

The Texas Jewish Studies
Research Triangle



First Undergraduate
Student Conference

University of Houston
March 25-26, 2018

Texas Jewish Studies Research Triangle Undergraduate Conference, March 25-26
University of Houston
Agnes Arnold Hall 210

Sunday, March 25

1:00pm **Welcome Remarks**

1:05pm **Keynote Address: Dr. Sarah Fishman, University of Houston, Professor of History and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, "Being Jewish and French during World War II"**

1:30 - 2:30 **Rethinking and Applying Ancient Texts**

Chair: Dr. Caryn Tamber-Rosenau, University of Houston

Joseph Godwin (University of Houston), "Scholarship on Cyrus the Great and the Restoration"

Emery Jones (St. Edward's University), "Elijah in Merkavah and Hekhalot Literature"

Allen Junek (Texas A&M University), "'My Brother's Keeper': Questions of Guilt and Responsibility to the Other"

2:45 – 3:45 **Cultural Formation and Exchange**

Chair: Dr. Claire Katz, Texas A&M University

Chase Bartlett (St. Edward's University), "Identity, Heritage, and Religion: People of Color, Judaism and Israel"

Joshua Thaxton (Texas A&M University), "Rehabilitating Irony"

Colton Cox (Rice University), "Between the Shum and the Abbey: Jewish Influence on Christian Exegesis in the Middle Ages"

4:00 – 5:00 Historical, Literary, and Philosophical Approaches to Understanding the Holocaust

Chair: Dr. Jason Johnson, Trinity University

Davis Stubblefield (Trinity University), “An Intentional and Methodical Process: The Conditioning of Nazification in 1930s Era Germany”

Hannah Philibert (Texas A&M University), “Reconciling the Rift between Body and Self”

Natalie Carrier (Trinity University), “Dual Truth and Lamentation through Midrash”

7:00 Dinner, Hungry’s, Rice Village
2356 Rice Blvd.
Houston, TX 77005

Monday, March 26

8:00 Breakfast, Agnes Arnold Hall (AH) 210

9:00 – 10:00 Migration, Acculturation, and Identity

Chair: Dr. Maya Soifer Irish, Rice University

June Chen (Rice University), “Chinese Jews: Acculturation and Assimilation”

Mandie Garcia (University of Houston), “Navigating Jewish Identity in America, and Finding a Voice through Yiddish Radio”

Gary Dreyer (Rice University), “They Came, They Saw, They Voted: A Historical Perspective on the Political Culture of Russian-Speaking Israelis”

10:10 – 10:55 Digital Approaches to Jewish Studies: The Jubilees Palimpsest Project

Chair: Dr. Chad Spigel, Trinity University

Ian Bryan and Marissa Gonzalez (St. Mary's University), The Recovery of Lost Ancient Jewish Literature: The Jubilees Palimpsest and Spectral Imaging

Dominique Dominguez (St. Mary's University), Digital Humanities Principles for Open Access to More Primary Sources: Manuscript Studies and Digital Humanities

11:00 – 12:00 Jewish Representations in Literature

Chair: Dr. Richard J. Bautch, St. Edward's University

Yesenia Caballero (Trinity University), "Batman as Golem: The Legendary Jewish Figure Resurrected as a Modern American Hero"

Sonia Hamer (Rice University), "Printed on Her Body: Interconnected Representations of Jewish Women and the Eastern European Shtetl"

Andrea Garcia and Isabella Scarpelli (St. Edward's University), "Comparing Dual Identities in Roth and Kashua"

12:00 – 1:30 Lunch, AH 444

Presenters

Chase Bartlett (St. Edward's University) is an undergraduate student in his sophomore year at St. Edward's University, majoring in Religious and Theological Studies. This is Chase's second year as an athlete on the tennis team at St. Edward's University, and some of his other scholarly interests include English Rhetoric and German.

Ian Bryan (St. Mary's University) is in his second year at St. Mary's University. His major is Finance in Risk Management, and his minor is Theology. He is from Nixon, Texas, a small town 65 miles south of San Antonio. After graduation he plans to complete the joint MBA-Theology program at Boston College. He joined the Jubilees Palimpsest Project to learn more about the history of codices.

Yesenia Caballero (Trinity University) is in her senior year at Trinity University. An English major with a minor in Theatre, she has done extensive creative writing and research. Last spring, she produced and directed an original musical for which she wrote the book and lyrics. Since then, she has gone on to assistant direct and dramaturg mainstage productions. After graduation, she intends to complete the MAT program at Trinity.

Natalie Carrier (Trinity University) is in her third year at Trinity University. She is majoring in Art History and Anthropology, with a minor in English. An interest in cultural studies and modern history motivated her to take courses focusing on Holocaust literature and museum representation. After graduation, she plans to pursue museum work. She is from Houston, Texas.

June Chen (Rice University) is a senior undergraduate student from Rice University. She will graduate in May 2018 with degrees in medieval studies, electrical engineering, and mathematics. Her post-graduation plan is to pursue a master degree in electrical engineering. She is interested in interreligious studies.

