

Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

Programme for Michaelmas Term 2025



Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies
Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HG
Tel 01865 610422
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OXFORD CENTRE FOR HEBREW AND JEWISH STUDIES

THE DAVID PATTERSON LECTURES

Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre
Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG

Thursdays, 6.00 pm (UK time)

All lectures will be presented in a hybrid format which will be accessible both online (see below) and in person in the Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre. Refreshments to follow. All welcome to attend.

Week 1, 16 October

Professor Yoram Meital (Ben-Gurion University)

Beyond Bricks and Mortar: Synagogues and Jewish Life and Heritage in Cairo

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/DQoPjwnUQuy5QkK8Px4NuQ>

Week 2, 23 October

Dr Aadel Shakkour (Al-Qasemi Academy)

Opting for Literalism: Foreignizing Arabic Idioms into Hebrew to Enhance the Prestige of Arab Culture

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/_JqsyinIR22yI0Wibkw-kw

Week 3, 30 October

No lecture. A concert will take place at the Maison Française d'Oxford. Please see further information elsewhere in this programme.

Week 4, 6 November

Dr Emily Rose (Academic Visitor, OCHJS)

A Bleeding Corpse, A Grim Grimm Fairy Tale with Early Modern Shivers: The Dubious Margaret of Pforzheim (1267), A Singular Female Blood Libel

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/AzgkbRIJSs-F3V1LTd-qhQ>

Week 5, 13 November

TBC

Week 6, 20 November

Professor Dr Patrick Koch (University of Hamburg)

TBC

Week 7, 27 November

Professor Susanne Marten-Finnis (University of Portsmouth)

Zamość – an Experiment in Geopolitical Engineering. The Sephardic Community in Late-Sixteenth-Century Poland and the Interplay between Geography, Diasporic Agency, and Trade

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/jNY8lqpwR5mCioGoC4jrTA>

Week 8, 4 December

Dr Amir Banbaji (Ben Gurion University)

Beyond Ornament: The Shifting Role of *Melitsah* in Hebrew Thought from the Middle Ages to the Haskalah

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/ma--NYzkQp--UVgfOonzBg>



LANGUAGE CLASSES

BIBLICAL HEBREW

Weeks 1-8, First and Second Years

Thursdays: First Year: 6.00-7.00 pm

Second Year: 7.00-8.00 pm

All classes will be held via Zoom throughout the term. Please register with the tutor, **Dr Stephen Herring**, at stephen.herring@ames.ox.ac.uk.



MODERN HEBREW ULPAN

Weeks 1-8, Absolute Beginners*, Lower Intermediates and Upper Intermediates*****

Tutor: Mrs Esther Yadgar

Absolute Beginners: Mondays @ 12:30-13:30 UK Time: For Michaelmas Term 2024, please register [here](#). The first class will take place on Monday, 14 October.

***Absolute Beginners:** Learning the alphabet, speaking, reading and writing, continuing simple verbs and short sentences

Lower Intermediates: Mondays @ 14:00-15:00 UK Time: For Michaelmas Term 2024, please register [here](#). The first class will take place on Monday, 14 October.

****Lower Intermediates:** Starting from present and past tenses, simple verbs. We will continue reading short paragraphs and move on to future tense and other forms of verbs

Upper Intermediates: Tuesdays @ 12 noon-13:00 UK Time: For Michaelmas Term 2024, please register [here](#). The first class will take place on Tuesday, 15 October.

*****Upper Intermediates:** Conversational Hebrew; reading of short articles followed by conversation

Please note that these classes progress each term and do not repeat again at the beginning of the next term.

All classes will be held via Zoom throughout the term and last one hour. All are welcome and please note that these classes are free of charge.

Members of the public are advised that in some classes teaching may be adjusted to meet University requirements.

Please contact Ms Priscilla Lange at academic.administrator@ochjs.ac.uk if you have any queries.





BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Wednesdays from 6.00-7.00 pm via Zoom only (UK time)

Tutor: Dr. Norman Solomon

Please note that the first class in Michaelmas term will take place on Wednesday, 22 October 2025 (Week 2)

Interested persons are welcome to join Dr. Norman Solomon's ongoing Talmud class on Wednesdays. The text for study in Michaelmas Term is the Berakhot Chapter 6. The text will be studied in the context of Rabbinic Judaism and with regard to its historical setting. Some familiarity with Hebrew and Aramaic will be assumed. The class will be conducted by Zoom. New students should register their interest directly with Dr Solomon at normansolomon@btinternet.com



OXFORD SCHOOL OF RARE JEWISH LANGUAGES

APPLICATIONS FOR CLASSES BEGINNING IN MICHAELMAS TERM ARE NOW CLOSED.

Please find information below regarding languages taught and their teachers. Click on the language name for class descriptions and more information.

[Haketia](#) (Dr Carlos Yebra López)
[Baghdadi Judeo-Arabic](#) (Dr Assaf Bar Moshe)
[Classical Judeo-Arabic](#) (Friederike Schmidt)
[Judeo-French](#) (Dr Sandra Hajek)
[Judeo-Greek](#) (Dr Julia G. Krivoruchko)
[Judeo-Hamadani](#) (Professor Don Stilo)
[Judeo-Italian](#) (Dr Marilena Colasuonno)
[Judeo-Moroccan](#) (Haviva Fenton)
[Judeo-Neo-Aramaic](#) (Dr Dorota Molin)
[Judeo-Persian](#) (Dr Ilan Moradi)
[Judeo-Provençal](#) (Dr Peter Nahon)
[Judeo-Tat](#) (Dr Murad Suleymanov)
[Judeo-Turkish](#) (Professor Laurent Mignon)
[Karaim](#) (Professor Henryk Jankowski)
[Kivruli](#) (Dr Hélène Gérardin)
[Ladino](#) (Dr Carlos Yebra López)
[Old Yiddish](#) (Dr Diana Matut)
[Yiddish](#) (Dr Beruriah Wiegand)





OXFORD SCHOOL OF RARE JEWISH LANGUAGES LECTURE

Jewish Music Class

The Sound of the *kley zemer* Jewish Instrumental Music until 1800

Mondays, 18:15-19:15 UK Time, Online via Zoom

Tutor: Dr Diana Matut

Although vocal music is intimately linked to the Jewish experience, instruments and instrumental music have been part of Jewish culture since Biblical times. This term, we will explore the history of instruments in Jewish contexts, their usage, prohibitions and surrounding social and religious discussions as well as Jewish instrumental music written until around 1800.

Please find the application form [here](#)

Please submit your completed application form as a Word document to the OCHJS Academic Administrator, Ms Priscilla Lange, by email at academic.administrator@ochjs.ac.uk no later than Wednesday, 15 October 2025 at 12 noon (Oxford time). (You can check time-zone comparisons on sites such as [this one](#)).

Individuals whose applications are successful will be notified on Thursday, 16 October 2025.

The first day of class for this course will be Monday, 20 October 2025 (Week 2 of Michaelmas Term).

The number of places available for this music class is limited. Priority will be given to applicants who are current university students, but other candidates will be considered. This class is free of charge.

If you have any queries, please contact Ms Priscilla Lange at academic.administrator@ochjs.ac.uk





BRICHTO ISRAELI ARTS & CULTURE CONCERT
Sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

Music in Theresienstadt

Concert by
Adam Leites and Gabriel Cassagnes



Week 3
Thursday, 30 October
6 pm

Maison Française d'Oxford
2-10 Norham Road
Oxford OX2 6SE

The program focuses on Jewish composers from Theresienstadt. This camp had a remarkable artistic significance during the war period. It was “home” to major composers, and an orchestra was created there.

The composers featured are Ilse Weber, Pavel Haas and Viktor Ullmann. Though not connected with the camps, Sergei Prokofiev last movement of his Piano Sonata No. 6, conveys the chaos and anguish of a world at war.

After the concert, please join us for refreshments and a chance to meet the performers, Adam Leites (oboe) and Gabriel Cassagnes (piano).

