewish Studies

Newsletter | Fall 2015 | Volume XXVI



## SHARING PERSPECTIVES



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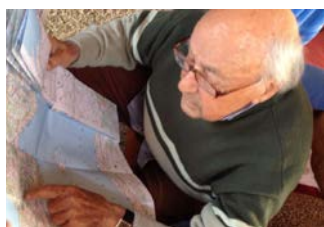
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Kara Schoonmaker

### CHAIR OF SEPHARDIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Prof. Devin Naar

### SEPHARDIC STUDIES RESEARCH COORDINATOR

Ty Alhadeff

## ART & DESIGN

### DESIGN & LAYOUT

Kimberly Jacobs  
[www.kimberlyannjacobs.com](http://www.kimberlyannjacobs.com)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Meryl Schenker  
[www.MerylSchenker.com](http://www.MerylSchenker.com)

### STROUM CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

University of Washington Box 353650  
Seattle, WA 98195-3650  
(206) 543-0138

[JEWISHSTUDIES.WASHINGTON.EDU](http://JEWISHSTUDIES.WASHINGTON.EDU)

## ON THE COVER

1. Katja Schatte & Hui (Dawn) Yang
2. Justin Shanitkovich & Christina Sztajnkrzyer
3. Eric (Shachar) Shamay, Jamie Merriman-Cohen, & Miriam Meister
4. Taryn Harris & Lauren Kurland
5. Emma Kibort-Crocker & Michael Tobias Balderas



# Jewish Studies, For What?



*Prof. Noam Pianko giving introductory remarks at the 2015 Stroum Lectures.*

Last fall, a group of mid-career Jewish Studies program directors from around the country gathered at the Stroum Center to discuss the question: “Jewish Studies, For What?”. For many of our teachers and mentors in the field of Jewish Studies, the answer to this question would have been clear. As pioneers in the academic study of Jews and Judaism, their mission was to establish the scholarly legitimacy of the study of the Jewish experience. Their success has been tremendous: Forty years ago there were a handful of Jewish Studies programs around the country. Today, there are more than 230 Jewish Studies programs across the U.S. The Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), the largest professional association for the field, has 2,000 scholars as members. Yet the growth of the field has left some younger scholars with the question of how best to deploy the intellectual resources that have been generated over the last several decades. With such institutional strength, the field of Jewish Studies has become one of the primary repositories of Jewish knowledge. However, our ability to demonstrate the relevance of this knowledge—on campus and in the community—has yet to be fully realized.

Since my colleagues raised these questions at our gathering last fall, I have spent a lot of time this year thinking about what impact our center could have and what initiatives we could undertake to reach these goals. Here are three ways I hope that the Stroum Center will answer the question, “Jewish Studies, For What?”

## **1. TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO LEARN AND LEAD**

The pressure in higher education toward higher enrollments makes it increasingly difficult to build close relationships with and between students. As an academic center significantly funded by community supporters, UW Jewish Studies has the ability to offer high-touch experiences to students seeking mentorship, meaning, and leadership opportunities. To facilitate this, we hired Lauren Kurland as the Stroum Center’s first Director of Student Engagement (see page 12). As far as I know, this is the first job of this kind at any Jewish Studies program (or possibly in any academic department) that focuses on working directly with students to build community around an academic program.

## **2. TO INTEGRATE JEWISH EXPERIENCE INTO BROADER ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS**

One of the potential risks of the expansion of Jewish Studies faculty and courses is that increasingly self-sufficient programs operate as silos within the broader university curriculum. Our curriculum committee this year developed a mission statement that will push us in the opposite direction. The new mission statement reads as follows: “Jewish Studies engages a diverse student body by providing entry points to universal questions and concerns through the lens of global Jewish experiences.”



*"Jewish Studies offers an approach that promises to build bridges and enhance dialogue between individuals from diverse denominations, political positions, and relationships with Judaism."*

Over the next few years, this statement will guide the creation of new courses and degree options that integrate Jewish Studies into the courses and curricula of a variety of disciplines. I am particularly excited that Prof. Mika Ahuvia has agreed to serve as our undergraduate student faculty adviser next year and, in this capacity, will take the lead on building our curriculum.

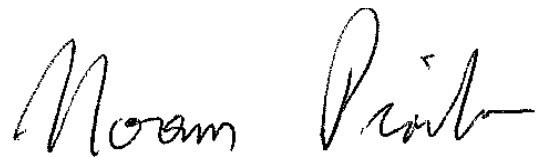
### **3. TO FILL GAPS IN THE JEWISH LEARNING ECOSYSTEM**

Jewish Studies programs are one of the most untapped resources in the Jewish educational landscape. The academic approach to Jewish learning emphasizes intellectual engagement, pluralistic viewpoints, and in-depth study. What we have learned from the recent Seattle Federation Jewish survey, and national studies like the Pew survey, is that these characteristics meet the needs of an increasing number of American Jews. As the American Jewish community becomes more polarized, Jewish Studies offers an approach that promises to build bridges and enhance dialogue between individuals from diverse denominations, political positions, and relationships with Judaism. This past year, thanks to a grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, we organized a Community Learning Fellowship that brought together twenty-five community members from diverse backgrounds to learn with our faculty members (see page 8). We also brought fifteen undergraduate and graduate fellows together for a pilot course in Jewish education (see page 10). Our Sephardic Studies Digital Library and Museum, led by Prof. Devin Naar, has exemplified the power of public scholarship in developing a digital archive of Seattle's Ladino treasures.

Of course, articulating "Jewish Studies, For What?" still requires a huge amount of work to implement the vision. The generous support of this community allows us to translate our potential into reality. Thank you for enabling us to grow so quickly over the past few years. I am indebted to my faculty colleagues from around

the university who contribute so much to our program. Reşat Kasaba, Director of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, our home department, provides invaluable support and encouragement to Jewish Studies. I also want to thank our dedicated staff: Rebecca Steelman, Hannah Pressman, Lauren Kurland, Kara Schoonmaker, and Ty Alhadeff. Of course, we will all miss our former Associate Director, Lauren Spokane, who contributed so much during her time at the Stroum Center.

Please feel free to get in touch to share your thoughts on "Jewish Studies, For What?"



**Noam Pianko**

Pruzan Chair of Jewish Studies  
Samuel N. Stroum Professor of Jewish Studies  
Associate Professor,  
Jackson School of International Studies

*"The generous support of this community allows us to translate our potential into reality."*

# the ART of MEMORY

UW ALUM AND ARTS ADVOCATE RETURNS TO CAMPUS IN A NEW ROLE—TEACHER



Cartoon Tamar by Edie Everette

**O**n a sunny afternoon in early May, students in Paccar Hall were milling around a cluster of photographs showing memorial sculptures from around the world. As they passed each picture taped on the wall, the students wrote down whether they recognized the monument, a one-word description of what it looked like, and a one-word description of how it made them feel. Afterwards, they discussed how monuments like the Field of Stelae in Berlin and the European Stolperstein project, both depicted in that week's reading of *Letting It Go* by Miriam Katin, help individuals to mediate national traumas like the Holocaust.

Small, impactful group activities like this were the hallmark of Tamar Benzikry's Spring 2015 course on "Graphic Novels and Jewish Memory." With a complex interdisciplinary topic

combining Art History, Jewish Studies, and Memory Studies, Benzikry was careful to provide students with accessible activities to jump-start discussion every week. She also assigned students to work in *chavruta* pairs to close-read comics artists' panels and pages and analytical texts by cultural scholars. And, she brought in four guest artists during the quarter to describe their creative processes for reckoning with personal and collective memory.

Most importantly, perhaps, Benzikry gave her students the fundamental tools to be able to discuss both contemporary art and Jewish memory. She says, "One of the main things I wanted students in my course to walk away with was a set of analytical skills to read words, to read pictures, and to read words and pictures together. I wanted them to have a critical lan-

guage and a shared vocabulary. In the first class, we talked about Memory Studies—key terms in the field—and in the second, we dissected the language of comics. It gave the students a framework and as we applied our shared terms in practice, I saw their confidence grow."

Benzikry took her first UW teaching opportunity very seriously: not only is Jewish art a topic about which she is extremely passionate, but also, she is a proud UW alum who graduated in 2005 with a BA in Art History and a Jewish Studies minor. "I saw this as an honor and a unique opportunity. I've walked on campus as a student and as someone going to meetings, but going to campus as a teacher about to facilitate learning—so exciting."

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Thanks to our supporters' generous gifts to the Jewish Studies Forward Fund, Benzikry was hired as a guest lecturer and given the opportunity to apply her theories about arts education to her own classroom.

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Stolperstein in the Pariser Platz, Berlin

Photo Credit: Richard C. Schonberg



Two covers of influential graphic novels recently published by Drawn & Quarterly. Left: *Letting It Go* (2013) by the Hungarian Holocaust survivor Miriam Katin. Right: *Exit Wounds* (2007) by the Israeli artist Rutu Modan.

## THE LANGUAGE OF COMICS

After graduating from the UW, Benzikry honed her knowledge at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where she earned a Masters Degree in Jewish Art & Visual Culture in 2007. A class with Rosalyn Deutsche on “The Art of Witness” opened Benzikry’s eyes to the possibilities offered by graphic novels, which she defines as “a long form comic with a narrative arc.” However, the genre was still somewhat limited: “When I was in graduate school, the only Jewish graphic novel I was exposed to was *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.”

