

BEN RATSKOFF

Jerome H. Louchheim School for Judaic Studies
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
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EDUCATION

University of California-Los Angeles, College of Letters & Science

Ph.D. in Comparative Literature (June 2021)

Dissertation: *Waltzing with Hitler: Black Writers, the Third Reich, and Demonic Grounds of Comparison, 1936-1940*

Committee: Michael Rothberg (chair), Stephanie Bosch Santana, Yogita Goyal, Robin D. G. Kelley, Alexander G. Weheliye

Master of Arts in Comparative Literature (June 2017)

Northwestern University, Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, Evanston, IL

Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in English Literature and African American Studies, magna cum laude (June 2013)

EMPLOYMENT

July 2023-Present **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jack H. Skirball Campus**
Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish History and Culture
Jerome H. Louchheim School for Judaic Studies
USC Jewish Studies

July 2021-2023 **Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jack H. Skirball Campus**
Visiting Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish History and Culture
Jerome H. Louchheim School for Judaic Studies
USC Jewish Studies

August 2019-May 2021 **Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA**
Adjunct Professor
Department of Religious Studies

PUBLICATIONS

Academic Articles and Book Chapters

“James Baldwin’s Black Critique of Jewish Whiteness” in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2020), pp. 240-260

“Improbable Spectacles: White Supremacy, Christian Hegemony, and the Dark Side of the *Judenfrage*,” in *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 39, no. 1, Special Issue: Trump and the “Jewish Question,” eds. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg (2020), pp. 17-43

“Splattering the Object: Césaire, Nazi Racism, and the Colonial” in *Caribbean-Jewish Crossings: Atlantic Literature and Theory*, eds. Sarah Phillips Casteel and Heidi Kaufman, University of Virginia Press (Charlottesville, VA: 2019), pp. 177-197

Translation

Translator from Yiddish, “Oyf a Yiddishe Beys-Oylam in Sahara,” by Benjamin Lubelski for *Wartime North Africa: Jews, Muslims, and Christians Under Occupation, Race Laws, and Internment*, ed. Aomar Boum and Sarah Abrevaya Stein (Stanford University Press, published in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2022)

Translator from French, “White Innocence and the Barbarisation of the Racialised: Destroy the Sleeping Monster (2019),” by Houria Bouteldja for *What The Fire Sees: A Divided Reader* ed. Eleanor Weber and Camilla Wills (Brussels: Divided Publishing Ltd, 2020), pp. 45-61

Public Criticism

“Rethinking Jewish Diaspora: On Analogy, Translation, and Abjection,” *The Funambulist* (September-October 2022), pp. 36-41

“En Allemagne, la lutte contre l’antisémitisme tourne à la chasse aux sorcières [In Germany, the Fight Against Antisemitism Turns into a Witch Hunt],” *OrientXXI* (August 30, 2022)

“Can the Palestinian Belong to a Universal History?,” *Jewish Currents* (July 28, 2022)

“The Entanglements Of Jewish Philanthropy And Liberal Statecraft: A Review Of Berman’s *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex*,” *HistPhil* (November 30, 2020)
Review: Lila Corwin Berman, *The American Jewish Philanthropic Complex* (Princeton University Press, 2020)

“Against Analogy,” *Jewish Currents* (June 9, 2020)
*First Place Winner of American Jewish Press Association Award for Excellence in Single Commentary, Monthly Newspapers and Magazines

“The Kids Want Communism: A Conversation with Joshua Simon,” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (April 24, 2020)

“White Supremacy and Christian Hegemony Came to a Head in Poway Violence,” *Truthout* (May 2, 2019)

“A Reluctant Bricolage of the Sublime and the Popular: Eliyahu Fatal’s ‘Broken Cisterns,’” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (April 15, 2019)

“Liberation Utopias: Houria Bouteldja on Feminism, Anti-Semitism, and the Politics of Decolonization,” *Los Angeles Review of Books* (April 5, 2018)
Review: Houria Bouteldja, *Whites, Jews, and Us: Towards a Politics of Revolutionary Love* (Semiotext(e), 2017)

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

“Demonic Grounds of Comparison: Black Writers on Nazism in Real-Time,” Max Kade Center for German and European Studies, Vanderbilt University, Nashville (February 22, 2023)

