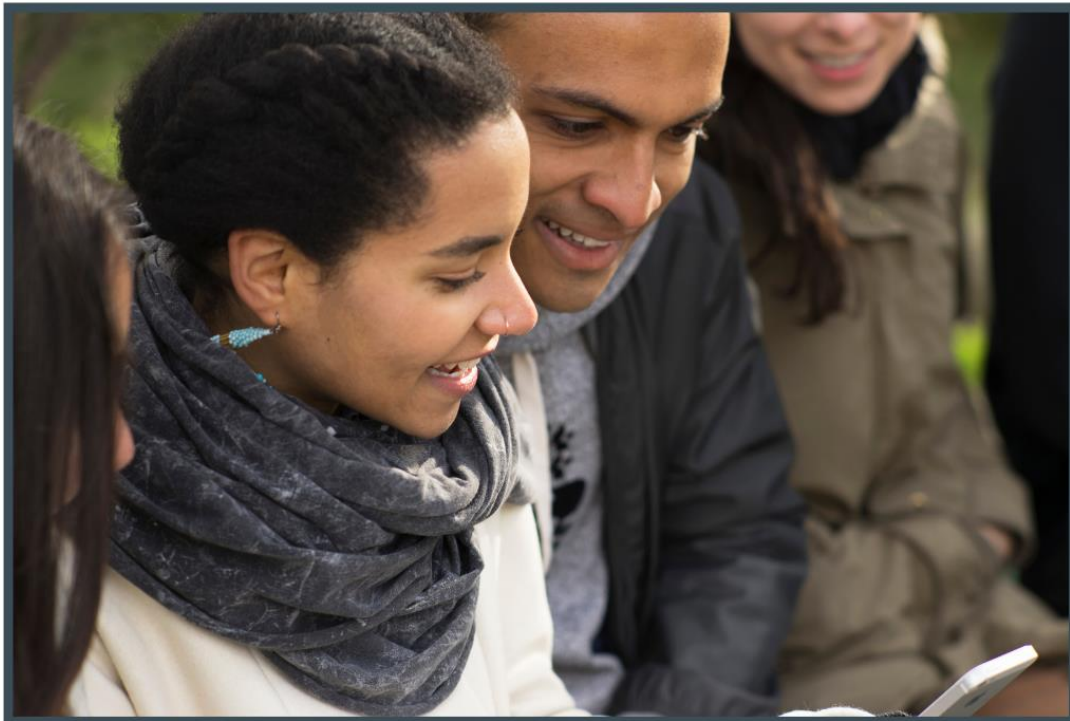


The Granovsky-Gluskin Graduate Program in Jewish Studies presents

THE SCHWARTZ-REISMAN GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE IN JEWISH STUDIES



Who is a Jew? A film by Sara Yacobi-Harris

Photo credit: John Ker

Resilience, Humour and Hope

Monday, April 26, 2021
10:00AM - 5:00PM

Zoom Link:
([click here](#))



Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

מרכז למדעי היהדות

Monday, April 26

10:00am Welcoming Remarks

Michael A. Rosenthal (Philosophy)
Acting Director, Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies

Caitlin Hamblin-Yule (Philosophy)
Conference Co-Chair

**10:10am Working at the Intersections of Jewish and Africana Studies
Keynote Panel**

Moderators: Doris Bergen (History) and Yu Wang (Comparative
Literature)

Roni Mikel Arieli, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Danielle Christmas, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Bryan Roby, University of Michigan
Kira Thurman, University of Michigan

12:15pm Lunch

Lunchtime Entertainment: Yidlife Crisis, an award-winning web
series and Jewish cultural brand founded by Jamie Elman and
Eli Batalion

**12:45pm Jewish Communities in Central Europe: Genocides and
Destruction in the 1900s**

Chair: Sophie Edelhart (Germanic Languages and Literatures)

Jon Neufeld (History), "The Impact of the Austrian Vision of
Mitteleuropa on Jewish Communities in Southeastern Europe,
1938-45"

Danijel Matijevic (History), "'As Catholics, You Will Be Able To Stay
in Your Homes': Religious Conversion, Genocide against the
Serbs, and the Destruction of the Jews of Vukovar, 1941-42"

Michal Mlynarz (History), "The Dynamics of Genocide in Industrial
Towns: The Shoah in Drohobych"

Respondent: Tatjana Lichtenstein (History, U. of Texas at Austin)

