

# FRANKELY SPEAKING

April 2008

## Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

On Living Two Lives	2
Frankel Fellows Travel to Israel	3
Jews & Urban Photography	4
Celebrating Partnerships	6
President's Challenge	7
Library Hosts Letters to Sala	8
Weinberg Prize Awarded	9
Eighteenth Belin Lecture	9
Day at the Institute	9
Mazel Tov	10
An Interview with Jessica Evans	11

### Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

University of Michigan  
202 S. Thayer St.  
2111 Thayer Building  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1608  
JudaicStudies@umich.edu  
(734) 763-9047



*Morris Engel's, "Sweet Evelyn," New York (1938)  
Courtesy Mary Engel and Howard Greenberg Gallery*

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic>

# From the Director: On Living Two Lives

I have had the pleasure this year of living two lives: as teacher and student. In the first case, I marshal materials, juxtapose them to comment on each other, seek threads to tie them together, and invite my students to explore the paths I've charted and to find their own

interpretations. It is inherently fun, and with good students, such as I have had at Michigan, it is remarkably rewarding. But I've also spent several days each week as a student studying Jews and the city through diverse eyes, from ancient rabbis to contemporary architects, from Hebrew writers to American photographers. The process has been exhilarating. I've learned to think about the spatialized speech of the rabbis and their visions of urban community. I've pondered the dialogues of Yiddish and English languages and letters in photos of chicken markets on the Lower East Side. I've contemplated Jewish café culture in diverse European cities in the early 20th century and considered the competing dynamics of city building in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Such have been the rewards of the Frankel Institute workshops.

What links these encounters is not a single disciplinary perspective, but rather the richness of interdisciplinary study. Jewish studies, it is often said, is inherently interdisciplinary, meaning that to do it well, one must not limit oneself to the methodological boundaries established in the 20th century academy. One must be willing to cross the borders of disciplines, to draw upon multiple approaches to illuminate the subject at hand: Jews, Jewish culture, Judaism, even Jewish history and literature. Such interdisciplinarity invites a readiness to savor the pleasures of being a student; to appreciate what one does not know and needs to learn. It involves a kind of intellectual stretching and reaching out to meet one's new teachers half way.

This year my teachers at the Institute have been an exceptional group. They

have been brilliant and patient; able to speak beyond the confines of their own specialties in order to bring their expertise to bear on our common concern of Jews and the city. Their questions intrigue. One week it is: how can one use modern Jews as a lens to imagine time and space as sacred? Another week:

how did Jews come to inhabit suburban space? And yet another week: how did a tenement come to be seen as an iconic Jewish object? Each question arises out of

a particular research agenda and opens possibilities for alternative approaches. Taken together they illuminate not only some of the dimensions of a centuries long Jewish encounter with cities, but also how interdisciplinary conversation works.

Students of Judaic studies often struggle with the demands of interdisciplinary learning. It is messy and confusing. It seems to lack a core to master. Its openness precludes easy closure. Like a liberal arts curriculum, it takes longer to find one's way. Does one love looking at change across time? Or does one prefer to analyze texts? Does one seek to test theoretical models? Students learn to follow inclinations that give them a useful perspective. Having gained those vantage points, they contribute to the exchange of interpretive scholarship that constitutes Jewish studies.

This year has been an incredible year at the Frankel Institute. It has made tangible the joys of interdisciplinary conversation, letting all of us sitting around the table taste the pleasure of being students once again, learning from an amazingly diverse group of teachers. Under the dynamic leadership of **Anita Norich**, we have shifted easily from student to teacher to student again, relishing the rewards of intellectual fellowship in Judaic studies.