The past several years, though, have seen a distinct proliferation in the field of Jewish-themed graphic novels. The topics range from Miriam Libicki’s *Jobnik: An American Girl’s Adventures in the Israeli Army* (2008) to *El Illuminado*, a 2012 graphic novel about New Mexico crypto-Jews co-authored by Ilan Stavans (one of our Stroum Lecturers in 2016). At the same time, there has been a popularization of graphic novels in broader American culture. In 2014 Roz Chast’s graphic novel-memoir about taking care of her aging parents, *Can’t We Talk about Something More Pleasant?*, became a #1 New York Times Bestseller, while a Broadway show based on Alison Bechdel’s graphic novel *Fun Home* swept the Tony Awards.

Benzikry considers graphic novels to be particularly effective for teaching about memory: “If you break down the words ‘graphic’ and ‘novel,’ you have images and words to consider on their own and cross-discursively. You can see how together, they become more than the sum of their individual parts, how together they represent time across space. The scholar Scott McCloud describes comics as the only art form in which the past, present, and future are visible simultaneously. If you look at a comics panel, on the left you have the past and on the right, the future. He describes the reader’s perception of the present as moving across the page.”

She continues, “This relates so much to Judaism and memory: Judaism is rooted in narrative, with ritual and learning operating as an ongoing narrative in which the past deeply informs the present, and the present informs, interprets, and recasts the past as relevant. I see the active remembering of stories as underpinning much of Jewish history and ideas; we do things now to remember things that were then.”

Through their paneled structure, graphic novels make apparent the conscious labor of stitching together

the components of a story. Benzikry and her students analyzed choices each artist made and applied Memory Studies terms such as mnemohistory and narrativization. Mnemohistory, as described by scholars such as Jan and Aleida Asmann, is concerned less with the past as such and more with how the past is remembered. Benzikry says, “I wanted students to walk away with an awareness of narrativization, or how we choose what goes into a story. To understand how history is a form of narrativization. Religion is a form of narrativization. As are our own life stories.”

Miriam Katin, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, was one of the artists that Benzikry highlighted in her class. Katin’s award-winning graphic novel, *Letting It Go* (published by Drawn and Quarterly in 2013), depicts the artist coming to terms with her son’s decision to move to Berlin, a city she saw as fraught with personal and collective memories. In the panel on the following page, excerpted from *Letting It Go*, Katin writes about the need to “draw yourself out of” a situation that is causing you pain. The artist visited Benzikry’s class via a Skype phone call that one student called “an amazing opportunity” and “very moving.”



SO, WHERE DOES A STORY BEGIN?



AND IF YOU ARE INSIDE THAT STORY RIGHT NOW,



IN THAT SITUATION AND IT HURTS AND SAY YOU CAN DRAW,



THEN YOU MUST TRY AND DRAW YOURSELF OUT OF IT.



A page from Miriam Katin's *Letting It Go* (reproduced with permission from *Drawn & Quarterly*).

*"I believe in the power of art to tell compelling stories, to help us see things—everyday things, big things, differently. Art helps us feel differently and it can help us to remember. I'd love to see the arts be integrated more into Jewish Studies classes."—Tamar Benzikry*

## ADVOCATING FOR ART IN THE CLASSROOM

Benzikry enjoys all aspects of understanding art, from the history and theory to its contemporary practice and impact on society. A prominent arts advocate in Seattle, she spends her days at 4Culture, where she manages public art projects for King County and consulting clients. One of the most successful campaigns she recently managed was "Poetry on Buses: Writing Home," a partnership to bring original poetry to Metro Transit.

Benzikry firmly believes in the ability of art to transform learning. Indeed, studies show that encouraging children to view and analyze visual art can increase life-long skills in observation and perception. She built this theme into a public lecture delivered at the third-annual JewDub Talks event this past January. Benzikry's talk, "How Ecological (and Jewish) Art Can Change How We Learn," focused on the path-breaking work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles.

Thanks to our supporters' generous gifts to the Jewish Studies Forward Fund, Benzikry was hired as a guest lecturer this past spring and given the opportunity to apply her theories about arts education to her own classroom. The results? Benzikry says, "We drew many students into this course, most of whom had never taken a Jewish Studies class before. We saw that art has the potential to draw students who otherwise might not be exposed to Jewish Studies and the lenses it has to offer."

Senior Shawn Laramie is majoring in Comparative Religion and minoring in Jewish Studies and NELC. He described Benzikry's class in glowing terms: "The course took us on a parallel journey through the history of underground graphic novels and the massively influential role that Jewish authors such as Art Spiegelman and Will Eisner had in elevating this unique art form out from the shadows and into the consciousness of the mainstream literary world. She led us in intense Socratic discussions on Jewish Graphic Novels both widely celebrated and obscure. I left the class with a greater appreciation for graphic novels, and a deep sense of cultural pride in how important Jews were in shaping their evolution."

Benzikry was likewise invigorated by her teaching experience at the Stroum Center, and she has several ideas to further integrate art into the Jewish Studies curriculum. "This class reinforced my belief in the power of the visual to teach and convey ideas. I think existing courses could incorporate more varieties of cultural expression—music, performance, poetry, photographs, as well as visual art and architecture. New courses can be built around Jewish cultural expression. I believe in the power of art to tell compelling stories, to help us see things—everyday things, big things, differently. Art helps us feel differently and it can help us to remember. So, I'd love to see more courses with art at the center and as springboard, and to see the arts be integrated more into Jewish Studies classes."

—H.P.



Photo credit: Arthur Shwab



Tamar Benzikry on stage during JewDub Talks, January 2015.





2015 participants Eric (Shachar) Shamay, Jamie Merriman-Cohen, and Miriam Meister discuss the readings at an evening session.



Michael Taylor-Judd (left) listens as Prof. Hamza Zafer explains Muslim and Jewish intellectual synergy.

## Community Learning Fellowship

The Stroum Center launched the Community Learning Fellowship (CLF) last year as yet another way to share our academic resources with the broader community. The pilot program provided an opportunity for a group of emerging Seattle Jewish leaders to engage in pluralistic conversations. From January through March 2015, the fellows met six times with different Jewish Studies faculty members to learn about “A Brief History of God in Jewish Sources.” The instructors included Sarah Stroup, Mika Ahuvia, Hamza Zafer, Devin Naar, Noam Pianko, and Michael Rosenthal.

Community engagement through public scholarship is core to the Stroum Center’s mission. For four decades, we have offered high-quality, innovative public lectures from experts in diverse disciplines within Jewish Studies. Following this tradition, the CLF offered an academic lens to explore Judaism in a supportive learning community. Sessions focused on relationship-building among fellows from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and affiliations.

Participant Joy Maimon said, “The Community Learning Fellowship provided a wonderful opportunity to engage in textual learning with a diverse group of passionate and committed Jewish community members. I appreciated the opportunity to meet new friends and form connections with people outside of my community.”

The Stroum Center would like to thank the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle for providing an Ignition Grant to support the Community Learning Fellowship. We would also like to thank our Advisory Board members for hosting the meetings.

### 2015 CLF PARTICIPANTS

Leah Almo  
 Dana Azose  
 Rena and Dana Behar  
 Tamar Benzikry\*  
 Kevin Britt  
 Michael Danto  
 Jeremy Derfner\*  
 Deirdre Gabbay  
 Aaron Levine  
 Joy Maimon  
 Miriam Meister  
 Jamie\* and Jeff Merriman-Cohen  
 Rabbi Yehudah Rapoport  
 Melissa and David Rivkin/Cohanin  
 Rabbi Avi Rosenfeld  
 David Sabban  
 John Schochet  
 Eric Shachar Shamay  
 Michael Taylor-Judd  
 Alan Waldbaum

\* Joined the sessions as representatives of the Jewish Studies Advisory Board Fellowship Plan-

Visit [jewishstudies.washington.edu/community-learning-fellowship](http://jewishstudies.washington.edu/community-learning-fellowship) to see more photos and to read session overviews by each faculty participant.



## WELCOME, DANA RUBIN!

We are delighted to announce that Dana Rubin joined the Stroom Center team in September as our new Associate Director. Dana has worked for over a decade in international higher education, specifically in the development of study abroad programs for students at Northwestern University and the University of Washington.

Dana says, "I'm most looking forward to combining my experience in international higher education with my passion for community engagement and Jewish Studies. I'm so excited to be part of the UW family again, especially as a member of the Stroom Center team housed within the prestigious UW Jackson School of International Studies."

We look forward to introducing Dana to our students, faculty, and community supporters at Stroom Center programming this year!



## UNDERGRAD UPDATE:

**Ashley Bobman**, whom we featured in our Fall 2013 Newsletter, received the prestigious President's Medal for her academic achievements and service to the community during her sophomore year. Bobman's involvement with Sephardic Studies, particularly her research project on her great-grandfather's Ladino writings, was singled out as a noteworthy achievement. A native of Mercer Island, WA, she is among the few individuals around the world writing Ladino compositions today. She has read her original poetry at the Ladino Day celebrations held at the UW in 2013 and 2014 (pictured right). See p. 28 for more about Ladino Day.