Please find the link for a free Eventbrite ticket here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/oxford-centre-for-hebrew-and-jewish-studies-82417491053>





THE NINTH EDWARD ULLENDORFF MEMORIAL LECTURE

Week 4, Wednesday, 5 November 2025
6:00 pm (UK time)

Professor Matthew Morgenstern
Tel Aviv University

Theodor Nöldeke's *Mandäische Grammatik* (1875) in Retrospect:
150 Years of Babylonian Aramaic Studies

This lecture will be a hybrid session which will be accessible both online (see below) and in person in the Catherine Lewis Lecture Room, Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG. Refreshments to follow.

In order to participate in this lecture online, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/IXJ9UUXSSNSBU0CDZ6avBg>

ALL WELCOME!



THE SECOND SOLOMON SCHONFELD LECTURE

Week 8, Tuesday, 2 December 2025
6:00 pm (UK time)

Professor Zoë Waxman
(AMES/OCHJS)

‘Packing for an Unknown Destination’:
Possession and Dispossession in the Holocaust

This lecture will be a hybrid session which will be accessible both online (see below) and in person in the Catherine Lewis Lecture Room, Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG. Refreshments to follow.

In order to participate in this lecture online, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/2ULvDE0uTKO7XJoMmsARtA>





**PROGRAMME OF THE CENTRE FOR HEBREW
AND JEWISH STUDIES
of the UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

**SEMINAR ON JEWISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE
IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN PERIOD**

Weeks 2-6, Week 8, Tuesdays from 2 to 3.30 pm
Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre
Clarendon Institute, Walton Street Oxford, OX1 2HG

All lectures will be presented in a hybrid format which will be accessible both online (see below) and in person in the Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre (followed by coffee, tea and biscuits in the Common Room, situated in the basement of the Clarendon Institute).

Convenor: Meron Piotrkowski

Week 1, Tuesday 14th October
No Seminar (Jewish Holiday)

Week 2, Tuesday 21st October
Alison Salvesen, *'So excellent and sacred and accurate a translation'*: Hebrew Scriptures in Greek form, from 3rd century BCE – 2nd century CE
In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/Vw7S-DX2TeWiktCJOIjN0g>

Week 3, Tuesday 28th October
Guillermo Velilla Guerra, Beyond Ptolemaic and Halachic Boundaries: Expanding the Linguistic Fabric of the Septuagint Exodus Covenant Code
In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/DMierpLpTzmScRIfrQjmzw>

Week 4, Tuesday 4th November
Thomas Schmidt, Jesus in the Writings of Josephus: Stylistic and Social Networking Analysis
In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/qU0ieENAOzyH6pIZe4CTmg>

Week 5, Tuesday 11th November
Asaf Gayer, New Insights into the Reception and Transmission of the Book of Isaiah in the Hellenistic–Roman Period
In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/ESXrrO21RT2QcCuRN1ntJw>

Week 6, Tuesday 18th November
Sacha Stern, Qumran and the Rabbis: 'Realism' and 'Nominalism'
In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/swrJEn9QRVWJbifmNwd1Uw>

Week 7, Tuesday 25th November

No seminar

Week 8, Tuesday 2nd December

Lindsey Davidson, Orality in Ben Sira and Related Wisdom Literature

In order to participate in this lecture via Zoom, please register at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/1x8aZrgYSmiZYCautPi9Bw>



READING GROUP:

JEWISH MAGICAL TEXTS FROM ANTIQUITY AND THE CAIRO GENIZA

Thursdays, Weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8 from 2 to 3 pm

Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre

Clarendon Institute, Walton Street Oxford, OX1 2HG

Convenors: Meron Piotrkowski and Adi Wiener

This reading group offers an encounter with key types of Jewish magical texts preserved on papyri, metal, clay, parchment, and paper, from Antiquity through medieval Cairo. Together, we will read and analyze these texts, identifying their distinctive features—biblical references, adjurations, magical formulae, angelic and demonic names, magical words and signs, and more. We will also consider the aims these texts were meant to serve, draw comparisons with parallel traditions, and discuss the significance of their similarities and differences.

If you have any queries, please contact Professor Piotrkowski at meron.piotrkowski@ames.ox.ac.uk

All are welcome—no prior language knowledge required.

