

Haverim

A Newsletter for the Friends of the Northeastern University Jewish Studies Program

LORI LEFKOVITZ

Dear Haverim (Friends),

In one of the Jewish Studies Dialogue of Civilizations programs this summer, Professor Simon Rabinovitch and I led twenty-one Northeastern undergraduates on a month-long set of learning adventures to cities in Spain and Morocco that were important locations during the Middle Ages, in the seven centuries before the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. We planned a course of study on the literature and history of this remarkable era, sometimes referred to (not uncontroversially) as “la Convivencia,” or “co-existence,” a period of cross-cultural influence, cooperation, and, also,

We read Moroccan folk tales, visited cathedrals and mosques, and experienced these contemporary Catholic and Muslim countries

through the lens of a complicated shared past in which Jews were a significant community.

My colleagues and I learned a lot from this Dialogue that we will incorporate into the ever-growing Jewish Studies program at Northeastern. The Dialogue culminated a year of programming characterized by complexity and responsiveness to events in the world. Following the massacre in Israel on October 7 and the ongoing war in Gaza, our faculty contributed to public conversations designed to provide some educational contexts for these tragedies. As campuses struggled with questions about the limits of free speech, our annual distinguished Ruderman lecture, this year by Professor James Loeffler, taught us about an historical turning point in America’s free-speech conversation in a presentation about “A Pogrom in Chicago: Antisemitism and the Limits of Liberalism in Postwar America.” And as we grieved over the sexual

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IN SEPTEMBER, I WILL BE SPEAKING ON TWO PANELS, ONE ABOUT DEFINITIONS OF ANTISEMITISM AND ANOTHER ABOUT FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS IN JEWISH LIFE AND PRACTICE.

outbreaks of bloody violence. The innovative Hebrew and Arabic poetry that characterized this period includes expressions of religious piety that live on in contemporary liturgy as well as poetry of unabashed, sensual eroticism. Evidence of once thriving Jewish life persists in distinctive synagogues, some of which are now museums, and in expansive Jewish cemeteries.

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THE ANNUAL MORTON E. RUDERMAN MEMORIAL LECTURE WITH JAMES LOEFFLER

In November, **Professor James Loeffler** from Johns Hopkins University delivered the annual Morton E. Ruderman Memorial Lecture. His topic, ***A Pogrom in Chicago: Antisemitism and the Limits of Liberalism in Postwar America***, examined a 1949 race riot and the civil rights court case that followed. This talk, which would have been an important and interesting one delivered by an engaging speaker under any circumstances, was particularly topical given that it was delivered just one month after the massacre in Israel on October 7th and at the beginning of the ongoing war in Gaza. Referencing the hate-based violence that was on everyone’s mind at that moment, Professor Loeffler also framed the legal and free speech ramifications within the United States, a topic which has become even more important in the months following his lecture.

This lecture was attended by academics both within and outside Northeastern University, and by students, all of whom were beginning to see incidents of antisemitism, and discussions about the power and limits of free speech, erupt on campus. Through describing previous intertwining of these issues in 20th-century America, Professor Loeffler deepened the audience’s understanding of what was happening and what was to come. This was a significant contribution to Northeastern University’s response to the ramifications of the events of October 7th.

Law School Professor **Jeremy Paul** delves more deeply into the court cases referenced by Professor Loeffler, and the contemporary free speech debates on campuses, in his essay on page 3.

The Morton E. Ruderman Memorial Lecture Series is generously sponsored by the [Ruderman Family Foundation](#).



SHARON RUDERMAN SHAPIRO, JAY RUDERMAN, LORI LEFKOVITZ, PROVOST DAVID MADIGAN, JAMES LOEFFLER



Bob Keene

JAMES LOEFFLER



[\[WATCH THE RECORDING\]](#)

The entire collection of the Morton E. Ruderman Memorial Lectures can be viewed on the Northeastern Library Digital Repository Service.

Learning from History

BY JEREMY PAUL

Recent campus protests sparked by the conflict in the Middle East have reminded us of the profound tension between two principles, both central to vibrant universities within a flourishing democratic culture. To ensure free inquiry, faculty and students must have nearly unlimited latitude to speak their minds across a virtually boundless range of topics. Open and robust expression are central to the core of academic life, and universities should encourage community members to both praise and criticize policy choices of the powers that be.

At the same time, free inquiry is worthless if it is restricted to a subset of the members of a university community. Speech that effectively marginalizes one group at the expense of others, or that serves to exclude faculty members or students who belong to disfavored minority groups, has the power to destroy the underlying community that free inquiry is designed to preserve.

University leaders must navigate these conflicting principles almost daily as they endeavor to preserve the rights of some people to speak freely while protecting the rights of others to be included as valuable members of campus discussions. Nor is this struggle limited to universities as the line between free speech and hate speech is perennially elusive.

In recent times, our Supreme Court has leaned very heavily on the side of free speech, finding that only when there is an “intent to intimidate” may a statute constitutionally ban the undeniably reprehensible act of “cross-burning” on the property of another or on public space, *Virginia v. Black*, 538 U.S. 343 (2003). The Court has also held unconstitutional on free speech grounds statutes that make it a crime to display a symbol targeted at groups based on race, among other things, but not on the basis of political ideology, *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377 (1992).

At the invitation of the Jewish Studies Program at Northeastern, noted historian **James Loeffler** delivered the **2023 Morton E. Ruderman Lecture** on November 7 and reminded the audience that our Supreme Court once took a very different stance, one more deferent to the power of government to protect groups against targeted defamation. In his lecture entitled, *A Pogrom in Chicago: Antisemitism and the*

Limits of Liberalism in Post-War America, Loeffler, Felix Posen Professor in Modern Jewish History at Johns Hopkins University, focused on the case of Joseph Beauharnais, the president of a hate group, the White Circle League of America, which played a key role in fomenting violence against Jews and Blacks over a five-day period of mob rioting in Chicago in 1949. Based on his later actions distributing hate-filled literature threatening brutal violence to “prevent the white race from becoming mongrelized by the negro,” Beauharnais was subsequently charged with violating an Illinois criminal statute that prohibited “any person



PROFESSOR JEREMY PAUL

... to ... publish, present or exhibit in any public place in this state any lithograph which publication or exhibition portrays depravity, criminality, unchastity, or lack of virtue of a class of citizens, of any race ... which said publication or exhibition exposes the citizens of any race ... to contempt, derision, or obloquy or which is productive of breach of the peace or riots....”