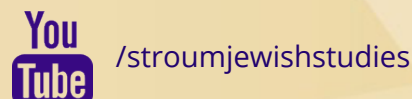
**Griffin Taylor**, a Jewish Studies minor and former student committee co-chair, won the Mary Gates Research Scholarship for his work in Linguistics.

**Mazel Tov & Mazal Alto, Ashley & Griffin!**



## CONNECT WITH US!

Visit [jewishstudies.washington.edu](http://jewishstudies.washington.edu) for thought-provoking articles, event info, videos, course listings, and more!



# The Next Generation of Jewish Educators at UW & Beyond

**E**mma Kibort-Crocker is a Seattle native and a first-year medical student at the UW. Yet for two weeks this past spring, she traded her scrubs and biology textbooks for a seminar table in Thomson Hall. The topic: what's the status quo of American Jewish education – and if we want to change it, where do we begin?

This debate drove the Stroum Center's new Jewish Education Fellowship, a bold initiative that asked many questions of its participants and came up with some creative solutions for the future.

Dr. Benjamin M. Jacobs, a leading scholar and practitioner in the field of Jewish education, visited the Stroum Center in April and May to run an intensive two-part workshop series on "American Jewish Education: Inside and Outside the Box." The early sessions covered the history and theory of modern Jewish education, while the latter sessions shifted to practical application and brainstorming new ideas.

The goal of the workshop series was twofold: to broaden the conception of where educational training can happen, and to recognize the untapped potential for lay leadership—that is, Jewish community members who are not professional educators—to contribute to the field. Prof. Noam Pianko, director of the UW Stroum Center for Jewish Studies, explained his strategic goals thusly: "The Stroum Center has a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to the Seattle Jewish education ecosystem by

training educators and providing thought leadership in a rapidly changing communal environment."

The fellowship experience really resonated with Kibort-Crocker, who said, "By gaining an understanding of the context and history of Jewish education in America, I feel more prepared to think about the future of the Jewish community. I really appreciated the diversity of the group and the multiplicity of viewpoints from the fellows. There are so many exciting and innovative things happening in Jewish education, and I loved exploring what already is out there and cultivating new ideas about how to enrich the field of Jewish learning."

## CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

Why would a major university like the UW get involved in the Jewish education enterprise, when there are manifold communal organizations that already support synagogues and day schools? As Dr. Jacobs explained, "There is a long-standing connection between universities and public schools. Historically, schools of education in major universities have seen it as central to their mission to be fully involved in improving the educational enterprise of the surrounding area. Interestingly, in recent years, the idea that a secular university can be involved in parochial schools has really taken hold. NYU, Stanford, GW, and others now have programs addressing various aspects of Jewish education."



*The group of 2015 Education Fellows with facilitator, Prof. Ben Jacobs.*



*"I really appreciated the diversity of the group and the multiplicity of viewpoints."*

**EMMA KIBORT-CROCKER**

Nevertheless, it would be practically unprecedented for an academic center at a public university to experiment with offering in-service training and support for educators in the local Jewish community. Said Jacobs, "Quite simply, this is a path-breaking venture in Jewish education."

Rivy Poupko Kletenik, Head of School at the Seattle Hebrew Academy, is supportive of the idea. She said, "If the Seattle Jewish day schools could partner together with the University of Washington, and create ongoing professional development as well as pre-service professional development, I think that would really be very advantageous for all of our schools in being able to attract staff that would be able to really make a difference for our kids."

### **A LABORATORY OF IDEAS**

The first step in the project, which launched in the early spring of 2015, was creating a cohort of students interested in exploring new approaches to Jewish education. The fifteen students who applied and were selected to participate included upper-level undergraduates, masters and PhD students with a wide range of interests—and to Dr. Jacobs' surprise, only one of them was in the education school. This turned out to be a positive, as Jacobs noted: "I liked the eclectic makeup of the fellowship class because that allowed different voices in the conversation. It shows there really is broad interest in the community to explore Jewish learning."

Lauren Kurland, the Stroum Center's Director of Student Engagement, agreed that the group's diversity was a plus. "It was delightful to observe graduate and under-

graduate students from disciplines as diverse as medicine, history, and library science putting their hearts and minds together to think about new, fresh and relevant Jewish educational opportunities. With young people like this at the helm, the future of Jewish education in Seattle looks bright."

The enthusiastic interest evidenced by the student participants disproved any notion that millennials (the demographic generation typically defined as being born between the 1980s and the early 2000s) are disengaged from the Jewish community. Jacobs emphasized, "Next Gen Jews, aka millennials, do indeed care about the field of Jewish education. They do indeed care about the community's future. The UW fellowship experiment showed that there is a critical mass of young people in Seattle who care enough to get together and problem-solve. They can't be dismissed as unaffiliated. They are proud to be Jewish; they are interested in oral histories and culture. Their ideas may not look like conventional Jewish education, but the interest is there. The energy is there."

Education Fellow Emily Thompson, who will also be part of the 2015-16 Jewish Studies Graduate Fellowship cohort, enjoyed the intensity of the seminars. "In just four evenings, we were able to cover more ground than I thought possible. We talked about our own experiences and perceptions as well as the current theories and practice regarding Jewish education. It was extremely generous of Ben Jacobs and the Jewish Studies staff to spend their evenings discussing this important area of study."

Bringing knowledge to current and future lay leaders of the Jewish community is the hallmark of organiza-

*"This is a path-breaking venture in Jewish education."*

**BEN JACOBS**



*"Seattle is a center for creativity and ideas and innovation. Jewish education should be part of that."*

**RIVY POUPKO KLETENIK**  
HEAD OF SCHOOL AT  
THE SEATTLE HEBREW ACADEMY



tions like the Wexner Heritage Program. Similarly, the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies could bring grounded thinking, academic resources, and critical ideas to Seattle's lay leadership, nurturing in particular the next generation of communal leaders who are already on campus pursuing degrees in other fields.

Jacobs, for one, is excited about the potential for the future. "The UW Jewish Education experiment this

spring was a really exciting venture in having interest and concern in Jewish education as a common denominator for an academic group. It demonstrated that that is an untapped resource."

Rivy Poupko Kletenik summed it up well: "Seattle is a center for creativity and ideas and innovation. Jewish education should be part of that."

—H.P.

## Student Engagement Highlights



**W**hen Lauren Kurland introduces herself as Director of Student Engagement for the UW Stroum Center for Jewish Studies, she often gets a puzzled look at first. This might be because the position—generously funded by a gift from Michele and Stanley Rosen and the Rita and Herbert Rosen Foundation—is seemingly the only one like it in Jewish Studies programs nationwide. Kurland's position, which formally started in winter 2015, stemmed from the desire to create more points of connection among Jewish Studies staff, faculty, and students. In this role, she meets with students coming from different backgrounds and heading toward different futures to learn about their experience with Jewish Studies.

Some of the students Kurland meets are committed Jewish Studies majors or minors, while others may be taking their first Jewish Studies course because they heard something good about the professor, because it fulfills a general education requirement, or because it falls at a

*"I am excited about continuing this work to create an even stronger community both inside the classroom and beyond."*

**LAUREN KURLAND**

*"I've sold back all of my math books, but all of my Jewish Studies books are still on my shelves."*

#### JEWISH STUDIES ALUM

convenient time in their schedule. Over coffee or a walk around campus, she learns about these students' backgrounds, why they enrolled in a Jewish Studies course, what they have found inspiring about the course they are taking, and where we could do better.

Kurland says, "I have the privilege of asking students where they find meaning in their academic pursuits and discovering where Jewish Studies can be present in providing that personal resonance." Impressively, her paper about emerging adults finding meaning through Jewish Studies was recently accepted for publication in *Gleanings*, the quarterly e-journal published by the Jewish Theological Seminary's Davidson School.

The testimonies she has gathered in her one-on-one meetings has affirmed that Jewish Studies has a special way of impacting students' college experiences. One alum told Kurland, "Math was my major, but my Jewish Studies courses inspired me...I've sold back all of my math books, but all of my Jewish Studies books are still on my shelves." Another recent graduate said that he valued Jewish Studies courses because "you can get a sense of the fluid boundaries of culture, identity, and how people dealt with those issues."

#### PROGRAMMING AND LEADERSHIP

To further advance her goal of deepening relationships between students and the Jewish Studies community, Kurland creates student programming and leadership opportunities throughout the year. One example of a popular program coordinated by students is the Feasting with Faculty series. In the fall, fifteen students dined with Tamar Benzikry, a guest instructor who taught "Graphic Novels and Jewish Memory" in the spring. In the spring, Kurland helped a student committee develop a lively and well-attended dinner with UW's trio of Hebrew professors, Naomi Sokoloff, Hadar Khazzam-Horovitz, and Tovi Romano. She also has initiated a "Tea with Faculty" program designed for Access students.

In 2015-2016, Kurland will guide the newly launched Jewish Studies Student Advisory Council to provide important student input on curriculum and programming. Alongside Program Coordinator Rebecca Steelman (UW Class of 2014), she will supervise the first ever cohort of three Stroum Center Interns, and is reaching out to alumni to offer Jewish Studies support in their lives

post-graduation. Utilizing her background in curriculum development, Kurland is working closely with Prof. Mika Ahuvia, UW Jewish Studies' newly appointed Undergraduate Student Adviser, and the Stroum Center's Curriculum Committee to rethink major and minor requirements to better address the needs of today's students. She also meets regularly with advisers from other departments across campus to help develop courses that can engage students from diverse backgrounds.