- 1) **(Week 2) Thursday 23rd October**
Magical Papyri
- 2) **(Week 4) Thursday 6th November**
Metal Amulets
- 3) **(Week 6) Thursday 20th November**
Babylonian Incantation Bowls
- 4) **(Week 8) Thursday 4th December**
Magical Recipes from the Cairo Geniza



INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH HISTORY FROM THE BIBLE TO MODERN TIMES

MANDATORY FOR ALL DEGREES

Weeks 1-8
Wednesdays from 2 to 3pm

Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre
Clarendon Institute, Walton Street Oxford, OX1 2HG

Course Description:

This course provides a comprehensive yet concise overview of Jewish history, tracing its development from biblical times to the modern era. Students will become familiar with key aspects of Jewish society, religious perspectives, and cultural practices throughout history, while also learning about significant events and a variety of sources, including literature, manuscripts, papyri, inscriptions, numismatics, and archaeology. The course consists of eight lectures, each focused on one of four major historical periods (Biblical, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern/Contemporary), delivered by specialists in each respective field.

(Week 1) Wednesday 15th October

Biblical History I: From Israel's Origins to the Fall of the Northern Kingdom [Deborah Rooke]

(Week 2) Wednesday 22nd October

Biblical History II: From the End of the Monarchy to the Return from Exile [Deborah Rooke]

(Week 3) Wednesday 29th October

The History of the Jews in Antiquity I: The Second Temple Period [Meron Piotrkowski]

(Week 4) Wednesday 5th November

The History of the Jews in Antiquity II: The Jews in Late Antiquity [Meron Piotrkowski]

(Week 5) Wednesday 12th November

The History of the Jews in the Middle Ages I: The world of Islam [Judith Olszowy-Schlanger]

(Week 6) Wednesday 19th November

The History of the Jews in the Middle Ages II: Christian Europe [Judith Olszowy-Schlanger]

(Week 7) Wednesday 26th November

The History of the Jews in the Modern Period I: Emancipation-Migration [Peter Bergamin]

(Week 8) Wednesday 3rd December

The History of the Jews in the Modern Period II: Antisemitism-Zionism [Peter Bergamin]





MEDIEVAL HEBREW READING GROUP

Weeks 1-4, 7-8
Thursdays 10:00-11:00 am

In-person: Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre, Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG and **online via Zoom:** see link below.

Convenors: Judith Olszowy-Schlanger and Joseph O'Hara

This reading group is an opportunity to practise reading directly from images of medieval Hebrew manuscripts in an informal setting. No advance preparation is required and all skill levels are welcome!

This year we will look at documents and manuscript excerpts from a broad range of the many genres found in medieval Hebrew texts, including scientific, literary, and legal. We will consider their palaeography, language, and historical context, and learn practical skills for reading unfamiliar handwriting, dealing with damaged texts, and interpreting dates and unusual vocabulary.

There will be coffee, tea and cake from 11am in the Common Room of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies for those attending in person.

In Week 5, there will be no reading group but please join the Medieval Anglo-Jewish Texts and History group which will meet in person from 9am to 5pm on Thursday, 13 November.

Please note that in Week 6 (20 November) the reading group will not meet, either in person nor on line. The reading group will resume in Week 7 (27 November).

In order to attend this reading group via Zoom, please register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/_Cx7LY20T-S0NxNwYgGBGQ



MEDIEVAL ANGLO-JEWISH TEXTS AND HISTORY

Week 5
Thursday, 13 November 2025, from 9 to 5.00 pm

Catherine Lewis Lecture Theatre
Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG

Convenors: Judith Olszowy-Schlanger with Dean Irwin (University of Lincoln)

This group convenes once a term to read together unpublished Hebrew and Latin documents from Medieval England as sources for the history of the Jews before the expulsion of 1290.

