During the 1950s, 123,000 Iraqi Jews arrived to Israel where they lived under very harsh conditions. These Iraqi Jews spoke Arabic in the transit camps where they were settled, and Iraqi intellectuals wrote in that language. Their shared Iraqi background united them as they organized support groups to help one another.

They also shared a history with their fellow Israeli citizens. As their opportunities for employment increased, they sought more contracts with the state. Their knowledge of Arabic was used in service of the state, helping it protect its regional and geo-strategic interests. Iraqi Jews, nonetheless, were far from satisfied with their place in Israeli society. They fought discrimination and wrote about their marginalization in a state that aimed to be secular, socialist, and Jewish. They demanded their rights as Jewish citizens in a Jewish state, rights that they were denied. This process produced individuals who loved Arab and Iraqi food, loved Iraqi culture and music, and were devoted to their new, ancestral home, Israel.

About Jeffrey Plevan
Jeffrey Plevan (z”l) graduated from the University of Arizona in 2000. The Plevan family endowed this lectureship in Jeffrey’s memory to promote his values and interests on our campus and in our community. He is fondly remembered by those who knew him as a remarkable person who combined his love of Judaism, Israel, and the University of Arizona with an infectious and upbeat personality and an inner drive to overcome life’s obstacles. In 2018, The Plevan Family created the Jeffrey B. Plevan Endowed Chair in Modern Israel Studies
From the Director

Winter has arrived in the desert. Snow today adorns many of the mountain peaks encircling Tucson, and the “spring” semester is now underway at The University of Arizona. Our students have returned to campus and are eager – sometimes anxious – to begin a new semester with new courses, new professors, and the opportunity to make new friends. That is part of the excitement about being a student at a dynamic university like the UofA. But we are also excited about our alumni, and in this edition of our semi-annual newsletter you will read of a few of our former students who are succeeding in their careers. I have to say that one of the joys of being a professor is watching how the lives of your students take shape after they finish their degrees. They continue to amaze in how they handle adversity and enjoy triumphs. As professors we stand ready to encourage them amidst painful times and to celebrate with them during their successes. Frankly, in my opinion anyway, we professors have the best jobs in the world!

The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies also has a very busy schedule of classes and events for you. Our several campus and community lectures bring internationally-recognized leaders who will enrich our lives and expand our perspectives, precisely what an outstanding university does for its many and diverse constituents. I hope to see you at as many of these events as your schedule will allow.

In addition to all these activities, this spring the Center will be undergoing its formal sixth-year review, an assessment of our people and programs that is mandated for all university units by the Arizona Board of Regents. Since last summer we have been assembling the data for our official report, and I am pleased to say that we have a good many things about which to boast. Perhaps most notable is the extent of our impact locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. I won’t go into the details here, but I can say that our courses are expanding both on campus and online. Our various lectures are now live-streamed on YouTube and Facebook and subsequently made available online for all, and our “Bible and Interpretation” website registers a couple million “hits” per year. The “visitors” to these online platforms come from across the States, Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia, even someone from Malawi has engaged with us, Malawi! So, the Center’s impact is truly international.

I hope you will enjoy this update on a few of our outstanding people and engaging programs. All of this is made possible by individuals like you who have generously supported the Center’s work. Thank you for that support that allows us to fulfill our mission, and please do consider a gift to the Center at this time so that we can continue to impact the lives of our students and all who are being reached by the Center.

With my deep appreciation and warm regards,

Ed Wright, Director
Alumnus Adds Pulitzer Prize to Résumé, Begins Position with USA TODAY

Hannah Gaber is an accomplished video journalist and film-maker, and on the cutting edge of the industry. She was part of the team that won a 2018 Pulitzer Prize in explanatory reporting for the multimedia project The Wall, a virtual-reality storytelling experience that enables viewers to have an “on the ground” experience of what the US-Mexico border looks like in three locations. The Wall takes an in-depth examination of Donald Trump’s border wall propositions. Hannah participated as a photographer and cinematographer on this project.

Hannah recently joined USA Today as a Video Producer. This was following her year in Cyprus on a Fulbright Research Fellowship in film-making, where she made a documentary film on the ways Cypriots from both sides of the U.N. buffer zone interact and socialize without NGO or other official actor involvement. Currently working on developing greater technical skills, Hannah sees a long-term future in film-making. Her advice to students is to focus on the short-term and make the best possible decisions now, while keeping future goals in mind.

Hannah graduated in 2016 with Master’s degrees in Journalism and Middle Eastern and North African Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Judaic Studies. She says her educational experience gave her understanding of the complexities of communities and people, as well as their shared experiences. It increased her instincts of empathy, which are crucial in journalism and film-making.