Reflecting on her busy first few quarters at the UW, Kurland says, "The students whom I have met are grateful to Jewish Studies faculty for their passion, their presence, and their commitment to good pedagogy. They are also grateful to the Stroum Center for considering students' needs beyond the classroom and focusing more holistically on student experiences with Jewish Studies. I am excited about continuing this work to create an even stronger community both inside the classroom and beyond."

With a dynamic professional like Lauren Kurland now occupying this unique staff position, the Stroum Center is assured of a greatly enhanced ability to impact individual students going forward.

—H.P.



*Dr. Ruth Behar speaks with incoming Jewish Studies Graduate Fellow Sasha Prevost at a special student workshop.*



# Stroum Center Photo Roundup



*Former Associate Director Lauren Spokane with Lucy and Herb Pruzan.*



*The attentive audience at Prof. Mika Ahuvia's welcome lecture in March included Dean Bob Stacey, Dean Judith Howard, and Prof. Reşat Kasaba, Director of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.*



*Hazzan Ike Azose asks a question after Ruth Behar's first lecture.*



*(L-R): Alan Waldbaum, Jeremy Derfner, Joy Maimon, and Rena Behar, all members of the Jewish Studies Advisory Board, were participants in the 2015 Community Learning Fellowship at the Stroum Center.*



*At the third annual JewDub Talks event in January 2015, Tamar Benzikry, Noam Pianko, Daniel Bessner, and Hamza Zafer gave thought-provoking talks on big ideas in Jewish history and culture.*



*Stroum staff pride! L-R: Lauren Kurland, Hannah Pressman, and Rebecca Steelman.*



*Graduating students get parting gifts from the Stroum Center!*





*At the 40th annual Stroum Lectures in May, Dr. Ruth Behar spoke about “Dreams of Sefarad” to a capacity crowd in Kane Hall.*



*At a special lunchtime workshop, Dr. Ruth Behar shows students a handmade book created by Cuban artist Rolando Estevez.*



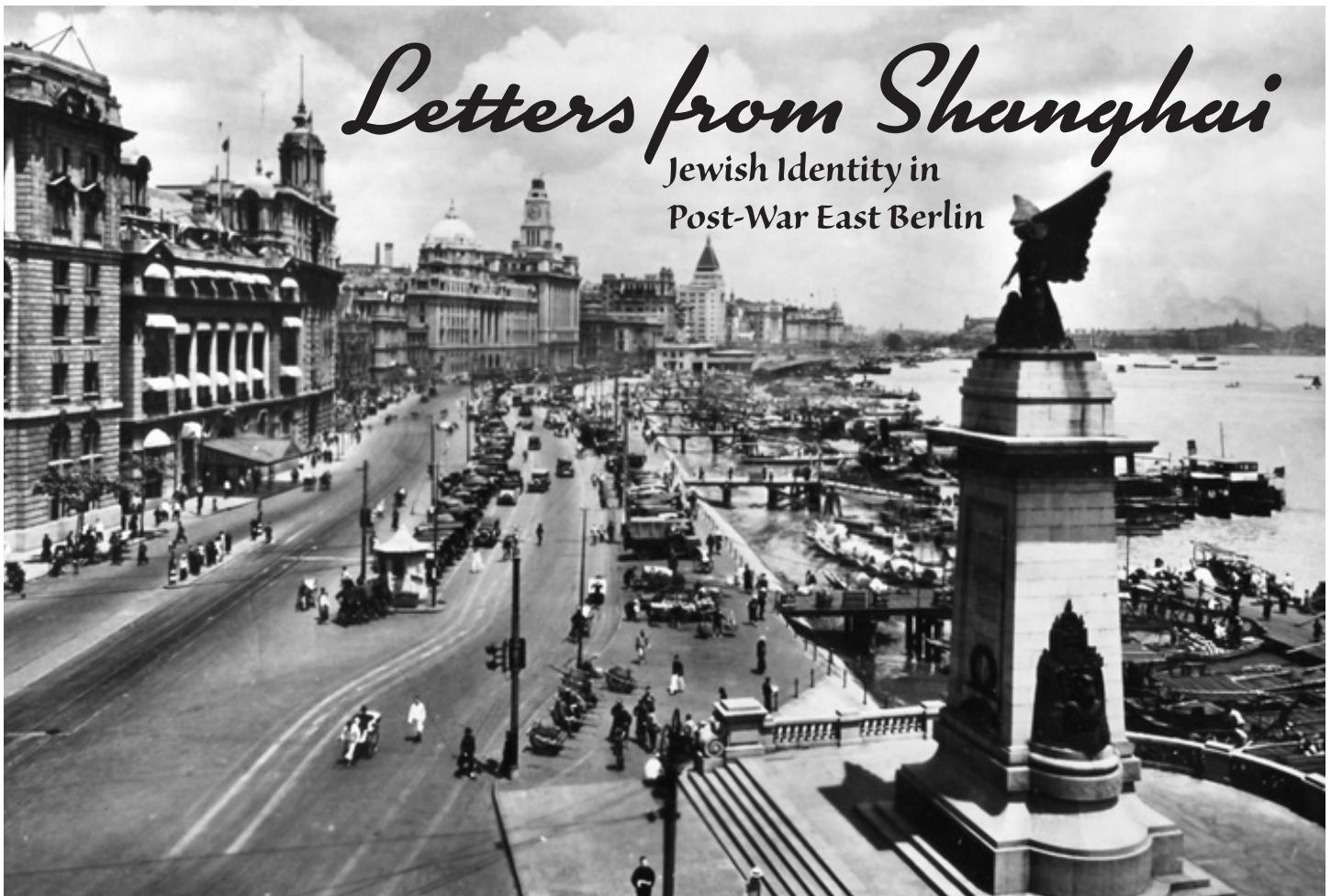
*Terry Azose, Advisory Board President, can always be counted on to give a warm welcome at the event check-in table!*



*Prof. Devin Naar, chair of UW Sephardic Studies, and Prof. Reşat Kasaba, Director of the Jackson School, with Dr. Ruth Behar at the 2015 Stroum Lectures.*



*Prof. Mika Ahuvia spoke about ancient Jewish views of angels at a special event to welcome her to the UW, March 2015.*



*Bin als Jude nur geboren, leider Gott's in deutschem Land.  
Will vom deutschen Volk nichts wissen  
—Goethe, Schiller, unbekannt.*

*As a Jew I was just born, unfortunately on German land.  
Don't want anything to do with Germans  
—Goethe, Schiller, banned.*

**DENNY GOTTLIEB**

**UNPUBLISHED POEM WRITTEN IN SHANGHAI, JULY 1941**

**TRANSLATED BY KATJA SCHATTE**

## **EXILE IN SHANGHAI**

Exiled in Shanghai during most of World War II, Denny Gottlieb (1893-1963) had lots of time: time to reflect on his German origins, his Jewish identity, and the twists of fate that had befallen him during the war. A merchant by profession, he had been deported to the Dachau concentration camp in late 1939. Attempts to immigrate to Palestine and the United States failed; finally, his wife Berta, a Protestant woman, had obtained visas for them both to travel to Shanghai.

The Gottliebs stayed in Shanghai from the middle of 1940 until 1947. Jews had been living in Shanghai since the 19th century, but waves of Jewish immigrants began arriving in the 1920s and 1930s, seeking to escape the Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of the Nazis. It is estimated that a community of over 20,000 Jews eventually lived in Shanghai during the war, the numbers swelling as nearly every country in the world had shut its borders. According to a recent article in *The Atlantic* by James Griffiths, "When the Second World War broke out in 1939, more European Jews had taken refuge in Shanghai than in any other city in the world."



猶太難民調查表  
DIRECTORY OF JEWISH REFUGEES

姓名 Name in full	Denny Gottlieb	
性別 Sex	Male	
年齡 Age	32	
國籍 Nationality	German	
族裔 Language	German	
地址 Address	Lübeck Road 47/48	
職業及技能 Occupation or Ability	Architect	
教育程度 Education	University level	
宗教信仰 Religion	Jewish	
備註 Notes	1940	
護照號碼 Passport No.	發給日期 Issued by	日期 On
9247/12	1940.10.12	1940.10.12

本件差支無之  
右許可又

Denny Gottlieb registered with a Jewish refugee organization in Shanghai in April 1940.



Berta Gottlieb, Denny's wife, arrived in Shanghai first and registered with a Protestant refugee organization. This is her ID card.

Archival images courtesy of the Centrum Judaicum at the Neue Synagoge Berlin.

中央歐洲基督教徒協會  
中央歐洲人新教徒協會  
ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL-EUROPEAN PROTESTANTS  
certifies that

MRS. GOTTLIEB, BERTA

born on MAERZ, 27. 1899

at ROTHENBURG/ODER/GERMANY

shown by the photo over-leaf, is as Protestant a duly registered member of the Association.

Shanghai, SEPT. 19. 1942.

169 Yuen Ming Yuen Road  
Room 201

SHANGHAI

Today, visitors can explore the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, while there is also a small boom in novels (like *Farewell Shanghai*, 2008) and scholarly studies exploring the period. The artist Wu Lin created a graphic novel, *A Jewish Girl in Shanghai*, which became a popular Chinese animated film that played at the Jerusalem International Film Festival. (For more on the role of graphic novels in mediating history and trauma, see the profile of Tamar Benzikry on p.4).