Leaning into its commitment to free speech, over and above its concern for fostering equality across groups, the ACLU, as Professor Loeffler explained, defended Beauharnais’s free speech rights to distribute literature even when it was filled with hate. And Professor Loeffler showed the audience how Beauharnais’ case, *Beauharnais v. Illinois*, 343 U.S. 250 (1952), ultimately decided 5–4 in his favor, highlighted the longstanding split in our law between those who, as Justice Felix Frankfurter did here, believe government should have the power to punish hateful speech

targeting identifiable groups and those who, as Justice Black did in dissent, contend that the principle of free speech is important enough that we must tolerate even the most hate-filled invective. Professor Loeffler asked the audience to reflect on why Frankfurter's view seems to have fallen out of favor and even to have been lost to our collective memory.

It might interest Professor Loeffler that many of the leading constitutional law casebooks contain the *Beauharnais* opinion and thus Frankfurter's views are not as forgotten as they might seem. But the real answer to Loeffler's question is that those controlling the courts have become increasingly hostile to the idea that speech targeting particular groups can be successfully cabined without trampling on legitimate expressions of a point of view. Those on college campuses more sensitive to the dangers of hate speech, even unintentional slights that buy into longstanding stereotypes, face an uphill battle in turning that around. Learning and research cannot thrive if campus denizens are walking on eggshells

about using the wrong kind of language.

But wherever any campus or legislature seeks to draw the line between protected speech and unacceptable invective, one lesson from Professor Loeffler's erudite lecture should be clear. If speakers are given broad latitude even when their remarks arguably target some disfavored group, then every group on campus must be required to have a thick skin as long as no one crosses from speech into violence. Alternatively, if we are to pay more attention to how hostile speech can cross the line into dehumanizing intimidation then we need to protect every group that might feel ostracized on campus or elsewhere. Ultimately, as Professor Loeffler so eloquently illustrated, the clash between Frankfurter and Black poses challenges for us all, but there can be no excuse for any group to be victim of a double standard.

Jeremy Paul is Professor of Law and former Dean at Northeastern University School of Law

violence perpetrated on October 7, mystified by the relative silence over these crimes, Chloe Pinto, a colleague on our London campus, spoke with us about the intersections of misogyny and antisemitism. The Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week program focused on "women and children," including a stunning lecture by Professor Zoë Waxman about sexual violence during the Holocaust and the slowness of scholars to confront its prevalence. Our enthralling survivor lecturer, Eva Paddock, owes her life to having been on the *Kindertransport* out of Prague. I also had the privilege of being in conversation with Eva following the Boston Jewish Film Festival screening of a moving documentary about Nicholas Winton, the man responsible for saving hundreds of Czech children, including Eva.

A point of light for me was the opening of the new Judaica gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the first such gallery at an encyclopedic museum of the stature of the MFA. I served on the diverse "Table of Voices" that advised Simona de Nepi, the Judaica gallery curator. In coming weeks, I will participate in a conversation with academic colleagues about definitions of antisemitism and, more joyfully, about

my contribution and that of other colleagues to feminist interventions in Jewish life and practice. In these pages you will find links to recordings many of our events.

Please look for our emails as we roll out our program year. We hope to see you at our events, and as ever, we are very grateful to our *haverim*, to the "friends" of Jewish Studies at Northeastern for your support. I want to close by expressing gratitude to our students, who give us purpose and who enrich our work, and to the Jewish Studies faculty, who create a vibrant intellectual community and support our strong curriculum and extraordinary co-curriculum.

Deborah Levisohn Stanhill has been the Administrative Specialist for Jewish Studies for seven years, sustaining the vibrancy of our program in myriad ways with dedication and integrity. This summer she has taken advantage of a professional opportunity outside of Northeastern. We are indebted to her and wish her blessings for success, health, and satisfaction as she advances on her career path.

Lori Lefkowitz
Ruderman Professor of Jewish Studies

Dr. Chloe Pinto speaks about Understanding Gendered Antisemitism

BY ILANA GOLDSTEIN

Dr. Chloe Pinto began her fascinating lecture on gendered antisemitism by reciting the famous monologue from Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, “Hath not a Jew eyes?” She explained that she memorized these words many years ago, which motivated her to study why people have historically seen Jewish people as subhuman. This research then led Dr. Pinto to an even more nuanced question: if Jewish women have historically been labeled as dangerous and unwomanly, how do misogyny and antisemitism interact and create a “duality of dangers”?

After introducing her topic of study, Dr. Pinto highlighted what she considers selected manifestations of gendered antisemitism: religious, racial, figural/conceptual, and epistemic. She explained that even before the conception of modern antisemitism, “there was Eve.” Eve – the first woman, banished from the Garden of Eden and the mother of all women according to the book of Genesis – serves as a cultural mythology of the human condition; the suffering of the world was her fault. This religious moral story evolved during the middle ages to include all Jews as guilty for the sins of Eve, but particularly Jewish women. As Dr. Pinto argued, Jewish women were marked as the “rejected lovers,” incapable of containing their sexual appetites. The perception of Jewish women’s promiscuity enhanced the narrative that Jewish women were dangerous, capable of luring gentile boys and men to their deaths.

The second manifestation of gendered antisemitism Dr. Pinto addressed was the racialization of Jewish people, particularly during the Holocaust. As she pointed out, sexual violence against Jewish women was rampant during the Holocaust, and despite testimonies presented by women, there is very little official documentation



CHLOE PINTO



JUDITH ROSENBAUM, CEO OF JEWISH WOMEN’S ARCHIVE

Jenna Ory

of such events. The third manifestation of gendered antisemitism highlighted figural antisemitism. As she argued, the “Jew” functions as a trope of “otherness.” Through figural gendered antisemitism, Jewish people, and particularly Jewish women, came to represent political and cultural woes, such as capitalism and communism.

The final manifestation of gendered antisemitism, epistemic antisemitism, highlights the societal impulse to victim-blame Jewish women. Dr. Pinto situated her argument in current events; on October 7th women were raped by Hamas militants at the Nova Music Festival in southern Israel. However, as Dr. Pinto claimed, because these women were “Zionists,” their suffering was largely ignored or denied. One massive antisemitic ideology asserts that Jewish people control the media. As Dr. Pinto argued, in the context of gendered violence during October 7th – though rapes, murders, and abductions were filmed and live streamed – the burden of proof is higher for Jewish women. She claimed, “Antisemitism undermines women’s knowledge.” The antisemitic idea that Jews control the media leads to denial of rape and threats of further violence against women.

Dr. Pinto ended her lecture with a message of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. She emphasized that when we see pain, we must speak out and protect one another. She then quoted a passage from the Hebrew Bible: “*Ana Hashem refa na la.*” Please God, heal her.

Ilana Goldstein is a PhD candidate in English at Northeastern University

Israel Studies at Northeastern



BY RIMA FARAH

Dr. Rima Farah joined Northeastern University in July 2023 as a Visiting Lecturer in Israel Studies supported in part by a three-year grant from the Israel Institute. Here, she briefly describes the content of three guest lectures featured in her Modern Israel course and open to the public as part of Northeastern's Israel Studies lecture series.