ALL WELCOME



SEMINAR ON THE HOLOCAUST AND MEMORY

Weeks 1, 3, 5 and 7

Thursdays, 2.15pm to 4pm **unless otherwise stated****

**Room 207, Clarendon Institute
Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG**

Convenors: Zoë Waxman and William Jones

ALL WELCOME

Week 1, October 16

David Borabeck (St Antony's College, Oxford)

From Temple to Holocaust and Back: The Linear History of Zionism and Its Problematization on Mount Zion

Week 3, October 30

Paola Medina-Gonzalez (University of Warwick)

"Schön ist die Welt!": Amateur Photography on the Front Lines and Documenting Female Impersonation

Week 5, November 13

Rebecca Glasberg (Royal Holloway, University of London)

The Holocaust in the North African literary imaginary

****Week 7: November 27, 4pm (PLEASE NOTE THE TIME)**

Lauren Cantillon (King's College, London)

Sensory memoryscapes: a framework to disrupt truisms of sexual violence in Holocaust Studies

Please note that this seminar in Week 7 will be held at the later time of **4pm**.



MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT SEMINAR

in association with: The Centre for the Study of the Bible, Oriel College

Wednesdays

Weeks 2, 4, 6 and 8 at 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Online via Zoom only

Conveners: Miri Freud-Kandel and Ghila Amati

This seminar series is held under the joint auspices of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies, the Faculty of Theology & Religion, & the Centre for the Study of the Bible. It is designed to create a forum for considering recent developments in modern Jewish thought. In particular, these seminars are intended to provide a forum for discussing recently published books in the field. Please find further information on the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies website at <https://www.ochjs.ac.uk/modern-jewish-thought-seminar/>

Week 2, October 22

Professor Ronit Irshai (Bar Ilan) and Professor Tanya Zion-Waldoks

(The Hebrew University) *Holy Rebellion: Religious Feminism and the Transformation of Judaism and Women's Rights in Israel*

To register and join online please click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/ugO325zzRU6nLcPtTmprAw>

Week 4, November 5

Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Arizona State University)

Earthly Spirituality: Jewish Environmentalism in the Post-Secular Age

To register and join online please click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/1vIn3Cm1SvycatKpg-56SA>

Week 6, November 19

Professor Marc Shapiro (Scranton University)

Renewing the Old, Sanctifying the New: The Unique Vision of Rav Kook

To register and join online please click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/UzNHXk8WRbuLtt7pb2rvDg>

Week 8, December 3

Professor Karma ben Johanan (The Hebrew University)

Jacob's Younger Brother: Christian-Jewish Relations After Vatican II

To register and join online please click here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/DSBaUUK7RaymZ6zxrfrn68A>

All are welcome.



ISRAEL STUDIES SEMINAR

Weeks 2 to 8

Time: Tuesdays, 2:15 – 4:00 pm

Place: St. Anne's College, Seminar Room 5

More details: [All Events](#) | [Middle East Studies \(ox.ac.uk\)](#) and at [OxTalks](#)

Convenors: Yaacov Yadgar and Davidi Borabeck

Members of the University only

Booking required and please register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/YxtP7b9BBA>

Week 2, 21 October

Dr Maayan Nietza

Precarious Labour in Precarious Times: The Impact of the War in Israel/Palestine on Non-Citizen Workers

Abstract:

The scale of atrocities in Gaza since October 2023 has overshadowed less catastrophic issues such as employment and workers' rights. Yet these concerns, while less urgent, significantly affect individual lives, non-citizen workers, and the region's political economy. Key developments include the replacement of Palestinian workers with migrant workers and the adoption of problematic recruitment mechanisms discarded in the past. These developments reflect a tension between three logics underlying the political economy of non-citizen labour in Israel/Palestine: a capitalist, an ethno-nationalist, and a colonial logic. They show how events since October 2023 have shaped the relationship between the three logics. Conflicts around the use of national security rhetoric following the 7 October attack to promote a far-right political ideology and around domestic and international checks and balances that used to offer (limited) protection of workers' rights demonstrate these tensions.

Biographies:

Dr Maayan Niezna is a Lecturer at the University of Liverpool School of Law and Social Justice. Before joining the School, she was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Modern Slavery and Human Rights at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, University of Oxford. Her research focuses on trafficking for labour exploitation, the regulation of labour migration, and the rights of non-citizens. She previously worked at the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants-Israel, the Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, Israeli Ministry of Justice, UNHCR, and worked on issues concerning the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as a lawyer at Gisha-Legal Center for Freedom of Movement.

