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 **COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**
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From the Director's Desk

Dear friends:

For over sixty years, the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies has been headquartered in two rooms in the Fayerweather building. It's been a cozy space, but given how much we've grown in ambition and accomplishment—we organized and ran over 50 programs and conferences this past year alone—we're excited to share that the IIJS will be moving to a new—and larger!—home on campus. Upon completion, we will have a physical space that more than meets our every need. It will be a warm, welcoming and functional space for students, visitors, and faculty that enhances the Institute's work. We're equally excited to host many future events there—including a *Hannukat HaBayit* (dedication of the new home) when construction is done, where we can thank the generous supporters who've made this dream possible. We hope you'll join us when that happens!

If you've attended any of our events in the past couple of years, you can attest to the substantial and significant programming we offer. Inside is a story about our academic "lunchtime lectures"—and some event highlights from our other program series. Over the years, we've built a solid foundation for our Israel Film Series, with major Israeli directors, screenwriters, and producers joining us for Q&A sessions following screenings of their works—people like Talya Lavie, Ron Leshem, and Eran Riklis. Likewise with our Israel and Foreign Policy series, we've created a regular forum to hear from leading public figures (Michael Walzer, Moshe Halbertal), think tank analysts (Tamara Wittes, Eric Trager, Natan Sachs), reporters (Matti Friedman)—even a high ranking State Department official (Ira Forman)—about the state of Israel, Jews, and foreign policy in the world today.

Another source of pride, for me, is how our public programs also serve our students beyond the classroom. We make it a point to create space for undergraduates to sit with these impressive speakers and have informal conversations—and it is quite extraordinary to eavesdrop on the discussions they have. We work hard to serve the students, and they repeatedly tell us how much their academic experience is enhanced by the opportunities we offer them.

A final note, on the topic of programming. We're always interested in your thoughts, and we're relying on you to help inform the programs we offer throughout the year. Please take just a few minutes to fill out our survey (via GoogleForms at <http://bit.ly/1cCictG>). I hope you'll give us your feedback—and that you continue to attend and support our work in exploring Israel and Jewish studies.

Sincerely yours,

Jeremy Dauber
Atran Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature & Culture
Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

Top:
Katka Reszke, speaking about the resurgence of the third post-Holocaust generation of Jews in Poland.

Bottom:
Ira Forman (left), US Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism in conversation with IIJS Fellow Jordan Hirsch (middle) and author Gal Beckerman (right) discussing the future of Jews in Europe



IIJS Course Sampler—Spring 2015

Humor in Jewish Literature

Jeremy Dauber

This course explored the rich tradition of comic Jewish literature, spanning continents and centuries, by examining the continuities in Jewish literary style as well as the tensions between universality and particularity inherent to comedy.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Early Islamic World

Eve Krakowski

This seminar focused on the enormous changes that faced religious communities in the early Islamic world, from the 7th to 12th centuries CE, including the social and political contexts of conversion to Islam, and the life of Christian and Jewish communities under Islamic rule.

Women, Gender, and Yiddish Literature

Agnieszka Legutko

To discover all the ways that women writers have revolutionized Yiddish literature, this course looked at the roles of women in the Yiddish literary establishment in the past and in Yiddish studies today.

From Herod to Bar Kokhba: Jews, Pagans, and Christians

Seth Schwartz

A detailed exploration of one of the most tumultuous and best attested periods of Jewish history before modernity, based on careful analysis of Josephus, intertestamental literature and Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament, and Rabbinic literature, in addition to archaeological, epigraphical and papyrological remains.

Jewish Studies—Not Just for Enrolled Students!