Deborah Dash Moore  
Director, Frankel Center for Judaic Studies  
Frederick G.L. Huetwell Professor of History

*What links these encounters is not a single disciplinary perspective, but rather the richness of interdisciplinary study.*



Above: Deborah Dash Moore with students from Judaic 417: Jews & the City  
Top, Page 3: Aura Ahuvia, Mika Ahuvia and Oren Segal (right to left)  
Photograph by D.C. Goings





**Aura Ahuvia**  
MA, Judaic Studies

Half-way to completion of her degree, MA student Aura Ahuvia is traveling to Hebrew University's Jerusalem Ulpan program for



**Mika Ahuvia**  
MA, Judaic Studies

Back from a short break where she served as a Jewish history teacher at the Jean & Samuel Frankel Jewish Academy of Metro-



**Oren Segal**  
PhD, Near Eastern Studies

Second year PhD student Oren Segal is beginning to write his dissertation – a gendered history of the representation of

## Three Students Travel to Israel as Frankel Summer Fellows

intensive-language study. Having worked with rabbinic literature, Hassidic texts and intermediate-level Biblical Hebrew, Ahuvia hopes to enhance her overall proficiency. Ahuvia's masters thesis addresses current experiences of synagogues and explores ideas for bolstering attendance. After completing her degree, she expects to continue her study by pursuing the rabbinate.

politan Detroit, Mika Ahuvia is heading to Northern Galilee. There she will join the archaeological team of Professor Sharon Herbert, Director of the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, in an excavation at Tel Qedesh. The time spent in Israel will benefit Ahuvia's long-term goals of becoming an archaeologist of Late Byzantine/Early Islamic Palestine.

Tel-Aviv's "Independence Park" in Israeli culture. Built to honor fallen soldiers, this site has become synonymous with homosexuality and the changing nature of Israel's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender community. With little written on the park and most materials on the subject found only in Israel, Segal will spend the summer in several archives throughout Tel Aviv.

## Frankel Center Summer Research & Scholarship

In addition to the Frankel Summer Fellows, the Frankel Center is pleased to support the following graduate students with funds for summer research and study.

**Sol Adelsky**, a Public Policy masters student, is going to Ukraine to study Russian. He will also job-shadow physicians in Jewish-based health organizations.

**Alexandra Hoffman** is off to Tel Aviv to do archival research at Beit Sholem Aleichem.

Five Judaic Studies graduate students will participate in the YIVO Uriel Weinreich Program for Yiddish Language in New York City. Two masters students **Jessica Evans** and **Katie Rosenblatt** and three doctoral students **Moshe Kornfeld**, **Josh Lambert**

and **Ben Pollak** will spend the summer improving their Yiddish language abilities.

Before the YIVO program, Moshe Kornfeld will spend time doing research in Asia. In Nepal, he will attend what is billed as the largest Passover Seder in the world. He will also join Israeli-backpackers as they trek to a variety of sites throughout India.

# Looks Given/Looks Taken: Jews & Urban Photography

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**Looks Given/Looks Taken: Jews and Urban Photography** frames a photographic lineage that took shape within the New York Photo League, where young Jewish American photographers created a new sort of interpersonal street photography in the 1930's. These images evidence a tradition, often identified as the New York School of Photography, still productively engaged by a range of American photographers. Expectations among photographers of the developing New York School were shaped by ambivalences common among young native-born Jews who grew up in the difficult Depression years.

Considered against a range of documentary practices, the emergent discourse of the New York School has been more ethnography than advocacy and more advocacy than reportage. The ethnographer, an anthropologist who studies ethnic cultures, is descended from travel writers and slumming reformers. As participant observers, ethnographic "professional strangers," these New York photographers entangle viewers in the evanescent matrix of street life, the play of body language and eye contact.

Between 1936 and 1951 over a thousand young Jews, many still teenagers, found their way to the Photo League near Union Square in Manhattan. Relatively few of these men and women seem to have been particularly religious. Their ideological commitments were predominantly and sometimes vociferously left wing. Most were native New Yorkers, but some came from out of town as migrants or refugees. The League attracted Jews with both East European and German roots. It became a home-away-from-home where even disputations felt *heimish*. This vibrant working-class space served as a club, school and professional association. Although members might be challenged on grounds of ideology, craft or aesthetics, the League's ethnic Jewish dimensions remained comfortably in the background, present but seldom explicitly acknowledged. Even decades later some alumni bristled to hear the League referred to as a Jewish milieu. Such sensitivity betokens both the importance and fragility of the League's unselfconscious Jewishness.