Clearly, something about this particular episode of the Holocaust and World War II history has captured the public's interest and imagination. Denny Gottlieb's poetry and biography provide unique insights into the experience of Jews who survived the war in Shanghai. As the 1941 poem quoted above eloquently expresses, Gottlieb viewed his home country, the "German land" and its entire cultural-national legacy, with evident bitterness. Nevertheless, he and his wife chose to return to East Berlin in 1947 and attempted to create a new life in the socialist state.

Registering official membership in the Jewish community was particularly important to Gottlieb; the archives of the Centrum Judaicum, the cultural center attached to the New Synagogue in Berlin, have preserved his admissions passes to the men's section of the Rykestraße from 1947-1956. However, as many of the survivors returning to East Germany after the war found out, maintaining Jewish identity—both personally,

and on the group level—was not that simple in the new reality of the socialist state. Having left the landscape of Shanghai behind, a radically altered landscape awaited the Gottliebs in East Berlin.

## POST-WAR TENSIONS

Personal narratives like the Gottliebs' form the core of Katja Schatte's dissertation research into the complex internal dynamics of East Berlin's Jewish community. An accomplished PhD student in the History Department, she spent her year as the 2014-15 Rabbi Arthur A. Jacobowitz Fellow zeroing in on the question of how the East German Jewish community reconfigured itself from 1945 through the late 1960s. As she notes, "After the Holocaust, the challenge was how to cope with trauma and loss in a society mostly made up of the bystanders and perpetrators of this very trauma."

Through a combination of archival research, personal documents, and oral histories, Schatte is discovering that East German Jews faced some familiar tensions as well as unique challenges: "As a consequence of their trauma, the whole community was more resilient after the war. The question, 'How do we remain a cohesive community?' became even more urgent for them. After the war there was diversification of Jewish identities while the older challenges of assimilation were intensifying. And, at the same time, there were the pressures of living in the socialist regime."





*Katja Schatte's dissertation research included a trip to Berlin during summer 2015. Above, Menashe Kadishman's installation "Shalekhet–Fallen Leaves" in the Memory Void of the Jewish Museum Berlin. Below, Street scene right outside the train station Hackescher Markt, a five-minute walk from the Synagoge Oranienburger Straße and the Centrum Judaicum.*



It is difficult to obtain precise numbers about the size of the post-war Jewish community in Berlin. There were about 16 million people living in the Soviet Zone in 1945. Schatte cites research by Lothar Mertens stating that in 1946, there were still 2,094 Jews officially registered with the Jewish congregations in the Soviet Zone, but the number had declined to 977 by 1952. Doubtless, there were individuals who self-identified as Jewish but hesitated to officially affiliate with a congregation (an insufficient translation of the German word *Gemeinde*) due to an intimidating combination of social forces: antisemitism, state surveillance, and state-sanctioned mistrust of organized religion.

In this challenging environment, Jewish congregations in post-war East Berlin were very concerned with preserving their identities as religious and cultural institutions. As an example, Schatte cites the electoral rules instituted by the Assembly of Representatives of the Jewish Congregation of Berlin in 1949: if a member's children had not been "brought up in the Jewish religion," he was not permitted to seek communal office.

Yet wartime experiences had forever changed the way individuals in the communities saw their own Jewish identities, making it hard to neatly categorize affiliation into one box. Having strict membership requirements of Jewish genetic lineage sounded, to some traumatized survivors, uncomfortably close to the laws by which the Nazis created racial definitions of identity. Questions relating to the affiliation of parents, spouses, and children highlighted the difficulty facing intermarried couples, already a source of tension before the war. These difficult issues are worthy of study because, as Schatte says, they can help us "complement the existing narrative of post-war Jewish identity by addressing Jewish lived experiences in the GDR."

### **PERSONAL NARRATIVES YIELD PUBLIC HISTORIES**

Schatte strongly believes that the way to understand Jewish everyday life is "from the bottom up – looking at Jewish experiences in East Germany through the eyes of individuals, while situating those experiences within the broader historical, social, and political context." For this reason, she is assembling case studies of specific people, like Denny Gottlieb, whose Jewish identities "stood in direct conflict with some of their community's definitions." Through these personal narratives, she is able to better analyze the tensions between personal and communal views of Jewishness in post-war East Berlin.

Schatte's research into post-war Jewish identity started as a side project, but she soon saw that there was enough underexplored material to warrant a full dissertation on everyday life in East Germany after the war. Attending gatherings of the German Studies Association, she met Atina Grossman, a professor of German and Modern European history at the Cooper Union, and

received encouragement to continue probing this topic. Grossman connected Schatte with the premiere center for German-Jewish history, the Leo Baeck Institute, as well as its Director of Research and Chief Archivist, Dr. Frank Mecklenburg.

At the same time that she was making these important connections in the field, Schatte was participating in the Jewish Studies Graduate Fellowship at the Stroum Center and working with our faculty. She observes, "Jewish Studies provided a space for me to explore things I otherwise would not have. Working with Prof. Devin Naar, I started to study transnationalism. During the Graduate Fellowship, we were having these discussions about what kinds of research you can do in Jewish Studies; suddenly I saw that my work could fit into a lot of different conversations that I hadn't been aware of."

Prof. Naar, who is now supervising Schatte's dissertation, spoke warmly about her project: "Drawing on her knowledge of a wide range of fields of study—from German history, the Soviet Union and the Cold War, to Jewish history and the Holocaust and gender studies—Katja is developing an innovative project that crosses geographical and conceptual boundaries and seeks to uncover complex, previously occluded stories of individuals and communities as they confront the trauma of war and genocide, seek to regain a semblance of stability, and forge a new set of identities. Her case of the rebuilding of Jewish life in post-war East Germany will surely intrigue scholars and the general public alike."

### THE THIRD GENERATION EAST AND BEYOND

Third Generation East (Dritte Generation Ost) is yet another circle that enriches Schatte's personal and professional growth. "Third East," as it is known, is a cohort of people born between 1975-1985 and living in the GDR when the Wall came down. The younger generation's conversations and perspectives have gained more attention as it has become clear that they experienced the country's transition from communism to capitalism differently than the older generations. Now, many of the Third East cohort are doing their own research into Germany's history and sharing it via social media and academic conferences on both sides of the Atlantic. (For Schatte's reflection on the Third Generation East, memory, and contemporary Germany, see her December 2014 blog post on the Jewish Studies website, entitled "Broken Glass and the Berlin Wall.")

Besides her academic research, Schatte is tapping into her own experience of growing up in East Germany on her website, [beyontheironcurtain.org](http://beyontheironcurtain.org). She hopes it will eventually become a collaborative platform which will house an oral archive of interviews with residents of formerly communist countries, showcasing how the transition impacted personal identity. "My goal is to show that there are some common elements to all the

stories, but then there are also very specific ways in which people experience post-socialist life and are still getting used to it. I want to highlight the great diversity of experiences of transition. For many, having lived in a communist country still plays a role in how they see themselves today." Courtesy of the Roseman Fund for Excellence, Schatte earned a grant to travel to Germany this fall and present her website at the Trier Digital Humanities Autumn School.

This summer, though, the multi-tasking Schatte was focused on a second fieldwork trip to expand her dissertation research. She visited the archive of the Jewish Museum of Berlin, part of which is affiliated with the Leo Baeck Institute, and the New Synagogue in Berlin; she also scouted out other archives in the hopes of finding more personal documents. One of her top priorities is finding people to interview so that she can continue building her case studies. She would love to eventually help build a comprehensive archive on Jewish life in East Germany.

In recognition of her worthy project, Schatte was awarded a second year of funding through the Jewish Studies Graduate Fellowship. Her research ensures a better understanding of the post-war choices of survivors like Denny Gottlieb. Despite their harrowing experiences, these individuals chose to return to the land of their birth and rebuild a Jewish community—a compelling story that, like the melancholy verses of Gottlieb's Shanghai poetry, deserves to be brought to light. —H.P.



*"Jewish Studies provided a space for me to explore things I otherwise would not have explored."*

**KATJA SCHATTE, PHD STUDENT AND THE  
RABBI ARTHUR A. JACOBOWITZ FELLOW**



# Building a Digital Library & a Legacy

*UW Sephardic Studies Program continues to grow under Devin Naar's leadership*

**W**ith 1,150 total items in its collection, the Sephardic Studies Digital Library and Museum at the University of Washington now contains the largest repository of digitized Ladino texts in the United States. Thanks to the leadership of Prof. Devin Naar, chair of the Sephardic Studies Program at the Stroum Center, and the dedication of his research team, led by Ty Alhadeff, the Digital Library has become a reality.

Generous individuals in the Seattle community and beyond have lent their family's Sephardic heirlooms for scanning and inclusion in the library. The items range from kabbalistic works to grammar books, novels, political tracts, and Bible commentaries. They were published in over a dozen different cities from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries.

The artifacts are viewable for free online; as of now, twenty scanned items are available to the public, with plans to roll out more of the collection during 2015-16. The library interface is being developed in partnership with the UW Libraries' Digital Initiatives Program, and items will be explored in depth on the UW Jewish Studies website. During 2014-15, the Sephardic Studies Program hired a professional scanning company to bring in its highest-quality equipment for fragile volumes, a process that took several months.

