

CJS@50

50 Years of Jewish Studies at the GTU



Thursday, May 3, 2018
Dinner Board Room
GTU Library
2400 Ridge Rd, Berkeley, CA

Schedule of the Day

- 8:30am: Welcome & Breakfast
- 9am-12pm: *Jewish Studies, Then and Now*
first session
- 12pm-1pm: Lunch reception
- 1pm-3:30pm: *Jewish Studies, Then and Now*
second session
- 3:30pm-4pm: Coffee break
- 4pm-5pm: *The CJS History Hour: A*
collaborative oral history of CJS
- 5:15pm-6pm: *CJS Builders: Honoring our*
supporters
- 6:30pm: Reception
Easton Hall, 2401 Ridge Rd.,
Berkeley

Conference Schedule

- 9am-10am: Naomi Seidman [Moderator]
Angela Botelho, Alan Shore,
Florence Lewis, Carrie Sealine
- 10am-10:50am: Joshua Holo [Moderator]
Shmaryahu Brownstein,
Robert Galoob, Ron Feldman
- 10:55am-12pm: Susan Aguilar [Moderator]
Rene'e Powell, Jonathan
Homrighausen, Merissa
Gerson, Cara Levin
- 1pm-1:45pm: Deena Aranoff [Moderator]
Charlotte Fonrobert, Alex
Marcus, Leah Macinskas-Le
- 1:55pm-2:40pm: Daniel Matt [Moderator]
Tricia Gibbs, Susan Aguilar,
Pinchas Giller
- 2:45pm-3:30pm: David Biale [Moderator]
Shana Penn, Deena Aranoff,
Eleanor Shapiro

Speaker Bios

Angela Botelho

To briefly introduce myself, I am a Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley California. I owe this status to my post-career move (as a former Deputy Attorney General for the State of California) to GTU's Center for Jewish Studies, where I completed an MA degree in 2013 under the guidance of Professor Naomi Seidman with my Honors Thesis. Since then, I have been preoccupied with writing my book, provisionally entitled *Writing the Self: German Jews and the Persistence of Jewish Identity in Conversion*. As the Jewish daughter of German Jewish refugees, converts to Roman Catholicism in the 1930s, my intense interest in this topic is both academic and personal, as reflected in the book's focus, trajectory, and crossover appeal. In my work, I seek to ascertain the impact of a contested Jewish identity on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the Jewish self. My medium of analysis is the text, written and oral. Specifically, I examine selected historical literary texts, family archives, and the two dozen oral history interviews I conducted with a full two generations of my parents' descendants in order to trace the mediated construction of the Jewish self in a post-conversionary milieu. My inter-genre inquiry is situated at the intersection of history, memory, and life writing (and, in its contemporary guise, the oral history interview) and their combined impact on the complexities of the post-modern, hybrid Jew whose reality defies categorization and the politics of naming.

Alan Shore

Dr. Alan M. Shore was born and raised in New York City. Before returning to academic work at the GTU in 2008, he pursued a variety of career interests including: writer, editor, educator, community activist and performer. In his post-doctoral life, he has lectured on the topics of modern Jewish history and Jewish-Christian relations at conferences in Israel, the Czech Republic and Finland. He has also taught seminars in his home community at the Academy of Lifelong Learning in connection with Western Washington University and at the public library. He and his wife, Kirsten, make their home in Bellingham, WA.

Speaker Bios

Florence Lewis

Following a career in academic management and corporate marketing, Florence took up an active art practice including ceramic interpretations of many biblical subjects, including her beloved cherubim. She is an avid auditor of many CJS classes. Currently she is focused on enlarging and painting medieval Jewish illuminations. She is currently working on a painting of monsters and mishwessen as the denizens of Noah's ark. Her presentation will focus on the biblical cherubim.

Carrie Sealine

Carrie Sealine received her MA in Jewish Studies from the Center for Jewish Studies/GTU in 2016 with a thesis titled, *Making Maccabees into Jews, Making Jews into Maccabees: Reading Jewish Identity through Extra-canonical Texts*. She is now a PhD Student in the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies of Religion with a concentration in New Religious Movements. She is interested in magic, Jewish magic, text, and critical theory and the emergence of post-religious spiritual praxes. Carrie will teach a Newhall class in the fall, *Women & Thelema: A Case Study*, which will interrogate Thelema, a neopagan new religious movement as a decolonial and feminist phenomenon.

Shmaryahu Brownstein

Shmaryahu Brownstein received his M.A. from CJS, and is presently working on a Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

Robert Galoob

Robert Galoob graduated with a Ph.D. from GTU in 2017. His dissertation was entitled *Post Hoc Propter Hoc: The Impact of Martyrdom on the Development of Hasidut Ashkenaz*.