“The Question of Fascist Cosmogonies and Their Overturning,” *Ceremony: Capitalism in Cosmological Terms*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (December 3, 2022)

Closed Workshop: Rethinking the Relationship Between Jewish Identity, Zionism, and Palestinian Nationalism, *Arab-Jewish Engagement Workshops*, Bruno Kriesky Forum for International Dialogue, Vienna, Austria (November 27-30, 2022)

“Rethinking Jewish Diaspora: In Conversation with Ben Ratskoff,” *Minor Cosmopolitan Assembly* (a project of the Minor Cosmopolitans Research Training Group at the Universität Potsdam), Berlin (November 10, 2022)

“‘A foul and violent orgy’: James Baldwin on Holocaust Exceptionalism and Black Revolt,” Birkbeck Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Birkbeck University of London (October 31, 2022)

“James Baldwin and the Politics of Holocaust Exceptionalism,” *Hijacking Memory: The Holocaust and the New Right*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Germany (June 9-12, 2022)

“Demonic Grounds of Comparison: Black Writers on Nazism in Real-Time,” in conversation with Damani Partridge (May 5, 2022), Lecture Series: New Directions in Jewish Studies, UC Davis, organized by Eva Mroczek

“Du Bois Before Warsaw, Fascism Before Racism,” in conversation with Amelia Glasser (January 26, 2022), Lecture Series: Black Studies and Jewish Studies in Conversation, Jewish Studies at Fordham University, organized by Magda Teter, Westenley Alcenat, Ben Ratskoff, and Eli Rosenblatt

“German Catechism” workshop, RePLITO (Beyond social cohesion — Global repertoires of living together), Berlin University Alliance (July 14, 2021)

“Of White Ethnographers, Holocaust Survivors, and Colonized Africans: *Chronique d’un été’s* Imperial Gaze” (April 24, 2021), Lecture Series: Memory Politics and Minority Managements in Contemporary Europe, Freie-Universität-Berlin, organized by Schirin Amir-Moazami and Hannah Tzuberi

“A Teach-in on Jewish Studies, Race, and Anti-Racism,” UCLA Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies (September 24, 2020), moderated by Sarah Abrevaya Stein and Dean Franco; speakers: Lila Corwin Berman (Temple University), Aomar Boum (UCLA), Sultan Doughan (Boston University), Maxwell Greenberg (UCLA), Ben Ratskoff (UCLA)

CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Black Lives under Nazism, Jacob and Yetta Gelman International Research Workshop, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C. (June 7-16, 2023)

Jews and Black Theory Workshop II, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (May 14-18, 2023), co-organized by Daniel Boyarin (UC-Berkeley), Jonathan Boyarin (Cornell), and Shaul Magid (Dartmouth)

Jews and Black Theory Workshop I, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (August 8-12, 2022), co-organized by Gerard Aching (Cornell), Daniel Boyarin (UC-Berkeley), and Jonathan Boyarin (Cornell)

“Periscope Comparison and the Multiplication of Bigger Thomas,” *Association for Jewish Studies Conference*, Chicago, IL (December 19-21, 2021)

Roundtable: Jewish Studies and the Racial Politics of Knowledge: Challenging White and Secular Epistemologies, *Association for Jewish Studies Conference*, Chicago, IL (December 19-21, 2021)

“Not at all analogous: Du Bois Before Warsaw, Fascism Before Racism,” *Entangled Otherings: Critical Perspectives on the Relationship of Antisemitism and Racism*, Hamburg, Germany (June 28-30, 2021)

“‘Never Again’ from Kahane to Cosecha: Between Self-Defense and Allyship,” *Memory and Political Responsibility*, University of California-Los Angeles (February 28-29, 2019)

Roundtable: Jewishness After Liberalism: New Directions in American Jewish Cultural Studies, *Association for Jewish Studies Conference*, San Diego, CA (December 15-17, 2019)

“Of white ethnographers, Holocaust survivors, and colonized Africans: *Chronique d’un été’s* Imperial Gaze,” *Association for Jewish Studies Conference*, Boston, MA (December 16-18, 2018)

“White Hegemony, Christian Hegemony, and the Dark Side of the Jewish Question,” *Race-Religion-Secularism Network Conference*, University of Amsterdam (October 21-23, 2018)