- 2pm** **Jews and Germans: Authenticity, Friendship, and Belonging**
- Chair: Mordechay Benzaquen (Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations)
- Eriks Bredovskis (History), “Franz Boas and German Anthropology: The Pursuit of ‘originality’ and ‘authenticity,’ 1880-1890”
- Michael Weaver (History), “Power, Politics, and Jewish-Christian Friendship in Germany, 1840-1870”
- Respondent: Nisrine Rahal (History)
- 3pm** **Break**
- 3:10pm** **Kantian Morality and Judaism**
- Chair: Caitlin Hamblin-Yule (Philosophy)
- Allison Murphy (Religion), “Kant's Definition of Morality and Its Implications for Judaism”
- Respondent: Kwesi Thomas (Philosophy)
- 3:55pm** **Break**
- 4:15pm** **Screening of *Who is a Jew?***
- 4:30pm** **Yiddishkeit and Questions of Identity**
- Chair: Katrin Zavgorodny (Art History)
- Sara Yacobi-Harris (OISE), “Who is a Jew?”
- 5:05pm** **Concluding Remarks**
- Gamal Mansour (Political Science)
Conference Co-Chair

Keynote Speakers

Roni Mikel Arieli is a cultural historian interested in the intersections between Holocaust memory, contemporary Jewish history, and human rights. She is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with the support of the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, where she is working on her research project, “Jewish Deportees in Mauritius (1940-1945): A History from the Margins.” She was also awarded a 2020-21 research fellowship at the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem; 2019-20 Phyllis Greenberg Heideman and Richard D. Heideman fellowship at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies; a Junior Postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich in July 2019; and a Postdoctoral fellowship as part of the research group, “In Someone Else’s Shoes - An Interdisciplinary Research Group for the Study of Empathy in History, Society, and Culture,” at the Mandel Scholion Research Center. She holds a PhD in Jewish History and Contemporary Jewry from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, written under the supervision of Louise Bethlehem and Amos Goldberg. Her book, *Remembering the Holocaust in a Racial State: Holocaust Memory in South Africa from Apartheid to Democracy (1948-1994)*, will be published in early 2022 in the De Gruyter series, “New Perspectives on Modern Jewish History.”

Danielle Christmas is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, endowed as the Delta Delta Delta Fellow in the Humanities. She holds a BA in English from Washington University in St. Louis and a PhD in English from University of Illinois at Chicago. Her current manuscript, “Auschwitz and the Plantation: Labor, Sex, and Death in American Holocaust and Slavery Fiction,” concerns how representations of slavery and the Holocaust contribute to American socioeconomic discourses. She has received a number of national awards to pursue this research, including support from the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the American Council of Learned Societies in partnership with the Mellon Foundation. Most recently, her interests in Southern history, including Confederate monuments and lynching narratives and visual art, have led to a number of presentations in partnership with UNC’s Carolina Public Humanities. She looks forward to expanding this work with research on white nationalist literature and peacebuilding initiatives through the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University.

Bryan Roby is an Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies with the Frankel Institute at the University of Michigan. His focus is on Middle Eastern and North African Jewish history in the modern era. After earning his PhD at the University of Manchester (UK), he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at New York University and was a Visiting Fellow at the Frankel Institute for Judaic Studies. His research interests include the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in Israel/Palestine, 19th- and 20th-century North African

history, and the legacy of French colonialism on Arab and Jewish identity. His first book, *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel's Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle 1948-1966* (Syracuse University Press, 2015), provides an extensive history of social justice protests by Middle Eastern Jews in Israel. His second book project explores the shifting boundaries of racial constructs in Israel/Palestine as well as African-American intellectual contributions to Israeli sociology and theories on race and ethnicity. In addition, he is examining the intellectual production of North African Jewish literary figures and political activists associated with the *haskalah/naḥda* in the early- to mid-20th century.

Kira Thurman is an Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures and History at the University of Michigan. A classically-trained pianist who grew up in Vienna, Thurman earned her PhD in history from the University of Rochester with a minor field in musicology from the Eastman School of Music. Her research, which has appeared in *German Studies Review*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (JAMS), *Opera Quarterly*, and *Journal of World History*, focuses on two topics that occasionally converge: the relationship between music and German national identity, and Central Europe's historical and contemporary relationship with the Black diaspora. She is the recipient of a Fulbright fellowship to Germany, the Berlin Prize from the American Academy of Berlin, and a residential fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey. Her article, "Black Venus, White Bayreuth: Race, Sexuality, and the De-Politicization of Wagner," won the German Studies Association's DAAD prize for best article on German history in 2014. Her book, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms*, is forthcoming in 2021 with Cornell University Press. Thurman has published in *The New Yorker*, served as a consultant for PBS documentaries and public radio projects, and worked with orchestras, opera houses, and music ensembles on programming and public education. Together with colleagues across the United States and Europe and with the support of the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, she runs the public history website, blackcentraleurope.com.