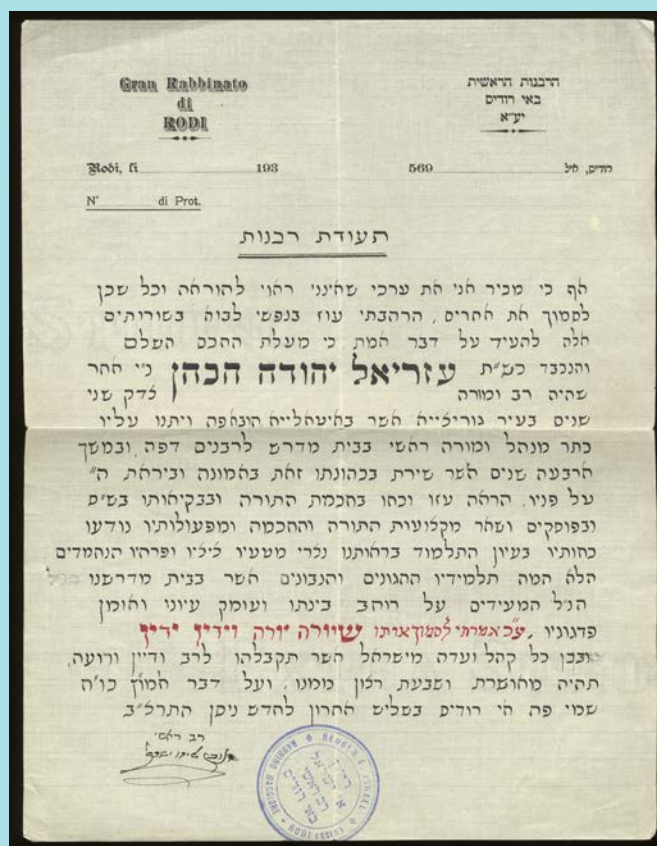
In this and in all its endeavors, the Sephardic Studies Program is grateful for the support of the Sephardic Studies Founders' Circle: Ike Alhadeff Foundation, Eli and Rebecca Almo, Joel and Maureen Benoliel, Harley and Lela Franco, and Richard and Barrie Galanti.

## ABOUT THESE SEPHARDIC TREASURES:

1. Rabbinical certificate for Rabbi Isidore Kahan (Azriel Yehuda Hacohen) from the Rabbinical College in Rhodes, signed by Haham Reuven Eliyahu Israel, the last chief rabbi of Rhodes. At the invitation of both congregations Ezra Bessaroth and Sephardic Bikur Holim, Rabbi Kahan arrived in Seattle in 1939, along with his wife and two daughters, to serve as the spiritual leader of both synagogues. Fleeing to Seattle on the eve of World War II, Rabbi Kahan fortunately evaded the fate of Rhodes' Jews, most of whom perished in Auschwitz in 1944. Rabbi Kahan wound up serving as the rabbi of the "Rhodesli" congregation, Ezra Bessaroth, until he retired in 1959. Courtesy of his daughter, Naomi Strauss.

2. An edition of a rare, illustrated Ladino magazine, *El Manadero o La Fuente de Sensia para el Pueblo* (The Source, or the Fountain of Science for the People), published in Constantinople in 1855 by the Scotch Missionary Society. Missionaries published literature in Ladino in the Ottoman Empire, including translations of the New Testament, biblical concordances, and catechisms, as well as more general texts, such as this one, which promised readers insights into "science," in order to court potential converts from Judaism; they were generally unsuccessful. The cover page of this edition features an illustration from an article about the biblical story of the sale of Joseph. From the collection of Albert Adatto (1911-1996), a pioneer of Sephardic Studies in the United States and an alum of the University of Washington. Courtesy of his son, Richard Adatto.

1.



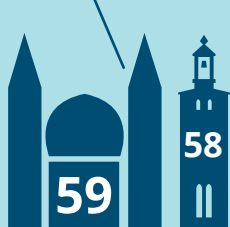
Istanbul



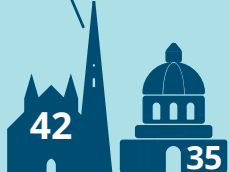
Izmir



Vienna



Cairo



Amsterdam



Jerusalem

Salonika

Livorno

Belgrade

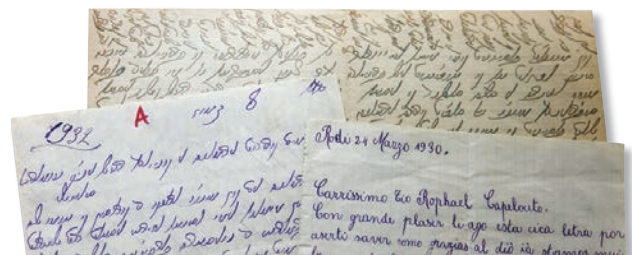
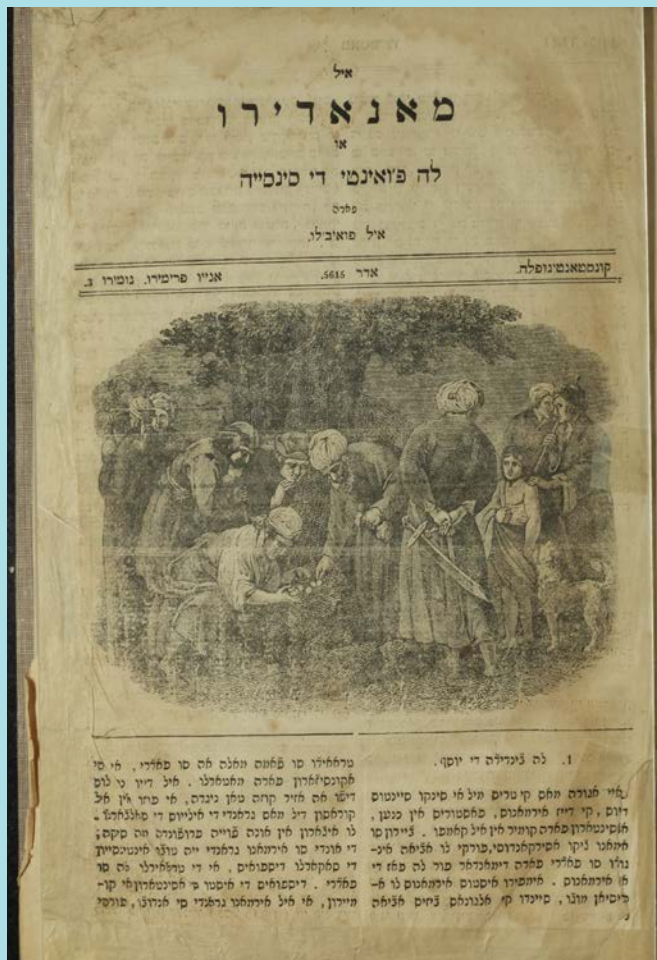
New York

After completing an intensive scanning project, the UW Sephardic Studies Digital Library now includes digitized versions of rare Ladino books that were published in the eastern Mediterranean and around the world. This chart shows the breakdown of the scanned books' cities of publication.

## READ ALL ABOUT IT: "UW BUILDS LARGEST LIBRARY IN SEPHARDIC LANGUAGE"

Congratulations to Prof. Devin Naar, who was featured on the front page of the *Seattle Times* on August 10, 2015! The article and an accompanying video covered his Ladino scholarship and the creation of the Sephardic Studies Digital Library and Museum.

2.



BETTINA HANSEN / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
Devin Naar's collection includes hundreds of letters between family in Seattle and kin in the U.S. and abroad. At left, Ladino is written using the Hebrew alphabet in the Sephardic style; at right, a 9-year-old girl's letter shows Ladino written with the Latin alphabet. Both are from the 1930s.

## UW professor builds biggest digital library of traditional Sephardic language

By NINA SHAPIRO  
Seattle Times staff reporter

Devin Naar wasn't hired at the University of Washington to teach Sephardic studies. The young scholar, only in his late 20s at the time, actually came to the university in 2011 to teach modern Jewish history.

Then the local Sephardic community found out that Naar could speak and read Ladino — the language of the diaspora resulting from Spain's expulsion of the Jews in 1492, a mixture of Spanish, Arabic, Turkish, Greek and other languages picked up in the lands where they settled.



BETTINA HANSEN / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
Devin Naar taught himself to decipher Ladino using library books.

This is an unusual skill. Naar says he doesn't know of any U.S. universities that teach students how to read Ladino in Hebrew

script, as it was written until the mid-1900s. This is particularly difficult when it comes to handwritten Ladino because, Naar says, "the way Sephardic Jews write Hebrew looks almost nothing like the way other Jews write Hebrew." Cursive Ladino, in fact, is reminiscent of Arabic.

Naar, trying to decipher letters left behind by a Sephardic great-uncle, taught himself to decode the script using library books.

Once local Sephardic Jews discovered that, they started bringing him Ladino items they had squirreled away; a grandfa-

See > PROFESSOR, A5



# Mapping the Past:

## A Student's Quest of Discovery



*"This was the most demanding project of my undergraduate career. And I still want to keep going."*

### Dual Sides of Spanish History

Living in Barcelona, Spain, as a child was a transformative experience for Ryan Gompertz (UW Class of 2015). A native of Camas, a small town near Vancouver, Washington, Gompertz lived abroad with his family for five years while his father, an engineer, was on assignment for Hewlett-Packard. The experience did more than help him acquire excellent Spanish: he also gained an appreciation for Spain's complex twentieth-century history, in particular the lingering legacy of General Francisco Franco's violent regime.