Teaching the next generation of students in the field of Jewish Studies is one of the central goals of the IIJS. But we are also dedicated to creating a home for discussion and learning about Jewish Studies and Israel for the broader Columbia community. The IIJS delights in serving as a home for intellectual conversation and education outside of the classroom. We regularly sponsor exciting programs available to the public, including academic daytime lectures with presentations on a wide range of topics in Jewish and Israeli history, literature, and culture. This past academic year, we offered the following “lunchtime lectures”:

- **Eve Krakowski** *Women and Rabbinic Law in the Middle Ages*
- **Marcin Wodzinski** *New Geography of Hasidism*
- **Jay Michaelson** *Jacob Frank: A Revisionist View*
- **Alon Confino** *The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide*
- **Alain Dieckhoff** *Israel and Diaspora: A Case of "Long-Distance Nationalism"*
- **Hannah Polin-Gallay** *On Memory and Accusation in Holocaust Testimony*
- **Marc Caplan** *Travel Writing, Allegory, and the Dissimulation of Self in S. Ansky's Destruction of Galicia*
- **Dafna Hirsch** *Food and Politics in Israel*
- **Berel Lang** *Primo Levi and the Matter of a Life*
- **Marsha Rozenblit** *New Perspectives on Vienna and the Jews*
- **Beryl Satter** *Religion, Race and Real Estate: The Battle over Contract Selling in 1960s Chicago*
- **Katka Reszke** *Return Of The Jew: Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland*
- **Keren Ben Horin** *Fashionable Identities in Israel*
- **Debra Kaplan** *Ritual, Gender, and Class: A Jewish Marriage Custom in Early Modern Germany*
- **Maoz Kahana** *Shabtai Zvi The Halakhist: The Legal Vocabulary of Anarchy*

These programs were made possible by the support of the Appel, Kaye, and Radov families.

IIJS Hosts 2015 Ancient Judaism Regional Graduate Seminar

About forty faculty and graduate students from Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, the Jewish Theological Seminary, NYU, Yeshiva University, and Yale University gathered together for the Ancient Judaism Regional Seminar, hosted this year by Columbia's IIJS. The two day regional seminar provided an informal environment for dissertation-stage graduate students to share their research with others, to learn from each other, and to receive constructive feedback from a range of students and scholars in the field.

Columbia is proud to create a supportive space for student mentorship and academic networking, and is dedicated to giving the next generation of scholars the tools necessary to launch their academic careers. The seminar was graciously supported by the Knapp Family Foundation; the Department of History; the Department of Religion; the Center for Ancient Mediterranean; and the American Academy of Jewish Research.

Top: The seminar featured students presenting papers for feedback and discussion. **Bottom:** Michelle Chesner, Columbia's Jewish Studies Librarian, provides background on selected manuscripts from the university's collection.



Rebecca Kobrin Chosen Among Lenfest Distinguished Teachers



Rebecca Kobrin, The Russell and Bettina Knapp Associate Professor of American Jewish History, was among this year's awardees for the Distinguished Columbia Faculty Award. The award was created in 2005 by Columbia Trustee Emeritus, Gerry Lenfest, (LAW'58, HON'09), to honor exceptional faculty in the Arts and Sciences. The awards are given annually to recognize unusual merit across a range of activities including scholarship, University citizenship, and professional involvement, with primary emphasis on teaching and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS from 2014-2015

Michael Walzer & Moshe Halbertal:

In Proportion: A Conversation about the Laws of War in the Israeli Palestinian Conflict

Zero Motivation

Screening of the popular Israeli film, followed by Q&A with Talya Lavie

Marcin Wodzinski

New Geography of Hasidism

Matti Friedman

Understanding the 'Israel Story': A Veteran Middle East Reporter Looks at What the Press Gets Wrong and Why it Matters

Maoz Kahana

Shabtai Zvi The Halakhist: The Legal Vocabulary of Anarchy

Debra Kaplan

Ritual, Gender, and Class: A Jewish Marriage Custom in Early Modern Germany

National Endowment for the Humanities Award to Columbia University Libraries Yiddish Archive

Columbia University Libraries/Information Services has received an award of \$150,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize field notes and linguistic surveys from the Language and Culture Atlas of Ashkenazic Jewry (LCAAJ) archive. "The Atlas archive is a treasure-house of voices from a vanished world, bearing irreplaceable—heartbreakingly irreplaceable—information about Jewish life, language, and culture," according to Jeremy Dauber, Atran Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture and director of Columbia's Institute of Israel and Jewish Studies. "It needs to be shared with the world, and we're delighted—and honored—that the National Endowment for the Humanities is enabling the Libraries to do so."