MARCH 14, 2024

THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT OVER THE ARAB CITIZENS IN ISRAEL 1948–1966: THE OCCUPATION BEFORE THE OCCUPATION?

Professor Arnon Degani, *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

In his lecture, Degani talked about the period of the Military Government, during which Israel placed military rule over the Arabs in Israel, as a case study to disrupt the academic and public binary discussions which claim that Israel either has consistently oppressed and persecuted the Palestinians under

its control or that Israel has overall functioned as a model of democracy. His lecture concluded that until 1967, Israel targeted Arabs in Israel and considered them as a threat to the state. Yet, it also attempted to integrate Arab citizens into Israeli society through

ARNON DEGANI

a protracted project of “subordinate integration.” The Arabs in Israel were engaged in civic struggles, but they also recognized Israel and the premise of Israeli citizenship.

Degani placed his argument about the “discrimination and integration” of the Arabs in Israel in the context of colonial and settler-colonial studies to demonstrate how the subordination of Arabs and their integration into Israeli society were different from those that occurred under European colonial power. He explained that the Jewish-Arab relationship in Israel during military rule is more comparable to

settler-colonial patterns, and the integration of the Arabs into Israeli society was a manifestation of a settler-colonial assimilationist agenda.

In his talk about the military government, Degani focused on four realms:

- The movement restrictions: The easing of the restrictions was a key lever the government held in conducting its policies with the Arab population.
- Labor unionism: The Histadrut, which was created to segregate Jewish and Arab workers and to dislocate Arabs from the Jewish economy, by 1959, provided Arabs full membership.
- Health care and education: The enhancement in Palestinian access to health facilities, doctors, vaccines and to basic treatment, which gradually turned into locally operated clinics, as well as the improvement of the educational system in Arab sector.
- The consciousness of the Arab citizens: Israel attempted to instill loyalty in Arab society. Israeli security created a network of collaborators who reported on “disloyal” behavior and monitored the education system in the Arab schools. However, over time, the state moved towards a more democratic approach, allowing free speech.

Degani showed how the end of the settler-colonial occupation of the Military Government in 1966 was the beginning of a military government over the occupied territories in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israel ended one (settler colonial) occupation and started a (colonial) occupation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. He defined the first as settler colonial because it was practiced by a sovereign Zionist movement and Zionists who left their countries to create a new homeland and had showed intentions to integrate the local Arab population into the new state. He referred to the second as colonial because of the ideology of building settlements and expanding the original state, i.e., Israel, after 1967.



MARCH 27, 2024: MODERN ISRAEL**THE AMERICAN & ISRAELI CONSTITUTIONAL TAPESTRY: PAST, PRESENT, AND CHANGE DRIVEN BY LEGAL REFORM**

Attorney Sagit Attia is an Israeli attorney with a decade of experience at the State Attorney's Office, specializing in constitutional cases before the Supreme Court and Labor Courts.

Attia's lecture was divided into three sections in which she engaged students in various discussions:

- A comparison between the Israeli and American Constitutions: a discussion about the establishment of the U.S. Constitution in 1787, the key principles of separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, the Bill of Rights, and subsequent amendments. These were compared to how religion and politics function in Israel, Ben-Gurion's reluctance to create a constitution, and the development of Israeli laws of human rights and freedom of speech.
- Her personal experience at the State Attorney's office: she talked about how she handled legal cases that pertained to minorities' rights and the freedom of individuals and to human rights, such as land expropriation. She engaged the students in an ethical discussion about Israel's Jewish identity and democratic character and how the laws in Israel protect the principles of human rights.
- She placed the discussion in the context of judicial reforms in Israel, the functions of the current government, and the current war between Israel and Hamas. Students raised questions about how the current Israeli government and its involvement in the war can change the principles of Israeli democracy.

APRIL 4, 2024: MODERN ISRAEL**ISRAEL AND THE NEIGHBORING ARAB COUNTRIES: NEW BUSINESS TRENDS**

Professor Amir Grinstein is an Associate Professor of Marketing at DMSB, Co-founder of 50:50 Startups.

Grinstein talked to the students about the development of Israeli technology and business and its influence on peace negotiations between Israel and Arab countries.

His lecture focused on the following themes:

- The development of the Startup Nation: Israel is among the top 5 countries with the most venture capital funding; has more companies listed on NASDAQ than Europe, Japan, Korea, India, and China combined; Israel is second in the world in R&D spending per GDP; Israel has more than 6,000 registered startup companies; and Israel is the home to the most innovative multinationals of the world. He explained how Israel became a leader in technology due to the support of the government, the lack of natural resources, which necessitates creativity, the culture of the Israeli people that seek creativity and development, military innovation, and diversity in Israeli culture.
- Israel and its neighbors: Threats and opportunities: Grinstein discussed with the students the Abraham Accords and the political shift in the Gulf countries. Iran as a mutual enemy encouraged Israel and some Arab countries to find common ground that will benefit both sides. Israel's technology is a significant factor in the peace process. The joint enemy between Israel and those Arab countries who resist Iran overshadowed the Palestinian case. However, Grinstein discussed with the students the potential consequences of the tragedy of the current Hamas-Israel War. He involved the students in a discussion using the following questions: Can there be reforms with the Palestinian authority? Can there be de-radicalization in Gaza? Can there be a new – more moderate – government in Israel? Can the Palestinians be willing to forge stronger connections with the more moderate gulf countries – e.g., UAE?
- In the last section of his talk, Grinstein talked about his company, 50:50 Startups. His company invests in diverse, socially responsible technology companies which were founded, managed, and equally owned by Jewish and Arab entrepreneurs (Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs/Palestinians, Palestinians). He explained to the students how his company aims at providing the conditions necessary to rebuild a future as a shared society. Students discussed the challenges that this company, or any project that bring the Palestinians and the Israelis together, can face, such as cultural differences, conflicts in the area, different perspectives, and social pressure to not interact with the "enemy."

Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week 2024

This year's Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week focused on the theme of women and children. The first event was an exhibit and accompanying presentation by **Andie Weiner**, the **Holocaust Legacy Foundation Gideon Klein Scholar for 2023–2024**.

Andie researched her family's survival story, which entailed a Dutch family hiding her newborn grandfather. She, along with her mother, traveled to the Netherlands to see the places her great grandmother and grandfather lived during the war, and to meet the descendants of the family who hid him. On her return, Andie created an exhibit that told the story through photographs, artifacts, and letters, some of which she read aloud. As a theater major, Andie incorporated an interactive piece as well, encouraging her audience to create reaction notes when leaving. Andie's presentation was covered twice by *Northeastern Global News*. The story of her research can be found [here](#), and coverage of her presentation [here](#). Read about the project in Andie's own words on p. 9.