Colton Cox (Rice University) is a senior undergraduate at Rice University majoring in Sociology and Policy Studies and minoring in Jewish Studies. Currently, he serves as President of Rice's Jewish Studies Student Association, which seeks to promote interaction between students and Jewish Studies faculty through interactive and informative events.

Dominique Dominguez (St. Mary's University) is in her second year at St. Mary's University. She is majoring in Theology with a minor in Communications. She is from San Antonio and has traveled to Poland for World Youth Day in 2016. She is active in youth ministry and plans to study education at the University of Notre Dame. In her work on the Jubilees Palimpsest Project she enjoys using human-machine readable languages to organize ancient literature for digital humanities study.

Gary Dreyer (Rice University) is a graduating senior at Rice University, majoring in History & Policy Studies and Minor in Business. This October, Gary will begin his graduate studies in International Relations & Politics at the University of Cambridge, focusing his research on Russian foreign policy and media in the Middle East.

Andrea Garcia (St. Edward's University) has completed the Jewish Studies minor at St. Edward's University. She is a Political Science major who just graduated in December 2017.

Mandie Garcia (University of Houston) is a post baccalaureate student in her first year towards earning a degree in world cultures and literature, with an emphasis on Middle Eastern studies. She is originally from Bay City, Texas, and graduated from Texas State University San Marcos with a bachelor's degree in mass communications: electronic media. She spent several years working in radio and television news production in the Austin area, and volunteering her media skills at nonprofit organizations serving local and international refugee populations. She plans to enter a graduate program for journalism or international studies in hopes of being an international journalist, which is why the topic of "Yiddish radio in America," was of great interest to her. Researching for this project revealed the positive influence of multicultural media, and inspired Garcia in further understanding how important diversity and representation in media truly is.

Joseph Godwin (University of Houston) was born in Houston, and feels lucky to be attending university at UH, in his hometown. He is a senior, majoring in anthropology and minoring in religious studies. He came to this project out of a desire to learn about Cyrus's role in the Restoration from Babylon. He also was curious to learn about the composition of Deutero-Isaiah, which contains prophecies regarding Cyrus.

Marissa Gonzalez (St. Mary's University) is in her second year at St. Mary's University. She is a Theology major and a minor in Environmental Science. She is from Grand Prairie, Texas (in the Dallas-Fort Worth area), and has been to Jamaica, Grand Cayman, and Mexico. She plans to go to graduate school when she graduates from St. Mary's in 2020. She has been working on the Jubilees Palimpsest Project since September 2017, and especially enjoys transcribing manuscripts in Mirador.

Sonia Hamer (Rice University) is from Houston, Texas. She is a senior at Rice University, pursuing a bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Jewish Studies. She enjoys long-distance writing. Her research grows out of a long-term interest in literary representations of Jewish women.

Emery Jones (St. Edward's University) is a senior at St. Edward's University interested in mysticism, esotericism, and how these intersect with Judaism.

Allen Junek (Texas A&M University) hails from College Station, TX. He is a senior philosophy and classics double major, and religious studies minor at Texas A&M University. He enjoys taking an interdisciplinary approach to the study of religion, which is why he jumped at the

opportunity to take Modern Jewish Thought and Philosophy in 2017, a course that focused on themes situated at the intersection of philosophy, religion, and history. His paper, *My Brother's Keeper: Questions of Guilt and Responsibility to the Other* is a continuation of some of the questions raised during this course and his attempt at formulating a coherent answer. He will graduate from Texas A&M University in December, after which he plans to pursue graduate coursework at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas.

Hannah Philibert (Texas A&M University) is from Pasadena, Texas, and is a senior philosophy major at Texas A&M. After she graduates in May 2018, Hannah will be teaching high-school English and Art. The branch of philosophy that Hannah is most interested in is ethics, which she was able to explore in a deeper historical context during a class she took last semester on Jewish Philosophy and Ethics After the Holocaust. Her research focuses primarily on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, a Jewish philosopher and Talmudic commentator.

Isabella Scarpelli (St. Edward's University) grew up in New York City and moved to Austin to attend college. She is a junior at Saint Edward's University, majoring in History and minoring Spanish and Jewish Studies. If she is not at a museum, she can typically be found at her piano or writing at her desk. Her summer class on Jewish Literature inspired her to take on her research project. In the exploration of Roth and Kashua's work, she has been able to dissect Jewish identity as it applies to these literary characters.

Davis Stubblefield (Trinity University) is a senior history student at Trinity University, aspiring to pursue graduate study with the intention of educating at the post-secondary level.

Joshua Thaxton (Texas A&M University) is originally from the gateway to the Wild West, Abilene, Texas. He fled home to pursue an education at Texas A&M University. His cynicism and apathy led him to the majors of English Literature and Philosophy, along with a minor in French, explained once again by his cynicism. He is currently a junior and looking forward to pursuing a PhD in the topics of critical theory and hermeneutics. His research interests have led him to the topics of irony and humor, or how irony has come to permeate postmodern and millennial cultures.