A welcome from our Director, Hava Tirosh-Samuelson

ASU Jewish Studies is committed to sharing knowledge and educating people about Jewish civilization through research conferences, public lectures, and academic instruction. Over 800 students a year take Jewish Studies classes at ASU.

In 2022-2023, Jewish Studies organized 23 public events and conferences and co-sponsored 4 others. These events consisted of research conferences and lectures from both ASU faculty and faculty from throughout the world. Nearly 4,000 people attended our programs, most of which were held virtually, allowing us to reach an international audience. Some of the highlights of the year included:

- A research conference, “Jews in Italian Musical Life, 1450 to the Present”
- A research conference, “Judaism, Jews, and Artificial Intelligence”
- An Eckstein Scholar-in-Residence lecture, “Jewish Life in America Today”
- A lecture series, “Jewish Sacred Aging”

In 2023-2024, Jewish Studies will offer numerous lectures, an international workshop, music recitals, and an international research conference. In addition, we will co-sponsor several Jewish-related programs including Genocide Awareness Week. The full listing of our activities is available in the included calendar and website.

We are very excited to offer this wide array of programming and we thank you for your generosity that helped us to reach an international audience.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and creative year,

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson
Director, ASU Jewish studies
Regents Professor History
Irving and Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism
ASU Jewish Studies Faculty Accomplishments

Awards, Fellowships, and Grants

**Volker Benkert**, Institute for Humanities Research Fellowship (2022-2023).

**Adam Cohen (Principal Investigator), Kathryn Johnson (Co-Principal Investigator), Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Co-Investigator) and Joel Gereboff (Co-Investigator)**, “Fasting and Flourishing: A Comparative Analysis.” Templeton World Charity Foundation, amount awarded $422,516 (2022-2025).

**Adam Cohen (Co-Investigator)**, “Extending the Table: Does Shabbat Dinner as A Spiritual Practice Increase Social Connectedness?”, Templeton World Charity Foundation, amount awarded: $500,000 (2022-2025).

**Adam Cohen (Principal Investigator)**, "Broadening Our View of Culture," US Army Research Institute, amount awarded $544,000 (2022-2024).

**Liz Lerman**, Guggenheim Fellowship (2023).


**Natalie Lozinski-Weach**, fellowship from the German Literature Archive for research on post-Holocaust authors to be conducted in Marbach, Germany (October 2022).

Editorial Work

**Rachel Leket-Mor** is the editor (since 2012) of *Judaica Librarianship*, a peer reviewed Journal of the Association of Jewish Libraries. In 2022 she edited vol. 22 of Judaica Librarianship.

Publications


**Anna Cichopec-Gajraj**


**Joe Lockard**

**Francoise Mirguet**

**Hava Tirosh-Samuelson**

Books


**Volker Benkert** *Terrortimes, Terrorscapes: Continuities of Space, Time, and Memory in Twentieth-Century War and Genocide*, Purdue University Press, (IN) September 2022

**Naomi M. Jackson**, *Dance and Ethics: Moving Towards a More Humane Dance Culture*, Intellect Ltd, (UK) October 2022


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Immersing the Self, Healing the Self

In Hebrew, a mikvah* is a special pool of water in which one immerses oneself for the sake of Jewish ritual purity. The act of immersion (tevillah) is done for various occasions: conversion; transitioning from secular to sacred time; preparing for marriage; transitioning between sexual abstinence and sexual activity following the menstrual-marital practices of family purity (niddah); completing divorce; or in relation to medical procedures like fertility treatments, major surgery, cancer treatments, and most recently, as part of medical gender transitioning.

Scholars have not studied the role of mikvah immersion in personal healing because they did not take first-person reports seriously. By contrast, my doctoral research shows that a surprising high percentage of people who use mikvah today experience their ritual immersion as a form of healing and use it for the purpose of healing.

With funding from ASU Jewish Studies, I conducted qualitative and quantitative research on contemporary mikvah immersion. I began with a pilot study among the Greater Phoenix Jewish community. The initial findings enabled me to frame my research questions:

- What does it mean to experience healing through mikvah immersion?
- How common are experiences of mikvah healing?
- What - if anything - might these experiences tell us about how Jews today think about self, well-being, and healing?

I then expanded the study to a larger sample in the United States (288 responses) and in the United Kingdom (239 responses), after which I also conducted in-depth interviews with 34 respondents. Participants in the empirical study comprised a robust cross section of Jewish denominations in the US and the UK. Although Orthodox Jews routinely use the mikvah, the majority of participants in the study were not Orthodox Jews, but people affiliated with non-Orthodox, liberal denominations.