Speaker Bios

Ron Feldman

Ron H. Feldman is a Visiting Scholar at the Graduate Theological Union, where he received his PhD in Jewish history and culture in 2004. His research focuses on the environmental aspects of ancient Jewish calendar texts in the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Rabbinic sources, especially the cycles of Sabbath and the New Moon. Ron is also the author of *Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah*, which began as an independent project under Professor Daniel Matt. Ron also edited *The Jew as Pariah*, a groundbreaking collection of Hannah Arendt's essays on Jewish topics, which was later expanded and republished as *The Jewish Writings*.

Ron has taught at various Universities in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has an MBA from the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley, which qualifies him for his day job as the Chief Financial Officer at the JCC of the East Bay, in Berkeley. His website, which contains much of his writing, can be found at: RONHFELDMAN.COM

Rene'e Powell

Rene'e Powell completed her master's degree in Jewish studies in 2010. As part of her thesis project she had a solo exhibition entitled *Echoes and Fragments*, which expressed her personal reflection on the Holocaust. She teaches Jewish art at the Center for Art, Religion and Education in Berkeley. She has taught several classes for Lehrs Haus in Berkeley and currently teaches for the Reutlinger Senior Living in Danville.

Speaker Bios

Jonathan Homrighausen

In my time at the GTU, I have written a thesis on the Song of Songs and the Qur'an; penned *Illuminating Justice: The Ethical Imagination of The Saint John's Bible* (Liturgical Press, July 2018), on *The Saint John's Bible*, a contemporary illuminated manuscript of the entire Catholic Bible; and co-authored, with David Pleins, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary by Conceptual Categories: A Student's Guide to Nouns in the Old Testament* (Zondervan, 2017). I am especially interested in scriptural conversations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. This fall I am beginning a PhD in Old Testament at Duke University.

Merissa Nathan Gerson

Merissa Nathan Gerson is a freelance writer based on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Her writing on sexuality, disability, Judaism, and the body has appeared in *Tablet*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *Lilith*, *Playboy*, and beyond. She was the inherited trauma consultant to the Amazon show, *Transparent*, gives talks on the inheritance of trauma and memory nationwide, and is currently an ELI Talks fellow.

Cara Levin

I am an East Bay native and an elementary school teacher by training and trade. I came to the GTU in 2010 after the massive teacher layoffs that hit California that year. I wound up keeping my job, but was so enthralled by my initial experience at CJS that I figured out a way to stay enrolled despite my teaching schedule and the birth of my son. Having no background in religious studies, I struggled to narrow down a thesis topic until Deena and Naomi convinced me that my personal interest in tattoo art, and how it appeared in the Jewish community, was a legitimate topic. My project came to focus on modern Jews and their relationship with the traditional Jewish prohibition against tattooing in light of the current popularity of tattooing. While I have remained a public school teacher since my graduation, my time at CJS has deeply informed who I am as a person, a Jew, and a participant in both local and broad discourse. I am grateful and proud to call myself a GTU graduate.

Speaker Bios

Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert

Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert earned her M.A. (1989) and Ph.D. (1995) at the GTU, with David Biale and Daniel Boyarin. She is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University, and in the fall will return to directing the Taube Center for Jewish Studies there. Her first book, *Menstrual Purity: Rabbinic and Christian Reconstructions of Biblical Gender* (2000) which won the Salo Baron Prize for a best first book in Jewish Studies of that year, is a product of the learning at the GTU's Center for Jewish Studies.

Alexander Marcus

Alexander Marcus is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at Stanford University. He holds an MA in Jewish History from the Graduate Theological Union and a BA in Religious Studies from Pomona College. He also serves as the Head of Content and Religious Affairs for the Austria-based Muslim Jewish Conference. His dissertation focuses on the rhetorical dimensions of the Babylonian Talmud with respect to the broader religious, cultural, and political world of Sassanian Mesopotamia. His academic interests include historical and contemporary hermeneutics, formulations of religious identities and boundaries, intersections of religion, science, medicine, folklore, and magic, ethics and the problem of evil in religious discourse, Christian-Jewish and Muslim-Jewish relations, and intersections of religion and power.