Judaic Studies Courses Spark Interest/Award in Church History for UA Grad

In October, Center Director Ed Wright received an email from Vanderbilt Divinity School notifying him that a former student, Danielle Oxnam, for whom he wrote a recommendation, recently graduated and received The Elliott F. Shepard Prize in Church History, a faculty-nominated award. At Vanderbilt, Danielle focused on the history of Christianity, theological texts, and Modern Christianity, and was also a research assistant. Her thesis examined narrative prose as an effective device in communicating theology.

Danielle graduated from the University of Arizona in May 2015 with her Bachelor’s Degree, triple majoring in English, History, and Religious Studies. She is a Tucson native and 3rd generation graduate from the UA. During her time at the UA she took the course God and the Problem of Evil with Prof. Karen Borek, an affiliated faculty member with Judaic Studies at the University of Arizona. This was a significant moment for Danielle. The course discussions revolved around a difficult subject with which many people have grappled. During this course she realized a few things about herself. She had great interest in Christian history and thought, and she wanted to reconstruct that open discussion environment as a teacher.

Danielle is in a gap year. She has returned to Tucson from Nashville, where she will work and decide her next step, whether it is graduate school or teaching. Long-term she wants to teach at the college or university level, where she can cultivate meaningful conversations with students through her mediums of English or Christian history and theology.

“Danielle is prime example of one of those students that you know early on will succeed in whatever profession she decides to pursue. I was thrilled at the news of her award, but not the least surprised to learn that she thrived in Vanderbilt’s very rigorous program”, says Ed Wright.
Recent Grad Spends Gap Year Volunteering and Learning in Israel Before Med School

Jarrod Rulney is taking a gap year in Israel before applying to medical programs in the states, psychiatry in particular. He recently graduated (May 2018) from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience and Molecular Cellular Biology, minoring in Judaic Studies.

Jarrod is very busy in a variety of activities. He primarily spends most of his time volunteering at Shaare Tzedek hospital in the nephrology unit where he has met and helped a wide variety of people including Holocaust survivors, the ultra-religious and the secular, Palestinians and Israelis, Muslims, Christians, Mormons, Druze, Baha’i, and others. One of the more interesting patients was about Jarod’s age and came in for dialysis with a military escort. He was handcuffed to his bed during the process as he apparently had attempted to stab an Israeli police officer a few days earlier.

Jarrod, although he is not particularly religious, is fascinated by the history and beliefs of his people. In Israel he frequents different yeshivas (e.g. Chabad, Litvish, “Kabbalistic/Spiritual”, “Orthodox”, and “Just Jewish”) and spends Shabbat at different homes to experience different perspectives of Jewishness. His primary inspiration for embarking on this journey was his experience in Judaic Studies at the University. Taking classes and interacting with the professors, such as Dr. Beth Nakhai, sparked a great thirst for knowing more. Taking courses in Judaic Studies allowed Jarrod to learn more about himself and the influences that helped shape him. When this gap year is over, Jarrod will be ready to tackle the next phase of his life.

Donate at Judaic.Arizona.Edu/ Give
For more information, call (520) 626-5758
Pozez Fine Arts Symposium

**Breath In a Ram’s Horn – To Open in Praise**
**CD Celebration**
*Sunday, Jan. 27 • 7:30 p.m.*
*University of Arizona Crowder Hall*
*$5 (Students) $7 (Senior/Military/UA Emp) $10 Adults*

**Daniel Asia,** Composer & Presenter
**Jeremy Huw Williams,** Baritone
**Ellen Chamberlain,** Violin
**Paula Fan,** Piano

In *Breath in a Ram's Horn: The Jewish Spirit in Classical Music*, composer Daniel Asia talks about the profound relationship between classical music and Judaism and extrapolates to the larger spiritual realm. Also included are performances of Asia’s music, particularly works that are inspired by Jewish texts: Psalms, those of his long-time collaborator poet Paul Pines, as well as Yehuda Amichai, and the universal texts of E.E. Cummings. Pieces performed will include those featured on his recently released and critically acclaimed CD, *To Open In Praise.*

Co-sponsored by the The University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music, The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, American Culture and Ideas Initiative, and the Tucson Jewish Community Center

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**Music of Israeli Composer Andre Hajdu**
**Wednesday, Jan. 30 • 7:00 p.m.**
*University of Arizona Holsclaw Hall*
*Free*

**Ricardo Hegman,** Piano

Andre Hajdu was one of the most important Israeli composers. An erudite scholar of Jewish music, he wrote many works based on Jewish folk music. I had the good fortune to play and conduct his music, and the honor to be his friend. This concert is a tribute to a great composer, teacher, and human being.