Graduate Student Abstracts and Biographies

Listed in order of presentations

Jon Neufeld

“The Impact of the Austrian Vision of *Mittleuropa* on Jewish Communities in Southeastern Europe 1938-45”

Though often seen as an ideological concept designed to justify Germany’s eastern expansion, the idea of *Mittleuropa* became a dominant political force in post-World War I Austria and shaped not only Austrians’ engagement with Nazi Germany but, by extension, outcomes for European Jewish communities, particularly in Southeastern Europe. This paper examines the impact of this idea through the lens of one man: Hermann Neubacher. A decorated veteran of World War I, Neubacher was a Social Democrat and a leading figure in “Red Vienna” before his ideological commitments to Austria’s place within a Greater Germany at Europe’s centre led him to join the Nazi Party. In 1938, Neubacher became the first Nazi mayor of Vienna before joining the foreign office and eventually becoming the second-highest-ranking German diplomat by 1944. In these positions, Neubacher shaped the events of the Holocaust by isolating and removing Jewish populations from the areas under his control in Southeastern Europe in a manner calibrated to maximize the benefits for not only Austria but himself. Examining Neubacher’s ideology and actions deepens our understanding of the Holocaust in Southeastern Europe and reveals new avenues for Austria’s ongoing process of coming to terms with its Nazi past.

*Jon Neufeld is a PhD candidate in the History Department and the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. His research focuses on the concept of *Mittleuropa*, its effect on the relationship between Germany and Southeastern Europe, and its impact on minority communities in the Balkans.*

Danijel Matijevic

“‘As Catholics, You Will Be Able To Stay in Your Homes:’ Religious Conversion, Genocide against the Serbs, and the Destruction of the Jews of Vukovar, 1941-42”

The District of Vukovar in modern-day Croatia was home to a vibrant Jewish community prior to the Second World War. Starting in 1941, when Nazi Germany destroyed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and established the fascist Independent State of Croatia with *Ustaša* as its client regime, Vukovar’s Jewish population was virtually wiped out by the end of the war. The *Ustaša* regime embraced the racial tenets of Nazism and, adding its brand of racism that focused on hated Serbs, embarked on a population-engineering project of its own. As in the Reich, the Roma population met a fate similar to that of Jews. The *Ustaša* policy against Serbs, in contrast, was a homegrown genocide, parallel to and independent from Croatia’s participation in the Holocaust. One method of destruction that the regime employed against Serbs was forced religious conversion, which was also among the means Croatian Jews used to try to escape persecution. With the District of Vukovar as its focus, this local history illuminates the dynamics of forced religious conversion in the context of two parallel genocides, the Holocaust and the genocide against the Serbs, analyzing the ways in which separate policies of mass violence ‘cross-pollinate’ and affect each other. The paper stems from one chapter of my dissertation and is based on original research in regional archives.

Danijel Matijevic is a doctoral candidate in History and Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. Previously, he taught at McGill University and Champlain College St-Lambert. Matijevic researches the history of mass violence and genocide, with a focus on the Holocaust, modern East-Central European history, and modern Latin America. His chapter, “‘The Converts Were Just Delighted:’ Religious Conversion as a Tool of Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia,” in Religion, Ethnonationalism, and Antisemitism in the Era of the Two World Wars, is forthcoming from McGill-Queens University Press and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Michal Mlynarz

“The Dynamics of Genocide in Industrial Towns: The Shoah in Drohobych”

This paper is an archival reconstruction of the Holocaust in Drohobych. Drohobych (Polish Drohobycz), lies in the far west of Ukraine. Prior to the Second World War, one-third of the city’s 40,000 inhabitants were Jewish. Although certain elements of the Nazis’ ‘typical’ pattern of ‘cleansing’ a Jewish community in Poland remained the same in Drohobych, such as the gradual introduction of antisemitic decrees and the eventual ghettoization of the local population, others, such as the keeping of people in an open ghetto, were not. This paper offers attention, memory, and voice to a few of the many victims of the *Shoah* in Drohobych. German soldiers re-captured Drohobycz from the Soviets on June 30, 1941. Mass murders soon began in the local Bronica forest. By September of 1942 Drohobycz had become a large open-space ghetto, where 10,000 Jews were held prior to their deportations to the Bełżec death camp. The mechanics of genocide employed in Drohobych used a combination of practices enacted in other Polish cities, while also using the area forest for shooting pits, and employing ‘hunts’ in the city streets. The paper presents through text and visuals the spaces of Drohobych, and how they were used to enact the Shoah against the almost 500-year-old Jewish community. It concludes by presenting a flicker of hope - the 2018 restoration of the Grand Synagogue and the legacy of Bruno Schulz in Jerusalem, a famous son of Drohobych.