Gompertz reflects, "I have a strong memory of walking in Barcelona and seeing a church wall riddled with bullet holes. I asked my mother what had happened, and she explained about the attacks on clergy that took place during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The war still felt like recent history when we were living in Spain."

At the same time, however, Gompertz found out that his own family's story intersected with Spain's history in a surprising way. His great-uncle Werner Cahn, a Dutch electrician, had escaped certain death by crossing the Pyrenees into Spain in 1943. Cahn was among roughly 40,000 Jewish refugees who avoided Nazi persecution by passing through Spain en route to eventual safety.

Naturally inquisitive, Gompertz was struck by dissonant versions of Spanish attitudes to Jews. He explains, "My great-uncle insisted that his life had been saved by Spain, but I was curious about the real story behind Franco's national government. There was an obvious discrepancy between the anti-Semitic rhetoric of Franco's regime and the real fact that a significant number of Jews escaped through Spain during the war, due to the help (or at least helpful inaction) of local officials."

He says, "I've always known a little bit about my family history, but I wanted to know more."

The questions were all there. He just needed the right tools to answer them.



*Ryan Gompertz at the History Department convocation, June 2015. Ryan took upper-level seminars with Prof. Devin Naar and Prof. Glennys Young.*

## A Quest of Discovery

Several years after his life-changing experience in Barcelona, Gompertz began his studies at the University of Washington in 2011. He majored in Political Science and History with a minor in Law, Society, and Justice. His extracurricular involvement included membership in Sigma Chi Fraternity, where he was philanthropy chair, and several internships.

Gompertz took full advantage of academic opportunities to supplement his formative encounters with Spanish history. Prof. Glennys Young (Department of History and Jackson School of International Studies) offered a class on the Spanish Civil War that helped to fill in many blanks in his knowledge of the Franco dictatorship. Young, whose forthcoming book is entitled *Refugee Worlds: The Spanish Civil War, Soviet Socialism, Franco's Spain, and Memory Politics*, observes: "In the junior seminar that he took with me in Fall 2013, Ryan demonstrated a real flair for historical analysis—for asking excellent questions and reading sources imaginatively. The Spanish Civil War captured his historical imagination. He wanted to learn as much as he could."

Then, in Spring 2014, Gompertz took a history majors' seminar with Prof. Devin Naar, chair of the UW Sephardic Studies Program and faculty for Jewish Studies and the Department of History. The course was HIST 498D, "From the Mediterranean to America: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Diasporas in the Twentieth Century." As is often the case, a push from a professor was all he needed; encouraged by Naar, Gompertz used his final paper as the chance to synthesize all of his questions in a rigorous way. The result was a twenty-page analysis entitled "Memories in the Pyrenees: Jewish Refugees and Spain During the Second World War."

Gompertz dug into the history of the period, looking at such works as Haim Avni's *Spain, the Jews, and Franco* (1982). His fluency in Spanish helped him examine several primary sources from the Francoist regime. Yet he found the most compelling source material to be testimonies from Jewish survivors, such as Lisa Fittko's *Escape Through the Pyrenees*. Fittko (1909-2005) was born in the Ukraine, became a political activist, and helped hundreds of refugees escape Nazi-occupied France during the war.

Far less famous, but also intricately connected to the project, was his own great-uncle Werner Cahn, who had been born in the Netherlands. Gompertz had the good fortune of being able to sit with Cahn at his home in San Diego and record him speaking, looking at maps, and explaining the story of his incredible wartime escape. Cahn made it out of Spain in 1944 and spent four years in Haifa, on Israel's northern coast, before immigrating to America. Gompertz included excerpts from the interview with his great-uncle in his final paper for Prof. Naar.

The overall picture that emerged from his research was of a National government that was politically pragmatic as Franco tried to consolidate power in the years following the Spanish Civil War. Officially neutral during the Second World War, Spain had an ambiguous policy toward Jewish refugees and the covert rescue efforts happening along its borders.

Gompertz explains, "The Spanish government policy literally changed from month to month during the war. It created a vacuum at the bottom level, so local officials could interpret it however they wanted. Some individuals were legitimately sympathetic to the plight of the Jewish refugees; others were happy to accept bribes or turn a blind eye as Jews passed through the border; others refused to cooperate. Sometimes a refugee's fate just depended on the day or which official he happened to talk to." For this reason, in every personal narrative he read, the writer attributed his or her survival to incredible luck.

Prof. Naar's guidance was crucial as Gompertz balanced the different accounts he was uncovering: "The biggest understanding I gained from Prof. Naar was how to interpret memoirs in the context of history. Everything is written through a perspective, and people's perspectives are just as important as what actually happened. In my project I compared the personal narratives to the historical sources and compared how those two things coexist and complement each other, even when they sometimes contradict each other."

Developing this kind of nuanced critical thinking is one of the clear benefits of Jewish Studies courses and studying the humanities in general. For Gompertz, honing his analytical skills paid off: this past spring he was accepted to UW School of Law.



*"My goal is that someone will look at my project online and be inspired to go record one of their relatives telling the story of their life."*

**RYAN GOMPERTZ**



## Mapping the Past Online

Most students file their seminar papers away or recycle them when the quarter is over. For Gompertz, though, the quest wasn't over when his history seminar ended. It had just begun.

Gompertz turned to the Stroum Center to get help developing a digital project that would reflect his research on Jewish refugees in Spain. He decided to dedicate the summer before entering law school to expanding his paper into an interactive online exhibit. Working with Kara Schoonmaker, the Stroum Center's Digital Media Coordinator, Gompertz developed a digital map tracing the escape routes of his great-uncle, Fittko, and other refugees. As a Digital Media Fellow, he also wrote two articles for [jewishstudies.washington.edu](http://jewishstudies.washington.edu) and edited his great-uncle's interview video into shorter segments.

Gompertz's project is certainly timely, as the Spanish-Jewish relationship is now a major news headline: Spain recently passed legislation enabling Sephardic Jews to return and claim Spanish citizenship. This invitation, coming over five hundred years since the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion of Jews from the Iberian peninsula in 1492, has generated significant soul-searching and debate in the Sephardic community about what it would mean to reestablish the connection with the country that caused such a traumatic rupture. While Gompertz's great-uncle Werner Cahn was not himself Sephardic, Cahn's story, and that of other Jewish war refugees who fled to safety via Spanish back channels, can provide a broader perspective on how we view Spain's treatment of Jews over time.

In addition, Prof. Naar, who also teaches a lecture course on Holocaust: History and Memory, points out, "Spain did intervene to protect a select number of Sephardic Jews from Salonica who, thanks to the Spanish protection they received, were deported by the Nazis not to Auschwitz but rather to Bergen-Belsen. From Bergen-Belsen, the Spanish government permitted these Sephardic Jews

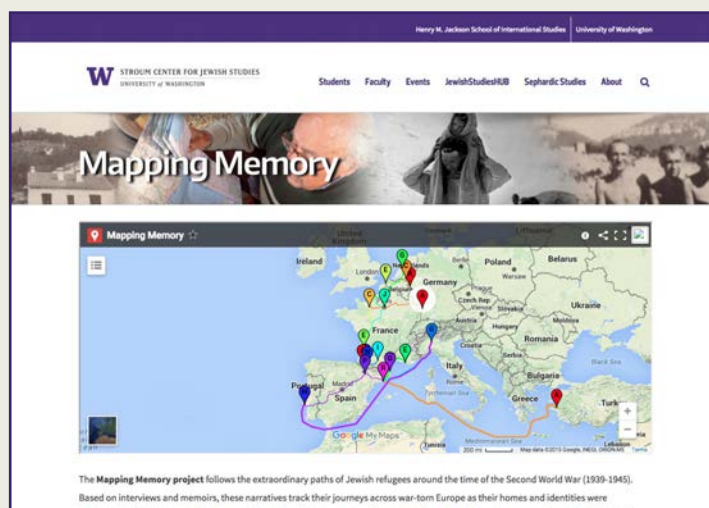
to be extradited to Spain but only if they had made arrangements to leave the country once they arrived. In other words, Franco may have been willing to help the descendants of those Jews his country had kicked out, but he was not willing to undo the expulsion decree of 1492."

Beyond shedding light on Spanish Holocaust historiography, Gompertz—like many in his generation—is keenly aware that the voices of Holocaust survivors and war refugees are an increasingly precious resource. "My great-uncle is 94 now, so I felt it was very important to preserve his stories. I think every family has stories like this. I want to be sure that these stories don't get forgotten."

Even though his law studies will keep him busy, Gompertz hopes to continue the research he started in Prof. Naar's course. "This was the most demanding project of my undergraduate career. And I still want to keep going. Next, I want to compare the situation in Spain with that of other 'neutral' countries. I would love to find more survivors and find out if their stories support my findings. And I would love to go back to Spain and find voices who can speak about the Franco side and attitudes to Jews, because even when they were helping Jews, the Jews were still the 'others' in Spain."