*These photographers  
of street life, the play*

The Photo League offered itself as a mirror and a window. It promised to help people in communities stratified by class, race, and ethnicity to see themselves as they were. And just as the League tried to mirror people back to themselves, it also worked to open a window so that visitors might perceive the city as experienced by those who walked its streets year round.

League photographers often organized collective projects, supporting one another as they explored neighborhoods they might not otherwise have visited. With their cameras they negotiated among strangers; some of them became adept at instigating and managing encounters. Such representational relationships were twice charged. Modernity requires that individuals practice their performance skills in order to get by in the city. If everyone passes in this sense, wearing faces and clothes for varying occasions, the "Jewish Problem" reveals itself as a normative condition. Young Jews at the Photo League tried to assimilate their city visually by exposing its web of sightlines. The structuring energies of New York School photographs often relate to tensions of looks averted, of eye-lines that drill through pictured space or that spark like crossed tram wires.

Deborah Dash Moore & MacDonald Moore, curators  
Excerpted from the **Looks Given/Looks Taken: Jews & Urban Photography** catalog.

Presented by the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies and Institute for the Humanities, **Looks Given/Looks Taken: Jews & Urban Photography** features nearly 30 photographs from around the country in the Institute for the Humanities Gallery on the first floor of the Thayer Building from March 10 - May 16, 2008. For more information, call (734) 763-9047 or visit <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic>





*entangle viewers in the evanescent matrix  
of body language and eye contact.*



Top: William Klein's "Big Face, Front of Macys" New York (1954)  
Courtesy Howard Greenberg Gallery  
Bottom: Lauren Greenfield's "Mijanou & friends from Beverly Hills  
High School on Senior Beach Day" Will Rogers State Park (1997)  
Courtesy Robert Koch Gallery

**I**n 1970, the Detroit Jewish Welfare Federation awarded three U-M faculty members a grant to establish Judaic Studies at the university. Since then, an extraordinary bond has developed between the university and private donors, building today's Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. That bond continues to grow through the profound

generosity of both long-time patrons and new admirers.

Almost forty years later, the Center is a leader in the field of Jewish Studies, integrated into top departments fueling interdisciplinary dialogue. The Frankel Center houses more faculty and students working in modern Jewish literatures and specializing in Yiddish language than any public university. There is a remarkable concentration of faculty members researching

Rabbinics and ancient Judaism. And the new the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies makes the U-M a premiere site for research and scholarship.

With such assets, it is vital to honor the pioneers who laid the foundation for and remain committed to such a multi-faceted program. It is also a pleasure to highlight a few of the newest friends whose contributions propel the Frankel Center to new levels of excellence.

## Celebrating Partnerships: Honoring Frankel Center Donors

### **Mandell “Bill” Berman**

Mandell L. Berman of Franklin, Michigan has pledged two years of expendable support to fund the first Mandell L. Berman Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Contemporary American Jewish Life. The position is designed to help foster the long-term health of social science scholarship on American Jews. Mr. Berman, who has long been an influential figure in the Detroit Jewish community and has played a critical leadership role with the North American Jewish Data Bank, attended the University of Michigan briefly before completing both an undergraduate degree in economics and MBA at Harvard University. Mr. Berman has previously supported graduate fellowships in Judaic Studies at Michigan.

### **Stephanie and Janet Bernstein**

When Stephanie Bernstein ('72 LSA) of Bethesda, MD and her mother-in-law, Janet Bernstein of Floral Park, NY, established the Michael S. Bernstein Library Archive and Preservation Fund in the Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies in October 2006, they did so because they wanted to honor the memory and passions of Stephanie's husband, Michael Bernstein ('73 LSA), who was killed in the 1988 Pan Am 103 crash over Lockerbee, Scotland. The Michael S. Bernstein Library Archive and Preservation Fund provides needed resources to maintain, extend and preserve the Judaica holdings of the Martin Salinger Resource Center and the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library Judaica Collection.