Michal Mlynarz is a PhD candidate in History. He specializes in the cultural, political and urban history of Poland, East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union, with an emphasis on the immediate post-World War II decades and the post-Soviet period. His major research interests involve the collective memory of the region, in particular the politics and history of monuments, museums, and cultural heritage. He has also worked on museum and heritage projects relating to Slavic immigration in Alberta. His dissertation is a comparative analysis of demographic, political, and cultural change in the urban spaces of Jelenia Góra, Poland, and Drohobych, Ukraine, and the ‘nationalization’ of the city in the post-1945 period. Mlynarz spent the summer of 2019 in Israel, working in the Yad Vashem Archives. The fruits of that labour are a major source base for his paper today.

Eriks Bredovskis

“Franz Boas and German Anthropology: The Pursuit of “originality” and “authenticity,” 1880-1890”

This paper examines the work of Franz Boas within the context of German anthropology. German anthropologists became fascinated by the west coast of North America (Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska), and the resulting discourse of a “pursuit of authenticity” contributed to the development of German national belonging according to race. As a case study, this paper focuses on the anthropologist Franz Boas, his fieldwork and also his personal trajectory in the 1880s—from a rising star in German anthropology to his struggle with antisemitism in Germany’s academia, to emigrating to the United States. Fueled by anthropological fears of a “loss of their research subjects,” the continual expansion of European colonization, and German interest in Indigenous North Americans, Boas produced a mountain of work on the Pacific Northwest Indigenous nations. His work ultimately disproved the prevailing assumption that biological differences were the determining factor in the development of society and culture. Instead, he argued that environmental and external factors affect culture. However, before his conclusions gained traction in the field of anthropology, rising antisemitism and nationalism in Imperial Germany limited his career opportunities and ability to garner academic support. This paper shows how the rise of German nationalism and imperialism during the final decades of the nineteenth century excluded scholars like Boas and contributed to the formation of national belonging according to race.

Eriks Bredovskis (he/him) is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History and the Collaborative Program in Jewish Studies. His dissertation focuses on Germans in the North Pacific Ocean from 1880–1920 and the circulation of German "experts" in non-German colonial spaces. He has held the Canada Graduate Scholarship from SSHRC as well as several research fellowships from the Munk School of Global Affairs. He has published in the German Studies Review and, most recently, in a collected edition that compares German and American imperial practices.

Michael Weaver

“Power, Politics, and Jewish-Christian Friendship in Germany, 1840-1870”

From the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the beginning of the wars of German “unification,” most of German-speaking Central Europe was bound by a loose Confederation of over thirty states. It was here that a group of liberal academics, journalists, and artists formed personal and political relationships—what they called “political friendship”—with one another and with monarchs across the Confederation. This web of personal relationships and political alliances coalesced into a network of political friends. Emotional bonds sustained its members as they sought to use their combined resources to alter the flow of nationalist politics, official policy, and professional favors. My paper addresses the role of a Jewish German novelist, Berthold Auerbach, in this network of political friends. His relationships with Christian members, bourgeois and royal, illustrated the complexity of Jewish-Christian friendship. Auerbach and his friends shared similar family and educational backgrounds, support for liberal politics, and a devotion to German nationalism. Christian members’ views of Auerbach’s “Jewishness” changed over the decades. For many years, the friends enjoyed a sense of political and religious affinity in their support for Christian dissenters and the Reform movement in Judaism. Beginning in the late-1850s, however, the burgeoning influence of antisemitic writers on Christian elites, including Auerbach’s liberal-nationalist friends, threatened Auerbach’s place in the network and his access to emotional, political, and professional support. My paper focuses on Auerbach’s understanding of his simultaneous in- and exclusions from Christian-dominated society as a writer, a Jew, a German, and a friend.

Michael Weaver is a PhD candidate in the Department of History and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. Michael’s work focuses on the intersections of friendship and politics in German-speaking Europe in the nineteenth century. His research has been funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Joint Initiative in German and European Studies at the Munk School of Global Affairs, and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies.