Next was the **Philip N. Backstrom Jr. Survivor Lecture** with **Eva Paddock**, who was on the last *Kindertransport* to leave Prague. Serendipitously, Eva's visit to Northeastern coincided with a newly released film about the British man who organized these rescues, Nicholas Winton. Although she was too young to have memories of the train ride, Eva evoked the war-time danger and the kindness of her

British foster family, and recounted the miraculous survival of her immediate family, the heroism and humility of Mr. Winton, and the normalcy of her post-war life. The audience was moved to tears as she finished speaking, and students were encouraged to watch the film, *One Life*. Read coverage of Eva's talk in *Northeastern Global News* [here](#).

The final event was the 31st annual **Robert Salomon Morton Lecture** given by **Zoë Waxman**, a Holocaust historian at Oxford University. In her talk, "Rape and Reproduction in the Holocaust," Professor Waxman discussed the need to listen to the painful survival stories told by women. Sexual violence, she indicated, is not an area historians have wanted to mine, but it does a disservice to history to not ask for and listen to these oral testimonies. Read Professor Simon Rabinovitch's overview on p. 10, and Professor Leff's discussion on p. 11.

Recordings of these talks can be found [here](#).

Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week at Northeastern is sponsored by the College of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Humanities Center. Additional sponsorship for the Robert Salomon Morton Lecture came from the Robert S. Morton Lectures and Events Endowed Fund, the Giessen Morton Lecture Fund and the Giessen Memorial Fund, with co-sponsorship from the School of Journalism and Department of History.



EVA PADDOCK IN FRONT OF A WAR-TIME PHOTO OF HER AND HER OLDER SISTER



ANDIE WEINER IN FRONT OF HER EXHIBIT

JOOP'S STORY: A VEILED RESISTANCE

2024 HOLOCAUST LEGACY FOUNDATION GIDEON KLEIN PRESENTATION

BY ANDIE WEINER

The Holocaust has been a relevant topic throughout my entire life. My maternal grandfather, or Opa, was born in 1944 in Nazi-occupied Netherlands. Not even two weeks after he was born, his mother gave him up and sent him to hide in plain sight with a couple named Jo and Leeni van de Meerendonk as well as their two children Adrian and Teeni. My Opa, Jack (Jopie) Groothuis, spent the first two years of his life living with the van de Meerendonk family in Vught, a town about an hour south of Amsterdam until 1946 when he and his mother were reunited and managed to move to America in 1950. Throughout his life, Opa and his mother, my great grandmother Hennie, kept in close contact with the family van de Meerendonk, always visiting during summers. This connection has spanned eighty years and four generations; I myself am even named for Jo's son Adrian, my Hebrew name is Adah. Throughout Opa's life and subsequently through mine and my mother's life, visits to Vught continued, and the families always made sure to maintain contact. We always knew that we had a powerful story on our hands, a story of bravery and courage worth sharing with audiences all over.

The Holocaust Legacy Foundation Gideon Klein Award, which supports projects about art and artists during the Holocaust, presented itself to me as a key tool to help share my family's story with the Northeastern community. I have always known that telling Opa's story would be an ongoing project in my life, so why not start now? I was fortunate enough to win this scholarship and use the money to take a trip to the Netherlands to see where Opa was raised and to connect with his past. While I was in the Netherlands, I was able to travel from Amsterdam to Vught and put myself in the shoes of my ancestors. In Vught, my mother and I stayed with Joop and Marjo van de Meerendonk, Jo and Leeni's oldest grandson. They took us to the Camp Vught Memorial Museum, where I was able to learn more about the history of the town and the atrocities that took place in the Camp. It was during the trip that I decided to present my project as a museum exhibit. I believed that creating the museum would encourage the audience to keep



DOCUMENTS DISPLAYED AT THE EXHIBIT.

“IF WE FAIL TO RECORD OUR HISTORY, NO MATTER HOW UNCOMFORTABLE IT MAY BE, WE DO A DISSERVICE TO ALL OF THOSE WHO COULD LEARN FROM IT: THERE IS POWER IN EVERYONE’S STORY.”

– ANONYMOUS VISITOR TO EXHIBIT

learning about the Holocaust after the performance and that the museum format would make it easier for my audience to digest the material in the moment.

After our time at Camp Vught, I was really able to start to piece together how I wanted this exhibit to look. The museum at Camp Vught was chronologically laid out; it started out in the early 1940s before the Camp was built, highlighting the indifference in the town and then diving into how everyone interacted with the concentration camp and how ultimately so many did nothing. I knew this model was something I was going to follow with my exhibit. During my trip to the Netherlands, I visited many museums that had ‘exit walls’ where visitors could leave their thoughts.

My exhibit was presented as a chronological story combining Holocaust history and my family's story. As my audience left the exhibit, they were asked to answer a prompt on a corkboard on their thoughts on the exhibit. For my exhibit, I had the audience answer the prompt “What are you leaving with that you did not

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THE 31ST ANNUAL ROBERT SALOMON MORTON LECTURE

Professor Zoë Waxman



KELLEE TSAI, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES, LORI LEFKOVITZ, ZOE WAXMAN, SIMON RABINOVITCH

BY SIMON RABINOVITCH

The **Robert Salomon Morton Lecture** is the keynote event in Northeastern's annual Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week, and each year features a speaker with deep insight into the problems of genocide historically and today. This year we were fortunate to hear from **Professor Zoë Waxman** from the University of Oxford speak about her research on sexual violence during the Holocaust and more recent genocides, such as in Rwanda and Yugoslavia.

Professor Waxman argued that scholarly perspectives on the use of sexual violence during the Holocaust have evolved in recent years. Sexual violence had long been seen as a byproduct of the Holocaust; in fact, however, sexual violence was central to how men and women experienced the Holocaust differently. Women were targeted by the Nazis sexually and reproductively, women were less likely to survive the Holocaust, and every woman in the concentration camps experienced sexual violence. Furthermore, being pregnant meant death for both Jewish mothers and babies – no Jewish children were to be born under the Nazis.

Professor Waxman eloquently pushed us to consider the practical and ethical challenges that scholars face in researching and writing about the centrality of sexual violence during the Holocaust. Practically, scholars only began to take a concerted interest in women's testimony of sexual violence at the moment in time when the number of remaining living survivors was dwindling. Morally, scholars face the challenge of representing women's experiences without reducing their lives to its most excruciating moments. We all, as Professor Waxman stated, have an ethical responsibility to honor both testimony and silence. The broader goal of Professor Waxman's research is a deeper understanding of how gender defined how women experienced the Holocaust. Women and children suffer disproportionately in war, a problem that is still with us. The challenge is to resist the normalization of sexual violence.