### **Frances and Hubert “Bud” Brandt**

Frances ('52 LSA) and Hubert Brandt ('53 Law) of Long Beach, New York, have been long time supporters of Michigan, where they met as students. Since that time, the Brandt's have provided support to a myriad of Michigan programs and initiatives, including the acquisition of Judaica for the University Library. Their generosity is currently focused on providing support for graduate students conducting research, study, and language-training in Israel through the Frances and Hubert Brandt Israel Fellowship. Their recent gift for this purpose qualified for the President's Challenge Match for Graduate Student Support.

### **Judy and Simeon Brinberg**

There is no shortage of Michigan families out there—generations of U-M alums who have deep seeded loyalties to the University. The extended family of Simeon ('55 LSA) and Judy Brinberg ranks among the most devoted. Simeon's daughter and son-in-law, Lisa ('84 LSA) and Mark Lundy ('84 LSA), attended LSA. The Michigan legacy will continue when granddaughter, Allyson Lundy, becomes a freshman at U-M. The Brinberg's have been supporting the College throughout the years and this year established the Judy and Simeon Brinberg Scholarship Fund for need-based students pursuing a Judaic Studies concentration. This endowment qualified for the President's Challenge Match, which doubled the amount and impact of the scholarship fund.

## Jean and Samuel Frankel

LSA alumnus Jean Frankel ('36 LSA) and her husband, longtime Detroit-area real estate developer Samuel, and their family have a long and distinguished history of involvement with, and giving to U-M. In 1988, their generous support transformed the Judaic Studies program into a leading academic venue for the teaching of Judaica, renamed the Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies in their honor. Subsequently, they established a chair in Rabbinic literature, helped secure Yiddish language instruction and, most recently, provided a gift to establish the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies.

## Judith and Stanley Frankel

Judith and Stanley Frankel ('63 LSA, '64 MBA) of West Bloomfield, Michigan have generously supported numerous programs within the Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies as well as other U-M departments. Stanley heads Frankel Associates, a privately held commercial real estate development and management firm founded by his father and Judith has been an antiques dealer since 1991 and owns the Antiques Center of Troy. Among their gifts is the Stanley D. Frankel Summer Fellowship supporting student research in Europe, Israel and Latin America. The fellowship was initially established by Judith and subsequently supported by Stanley as well.

## Eva and Sheldon Hamburger

Eva ('96 Engineering) and Sheldon ('77 Engineering) Hamburger of West Bloomfield, Michigan demonstrated their strong commitment to Judaic Studies by providing graduate fellowship support to students in the Frankel Center from 2003 through

2007. The Hamburgers, who also contribute to undergraduate scholarships in the College of Engineering, hosted an event at their home in 2004 to introduce friends and neighbors to some of the Frankel Center's faculty and graduate students.

## Sue and Alan J. Kaufman

Sue ('73 LSA) and Alan Kaufman of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan have established the Alan J. and Sue Kaufman Family Scholarship Fund to support in-state students pursuing a concentration in Judaic Studies. The Kaufmans, whose three children (Emily, Jodie and Daniel) all completed undergraduate degrees in LSA, have also supported graduate fellowships in Judaic Studies at Michigan. Sue is a member of the University's Detroit Major Gifts Committee.

## Marshall M. Weinberg

Marshall M. Weinberg ('50 LSA) of New York City has committed an additional \$100,000 to the Marshall M. Weinberg Endowed Fund in Judaic Studies for Graduate Students, which he established in 2000 in the Frankel Center. He also established the Marshall M. Weinberg Prize in Judaic Studies, an annual award to a doctoral student for outstanding academic distinction and promise, which was first awarded in 1995. Weinberg, who is Vice-Chair of The Michigan Difference National Campaign, hosted a luncheon for Judaic Studies in New York City in 2006. He has also generously funded both the Weinberg Distinguished Visiting Professorship and the Weinberg Fund for Philosophy and the Cognitive Sciences in the Department of Philosophy, as well as summer fellowships in the School of Natural Resources and Environment and an endowment in the Population Studies Center in the Institute for Social Research.