Allison Murphy

“Kant's Definition of Morality and Its Implications for Judaism”

As Paul Franks has remarked, "no non-Jewish [modern] philosopher has been more central to Jewish philosophy than Kant." Yet the treatment of Judaism in Kant's writings betrays a limited, and often misguided, understanding of the religion, and he ultimately claims that Judaism is not a religion at all. In the ensuing centuries, there have been many attempts to reconcile Kant's moral philosophy with the religion he dismissed. Apologists have emerged on both sides, emphasizing the blind spots in Kant's comprehension of Judaism or else conceding that modern Judaism ought to prioritize the rational and moral over the ritual and traditional as the Kantian system demands. In this talk, I apologize neither for Kant nor for Judaism. Instead, I explore what makes Judaism an interesting case for Kant's definition of morality. Attention to his discussion of Judaism, in other words, can shed light on Kant's more general effort to reconceive morality without the foundations of any historical religion.

Allison Murphy is a PhD candidate in the Department for the Study of Religion in collaboration with the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies. She holds an MA in Religion and a BA Honours in Ethics, Society, & Law, both from the University of Toronto. Her work is in philosophy of religion and focuses on the intersection of religion and morality, taking a reconstructive approach to Kantian ethics. Her dissertation explores how a Kantian, universalist morality might be made compatible with the values of cultural pluralism while avoiding both the kind of moral relativism and the moral absolutism that threaten to undermine meaningful discussion about moral issues in an increasingly globalized context.

Sara Yacobi-Harris

“Who is a Jew?”

Sara Yacobi-Harris is the founder of No Silence on Race. She is an artist and community organizer. Sara is currently pursuing a Master of Education at the University of Toronto with a focus on critical race theory, Jewish Studies and community development. In 2017, Sara produced and directed a documentary film titled “Who is a Jew?” The documentary explores the roots of cultural and ethnic identity and the experience of Black Jews and Jews of Colour in Toronto. She is currently in partnership with the Ontario Jewish Archives to produce a portrait series and short film bearing witness to the rich ethno-racial diversity that exists within the Ontario Jewish community.

Respondents

Tatjana Lichtenstein is an Associate Professor of History and the director of the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She graduated with a PhD in History from the University of Toronto in 2009. Her research and teaching focuses on minorities, nationalism, state-building, and war and genocide in Eastern Europe during the twentieth century. At UT, Dr. Lichtenstein teaches courses on modern Jewish history, undergraduate surveys and specialized graduate courses on the Holocaust, as well as courses on World War II in Eastern Europe. Last year, she helped launch a new undergraduate minor at UT in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Presently, Dr. Lichtenstein is working on a research project that explores the experiences of intermarried Jewish and non-Jewish families in German-occupied Bohemia and Moravia during the Second World War.

Nisrine Rahal is a doctoral candidate in History and the Collaborative Program in Jewish Studies. Her dissertation, *A Garden of Children and the Education of Citizens: The German Kindergarten Movement from 1840 to 1880*, examines the early children's education institution as a movement tied to the revolutionary 1840s. Through the Kindergarten movement, she examines histories of revolution, emancipation, religious dissent, and state power. Between June 2017 and March 2018, she was a doctoral fellow at the Leibniz Institute of European History in Mainz. She also held a Leo Baeck Fellowship between October 2015 and October 2016. Her project received support from the Central European History Society, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, and the History of Education Research Library (BBF) of the Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education (DIPF).

Kwesi Thomas is about to start the PhD program in philosophy at the University of Toronto in the fall. His research focuses on examining and comparing how Black and Jewish thinkers have critiqued dominant Western Philosophy of the 18th-20th centuries. Kwesi is also the Editor-in-Chief of UofT's first philosophical zine, ē.

Graduate Student Conference Co-Chairs

Caitlin Hamblin-Yule is a PhD Candidate in Philosophy at the University of Toronto. She graduated with an MSc in philosophy from the University of Edinburgh in 2015. Her primary research interests concern self-awareness and intersubjectivity (primarily in Kant and post-Kantian German philosophy). Caitlin's dissertation focuses on Kant's views of recognition, personhood, and community. In particular, her dissertation aims to show how the concept *<person>* can be correctly applied to discrete individuals in Kant's system.

Gamal Mansour is a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the University of Toronto. He specializes in comparative politics and international relations and is a member of the collaborative program in Jewish Studies. Gamal's dissertation tackles state-business relations in Syria under the Bashar al-Assad regime (2000-2011).

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