“Whiteness and Christendom: James Baldwin’s Figure of the Jew, *Jewish Friends: Contemporary Figures of the Jew*, Freie Universität Berlin (October 16-18, 2017), Respondent: Daniel Boyarin, University of California-Berkeley

“Black Studies, Decolonial Thought, and Jews,” *American Comparative Literature Conference*, University of Utrecht (July 6-9, 2017)

“Césaire, the Holocaust and the Colonial,” *American Comparative Literature Conference*, Harvard University (March 17-20, 2016)

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED

“Civilization Breaks: Colonialism, Slavery, and the Holocaust,” Co-organized with Michael Rothberg and Zoé Samudzi, University of California-Los Angeles (May 22-23, 2023)

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Hebrew Union College Faculty Council (Fall 2022-Present)

Casden Faculty and Graduate Student Research Seminar, Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life, University of Southern California (Fall 2022-Present)

AWARDS, GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

Visiting Fellow at the Center for Jewish Studies at Fordham University (2021-2022), co-organizer of the “Black Studies and Jewish Studies in Conversation” Lecture Series

First Place Winner: Excellence in Single Commentary, Monthly Newspapers and Magazines (June 24, 2021) for “Against Analogy” in *Jewish Currents* (June 2020), *American Jewish Press Association* 40th Annual Simon Rockower Award Ceremony

Dissertation Year Fellowship (2020-2021), University of California-Los Angeles

Summer Pre-Dissertation Research Fellowship (Summer 2019), The Center for European and Russian Studies, University of California-Los Angeles

UCLA Fritz, Jenny and Gustav Berger Fellowship in Holocaust Studies (2018-2019), Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies, University of California-Los Angeles

Chaskel & Sara Roter Summer Research Travel Grant (Summer 2018), Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies, University of California-Los Angeles

Graduate Research Mentorship (2017-2018), University of California-Los Angeles (“Anti-Judaism in Marxist Thought,” Advisor: Katsuya Hirano)

Philip and Aida Siff Educational Foundation Scholarship (2017-2018)

UCLA Faculty Women’s Club Scholarship (2017-2018)

Komar-Shideler Graduate Fellowship (Summer 2017), Department of Comparative Literature, University of California-Los Angeles

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Leo Baeck Summer University 2018: Jewish Studies and Gender Research (July 16-27, 2018), Selma Stern Zentrum für Jüdische Studien Berlin-Brandenburg and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Decolonizing Knowledge and Power Summer School (July 2-12, 2018), Dialogo Global, Barcelona, Spain

Jewish Activism Summer School (July 31-August 20, 2017), University of Potsdam, Berlin, Germany

Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School in European Jewish History and Culture (July 2-5, 2017), University of Sussex, Falmer, England

Kent Summer School in Critical Theory (June 13-24, 2016), University of Kent Paris School of Arts and Culture, Paris, France
(Seminar: James Martel, "How to be a bad subject: misinterpellation and the anarchisation of the soul")

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Southern California

"Antisemitism, Racism, and Other Hatreds," JS 315 (Spring 2023)

"Representing the Holocaust in Literature and Film," GESM 120g (Spring 2022, Fall 2022)

"The Holocaust," JS 211 (Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022)

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

"Representing the Holocaust in Literature and Film," HIS 643 (Fall 2022)

"Modern Jewish History," HIS 602 (Spring 2022, Spring 2023)

"Post-war Memory, Memorialization, and Justice," HIS 643 (Fall 2021)

Occidental College, Los Angeles

"The Holocaust in Comparative Perspective," CSP 63 (Spring 2021)

"History of Antisemitism," RELS 257 (Fall 2020)

"The Holocaust in Comparative Perspective," CSP 71 (Spring 2020)

"History of Antisemitism," RELS 257 (Fall 2019)

Jewish Activism Summer School, University of Potsdam, Berlin

Theoretical and Practical Approaches to Historical Responsibility: Violence, Justice, and Reparation (Summer 2018)

University of California-Los Angeles

Survey of Literature: Age of Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century: "Plot, Plantation, Proletariat," COM LIT 4CW
(Summer Session C 2020)

LANGUAGES

English: Native speaker

French: Fluent (Reading, Speaking, Writing)

Hebrew: Proficient (Reading, Speaking, Writing); especially Rabbinic Hebrew

Yiddish: Good (Reading, Speaking, Writing)

German: Good (Reading)