# President's Challenge: Phase Two

**F**ollowing a successful challenge program focused on aid for undergraduates, U-M President Mary Sue Coleman has created a new gift challenge for graduate fellowship support as a concluding phase of the Michigan Difference Campaign. President Coleman's challenge allows donors to leverage their gifts in support of a new generation of Michigan leaders with every \$2 contributed being matched by \$1 from the President's Challenge Fund.

The financial support offered by the Frankel Center is vital in attracting promising new scholars to Michigan. As competition from other universities continues to mount, these funds are a significant factor in maintaining the Frankel Center's distinction as a top destination for graduate education.

The President's Challenge began in the Fall Term 2007 and runs until \$40 million is committed in gifts or the Michigan Difference Campaign ends on December 31, 2008. Donors can extend their gifts over a period of 5 years with the entire

gift being matched as long as the pledge with first payment is received within the designated time of the challenge.

Those interested in supporting Judaic Studies graduate fellowships should contact Martha Luckham, College of Literature, Science and the Arts Development (for a sample of what our graduate students achieve, see pages 3, 9, 10 or 11). For information on the Frankel Center's program needs, visit <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic>.







# Letters to Sala: A Young Woman's Life in Nazi Labor Camps

## Library Bids Good-Bye to Heralded Traveling Exhibit

***"In 1991, as 67 year-old Sala Garncarz Kirschner prepared herself for triple bypass surgery, she opened a painful chapter of her past. For nearly five decades she had shielded her three children from her Holocaust years, never talking about her Polish Jewish family's experiences in World War II."***

After so many years of years of silence, Kirschner shared a worn portfolio with her daughter Ann and explained, "These are my letters from the war." The portfolio contained dozens of personal letters, handwritten postcards, documents and scraps of paper all saved during Sala Garncarz's five years in seven forced labor camps.

From these letters, Sala's daughter Ann Kirschner and historian Jill Vexler pieced together the exhibition ***Letters to Sala: A Young Women's Life in Nazi Labor Camps*** for the New York Public Library. Reproducing the letters and other documents, the exhibit offers one person's extraordinary view of the world events surrounding her.

From February through March of this year, the University of Michigan hosted a traveling exhibition at the Harlan Hatcher

Graduate Library inspired by the original. Drawing from an archive of over 350 items now housed in the New York Public Library's Dorot Jewish Division, the traveling exhibit included nearly 100 documents narrating Sala's personal tragedies and courageous spirit.

"The letters that comprise this exhibition are the true embodiment of how the written word can give life," said curator Jill Vexler. "What emerges from the exhibition is an inspiring portrait of human resilience in the face of unthinkable atrocity."

"The exhibition complements the strengths of the Library, including its extensive Holocaust collections and the University's expertise in Judaic studies and the Holocaust," said Paul N. Courant, University Librarian and Dean of Libraries, Harold T. Shapiro Collegiate Professor of Public

Policy, and professor of economics and of information at U-M. "In addition, the University Library was the first public institution to have access to the Shoah Visual History Foundation archives with more than 52,000 interviews with survivors, witnesses, rescuers, and liberators."

On February 13, in conjunction with the exhibition, the U-M Library hosted, "Whose Story Is It: How an Archive was Transformed into an Exhibition, a Book, a Play & a Documentary Film" featuring New York Public Library curator Jill Vexler.

See the online "Letters to Sala" exhibit at <http://www.nypl.org>.

*Above: Exhibit panels on display in the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library Gallery.*

*Above quote is from "Letters to Sala" Catalogue Introductory Letter by Jill Vexler and Ann Kirschner (New York Public Library, 2006).*



# Weinberg Prize Awarded:

## Josh Lambert Joins List of Distinguished Scholars

Established in 1995, the Marshall M. Weinberg Graduate Student Prize is awarded annually to an outstanding Judaic Studies doctoral student. The impressive list of past recipients includes scholars working in the field throughout the nation.