Dr Yahel Kurlander is a sociologist of labour markets specialising in migration and work. Her research explores the intersections of labour migration, agriculture, law, and health, with a focus on Thai and other migrant workers in Israel. She has published extensively in leading academic journals and collaborates on international research with partners from academia and civil society. Her current projects address the impact of war on migrant workers, agricultural policy, and access to healthcare for marginalised groups. She is a Senior Lecturer at Tel-Hai Academic College.

Week 3, 28 October

Dr Angy Cohen

The Ethics of the Mothers: Field notes on Mizrahi women's religion of care

Abstract:

This talk explores the notion of obligation towards others at the intersection of Jewish feminist thought and the lived religious practices of Sephardi women in Israel. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and her involvement in Arevot – the only Sephardi feminist beit midrash in Israel – Dr Cohen examines how women who engage in practices of blessing, healing, and intercessory prayer construct a moral and spiritual authority grounded in caregiving, vulnerability, and responsibility for others. Focusing on figures such as Tamar, Menuja, and Shoshi – women of Moroccan, Bukharan, and mixed Mizrahi backgrounds – she argues that their everyday religious actions constitute a form of ‘domesticated religion’ (Lévy & Lévy), often overlooked by normative Judaism, yet central to the ethical imagination of Mizrahi feminist thought. These women’s rituals challenge the dichotomy between public and private, legal and affective, tradition and innovation

Biography:

Dr Angy Cohen is a Ramón y Cajal research fellow at the Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean and the Middle East at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC). She holds a PhD from the Autonomous University of Madrid and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and has held academic positions at Tel Aviv University, Concordia University (Canada), and the University of Calgary (Canada). Her research focuses on Sephardi and Mizrahi communities in Israel and in the diaspora – particularly in Argentina – with special attention to migration memories and experiences, women’s religiosity, Sephardi feminism, and the everyday moral experiences of Sephardi women. She combines ethnographic fieldwork with feminist theory and Jewish thought to explore questions of tradition, care, and ethics and subjectivity.

Week 4, 4 November

Professor Haim Yacobi

From Separation to a Shared Homeland: Notes on Settler-Colonial Urbanism in Israel/Palestine

Abstract:

In this presentation, Professor Yacobi aims to discuss settler colonial urbanism(s) in Palestine/Israel, while exploring the different spatial and political typologies developed during the last few decades. He will discuss how colonial planning has been used as a tool of social, demographic, and spatial control and how Palestinian claims for the right to the city are meaningful political forms of protest. The presentation will refer to Palestinian cities (such as Lydda) that were transformed into ‘Jewish-Arab mixed cities’, to new ‘Jewish cities’ that are going through a process of ‘Arabisation’, to Jerusalem as a neo-apartheid city, and

to the current spatioicide of Gaza. The argument to be articulated in this talk is that moving from the paradigm of separation into a shared homeland is the only sustainable approach which will lead to a shared future.

Biography:

Haim Yacobi is a Professor of Development Planning at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit. With a background in architecture, he specialised in critical urban studies and urban health. Between 2006-2007 he was a Fulbright Post-doctorate fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of California, Berkeley, and then joined the Department of Politics and Government at BGU. For the years 2010-2012 he received a Marie Curie Grant which has enabled him to work at Cambridge University, where he conducted a research project that dealt with contested cities. The main issues that stand in the center of his research interest in relation to the urban space are social justice, the politics of identity, urban health, and colonial planning. In 1999 he formulated the idea of establishing 'Bimkom - Planning in Human Rights' an NGO that deals with human rights and planning in Israel/Palestine and was its co-founder. Currently he holds (together with Prof Omar Dajani) a UKRI ESRC grant: 'The Shared Homeland Paradigm: Reimagining Space, Rights and Partnership in Palestine-Israel'.

Week 5, 11 November

Dr Shlomo Fischer

Is the Gaza War the End or the Beginning of Romantic Religious Zionism?