The LCAAJ archive consists of over 600 interviews conducted between 1959 and 1972 with native speakers of Yiddish. The LCAAJ project collected its interviews at essentially the last moment, when a diverse body of native speakers was still alive, aiming to address both the challenge of an endangered linguistic and cultural legacy, and the special potential that Yiddish provides for studying language and cultural contact and change. The two-year project funded by NEH will digitize approximately 140,000 pages of interview answer sheets that contain data from the interviews, and will make all the digitized content freely available to scholars on the Internet on a Columbia website. Bringing the LCAAJ archive into the digital environment will increase exponentially its value to historians of Jewish Studies and European history, linguists, anthropologists, and students and teachers of Yiddish.

Learning from the Masters: The M.A. Program in Jewish Studies

If you're looking for a chance to engage deeply with Jewish Studies (but are thinking more broadly than an academic career) IIJS's M.A. program may be the perfect opportunity for you. The master's program in Jewish Studies offers students the opportunity to spend two years learning from some of the field's greatest teachers and scholars. The program concludes with the chance to write an original thesis on a topic of special interest; recently, students have tackled everything from the role of Jewishness in Arnold Schoenberg's music to the narrative techniques of the Babylonian Talmud. This season, the IIJS put new energy into its master's program with the hiring of its first full-time program coordinator. Adam Kirsch, a poet and literary critic who writes for the online Jewish magazine Tablet and other publications, aims to grow the M.A. program into a thriving home for students interested in careers in Jewish writing, education, and administration, as well as lifelong learners. If you or anyone you know would like to learn more about this program, contact Adam at ak3111@columbia.edu.



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The Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies – Columbia University’s center for the academic study and discussion of Jewish life, history, and culture – has long been a national and international leader in the field, and recently, the Institute itself has gone through an exciting season of growth.

With interest in Jewish and Israel Studies reaching new heights in and out of the university, the need to support academic opportunities, innovative programming, and cutting-edge teaching that enrich students, scholars, and the larger Columbia University community alike is crucial.

Please consider supporting the IIJS. To do so, visit <https://giving.columbia.edu/giveonline>.

Spotlight on the Students: A Bit of a Family Affair

Eliav Grossman came to Columbia in the fall of 2012, following in the footsteps of his older brother Aminadav (class of 2014). Both brothers found an academic home at the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, and each participated in the IIJS Undergraduate Israel Fellowship. Eliav spent last summer at the Hartman Institute editing articles on legal theory and Jewish law; Aminadav worked one summer as a research assistant at Hebrew University’s Department of Jewish Thought, and another as an intern for ITIM, a Jerusalem-based non-profit that helps Israeli citizens navigate life-cycle events within Israeli religious and governmental institutions.

Rachel Friedman, a Columbia College student who graduated this year, also got to know Aminadav during their time on campus together. The pair met during a summer camp before attending college, but they really became friends while taking an IIJS class on Talmudic Narrative. In fact, they became engaged earlier this year, and are getting married this summer. Rachel is a two-time alum of the Israel Fellowship as well, having spent one summer doing research for ITIM and another as a research assistant for Daniel Gordis. “I’ve really appreciated the opportunity to spend my summers in Israel—they were really good ‘training wheels’ for trying out living and working there. And it worked, because we’re moving there!” said Rachel.

So what’s it like to have had your college education be a bit of a family affair? According to Eliav, “Being on campus with my sibling -- and sibling to be -- was and is a lot of fun. We have similar interests (Jewish studies, Jewish texts) which provides the benefit of being able to have interesting — and sometimes heated — family conversations about topics about which we are passionate.” IIJS is glad to have had a role in adding to these family conversations and to be part of their home here on campus!



Left to right: Rachel Friedman, Aminadav Grossman, and Eliav Grossman