The 2008 winner, **Josh Lambert**, is a doctoral student in the Department of English Language & Literature who is focusing on Modern Jewish Literatures. As an undergraduate, Josh attended Harvard University where he graduated *magna cum laude* in 2001. Since coming to Michigan, Josh has continued to write, contributing to the *Forward*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Globe & Mail* and the *Jewish Reader* among other publications.

The first Weinberg Prize winner, **Eric Goldstein**, received the Jewish Book Council's 2008 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish

Literature Choice Award for *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race and American Identity*. He received his doctorate in 2000, advised by Todd Endelman, William Haber Professor of Jewish History. Dr. Goldstein is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University.

**Maud Mandel**, another Weinberg Prize winner, received the Herbert Katzki Award from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. She is Associate Professor of History and Judaic Studies at Brown University.

More recent Weinberg prize recipients include **Justine Pas**, American Culture; **Emil Kerenji**, History; and **Jason Von Ehrenkrook**, Near Eastern Studies. Both Justine and Emil expect to complete their doctorates at the end of this term and Jason expects completion in 2009.



Josh Lambert  
Photograph by D.C. Goings

## Belin Lecture: Wenger Impresses at 18th Annual Lecture

At the Eighteenth Annual David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs, historian Beth Wenger explored the ways in which Jews wrote America into Jewish history and Jews into American history.

The University of Pennsylvania professor of history and Jewish studies traced the creation of new renditions of Jewish collective history to the waves of immigrants arriving in the United States in the early twentieth century. These immigrant Jews entered a nation filled with unprecedented freedoms and void of Jewish history.

Professor Wenger is currently director of the Jewish Studies Program at University of Pennsylvania. Her recent book *The Jewish*

*Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America* (Doubleday Press, 2007) was the companion to the PBS documentary of the same name that aired in January 2008.

Founded by David W. Belin, the lectureship serves as a forum to discuss pressing issues such as Jewish faith, culture and family in America. Mr. Belin, a graduate of the U-M College of Literature, Science & the Arts, Business School and Law School, led a distinguished career in law and public service. He served as counsel to the Warren Commission, investigating the Kennedy assassination, and wrote two books on the subject. He was also a founding member of numerous national and international Jewish service organizations.

For more information on the Belin Lecture, visit <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic>. Forthcoming in the Fall is a collection of previous Belin Lectures, *American Jewish Identity Politics*, edited by Deborah Dash Moore. For more information, please email [JudaicStudies@umich.edu](mailto:JudaicStudies@umich.edu).

## Day at the Institute: Study with the Frankel Institute Fellows

The Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies and The Jewish Forum of Metropolitan Detroit have partnered to offer a day of study with several of the Institute's visiting scholars. Following the theme of "Jews & the City," participants will take an international tour with 'stops' in Jerusalem & Sepphoris, Israel; Turin, Italy; Moscow, Russia; and New York City & Detroit, United States.

Hosted entirely in the Thayer Building on the U-M campus, more details and registration information may be found at the Jewish Forum's website:

[www.jewishforum.org](http://www.jewishforum.org)

If you are interested in participating in the Day at the Institute and need additional information, call (734) 763-9047.



In November, **Ryan Szpiech**, assistant professor of Romance Languages & Literatures, participated in a conference, “Jewish Identity in the Late Middle Ages” in Granada, Spain. Szpiech and a team of scholars were awarded a 4-year **European Research Council Starting Grant** for their project, “The Intellectual and Material Legacies of Late Medieval Sephardic Judaism: An Interdisciplinary Approach.” The project was among the top 200 given full funding out of 9000 applicants. The team proposed numerous publications, conferences, and activities around a theme of the Bible in late Sephardic culture.

**Ruth Tsoffar**, associate professor of Anthropology and Women’s Studies, received the **Elli Kongas Maranda Prize for 2007** from the **Women’s Section of the American Folklore Society** for her book, *The Stains of Culture: An Ethno-Reading of Karaite Jewish Women*. In addition, her article, “Dissected Identity: Mizrahi Women, Space & Body, Part II” was published in the

Fall 2007 issue of *Hagar: Studies in Culture, Polity & Identities*.