Abstract:

In this lecture, Dr Fischer presents Religious Zionism, the right-wing religious nationalist movement, which despite representing 12-16% of Israel's population, has a prominent and influential place in the current 'fully' right-wing government. In contradistinction to previous research, he argues that this movement, which initiated and led the settlement movement in the West Bank and the Golan Heights, is best understood not as a fundamentalist movement, but as a religious romantic nationalist enterprise that at its philosophical core emphasises modern notions, such as self-expression and self-realisation. Thus, not only does it adopt important components of the modern cultural programme, it also presents a religious theory of modernity. He briefly examines how opposing religious Zionist sub-streams developed in response to the political and cultural challenges that the broader Israeli society and government posed. Finally, Dr Fischer discusses the impact of recent developments: 1) the increasing acceptance of religious nationalism among the general Israeli public; and 2) the extensive Religious Zionist participation (and sacrifice) in the prosecution of the Israel-Hamas war.

Biography:

Dr Shlomo Fischer is a Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute in Jerusalem. Until his retirement, he taught sociology in the School of Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has published extensively on religious Zionism and the Shas movement. His research interests include religion in Israel and its intersections with politics and class, the American Jewish community, and the relations of religious and civic education. His book, *Expressivist Religious Zionism: Modernity and the Sacred in a Nationalist Movement* was published in December 2024.

Week 6, 18 November

Professor Sarab Abu Rabia-Queder

Intersecting Penalties: Reproducing Inequality Among Palestinian Middle-Class Women

Abstract:

This study explores the mechanisms underlying the paradox of marginality experienced by middle-class Palestinian professional women in the Israeli labour market through an intersectional analysis of their everyday professional lives. It demonstrates that this paradox—characterised by their marginalisation despite possessing high educational capital comparable to that of highly educated Jewish (both men and women) and Palestinian male professionals—is perpetuated through biopolitical modes of power.

The findings reveal that when their professional capital intersects with other axes of power such as ethnicity/racism, gender, religious norms, and tribal affiliations, it fails to receive recognition or legitimacy from colleagues and clients, thereby reinforcing intersectional inequalities.

Biography:

Professor Sarab Abu Rabia-Queder is an Associate Professor at the school of Education at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. In her studies, she focuses on the mechanisms of control, racialisation and marginalisation of minority groups in the fields of higher education, employment and the family. She has published many papers in journals such as *Sociology*, *British Journal of Sociology* and *Current Sociology* and the winner of several competitive grants and prizes, such as the Toronto Prize for Excellent Young Academic Scholars, Businesses for Peace, and was chosen as the sociologist of the month (July) for *Current Sociology* journal (2019). In May 2024, she received an honorary doctorate from Weizman Institute of Science for promoting epistemic justice for minority groups. Alongside her academic pursuits, Professor Abu-Rabia-Queder is also a feminist activist. She serves as a board member in several NGO's and academic committees. Her main activity focuses on issues central to Palestinian women's agenda such as access to education, combating polygamy, and improving employment opportunities.

Week 7, 25 November

Dr Adi Sapir

Student volunteering in historical perspective: debates and tensions in Israeli higher education

Abstract:

In this talk, Dr Sapir will present her research on the historical development of student volunteering in Israeli higher education and its current implications. Based on archival analysis of two elite universities over four decades, the study identifies three key debates surrounding student volunteering: over the purpose of volunteering; over its mandatory nature; and over the awarding of academic credit.

Challenging current critiques which focus on tensions embedded in the current neo-liberal climate, the historical lens reveals that key features – such as individualisation, control mechanisms, and demands for compensation – were shaped in earlier decades. These debates reflect broader questions about the shifting boundaries of the academic mission, student equity, and academic autonomy. Connecting this study to ongoing research on widening participation in Israeli higher education, she argues that mandatory volunteering requirements tied to need-based grants function as mechanisms of disciplinary poverty governance, reproducing inequality through disciplinary practices.