The key finding of the study was that participants (mostly non-Orthodox) who experienced mikvah immersion as healing described their “healing” as centering and affirming their self, often during major life changes and/or experiences of personal suffering. Significantly, the prescribed acts, such as the preparation for immersion (chaffilah) or the removal of physical barriers between the water and the immerser (hatzitzlah) were invested with psychological and emotional meanings that signified personal transformation that contributed to their healing.

Conceptually, the study shows that participants regarded the self in holistic terms as “body-self” that seamlessly integrates physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological, and relational dimensions. This means that difficulties in any one dimension of the self could produce difficulties in one or more of the other aspects of the self, including the physical. Thus, maintaining the well-being of the body-self requires continual work keeping the various dimensions in harmony with each other. For this reason, mikvah immersion is most meaningful to people who experience chronic illness, demanding relationships, fertility struggles, and/or exclusion within their Jewish communities (e.g., LGBT Jews, Jews of Color, converts, and Jews in interfaith relationships).

My research has established that interest in the ancient ritual of mikvah immersion has been growing among Jews across diverse levels of religious observance. The ritual attracts Jews today because it is significant religiously, psychologically, and socially. For many Jews, these levels combine to affect healing within the self.

*All words in italics are Hebrew words in transliteration
### Jan. 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 10</td>
<td>Who Was Josephus? The First-Century Jewish Historian between Judea and Rome, Francine Morgenstern, ASU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>How Josephus Read the Jewish Past: The First-Century Historian Rewrites the Bible, Daniel Stein Kokin, ASU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Whose Josephus? The First-Century Historian's Afterlives Among Christians and Jews, Daniel Stein Kokin, ASU</td>
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All lectures are at 7 pm MST, 9 pm EST on Zoom.

Register: [jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJosephus](jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJosephus)

### Feb. 2024

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 6, 13 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Jewish Literature beyond the Cold War: Legacies and Futures Lecture Series</td>
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<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>From Behind a Star: Philip Roth, Rita Klímová, and the American Arrival of a Forgotten Jewish Classic, Brian K. Goodman, ASU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>Writing Home: Identity and Belonging in New German - Jewish Literature, Natalie, Lozinski - Veach, ASU</td>
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All lectures are at 7 pm MST, 9 pm EST on Zoom.

Register: [jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJewishLit](jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJewishLit)

### Feb. 25 - 26

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Join us for discussions on scientific considerations of biotechnology on the future of humanity, secular and Jewish law, ethics of medical innovations, and philosophy. The Dr. Michael Anbar Keynote Address on Judaism, Science, and Medicine will be delivered by Dr. Laurie Zoloth, University of Chicago (IL). Conference is open to the public both in person and on Zoom. For more information or to register, contact: <a href="jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSMG24">jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSMG24</a></td>
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### Mar. 2024

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<tr>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>Albert and Liese Eckstein Scholar-in-Residence Program I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>American Jewry Today and Tomorrow: Challenges, Opportunities, Crises, Arnold Eisen, Jewish Theological Seminary (NY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 13, 20 &amp; 27</td>
<td>Modern Jewish Philosophers on Being Jewish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 13</td>
<td>Judaism as Law, Arnold Eisen, Jewish Theological Seminary (NY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 15</td>
<td>Writing about the Holocaust, Arnold Eisen, Jewish Theological Seminary (NY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 17</td>
<td>Modern Jewish Philosophy through this lecture series on how Jewish philosophers have grappled with modernity, and how they reinterpreted Jewish beliefs. Special attention will be paid to Martin Buber, Mordecai Kaplan, Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and Emmanuel Levinas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>How Josephus Read the Jewish Past: The First-Century Historian Rewrites the Bible, Daniel Stein Kokin, ASU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 20</td>
<td>Whose Josephus? The First-Century Historian's Afterlives Among Christians and Jews, Daniel Stein Kokin, ASU</td>
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All lectures are at 7 pm MST, 9 pm EST on Zoom.