Prof. Naar calls Gompertz "a standout student" and is enthusiastic about the potential for his online mapping project: "I am excited for Ryan to bring the story of his great-uncle, as a microcosm of the trajectories of Jews fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe, to broader public attention. Ryan gets at some of the complexities involved in Spain's policies towards Jews during this challenging period and helps us better understand the various ways in which those refugees who entered Spain have remembered their experiences."

Ultimately, Gompertz hopes that his quest will simply encourage others to begin family history projects. "My goal is that someone will look at my project online and be inspired to go record one of their relatives telling the story of their life." —H.P.



Ryan Gompertz's Mapping Memory webpage was created through a Stroum Center Digital Media Fellowship. You can check it out at:

<http://jewishstudies.washington.edu/mapping-memory>

# Our Faculty

**Noam Pianko**

Samuel N. Stroum Chair of Jewish Studies; Lucia S. and Herbert L. Pruzan Professor of Jewish Studies

**Mika Ahuvia**

Althea Stroum Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies and the Marsha and Jay Glazer Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies

**Gad Barzilai**

Professor Emeritus

**Daniel Bessner**

Assistant Professor, Jackson School of International Studies

**Richard Block**

Associate Professor of Germanics

**Paul Burstein**

Professor Emeritus

**Joseph Butwin**

Associate Professor of English

**Daniel Chirot**

Job and Gertrud Tamaki Professor of International Studies and Sociology

**Galya Diment**

Professor, the Thomas L. & Margo G. Wyckoff Endowed Faculty Fellow, and the Joff Hanauer Distinguished Professor in Western Civilization, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

**Kathie Friedman**

Associate Professor of International Studies

**Susan A. Glenn**

Professor of History

**Ana M. Gomez-Bravo**

Professor of Spanish and Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies

**Barbara Henry**

Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures

**Marty Jaffee**

Professor Emeritus

**Deborah Kerdeman**

Associate Professor of Education

**Levis A. Kochin**

Associate Professor of Economics

**Joel S. Migdal**

Robert F. Philip Professor of International Studies, Jackson School of International Studies

**Devin Naar**

Chair of Sephardic Studies Program, Jackson School of International Studies, Department of History

**Scott Noegel**

Professor, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

**Michael Rosenthal**

Professor and Chair, Department of Philosophy

**Naomi B. Sokoloff**

Professor, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization and Department of Comparative Literature

**Robert Stacey**

Dean of College of Arts & Sciences; Professor of History

**Sarah Culpepper Stroup**

Associate Professor of Classics

**Ruggero Taradel**

Lecturer, Department of French & Italian Studies

**Hamza Mahmood Zafer**

Assistant Professor, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

## LECTURERS

**Hadar Horovitz**

Lecturer in Elementary Hebrew Language, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

**Hannah S. Pressman**

Affiliate Faculty, Graduate Fellowship Coordinator

**Tovi Romano**

Lecturer in Modern Intermediate Hebrew, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization

**Anat Mooreville**

2015–16 Hazel D. Cole Fellow in Jewish Studies



*Dr. Anat Mooreville is this year's Cole Fellow at the Stroum Center (left). Profs. Michael Rosenthal, Mika Ahuvia, Noam Pianko, and Paul Burstein (right).*



# Thank You 20

Estate of Ike Alhadeff  
Eli and Rebecca Almo  
Drs. Ingrid Peterson  
and Charles Alpers  
Judith P. Amiel  
Simon and Amy Amiel  
Joel Arogeti  
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Michael and Erin Azose  
Paul and Tamar Azous  
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*"After years of attending consistently compelling and memorable Stroum Lectures, it was natural that we would want to become engaged in a more meaningful way with the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies. Most recently, we have been touched by the work of the Sephardic Studies Program. Our local community has been profoundly revitalized by their work and, as a result, feels more interconnected than ever with Sephardic communities abroad."*

—RENA AND DANA BEHAR, COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

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## THANKS TO OUR ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS 2015-2016

*Welcome to incoming members Rabbi Ben Hassan, Joy Maimon, David Sabban, and Carol Starin!*

Adina Almo  
Terry Azose (Chair)  
Paul Azous  
Rena Behar  
Tamar Benzikry  
Bob Center (ex officio)  
Jeremy Derfner  
Lela Franco  
Sonny Gorasht (ex officio)

Rabbi Ben Hassan  
Joy Maimon  
Jamie Merriman-Cohen  
Herb Pruzan (ex officio)  
David Sabban  
Amee Huppin Sherer  
Carol Starin  
Noah Tratt  
Patty Willner

## THANKS TO OUR HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS 2015-2016

Norman Behar  
Joann Bianco  
Dr. Joseph and Barbara Buchman  
Bob Center  
Arlene B. Ehrlich  
Sonny Gorasht  
Al Maimon  
Ann Nieder

Herb and Lucy Pruzan  
Michele Rosen  
Gil and Miriam Roth  
Iantha Sidell  
Dr. Leo Sreebny  
David Stone  
Goldie Tobin  
Ina Willner



# International Ladino Day

*El ijo de mi ijo, dos vezes mi ijo*  
*The child of my child is doubly my child.*

On December 4th, 2014, a record crowd of 400 people gathered in Kane Hall for Seattle's second annual International Ladino Day community celebration. The event was truly multi-generational, with presentations by the Seattle Ladineros, UW undergraduates and graduate students, young campers from the Sephardic Adventure Camp, and several community members. Seattle was among several cities around the world celebrating Sephardic language and culture. This year, UW Sephardic Studies will host Ladino Day on December 6th.



*Prof. Devin Naar and the Seattle Ladineros take the stage.*



*Members of the Flory Jagoda Ensemble were in the audience for the celebration.*



*The multi-generational audience was treated to a mixture of history, songs, proverbs—and of course, Sephardic pastries!*



*Graduate Fellow and PhD student Molly FitzMorris, one of the event's organizers, spoke about the remarkable Ladino speech community in Seattle.*



*Participants from the Sephardic Adventure Camp sang together.*

# SCJS Events 2015–16

Please check our events calendar at [jewishstudies.washington.edu](http://jewishstudies.washington.edu) for updates and event registration. Dates, times, and locations are subject to change. If you have questions, call the office at (206)543-0138 or email [jewishst@uw.edu](mailto:jewishst@uw.edu).

## OCTOBER

### LUNCH AND LEARN WITH PROF. SHALOM SABAR

Thursday, October 1, 2015  
12:00–1:30 PM  
Thomson 317

### LADINO SONGS RENEWED WITH GUY MENDILOW ENSEMBLE AND PROF. DEVIN NAAR

Wednesday, October 7, 2015  
7:00 PM  
Ethnic Cultural Theater

### EXPLORING A BORROWED IDENTITY WITH SAYED KASHUA

Monday, October 26, 2015  
7:00 PM  
Kane 120

## NOVEMBER

### A BRIEF STOP ON THE ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ WITH GÖRAN ROSENBERG

Thursday, November 12, 2015  
6:00–7:30 PM  
HUB 340

### JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD: AN AMERICAN INNOVATION BOOK LAUNCH WITH PROF. NOAM PIANKO

Wednesday, November 18, 2015  
7:00–8:30 PM  
University Book Store



The Stroum Center for Jewish Studies Presents

**MIXED MEDIA**  
new expressions of identity



Prof. Dara Horn



Prof. Ilan Stavans

## DECEMBER

### INTERNATIONAL LADINO DAY

Sunday, December 6, 2015  
4:00–6:00 PM  
Kane 130

## JANUARY

### LUNCH AND LEARN: PROF. MARTY JAFFEE'S SIFRE DEVARIME-BOOK

Wednesday, January 13, 2016  
12:00–1:30 PM  
HUB 145

### SYRIAN JEWISH MUSIC WITH PROF. MARK KLIGMAN

Thursday, January 28, 2016  
6:30–8:00 PM  
Thomson 101

### SPRING 2016 LECTURE SERIES—BEYOND THE BINARY: ISRAEL STUDIES TODAY

We're excited to welcome several emerging scholars to share new directions in the field of Israel Studies. Lecture dates and times to be announced.

## MAY

### GRADUATE FELLOWS SPRING RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Friday, May 6, 2016  
9:30 AM–1:30 PM  
UW Intellectual House

### STROUM LECTURES WITH PROF. DARA HORN AND PROF. ILAN STAVANS

Monday and Tuesday,  
May 23 & 24, 2016  
7:00 PM  
Kane Hall 220

This year we welcome two leading Jewish authors to speak about how the Hebrew language has impacted their creative writing, scholarship, and identities.

### HEBREW AND THE HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday, May 24, 2016  
Petersen Room of Allen Library  
Selected panel presentations will be open to the public; please check our website for further details and registration.





STROUM CENTER  
FOR JEWISH STUDIES

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

The Henry M. Jackson  
School of International Studies



*Dr. Leo Sreebny enjoyed Ruth Behar's first Stroum lecture in May.*



*Students from several departments met with Stroum Lecturer Ruth Behar in May for a lunch session on Culture, Art, and the Self.*



*Professors Devin Naar, Vanessa Freije, Daniel Bessner, Mika Ahuvia, Hamza Zafer, and Naomi Sokoloff.*



*Jewish Studies Student Committee leaders Griffin Taylor and Angela Ugalino were the MCs for the 2015 JewDub Talks event in January.*