Simon Rabinovitch is Stotsky Associate Professor in Jewish Historical and Cultural Studies, core faculty in Jewish Studies, and Chair of the Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Committee

DISCUSSION

BY LAUREL LEFF

Most historians have acknowledged that sexual violence took place during the Holocaust but most have maintained that it was not intrinsic to the genocidal process. Zoë Waxman, Professor of Holocaust History at the University of Oxford, was one of those historians. Waxman says she was wrong.

“Rape is a fundamental, essential element of the Holocaust just as it proved to be in subsequent conflicts,” Waxman said in delivering the Robert Salomon Morton Lecture on April 3 as part of Holocaust and Genocide Awareness Week at Northeastern. “It took me too long to realize this partly because I was being too conservative with the evidence and partly too because I didn’t have the words to speak about it,” she said. “I was silenced by the horror I could barely bring myself to acknowledge.”

The author of *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* explained how her position has evolved in recent years, beginning with “recognizing the Holocaust as a revealing and particularly terrible example of gender in action.” (Men too were subjected to sexual violence during the Holocaust, having been raped, forcibly circumcised and castrated, but not in as great numbers and not with the same intent.)

Waxman offered several reasons why she and most other scholars had relegated sexual violence to a byproduct of the Holocaust. First, race was more important to the Nazis than gender, so historians appropriately gave it greater priority. “Still, the Nazis saw Jewish women as different than Jewish men and persecuted them accordingly by reducing them to their biological functions,” Waxman said. “Indeed, gender operated as a crucial signifier between life and death for Jews living under the Nazis.” Often accompanied by children, possibly pregnant, and perceived as physically weaker, women were less likely to survive the initial selection at camps such as Auschwitz.

Second, limited documentary sources and eyewitness accounts existed to establish sexual violence. “It is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how sexual violence played out during the Holocaust,” Waxman said. In her case, “I was looking for something akin to certainty, but that’s not how historical sources work.”

She offered the example of doctor reports from

the Warsaw ghetto that mentioned Germans’ rapes of Jewish women. Historians have treated the reports skeptically because the victims weren’t identified, and it wasn’t possible to tell “whether these instances were opportunistic or systematic, isolated or widespread.”

Victims’ statements also proved problematic. “Testimonies to such experiences are often hard to come by and fragmentary in nature,” Waxman said, noting the reluctance of victims to discuss sexual violence. “More important still, most victims died without ever recording their experiences.” Even the accounts that exist can’t be corroborated.

“Nevertheless, and this is the crucial point, this makes testimony more and not less precious and important to understand,” Waxman said. Historians shouldn’t give up. “Reading against the grain, pausing to consider silences, historians have found intangible traces of sexual exploitation,” she said.

Nor should historians be deterred by the argument, made by many scholars, that widespread sexual violence likely did not occur due to the

THE NAZIS SAW JEWISH WOMEN AS DIFFERENT THAN JEWISH MEN AND PERSECUTED THEM ACCORDINGLY BY REDUCING THEM TO THEIR BIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS.

Nazi prohibition on sex between Aryans and Jews incorporated into the Nuremberg laws and military codes. “I now understand that this does not mean sexual violence did not happen,” Waxman said, but “rather that the law increased the likelihood of it being concealed.”

She cited the statement of a German soldier during a postwar investigation in which the soldier described his rape of two women in a house in Poland. The soldier noted the Nuremberg laws. Rather than believing the laws didn’t apply or acknowledging he was contravening them, this soldier thought the laws enabled him to engage in rape as “another way of torturing and dehumanizing” the victims. He believed

(continued on page 12)

DISCUSSION (Continued from page 11)

he was “justified in raping Jewish women as part of military endeavors,” Waxman said.

Waxman credited feminist scholarship and the MeToo movement for “a sea change in people’s willingness to talk about rape and sexual violence during the Holocaust.” Unfortunately, that happened after most of the Holocaust victims who could have been encouraged to tell their stories had already died. “It is a painful irony that it is only with the passing of

was the emergence of overwhelming evidence of rape in both the Rwanda and Yugoslavian genocides in the last decade of the 20th Century. Estimates are that between 100,000 and 200,000 Tutsi women were raped in Rwanda in a span of 100 days. Human Rights Watch suggested that every woman who survived experienced sexual violence. Rape was as common during the Yugoslavian conflict and better documented by the western media. “We were able for



IT IS A PAINFUL IRONY THAT IT IS ONLY WITH THE PASSING OF MOST OF THE WITNESSES THAT SCHOLARS ARE BOTH MORE WILLING TO LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF RAPE AND HAVE MORE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SENSITIVITIES OF DISCUSSING IT.

most of the witnesses that scholars are both more willing to look for evidence of rape and have more understanding of the sensitivities of discussing it,” Waxman said.

Hearing Holocaust survivor Ruth Elias speak in Jerusalem helped lead Waxman to the centrality of gender in understanding the Holocaust. Elias arrived at Auschwitz, pregnant. Because she was not showing, Elias survived the selection. After she gave birth in the camp, she and her baby were slated for one of Dr. Josef Mengele’s notorious medical experiments. Elias injected the newborn with morphine to prevent the anticipated torment. For years, Elias wouldn’t talk about what had happened. She finally decided her children and grandchildren needed to know and began speaking publicly.

“Listening to Elias was the moment I started to think ... as an explicitly feminist historian” about women’s experiences in the Holocaust, Waxman said. “Both her silence and her speaking are important, and scholars need to attend to each.”

Another critical moment in her scholarly evolution

the first time in modern history to document rape as an act of genocide in real time,” Waxman said.

That evidence, along with lobbying by human rights organizations and women’s groups, led the United Nations to recognize rape not just as a crime of war, but as an act of genocide. “Sexual violence is not something that happens additionally during war and genocide but it often is used simultaneously with military action or attempted ethnic cleansing,” Waxman said.

Sexual violence, as well as other gender-based actions, need to be incorporated into general understandings of the Holocaust, she said. For example, the sexualized nature of women’s treatment upon being imprisoned in concentration camps should be recognized. Women were forced to undress in front of leering SS men and were then subjected to the indignities of having their legs spread and their pubic area shaven.

Formidable scholarly challenges continue to exist in dealing with sexual violence during the Holocaust, Waxman said. Sexual violence should not come to

overshadow other forms of suffering, for example. Allowing rape to be the worst thing to happen to a woman has the “perverse effect of perpetuating sexual stereotypes and archaic ideas about women’s bodies.” Waxman offered the example of a male partisan who gave a gun to his sisters hiding on the Aryan side of Warsaw and told them to shoot themselves rather than let German soldiers take them. The brother’s message was clear: death was preferable to sexual violation.