Toward the end of 2007, **Zvi Gitelman**, Preston R. Tisch Professor of Judaic Studies, released a co-edited volume, *Revolution, Repression and Revival: The Soviet Jewish Experience*. He followed this with an article, “Do Jewish Schools Make a Difference in the Former Soviet Union,” in the winter issue of *East European Jewish Affairs*. Professor Gitelman traveled to Israel in December to lecture at the **Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History** and take part in a conference at **Hebrew University** marking 40 years since the emergence of the Soviet Jewry movement. More recently, he presented *Ethnicity & Terror at Harvard University* and *Was Communism a Jewish Conspiracy?* at **Emory University**. For two weeks in February, Professor Gitelman taught an accelerated course on the politics of modern East European Jewry at the **Central European University** in Budapest. Look for an updated Russian edition of

his book, *Century of Ambivalence*, in March under the title *Bezpokoinnyi vek* (Uneasy Country).

Since January, **Emil Kerenji**, graduate student in History, has been serving as Raul Hilberg Fellow at the **Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies** at the **US Holocaust Memorial Museum**. This fall the former Weinberg Prize winner starts a tenure-track assistant professorship in modern Eastern European history at the **University of South Carolina**.

Also heading to the University of South Carolina is graduate student, **Saskia Coenen-Snyder**. In the fall she begins a tenure-track assistant professorship in European Jewish History. There she will teach the history of the Holocaust as well as courses on Jewish experience in modern Europe. During their time at U-M both Saskia and Emil have been fortunate to work with adviser **Todd Endelman**, William Haber Professor of Modern Jewish History.

## Mazel Tov: Faculty, Student & Alumni Honors

**Deborah Dash Moore**, Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, was seen by millions as a featured historian in the PBS documentary, *The Jewish Americans*, broadcast in January. Professor Dash Moore served as an adviser to the documentary alongside other distinguished scholars. In mid-February she traveled to Jerusalem to present the Samuel Paley Lectures in American Jewish History at **Hebrew University**. Her two lectures, *On Common Ground: Jews & Urban Photography* explored “City Streets” and “Family Albums,” both reflecting her current research as a Frankel Institute Fellow. Later this year, look for an article also based on her current research entitled, “On City Streets,” in *Contemporary Jewry* (vol. 28) from the **Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry**.

Jean & Samuel Frankel Professor of Rabbinic Literature, **Yaron Eliav**, presented “Archaeology & the Study of Talmudic Literature” at **Brandeis University’s** international conference on “Teaching

Rabbinic Literature: Bridging Scholarship & Pedagogy.” In late February, Professor Eliav went to the **Getty Institute** in Los Angeles where he gave a public lecture on “Roman Statues, Rabbis & Greco-Roman Culture.” Professor Eliav has been on sabbatical working on a book project.

In New York, Professor **Anita Norich** participated in a literary tribute, “The Singer Siblings,” at the just opened **Museum at Eldridge Street** in New York’s Lower East Side. Celebrating the works of Israel Joshua Singer and Esther Kreitman, the older siblings of Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer, Norich spoke with other noted scholars including Gennady Estraiikh and Janet Hadda.

**Justin Winger**, a student in the **Judaism & Christianity in the Græco-Roman World** program (in the Department of Near Eastern Studies), has been awarded a **W. F. Albright Institute Junior Research Fellowship** for the 2008-09 academic year. Winger plans to do dissertation research on aspects of the second century

synagogue at the **Albright Institute for Archaeological Research** while living in Jerusalem. Interested in ancient Judaism, Winger hopes time at the Albright Institute will help him understand the form and function of ancient synagogues. There is a significant difference in the design of synagogues, as well as the practice of Judaism, during the 1st and 4th centuries CE, but there is limited scholarship on the centuries in between. Winger hopes to not only understand the physical structure of 2nd and 3rd century CE synagogues, but also the culture of Judaism during this period between the end of Second Temple Judaism and the rise of Rabbinic Judaism.