Register: [jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJewishPhilosophy](jewishstudies.asu.edu/JSJewishPhilosophy)

### Apr. 2024

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<tr>
<td>Apr. 7</td>
<td>ADL Conference on Antisemitism Today, 10 am - 3 pm MST in person at SkySong in Scottsdale. Co-sponsored by ASU Jewish Studies. For more information or to register, contact: <a href="skader@adl.org">skader@adl.org</a></td>
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### Apr. 15 - 19

Rosenbluth Family Charitable Foundation Genocide Awareness Week 2024: Nationalism, State Violence, and Genocide

This year’s theme investigates the role of the state in facilitating and shaping the perpetration of genocidal violence. Whether it’s the Nazi State carrying out the Holocaust, or the Ottoman Empire perpetrating the Armenian Genocide, states have been the primary instrument for conceiving, organizing, and deploying genocide against targeted populations. Programs will be offered over four days at various times both in person and on Zoom. See the link below for more info. This event is sponsored by SHPRCS, co-sponsored by ASU Jewish Studies, and funded through an generous grant from the Rosenbluth Family Charitable Foundation. For more information or to register, contact: [https://shprcs.asu.edu/gaw2024](https://shprcs.asu.edu/gaw2024)

### May 2024

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<tr>
<td>May 5 - 6</td>
<td>Western Jewish Studies Association Conference (WJSA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5 - 6</td>
<td>ASU Jewish Studies is proud to be hosting the WJSA Conference this year. Panels will be devoted to Jews in the American West, pedagogical aspects of Jewish Studies, contemporary Jewish issues and much more. Co-sponsored by ASU Jewish Studies and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information or to register, contact: <a href="ifaron@sdsu.edu">ifaron@sdsu.edu</a></td>
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The benevolence of Jewish Studies donors enables ASU Jewish Studies to offer a variety of generous scholarships and fellowships to ASU students at every academic level. To learn more about our scholarships, visit the link listed above.

Student Uses Scholarship to Explore International Archives

My name is Liudmila Sharaya, and I am a PhD candidate in History at the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at ASU. My dissertation, preliminary titled “Russian Émigrés in a Transnational Perspective: Orientalism, Nostalgia and Political Evolution in Interwar Bulgaria and France,” explores the adaptation and its limits of first-wave émigrés from the former Russian Empire, including Russophone Jews. The analysis of the Jewish émigrés’ experiences from Russia provides a more complex and diverse picture of the interwar migration and, at the same time, will enrich knowledge about the Jewish population of the Russophone diaspora.

To create a comprehensive picture of this experience, I need to explore archives in four countries. The grant from Jewish Studies has been instrumental in providing me an opportunity to explore the archives in two of them, France and Bulgaria. Thanks to this grant, I made the trip to the French archives in December 2022, where for two weeks, I browsed the documents preserved at the Archive of the Police Prefecture. The documents I discovered during the trip were extremely informative about both relationships between different groups of emigrés from the Russian Empire and attitudes among the French populations toward newcomers. I am looking forward to continuing my research in Paris and Sofia during the next academic year.

Scholarships

Benjamin Goldberg Memorial Scholarship
Cabot Family Scholarship
Chulew Family Endowed Scholarship in Jewish Studies
Chulew Family Endowed Scholarships in Jewish Studies
Jewish Studies Great Students Graduate Fellowship
Morris and Julia Kertzer Scholar
Schwartz Honors University Scholarship
Schwartz Research, Study and Travel Grant
Schwartz Jewish Studies Fellowship
Seymour H. Jacobs Memorial Scholarship

Scholarship Recipients 2022-2023

Aaron Belbeck
Jewish Studies Great Students Graduate Fellowship

Jason Bronowitz
Schwartz Research, Study and Travel Grant

Jared Elters
Benjamin Goldberg Memorial Scholarship

Isobel-Marie Johnston
Schwartz Honors University Scholarship

Liudmila Sharaya
Schwartz Research, Study and Travel Grant

Eugenia Min-Chun Yeh
Chulew Family Endowed Scholarships in Jewish Studies

Best Wishes and Mazel Tov, Dawn!

In May 2022, following two decades of furthering the mission of ASU Jewish Studies, Dawn Beeson transitioned to the role of Manager of Marketing and Communication at ASU’s Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict. Since 2008, Dawn was instrumental in developing ASU Jewish Studies with current Director Hava Tirosh-Samuelson. She managed the business operations of the unit, designed all marketing and communication materials, and administered student awards and curricular matters. Her considerable talent, creativity, and dedication were integral to the accomplishments of ASU Jewish Studies. We wish Dawn the very best in her new endeavor, and we thank her for superb service to Jewish Studies.

A note about the time of our Zoom events

All Zoom programs are listed according to Arizona MST and New York ET. Should you need help figuring out the time of a program, email Gloria.Baker@asu.edu or give us a call at 480-965-8094.

Sign up to receive Jewish Studies emails and paper communications

jewishstudies.asu.edu/signup
Please help ensure we can continue to offer high quality Jewish Studies programs to the community by supporting Friends of Jewish Studies with a donation today.

Thank you!

make a secure donation online

asufoundation.org/jewishstudies