**Ricardo Hegman,**
Maimónides University,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Co-sponsored by the The University of Arizona Fred Fox School of Music, The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, American Culture and Ideas Initiative, and the Tucson Jewish Community Center

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**The Other Jewish-Americans**
**Mon., Feb. 4 • 7pm • Tucson JCC**

**Prof. Jeffrey Lesser**  
Emory University

Latin America has had a Jewish presence since the 15th century when Jews fleeing the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition began to settle in the region. Today, there are more than a half-million Jews in Latin America. Some descend from the Jewish “cowboys” who came to South America from the Russia Empire in the late 19th century while others arrived as refugees from World War II era Central Europe. Still more came from the Middle East in the 20th century, as the region de-colonized. All lived in a society that remains predominantly Catholic and has a long history of institutionalized anti-Semitism. Most have lived through difficult economic and political moments. Yet in spite of their minority status, the Jewish-Latin America continues to thrive.

**Jeffrey Lesser** (Ph.D., New York University) is the Samuel Dobbs Professor of History and the Director of the Halle Institute for Global Research and Learning. His research focuses on Latin America particularly Brazil, on issues related to ethnicity, immigration, and race. He explores how ethnic groups understand their own and national space. His work addresses three primary communities: Jewish-Brazilians, Arab-Brazilians, and Asian-Brazilians. In his work he seeks to understand how these immigrants adapted to their new country and how national identity evolved as they and their descendants became Brazilians.

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**Spring Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series:**
**The Diverse Jewish World**

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**The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies  |  Spring 2019 judaic.arizona.edu**
Jews of France & Antisemitism in Europe
Mon., Feb. 11 • 7pm • Tucson JCC

Prof. Günther Jikeli
Indiana University

Jewish communities have been revived and are even thriving in some parts of Europe after the Holocaust, against all odds. However, antisemitic incidents have been on the rise since the beginning of the 21st century in Europe. Many Jews - the majority in some countries - have been personally insulted, threatened, or attacked for being Jewish. While Jewish communities are protected by European governments and laws, fringe groups that have been hostile to Jews are growing and gaining influence in mainstream society. Prof. Jikeli will provide an overview of available survey data and an analysis of European antisemitism from the radical and populist right, the anti-Zionist left, and Islamists.

Günther Jikeli (Ph.D., Technical University Berlin), historian and sociologist of modern Europe, is Visiting Associate Professor at the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, Indiana University. He is a research fellow at the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (GSRL/CNRS), Paris. In 2013 he was awarded the Raoul Wallenberg Prize in Human Rights and Holocaust Studies by the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation and Tel Aviv University.

Cemeteries, Shrines, & Synagogues:
Jewish-Muslim Encounters in Present-Day Morocco
Mon., March 11 • 7pm • Tucson JCC

Prof. Aomar Boum
UCLA

Anthropologists have studied cemeteries as sites where rituals of mourning take place without ignoring that they are also places where individuals and communities construct meaningful personal memories. In Morocco, Jewish cemeteries continue to be places that connect the Moroccan Jewish diaspora to its homeland. Jewish cemeteries and their shrines in rural and urban environments have enabled the state and local Muslim populations to build new relationships with Moroccan Jews. As the number of Jews in Morocco continues to decrease since the last decades of the 20th century, a generation of Moroccan Muslims has created a form of Jewish-Muslim cooperation as caretakers of cemeteries. Boum will explain how Moroccan authorities implemented conservation programs of Jewish heritage spaces and how Jewish-Muslim relations acquired new meanings grounded in Jewish history.

Aomar Boum (Ph.D., University of Arizona) is Associate Professor of Anthropology at UCLA. His anthropological research focuses on the social and cultural representation of and political discourse about religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East and North Africa. He is interested in the place of religious minorities such as Jews, Bahá’ís, Shi’a, and Christians in post-independence Middle Eastern and North African nation states.

Sun., March 17 • 7pm • Tucson JCC

Prof. Alma Rachel Heckman
University of California, Santa Cruz

Until quite recently, the experiences of Jews in North Africa during WWII remained footnotes in a Eurocentric story, commemorated in the popular imaginary only as side stories in the 1942 film Casablanca. This talk goes beyond the romance of that film and explores the wide variety of Jewish experiences in North Africa during WWII, both as refugees from Europe and as victims of Vichy collaborationist anti-Semitic policy.