English graduate student, **Benjamin Pollak’s** Yiddish epistolary novel has been accepted for publication in *Vayter*, a Yiddish newspaper for students produced by the weekly newspaper, *Forverts*. Just finishing his first year at U-M, Pollak’s writing can also be seen on JBooks.com, where his review of Michael Chabon’s *Gentleman of the Road: A Tale of Adventure* is available for reading.



*Before Michigan, my only exposure to Yiddish came through the Judy Blume children's literature I read as a child.*



Jessica Evans  
Photograph by D.C. Goings

Originally from Brighton, Michigan, Jessica Evans, AB '06, is finishing her fourth-semester in the Judaic Studies Masters program and has been focusing her attention on twentieth century Jewish American history. She is currently researching her MA thesis, examining the crisis of Jewish continuity as confronted in the early 1980s by a growing population of American Jewish singles. The Frankel Center recently spoke with Evans regarding her decision to study Judaic Studies and her future plans.

**Q: As an undergraduate what inspired you to concentrate on Judaic Studies?**

A: I began my college career as a clarinet performance major, but found it to be an isolating endeavor - all those hours in the practice room! I took an "exploratory" semester taking classes that I hoped might lead me to a new field of interest. Of these classes, the Judaism section of Religion 201—which teaches a broad overview of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—intrigued me most, and I followed it with more Judaic Studies classes.

**Q: Have you incorporated music into your research?**

A: I was at first hesitant to incorporate music into my Judaic Studies-related research, worrying that my training in classical performance would not be of any assistance to my historical work. However, with encouragement from Professor Anita Norich, I found that my musical training was indeed instructive in the study of klezmer music and the social history of American Jews that surrounds it.

**Q: Beyond an interest in Klezmer, you have spent substantial time developing your Yiddish language skills, both at U-M and external programs. What was your previous experience with Yiddish?**

A: Before Michigan, my only exposure to Yiddish came through the Judy Blume children's literature I read as a child. I have completed two-years of Yiddish instruction

with Vera Szabo. In 2007 I participated in the YIVO's Yiddish Summer Program at New York University. I recently attended KlezKamp, where I was able to interact with a substantial group of Yiddish speakers.

**Q: What is the value in studying Yiddish?**

A: For the historian of Jewish American history, the value of studying Yiddish cannot be understated. I hold myself responsible for knowledge of all pathways of Jewish life, and Yiddish is both a tool and an end for me to do so. On a personal level, I find both Yiddish language and culture delightful for their nuance, humor, and Weltanschauung—world view.

**Q: Why did you choose to get a masters in Judaic Studies?**

A: I chose the master's program after a year of trying to convince myself that I wanted to attend law school. When I admitted that I had little interest in law, I simultaneously realized how much I'd enjoyed my undergraduate studies. I believe my decision to receive my Master's helped to focus my interests and hone my academic skills so that I will be thoroughly prepared for the doctoral degree I plan to begin in Fall 2008.

**Q: What challenges have you faced in your graduate studies?**

A: These semesters of graduate study have been wrought with many challenges — most mundane, like time-management and a burgeoning workload — but others more substantial, like grappling with exposure to higher-level texts and more abstract thought. I overcame these trials by whole-heartedly throwing myself into my work. Early in this program I put in 80-hour weeks, because I believed that intense over-preparation was the only way I could jump the hurdle from undergraduate to graduate studies. Having successfully negotiated that divide, I have found more balance while retaining the important lessons I learned in those first months as a graduate student.



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## Save the Date! 2008 Spring Events

### Deborah Dash Moore

#### Visualizing Street Culture in America

Thursday, April 10 at 12 noon

202 S. Thayer St., Room 2022

### "A Day at the Institute"

#### Join the Frankel Fellows for a Day of Study

Sunday, May 4 from 9:30 am - 4 pm

202 S. Thayer St.

For more details on Frankel Center events visit:

<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/>

Explore our website brimming with events, announcements,  
news & information for students, faculty, alumni and friends

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### Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

202 S. Thayer Street

2111 Thayer Building

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1608

(734) 763-9047

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