It also is important to listen to what survivors are saying without imposing a scholar’s pre-conceptions. “There is often a gap between what historians need to know and what survivors, different survivors, need to talk about,” Waxman said. She recalled interviewing a woman who had had a sexual relationship with the much older farmer who was hiding her. Despite the obvious age and power differential, the women refused to describe the experience as rape and insisted on talking about what she considered the more traumatic aspects of her situation, including starvation.

The most difficult challenge, Waxman said, is not to lose sight of the humanity of the victims, to not participate in their further humiliation. The stigma of rape needs to be gotten over “so women can tell

their stories without forever being defined by them,” Waxman said.

She stressed that in particular photographs should be used cautiously. She recalled being confronted in a Holocaust museum in Norway by a photo depicting a young Jewish woman in a ghetto with her skirt lifted up. It was apparent that no care had been taken in deciding whether to display the photo. In serving as a consultant to two British museums planning exhibits on sexual violence during the Holocaust, Waxman said she has advised the institutions not to include photos.

“We will not meet our ends, either as scholars or citizens, much less as feminists, if we end up unwittingly reproducing the categories of the abuser,” Waxman said. “These women were more than just their bodies, were more than what they were forced to endure.”

She ended her lecture by returning to the survivor who had proven pivotal in her understanding of these issues. “Ruth Elias was more than the result of her devastating experiences,” Waxman said. “She was a person. And if we lose sight of that we will have failed.”

Laurel Leff is Professor of Journalism at Northeastern University, and Core Faculty in Jewish Studies

LEGACY FOUNDATION GIDEON KLEIN PRESENTATION *(continued from page 9)*

come in with.” The opening quote to this essay is one of the many responses that I received.

I was very fortunate to have received close to one hundred responses highlighting the importance of Holocaust education and storytelling. I also had many conversations with audience members after the exhibit presentation. Many told me their own Holocaust stories or how moved they were by the piece. This, to me, made it all worth it. When one person hears a story, they are a witness to history. Sharing stories with my audience and vice versa creates more witnesses and brings more stories into the public eye. With more stories and more known history, there is no room for debate. Especially now that so many survivors are dying or are getting too old to remember their experiences, we as human beings

and as educators need to rely on the stories that we know to keep teaching. I know that sharing this story with the world is something that I will do for the rest of my life. I plan to someday turn it into a children’s book and then hopefully a screenplay. Being a part of this found family and growing up with this history has instilled in me the need to tell stories, the need to spread history so that it is not forgotten. I hope to spend the rest of my life telling this story and to make sure that no one will ever question the validity of my grandfather’s upbringing or the horrors of the Holocaust. To save one life is to save the world.

Andie Weiner ’24, a combined Theater and Psychology major at Northeastern University, was the 2023–2024 Holocaust Legacy Foundation Gideon Klein Scholar.

FACULTY NEWS

Rima Farah, Visiting Lecturer in Jewish Studies, is working on two articles she expects to publish soon. One is titled “Historical and Political Configurations within Cultural Boundaries and Communal Segregations in Israel.” The other is a collaboration examining attitudes of students of Hebrew in Saudi Arabia to authentic Hebrew texts about religion, politics, and culture.

Laurel Leff, Professor of Journalism, published four articles:

“[Why a group of journalism professors attacked a New York Times investigation of Hamas’ sexual violence](#),” *Haaretz*, May 2024

“[Why Is Johns Hopkins Still Honoring an Antisemite?](#)” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 22, 2024, [with Sanford Jacoby]

“[How the Nakba has overshadowed the Holocaust in U.S. media since Oct. 7](#),” *Haaretz*, Dec. 12, 2023 (print edition)

“[The Holocaust and Hamas attacks: history shows facts and truth are an ongoing challenge](#),” *Dallas Morning News*, Nov. 1, 2023

She also gave several presentations:

“[Rescuing Polish Scholars from Nazi Europe](#),” Forum for Dialogue, May 25, 2024, Krakow, Poland

“[How Not to Learn from History: The Holocaust in Press Coverage of the Gaza War](#),” Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, May 6, 2024.

“[Memory and the Ethics of Memorialization](#),” panel moderator, Brandeis University, April 10, 2024.

“[The Callousness of Official Harvard Stopped Me’: The Faculty who Fought for Jewish Refugees and Against the Administration](#),” Center for European Studies, Harvard University, March 21, 2024

“[Mittelman-Berman Education Series](#),” Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Dallas, November 1, 2023

“[Giving Voice to the Dead: Using Records to Tell Holocaust Stories](#),” presenter and moderator, Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, October 11, 2023

Leff was also interviewed on Michael Zeldin’s [That Said podcast](#), on Oct. 27, 2023

Lori Lefkowitz, Director of Jewish Studies, was interviewed several times by *Northeastern Global News*. In October she shared her reaction to the [attack on Israel](#), and a week later, her thoughts on the [possibility of future peace](#). In February she was interviewed about [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#). She was also cited in an October WBZ news story about [Israeli reservists trying to fly home to Israel](#).

Lefkowitz was part of an advisory board for planning the new Judaica gallery, “Intentional Beauty,” at the Museum of Fine Arts. She spoke there in March on “Jewish Feminism: Transforming Ritual Practice,” as part of a series on Exploring Jewish History and Art. Watch the [recording](#).



LORI LEFKOVITZ AND EVE PADDOCK AT BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

In February, [GBH interviewed](#) Lefkowitz about taking Northeastern students to the Arava Institute, as part of their coverage of a fundraising dinner held by the Institute.

In March, Lefkowitz interviewed **Eva Paddock**, the 2024 Philip N. Backstrom Jr. Survivor Lecturer, following the Boston Jewish Film screening of *One Life*, the story of Kindertransport hero Nicholas Winton. Paddock was one of the children Winton rescued.

This fall, Lefkowitz will participate in two events. On September 19, she will be part of an online panel discussing antisemitism hosted by the Center for Jewish Studies at CUNY Graduate Center. On September 27, Brandeis Archives will celebrate her gift of materials relating to Jewish feminism. (See [donation story](#))

In October, **Bill Miles** hosted International Fulbright Scholar **Prof. Mohsine El Ahmadi** of Morocco for a conversation about Moroccan-Israeli relations, entitled “Is There an Ibrahim Behind the Abraham Accords? Morocco, Jews, Israel and America.”

Miles participated in a November conference held by the

Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa, “From Auschwitz to Biafra and Beyond: Africanization of the Holocaust, With a Focus on Nigeria and Cameroon.

Miles participated in a conference on **Indian Diaspora Women and Patriarchy at the University of Hyderabad** in Dec. 2023 (presenting a case study on Indian Israeli women).

Miles published:

“After Israel’s Nationality Law of 2018: Is the ‘Blood Covenant’ Broken for the Druze?” *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 14:4 (October–December 2023), pp. 415–434.