Alma Rachel Heckman (Ph.D., UCLA) is Neufeld-Levin Chair of Holocaust Studies and Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She specializes in modern Jewish history of North Africa and the Middle East with an interest in citizenship, the politics of belonging, transnationalism and empire. She is currently at work on a book manuscript tentatively entitled, Radical Nationalists: Moroccan Jewish Communists and the Politics of Belonging.
In our digital age, the open circulation of knowledge is instantaneous and open to almost anyone. We value the ideal of transparency and disdain the idea of secrets. However, in the past this was not the case. In fact, the study of and trade in secret or nature’s secrets was a way to attain a higher type of knowledge. The theme of this lecture is the early modern Jewish trade in secrets, a topic that has only recently been explored by scholars.

Dr. Kaye will take us into the intriguing world of Italian Jewish professors de’ secreti (“professors of secrets”), resourceful purveyors of useful and practical knowledge from medicine to business, espionage to weapons, but also of arcane secrets from astrology to alchemy. Taking a micro-historical approach, the lecture focuses primarily on the colorful figure of the 16th century Italian Jew Abraham Colorni, and explores how this multi-talented cryptologist became a well-known professor of secrets who served in courts throughout Europe. This lecture will explore Jewish trade in secrets and its implications for the dissemination of knowledge that led to the Scientific Revolution by 1800.

**Dr. Deborah Kaye** (Ph.D., University of Arizona) is a Lecturer at the University of Arizona with appointments in Judaic Studies, History, and French and Italian, where she teaches courses in European and Jewish cultural history. She also serves on the editorial board of the Religious Studies Review.

During a ten-year-long project of researching the labor migrant community in South Tel-Aviv, Zubida researched the accommodation of labor migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in Israel. The patterns of their accommodation resulted in social conflict, economic competition, and spatial dislocation between newcomers and ‘indigenous’ populations. The confluence of these populations, on the one hand, brought new cultural fusions, economic advantages (which are sometimes exploitations or the result of exploitation), and on the other hand, ‘neighborhood renewal’ or gentrification.

**Hani Zubida** (Ph.D. New York University) is currently the Chair of the Political Science Department at the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College. He is also a well-known media personality in Israel, who anchors and who provides professional commentary on various television and radio shows both in Hebrew and English. His research specializes in immigration, labor migration, identity and general identity, borders and social borders, Israeli democracy, and its socio-economic and political realms.

**Invisible Borders in Israel: How are State & City Authorities Using Migrants to Gentrify South Tel Aviv?**

**Wednesday, Feb. 6 • 4pm**
**UA Hillel • Free**

**Prof. Hani Zubida**
Max Stern Yezreel Valley College

Dr. Deborah Kaye will recount the story of two Jewish brothers, Alphonse and Théodore Ratisbonne. Born early in the 19th century in Strasbourg, Alsace, they went to Rome, converted to Catholicism, and founded a French religious order. In Jerusalem, they established the Convent of the Sisters of Sion by the Arch of Ecce Homo on the Via Dolorosa, the Convent of St. John in Ein Kerem, and the Ratisbonne Monastery in Rehavia.

This is also the story of the Sisters of Sion, who ran girls’ schools and orphanages at both Ratisbonne convents, and managed a medical dispensary serving the impoverished people of Jerusalem. This is, finally, the story of two French women, Sister Marie Godeleine (1879-1960) and Sister Marie Aline de Sion (1911-1971; Ph.D., Sorbonne, 1955), who lived at the Convent of the Sisters of Sion. The story of their exploration of the Arch of Ecce Homo and the Lithostratos, which tradition holds is where Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus, is virtually unknown among archaeologists.

**Beth Alpert Nakhai** (Ph.D. University of Arizona) is an Associate Professor in the University of Arizona’s Center for Judaic Studies. Prof. Nakhai’s specializations include the lives of women in antiquity, and the archaeology of Canaanite and Israelite religion and culture.

**Ecce Feminae: Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa, the Ratisbonne Brothers, and the Sisters of Notre Dame of Sion**

**Monday, Feb. 18 • 4pm**
**UA Hillel • Free**

**Prof. Beth Alpert Nakhai**
The University of Arizona
Raphael Patai Memorial Lectureship Series

Assault Upon the Past: Recent Destruction of Cultural Heritage Sites in Syria, Iraq, & Libya
Monday, Feb. 25 • 7pm
Tucson JCC • Free

Professor Susan Ackerman
Dartmouth College

In this lecture Professor Ackerman will be discussing current projects with ASOR’s Cultural Heritage Initiatives (ASOR CHI). ASOR works with the US State Department and donors to document, protect, and preserve the cultural heritage of war-torn Syria, northern Iraq, and Libya, promotes global awareness and plans emergency and post-war responses.