Biography:

Dr Adi Sapir is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Leadership and Policy in Education at the University of Haifa. Her research focuses on higher education and its social, cultural, historical, and organisational contexts. She has studied early academic entrepreneurship, the evolving meanings of basic and applied research, and the commodification of universities' public roles. Her current work examines equity in higher education, focusing on the experiences and challenges of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and the institutional barriers they encounter.

Week 8, 2 December

Dr Yair Wallach

The Ottoman Production of Ashkenazi Identity

Abstract:

The grouping of Yiddish speaking Jews, of various origin countries in Central and Eastern Europe, into a single overarching identity of Ashkenazim, was meaningful particularly in multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Jewish contexts. This seminar examines the shaping of the Ashkenazi community in Ottoman Jerusalem, as facilitated by Ottoman legal and political context. Ottoman recognition of Ashkenazim as a corporate identity was crucial to its emergence and continuity.

Biography:

Dr Yair Wallach is a Reader (Associate Professor) in Israeli Studies, and the head of the SOAS Centre for Jewish Studies. He has written on urban and material culture in modern Palestine/Israel, and more recently on race and migration. His book *A City in Fragments: Urban Text in Modern Jerusalem* (Stanford University Press, 2020) won the Jordan Schnitzer book prize in 2022.



PROGRAMME OF THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

BIBLICAL HEBREW READING GROUP

Weeks 2-8 (no sessions in Week 1)

Mondays, 12:00-13:00

Seminar Room B, Faculty of Theology and Religion, Schwarzman Centre Level 3

Convened by Cian Power

Week 1, 13 October

No session

Week 2, 20 October

Danilo Verde (Cambridge): Lamentations 3:1-11

Week 3, 27 October

Christl Maier (Marburg): Jeremiah 4:13-22

Week 4, 3 November

David Janzen (Durham): 2 Chronicles 35:20-27; 2 Kings 23:28-30 (cf. 2 Chron 18)

Week 5, 10 November

Rebekah Van Sant (Oxford): Esther 4:12-17, Genesis 45:1-5

Week 6, 17 November

Cian Power (Oxford): Obadiah 8-18

Week 7, 24 November

Rosanne Liebermann (Aarhus): Psalm 22:7-16

Week 8, 1 December

Alexiana Fry (Copenhagen): Esther 1:8; 3:5-6, 13; 8:11, 13; 9:5, 13





HEBREW BIBLE / OLD TESTAMENT SEMINAR

Theme: Trauma in Biblical Texts

Weeks 2-8

Mondays, 14.30-16.00

**Seminar Room 30.301 B, Faculty of Theology and Religion
Schwarzman Centre Level 3**

Convened by Katherine E. Southwood

Week 2, 20 October

Danilo Verde (Cambridge): Trauma and Ideology in the Book of Lamentations

Week 3, 27 October

Christl Maier (Marburg): The Book of Jeremiah as a Cultural Trauma Narrative

Week 4, 3 November

David Janzen (Durham): Trauma Theories, Category Mistakes, and Postexilic Judah as a Traumatized Society

Week 5, 10 November

Rebekah Van Sant (Oxford): Deception, Subversion, and Femininity in the book of Esther and the Joseph Narrative

Week 6, 17 November

Professionalization Session and Writers workshop

Week 7, 24 November

Rosanne Liebermann (Aarhus): Animal Metaphors for Trauma and Illness in the Psalms

Week 8, 1 December

Alexiana Fry (Copenhagen): Trauma, Self-Defence, and Revenge in *Esther*

There will be a chance to talk informally after the seminar over tea and coffee.





VISITING FELLOWS

Dr Dean Irwin (University of Lincoln), Visiting Fellow in Anglo-Jewish Medieval History
Professor Susanne Marten-Finnis (University of Portsmouth), Leverhulme Emeritus Visiting Fellow

VISITING SCHOLARS

Dr Emily Rose
Dr Aadel Shakkour (Al-Qasemi Academy)

Junior Visiting Scholar

Ms Adi Wiener (Tel Aviv University)



THURSDAY COFFEE, TEA AND CAKE

Every Thursday morning during term from 11.00 to 11.30am
in the Common Room, Clarendon Institute, Walton Street.
An opportunity to meet and catch up with others working in Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

ALL WELCOME



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