Speaker Bios

Leah Macinskas-Le

Leah Macinskas-Le is a PhD student in the Department of Sacred Texts and Their Interpretation at the Graduate Theological Union in New Testament and Rabbinics. Her research interest is the rhetoric of Jewish halakhic debates in the Second Temple period. Leah has a BA in Classics and Critical Theory from McGill University, a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Master of Arts in Ancient Judaism from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Her MA Thesis with honors was titled *The Sociological Implications of Halakhic Debates in the Second Temple Period: Qumran, The New Testament, and the Mishnah*. In Fall 2018, Leah will be teaching a Newhall course on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Tricia Hellman Gibbs

Tricia Hellman Gibbs, MD, co-founded the San Francisco Free Clinic with her husband, Richard, in 1993. A graduate of Williams College and Yale Medical School, Dr. Gibbs was also a member of the U.S. Ski Team and is a mother of 5. She is on the clinical faculty at the University of California San Francisco and Yale University School of Medicine. She received a master's degree in Jewish Studies from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley in 2014, completing a thesis titled *God's Indwelling as Radiant Intellect: An Intertextual Reading of the Guide of the Perplexed*.

Dr. Gibbs has dedicated much creative energy, thought, and support to interfaith studies, particularly those devoted to relations between Jews and Muslims, a focus that has resulted in publication of a novel (*A New Song*, Derusha Publishing 2011), a new major motion picture (*The Rendezvous*, Unified Pictures and Sony Entertainment, Nov. 2017). She is currently at work on her second novel, a sequel to the first involving the great medieval Jewish physician and rabbi, Moses Maimonides.

Speaker Bios

Susan Aguilar

Susan Aguilar is a doctoral candidate in the GTU's Department of Cultural and Historical Studies of Religion. She also received her M.A. in Jewish Studies at CJS. Her area of focus is on Jewish constructions of identity and cultural production in the Medieval and Early Modern periods. During her doctoral program, Susan was a GTU Presidential Scholar and received research grants from the Taube Foundation, the Academic Consortium of Northern California/Jewish Community Center, San Francisco and was awarded the Elka Klein Research Grant by the Association for Jewish Studies. She has presented academic papers at the Medieval Academy of America, the Association for Jewish Studies, the International Medieval Meeting in Lleida, Spain and at conferences in Stockholm and Edinburgh.

Susan's dissertation focuses on Jewish participation in public processions and rituals in the Crown of Aragon during the 13th through 15th centuries in order to explore medieval Jewish identity.

Pinchas Giller

Pinchas Giller was brought up in Cocoa Beach, Florida. He was ordained at Yeshiva University and received his doctorate at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Rabbi Giller has written extensively on Judaism and his field of expertise, Jewish Mysticism or Kabbalah. He has written four books, *The Enlightened Will Shine: Symbolism and Theurgy in the Later Strata of the Zohar* (State University of New York Press, 1993), *Reading the Zohar* (Oxford University Press 2000), *Shalom Shar'abi and the Kabbalists of Beit El* (Oxford University Press 2000), and *Kabbalah: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Continuum Press; 2011). He has also edited *Be'er Moshe al ha-Torah*, by the 19th century maskil Moshe ha-Cohen Reicherson. Rabbi Giller is Professor of Jewish Thought and chairman of the Jewish Studies department of the American Jewish University, Los Angeles.

Speaker Bios

Shana Penn

Shana Penn, MA (European Studies, Jagiellonian University), is the executive director of Taube Philanthropies, in San Francisco, and a visiting scholar at the Graduate Theological Union's Center for Jewish Studies, in Berkeley. Her books include *Solidarity's Secret: The Women Who Defeated Communism in Poland* (University of Michigan Press, 2005) and *Gender Politics and Everyday Life in East and Central Europe* (co-edited with Jill Massino, Palgrave USA, 2009). In 2014, Shana was awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland for both her gender studies scholarship and advocacy of Polish-Jewish relations.

Deena Aranoff

Deena Aranoff is Faculty Director of the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. She teaches rabbinic literature, medieval patterns of Jewish thought, as well as the broader question of continuity and change in Jewish history. Deena is also a community educator and teaches Bible, rabbinics, and Jewish mysticism throughout the Bay Area.

Eleanor Shapiro

Eleanor Shapiro recently completed her dissertation *The Sound of Change? Performing Jewishness in Polish Small Towns* under Naomi Seidman. Ellie's interest in Poland began in 2003 when she first visited the country as a guest of the Polish Cultural Institute in her capacity as director of the Bay Area-based Jewish Music Festival. Her research was supported in part by a Fulbright fellowship in 2013-2014. A lifelong Jewish cultural activist, she has worked for the SF Jewish Film Festival, the Magnes Museum, and the "J", the Jewish News of Northern California. From 1982-1990, she was based in Israel where she worked as a teacher and freelance journalist. In Fall 2018, she will be teaching a course titled Jewish Music Matters at the GTU Center for the Arts and Religion.

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