Susan Ackerman (Ph.D. Harvard) is the Preston H. Kelsey Professor of Religion at Dartmouth College and the President of ASOR (The American Schools of Oriental Research). She is a specialist in the religions of ancient Israel and the religions of Israel’s neighbors (Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan).

About Raphael Patai
Prof. Raphael Patai wrote dozens of books and hundreds of scholarly articles. He was in many respects a model of scholarly productivity. This was combined with his encyclopedic knowledge and learned creativity. Upon his death in July 1996, Patai was memorialized in the Jerusalem Report as a “prolific cultural anthropologist and Jewish and Mideast Studies scholar.” The subjects of his books ranged widely from Jewish history, Biblical Studies, family life in the ancient and modern Middle East, and Jewish alchemy.

Jeffrey Plevan Memorial Lecture

Israeli Babylonians: The Birth of Iraqi Israeli Identity
Monday April 29 • 6:30 pm
Tucson JCC, 3800 E. River Rd. • Free

Orit Bashkin
The University of Chicago

Lecture description inside front cover

Prof. Orit Bashkin (Ph.D. Princeton) is Professor of Modern Middle East History at the University of Chicago. Her most recent book, Impossible Exodus, Iraqi Jews in Israel (Stanford, 2017), was the co-winner of the 2018 Nikki Keddie Book Award, sponsored by the Middle East Studies Association.

About Jeffrey Plevan
Jeffrey Plevan (z”l) graduated from the University of Arizona in 2000. The Plevan family endowed this lectureship in Jeffrey’s memory to promote his values and interests on our campus and in our community. He is fondly remembered by those who knew him as a remarkable person who combined his love of Judaism, Israel, and the University of Arizona with an infectious and upbeat personality and an inner drive to overcome life’s obstacles.

In 2018, The Plevan Family created the Jeffrey B. Plevan Endowed Chair in Modern Israel Studies.
The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies has long possessed a robust outreach program. Annually, we host more than 20 events in the Tucson community in collaboration with community and university partners. These events feature experts on all fields associated with Judaic Studies, presenting research and commenting on current trends and events, as well as musical performances and media events with discussion.

In recent years, the Center has used social media to increase access to its knowledge-based programs. The Center created a Facebook page to create community interaction as well as a YouTube channel to broadcast past events to those who could not attend in person. The Facebook page has grown significantly and has regular interaction with community members and similar institutions from across the country. The YouTube channel has been a tremendous success. Currently, there are over 200,000 views on the channel and nearly 1,500 subscribers, making our social media program the largest among Judaic Studies programs in the country. More than 50 people a day access the channel, a number that notably increases with major international and national events related to the Jewish world or Middle East. The addition of social media to our programming has more than doubled our annual audience from 2,000 to well over 5,000.

In addition to these media outlets, Judaic Studies owns Bible and Interpretation (bibleinterp.com), among the world’s leading scholarly sources for biblical and archaeological news and articles. Bible and Interpretation receives over 2 million visits per year.

Judaic Studies started experimenting with live-streaming through YouTube last season, and this season we have added live-streaming to Facebook as well as YouTube to extend our program reach. We have found tremendous success and more than doubled our event live-audience. Additionally, we have added shorter commentaries from our network of experts on current events. We live-streamed Professors David Graizbord and Gil Ribak discussing the condition of Jewish identity in America. Simon Henderson from the Washington Institute discussed the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey and its ramifications to U.S. interests in the region; and there are more to come.

Due to the Center’s longstanding and robust outreach program coupled with new technology, both in recording and broadcasting, we have developed a unique platform for information access. We firmly believe that what these scholars and experts know and do is important, and we want to inform as many people as possible. This is our mission as a Center at The University of Arizona.
Thank You for Supporting Judaic Studies!

Your donations support engaging programs, academic excellence and community involvement!

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*(of blessed memory)
The reach of scholars affiliated with The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is now worldwide. Those scholars are experts in a host of academic disciplines, and they work in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Mexico. This spring the Louis and Shaol Pozez Memorial Lecture Series will continue our exploration of the experiences of Jewish communities around the world. We will learn about the pressing issues they face and how we might support them. Join us as we learn from and are challenged by internationally-recognized experts on the Jewish communities of North Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Your mind will be challenged, your heart touched, and your view of the Jewish world vastly expanded.