“Holocaust Consciousness, Igbo Jewish Identity, and the Resurgence of Biafran Nationalism in Nigeria.” *Journal of Jewish Identities* 16:1&2 (January/July 2023), pp. 57–78.

“‘Almost a mother tongue’: National identity and Hebrew language acquisition among Druze schoolchildren in Israel.” *Journal of Language and Politics*, April 8, 2024, pp. 1–23

Simon Rabinovitch, Stotsky Associate Professor in Jewish Historical and Cultural Studies, was quoted alongside Lefkovitz, in a [Northeastern Global News](#) article on his reaction to the attack on Israel on October 7th.

Professors Lefkovitz and Rabinovitch participated in a November 2023 series hosted by the College of Social Sciences and Humanities: [Crisis Conversation Series on the War in Israel and Gaza](#). With Mai’a Cross, Associate

Dean of Faculty Affairs, as moderator, they discussed “Jewish History, Jewish Responses.”

Rabinovitch’s new book, *Sovereignty and Religious Freedom: A Jewish History*, will be published by Yale University Press in Fall 2024.

A comparative legal history of Jewish sovereignty and religious freedom, this book illuminates the surprising ways that collective and individual rights have evolved over the past two centuries

It is a common assumption that in Israel, Jews have sovereignty, and in most other places where Jews live today, they have religious freedom instead. As Simon Rabinovitch shows in this original work, the situation is much more complicated. Jews today possess different kinds of legal rights in states around the world; some stem from religious freedom protections, and others evolved

from a longer history of Jewish autonomy.

By comparing conflicts between Jewish collective and individual rights in courts and laws across the globe, from the French Revolution to today, this book provides a nuanced legal history of Jewish sovereignty and religious freedom. Rabinovitch weaves key themes in Jewish legal history with the individual stories of litigants, exploring ideas about citizenship and belonging; who is a Jew; what makes a Jewish family; and how to define Jewish space. He uses recent court cases to explore problems of conflicting rights, and then situates each case in a wider historical context. This unique comparative history creates a global picture of modern legal development in which Jews continue to use the law to carve out surprising forms of sovereignty.

IN MEMORIAM

The Jewish Studies Program mourns the loss of **Professor Jeffrey Burds**, Affiliated Faculty. An Associate Professor of History at Northeastern, among other subjects in European and Soviet History, he taught World War II in Eastern Europe, and pre-pandemic led an annual Dialogue of Civilizations to Eastern European Holocaust sites. He published about Ukrainian nationalism, Soviet counterinsurgency, and the Soviet secret police. His publications include *Holocaust in Rovno: The Massacre at Sosenki Forest, November 1941*; and *Espionage and Nationalism*. Professor Burds was the recipient of grants and honors from IREX, Fulbright-Hays, the Social Science Research Council, the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Council, and the Holocaust Educational Foundation. He was a Charles H. Revson Foundation Fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (2008), and the 2014 Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecturer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



A Class Field Trip with Simon Rabinovitch

BY LIZA SHEEHY

In true Northeastern experiential learning fashion, Professor Simon Rabinovitch's Jewish Studies and History spring course took a trip to Kiryas Joel, New York, to learn and experience first-hand how one Jewish group created a community which utilized the opportunities and values of the United States to reinforce their own identity within the common whole. Below, student Liza Sheehy reflects on what she saw and learned.

This past semester in Professor Simon Rabinovitch's course *Immigration and Identity in the American Jewish Experience*, our class took a day trip to Kiryas Joel, New York, north of New York City. The Kiryas Joel population is almost exclusively Yiddish-speaking Hasidic Jews of the Satmar Hasidic sect. We were fascinated by the idea of a 21st-century American town where there are signs regarding religious modesty, Yiddish is spoken as a common language, and the emergency vehicles – even the dump trucks – are marked in Yiddish. Before our trip, we learned about the town's founding, litigation surrounding zoning and growth, and a case that reached the United States Supreme Court regarding the town's public

school district. These disputes have raised many interesting legal and social questions that relate to our course's core theme of identity in the American Jewish experience.

With all of this in mind, we arrived at Kiryas Joel and met with various town and school district leaders to gain a first-hand perspective. The entire trip was incredibly

AMBULANCE (STUDENTS: LIZA SHEEHY, RACHEL GRUPP, CALLIOPE SILVERBERG, NOAH BEN-ZION)

eye-opening, but I found our visit to the public school most interesting. Most students in Kiryas Joel attend independent Jewish Day schools, though for special needs students to receive publicly funded resources to support their education, they must attend public school. However, it proved difficult for these students to attend other area public schools that do not understand the language and customs of the students' community. So, the town was able to draw a new school district along its borders to open a public school in Kiryas Joel to support these students. The newly drawn district attracted attention and subsequent litigation that culminated in front of

the United States Supreme Court to determine the constitutionality of a public school district drawn for a homogenous religious community. The Court ruled that this violated the Establishment Clause, though with support and changes to New York State law, the school district remains. In discussing this legal battle in the abstract, it was easy to take one side or another. However, upon our visit to the school, all these questions faded away. Amazing teachers and specialized facilities have created a phenomenal program that truly caters to the needs of these students. And there was no religious symbolism in comparison to the other buildings we saw with mezuzahs all around, for example.

Our hosts also graciously took us on a tour of various town resources such as the medical center and emergency service departments. These visits underscored the delicate balance between maintaining religious customs and observance while balancing secular norms and receiving support from those outside the community. The emergency medical services are entirely volunteer, and they have help from outside the town to work on Shabbat. However, when a life is in danger the entire team will respond despite observance of Shabbat. Medical center staff come from outside of the town as well, and some try to learn Yiddish to communicate more comfortably with patients. The medical center also has gender-separated waiting rooms, which interestingly, state and federal regulators prefer because it respects the cultural niche of the community and makes patients feel comfortable. In the medical center and emergency service facilities there are also mezuzahs on every doorpost.

My classmates and I are grateful to Professor Rabinovitch and our hosts in Kiryas Joel for this eye-opening experience which broadened our knowledge and perspective on Judaism in general and the American Jewish experience.

Liza Sheehy is a fourth year student majoring in History, Culture, and Law with minors in Journalism Studies and Spanish.



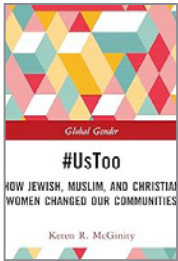
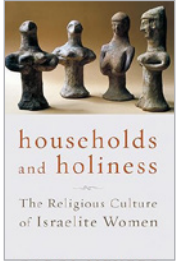
WHAT'S NEW IN THE JEWISH STUDIES LIBRARY

BY BRIAN GREENE

Snell Library has entered the final phase of construction in its multi-year building renovation. Much progress has been made: the 4th floor reopened for student study in the fall, featuring a new silent area; the spring semester welcomed the return of the print book collection to the newly constructed lower-level stacks, and the summer unveiled the newly re-designed first floor lobby and entryway. In early fall, the renovation should be complete with the reopening of all floors, including the new event space, coffee shop, and classrooms. If you haven't yet seen the new spaces, please stop by, as we look forward to welcoming you and supporting your research and teaching in the coming year.

Even in a tight budgetary year, the Library continued to support the acquisition of new materials, prioritizing faculty requests and the materials needed to support the university's curriculum and the instructional needs of the department. Purchasing books in e-format ensures the accessibility of titles to users across the global university system.

A selection of new Jewish Studies titles is available in [Leganto](#). As always, this year's acquisitions reflect the wide interdisciplinary range of the Jewish Studies field. The following represents a small sampling of new acquisitions:

- **#UsToo: how Jewish, Muslim, and Christian women changed our communities** by Keren R. McGinity. Examines the relationship between sexual harassment, gender, and multiple religions, highlighting the voices of women of different faiths who found their voices and used them for the betterment of their communities. 
- **Households and Holiness: The Religious Culture of Israelite Women** by Carol Meyers. Provides a clear and succinct overview of the religious lives of Israelite women, stressing the diversity of religious practices in ancient Israel. 

- **Jewcy : Jewish Queer Lesbian Feminisms for the Twenty-First Century**, Marla Brettschneider, editor. Illustrates the diversity of Jewish lesbian queer experience through a range of topics, voices, and genres, encouraging readers to rethink narrow conceptions of Jewishness. 
- **Kugels and Collards: Stories of Food, Family, and Tradition in Jewish South Carolina** by Rachel Gordin Barnett and Lyssa Kligman Harvey. Celebrates the unique and diverse food history of Jewish South Carolina using stories and recipes from diverse Jewish sources and exploring how cherished dishes were influenced by available ingredients and complemented by African American and regional culinary traditions. 
- **The Counterfeit Countess: The Jewish Woman Who Rescued Thousands of Poles During the Holocaust** by Elizabeth B. White and Joanna Sliwa. Tells the astonishing unknown story of "Countess Janina Suchodolska," a Jewish woman who rescued more than 10,000 Poles imprisoned by Poland's Nazi occupiers. 

If you have any suggestions or recommendations for future purchases, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing your feedback and partnering with you to support student learning and engagement.

Brian Greene, Head of Information Delivery and Access Services, is the Library's Liaison for Jewish Studies on the Boston campus. He can be contacted at br.greene@northeastern.edu.

DIALOGUE OF CIVILIZATIONS: TWO TRIPS

SPAIN AND MOROCCO: MAY-JUNE 2024

In May and June 2024, Lori Lefkovitz, Simon Rabinovitch, and Rima Farah led twenty-one students on a brand-new Dialogue of Civilizations Program to Spain and Morocco. The month-long program, *History and Literature of Medieval Spain and Morocco: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in Uneasy Coexistence*, focused on the complex relationships among different religions between the 8th and 16th centuries, as well as the cultural and literary products of that age. Students and faculty began in Madrid and traveled to Toledo, Granada, Cordoba, Seville, across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tangier, and on to Fes, Marrakesh, Rabat, and Casablanca. They visited religious and archaeological sites, universities, and cultural institutions, heard from local experts, listened to music, tasted cuisine, and came away from the experience with an understanding of the complexities of coexistence and conflict between religious communities.

Read the blog [here](#). This site also has dozens of photos and students' digital history projects.



MADRID



SYNAGOGUE IN FES



ALCAZAR IN SEVILLE

BOAT TO
TANGIER



HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE STUDIES

This summer, students traveled to Germany and Poland for a study of the Holocaust as part of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Dialogue of Civilizations led with Professor Natalie Bormann. The program takes place at primary historical sites – including the concentration camp memorial sites such as Dachau, Sachsenhausen, and Ravensbrück, and the memorial and museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Students engage in depth with the history and impact of the Holocaust and learn about policies and reforms that may contribute to genocide prevention.



VISIT TO THE HOUSE OF THE WANNSEE.

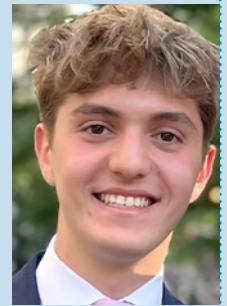


LOOKING AT THE COMMEMORATIVE STUMBLING STONES THAT EXIST THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF BERLIN.

MAZAL TOV TO

Noah Ben Zion '27

winner of the 2024 Ruderman Scholarship. Noah is a History and Political Science Major with a Minor in Jewish Studies. He is interested in Middle East conflict, Israel's role in modern policy, and the historical impact that the Holocaust has had on Judaism over the last 80 years. At Northeastern Noah is involved in Hillel, Student Government, and Alpha Epsilon Pi.



Max Berger '26,

winner of the 2024–2025 Holocaust Legacy Foundation Gideon Klein Award. He aims to develop a website that curates and visually interprets Holocaust poetry by poet



victims, providing insights into their experiences and the unique ways they expressed their trauma, while employing interactive data visualizations and Holocaust artwork to create a dynamic and comprehensive archive of these lost poet voices. Max is majoring in Business Administration and Design and minoring in Jewish Studies. He is a multidisciplinary designer and researcher born and raised in New York.

LOOKING FORWARD...

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
5:00 PM
RENAISSANCE PARK, ROOM 909

“Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa: Struggles for Ethnic Self-determination and Intellectual Revolutions”

Professor Rima Farah will be speaking on the formation and development of the cultural fabric and the political environment in the Middle East and North Africa.

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024
NOON (ZOOM)

Panel: Definitions of Antisemitism

A panel discussion on defining antisemitism with invited scholars, Ken Stern, David Feldman, and Lori Lefkowitz. Sponsored by the Center for Jewish Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. [Register online](#) to attend.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024
11:00 AM
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Jewish Feminist Alumnae Gifts to Brandeis Archives: A Celebration

Brandeis Archives invites you to celebrate new archival acquisitions, created and donated by alumnae Susan Weidman Schneider, Betsy Teutsch '74, Lori Lefkowitz '77, which document the pioneering work each did in foregrounding women in Jewish ritual and scholarship.

THANK YOU

To the faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, and community members who made donations to the Jewish Studies Program this past year. Your support is meaningful and goes toward enriching our programming for students.

Gifts to the Jewish Studies Program may be made through Northeastern University.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
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DIRECTOR
Lori Hope Lefkowitz

617.373.7045
jewishstudies@northeastern.edu
northeastern.edu/jewishstudies

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