

HUC-JIR IN THE BERKSHIRES

Roots and Reinventions: A Weekend of Jewish Ideas

July 25 – 28, 2024

huc.edu/berkshires

Join Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the Berkshires for engaging programs on and around Shabbat exploring roots and reinventions of Jewish life.

Questions? Contact Ilana Goldberg, events@huc.edu or 212-824-2207.

Program of Events

Join us for one or more of these programs; open to all. Note that program location, date, and times are subject to change.

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024

Creativity in a Time of Crisis: An Evening with Israeli Writer and Filmmaker Etgar Keret

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Join HUC-JIR for an evening with acclaimed Israeli author and filmmaker Etgar Keret, who will speak about creativity in the current moment. Following his remarks, Professor Wendy Zierler will join Keret on stage for a discussion about his innovative voice and perspective across his body of work. Advance registration encouraged; event tickets are \$20 each.

Presenters:

Etgar Keret is an internationally acclaimed Israeli writer and filmmaker. Known for his short stories, Keret fuses the bizarre with the banal, and offers a window on a surreal world that is both dark and comic. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, and *the Paris Review*, among many other publications, and he is a regular contributor to *This American Life*. In 2016 Keret was awarded The Charles Bronfman Prize, recognizing his work as inspiring Jewish Values and having global impact.

Rabbi Wendy Zierler, Ph.D. is Sigmund Falk Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies at HUC-JIR in New York. She received her Ph.D. and her M.A. from Princeton University; her B.A. from Stern College of Yeshiva University; and an M.F.A. in Fiction Writing from Sarah Lawrence College. Most recently, she is co-editor of two books, *These Truths We Hold: Judaism in an Age of Truthiness* (with HUC colleague Rabbi Joshua Garroway, HUC Press 2022), and *Building A City: Writings on Agnon's Buczacz in Memory Alan Mintz* (with Sheila Jelen, Indiana University Press, 2022).

Location:

Shakespeare & Company
Lenox, MA

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2024

Yiddish Futures: Translation in the New Yiddish Moment

In collaboration with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Knosh and Knowledge program.

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

In 2023, the New York Times boldly declared: "Yiddish Is Having a Moment." On the eve of World War II, Yiddish was the language of 10 million people. In America today, Yiddish survives and thrives in far different forms—most often mediated through translation. In this presentation and moderated conversation, acclaimed scholars and translators of Yiddish Jordan Finkin, Ph.D. (HUC-JIR) and Madeleine (Mindl) Cohen, Ph.D. (Yiddish Book Center) will discuss: What challenges and responsibilities does the Yiddish translator have in America today? How can Yiddish translations help us understand Jewish roots and reinventions in the United States? This presentation will pursue these and other questions in a wide-ranging discussion of the importance and implications of translating Yiddish literature in 2024—one year into its officially declared "moment."

Presenters:

Jordan Finkin, Ph.D. is Deputy Director of Libraries and Rare Book Manuscript Librarian at the Klau Library, Cincinnati. He is the author of numerous academic articles as well as several scholarly monographs, most recently *Exile as Home* on the work of the Yiddish poet Leyb Naydus. In addition to his scholarly work, Dr. Finkin is a literary translator from Yiddish, German, and French. Dr. Finkin currently serves as the co-director of Hebrew Union College Press and is also the founder and director of Naydus Press, a non-profit publisher of Yiddish literature in English translation.

Madeleine (Mindl) Cohen, Ph.D. received her doctoral degree in Comparative Literature with an emphasis in Jewish Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. A western Massachusetts native, she grew up in Greenfield and attended Hampshire College, where her studies focused on German and German-Jewish literature. As an undergraduate, Mindl participated in the Yiddish Book Center's Steiner Summer Yiddish Program, which set her on the path of Yiddish Studies, and more recently she was a Yiddish Book Center Translation Fellow. Before coming (back) to the Center as the Academic Director, she worked as the Editor-in-Chief for *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies* and taught Yiddish language at Harvard University. Mindl also teaches as a visiting lecturer in Jewish Studies at Mount Holyoke College.

Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
Great Barrington, MA

Alumni Only Event: Lunch and Learn

12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Continue the conversation about writing and filmmaking in the current moment with acclaimed Israeli author and filmmaker Etgar Keret and Professor Wendy Zierler. The program will begin with reading and study of Etgar Keret's short-short stories led by Professor Zierler, after which Keret will join us for a conversation about his writing and what the current moment calls for.

Location:

Crissey Farm
Great Barrington, MA

Musical Kabbalat Shabbat and Welcome Reception

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Join us in Hevreh of Southern Berkshire's welcoming cedar-paneled sanctuary for an uplifting and musical Friday night service with Rabbi Jodie Gordon '14, featuring HUC-JIR cantorial faculty, students, and alumni under the leadership of Cantor Jill Abramson '02, Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. The evening will begin with an informal reception, to which all are invited for hors d'oeuvres and conversation in community, and include a D'var Torah by President Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D.

Presenters:

Rabbi Jodie Gordon '14 has served Hevreh of Southern Berkshire since her ordination from HUC-JIR. From 2014-2024, Rabbi Gordon served as both rabbi and Director of Education, before becoming senior rabbi in 2024. She earned her BA from Brandeis University, majoring both in Sociology and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. Rabbi Gordon grew up with strong connections in the Reform movement, especially through her time at URJ Eisner Camp, which instilled in her a lifelong love for Jewish learning and the Berkshires. Her path to the rabbinate was paved with invaluable experiences in a variety of Jewish communal institutions, including the Hillel at the University of Wisconsin, The JCC in Manhattan, and Ma'yan: The Jewish Women's Project. She is also a part of the Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship Alumni program of HUC-JIR.

Rabbi Gordon believes that Jewish joy is a crucial ingredient to building community. At Hevreh, she has built a culture of joy, connection, and presence through individual relationships with congregants at all ages and stages. Through original programming like Community Shabbats, Intergenerational Women's Seder, or Boker Tov Hevreh, Rabbi Gordon is always seeking ways to bring people together through music, learning, and shared stories that connect us to the story of the Jewish people.

Cantor Jill Abramson '02 is the Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, having previously served as the senior cantor at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY, cantor and director of education at Congregation Sukkat Shalom in suburban Chicago, IL, and sole clergy leader at Congregation Shir Ami in Greenwich, CT. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Grinnell College and a Master of Sacred Music and was ordained a by HUC-JIR. Cantor Abramson has a strong commitment to international social justice work, having lived in Cameroon, West Africa, taught English in Indonesia, and conceived an Israeli and Arab teenage choir as part of the international peace program, Building Bridges for Peace.

Location:

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
Great Barrington, MA

SATURDAY, JULY 2, , 2024

Trails and Torah with Temple Anshe Amunim and Hevreh of Southern Berkshire

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Join HUC-JIR for a restorative and thought-provoking Shabbat morning experience exploring Jewish roots and reinventions, choosing between two options in the Berkshires' Pleasant Valley:

1. A Torah study and gentle hike, led by HUC-JIR faculty members Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D. (Provost) and Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D.
2. A meditative exploration of nature and Jewish thought, led by HUC-JIR alum Rabbi Rex Perlmeter '85

All are welcome, comfortable shoes encouraged.

Location:

Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary
Lenox, MA

Presenters:

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., is Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters (University of Cincinnati Press, 2019) as well as the second volume, American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith (University of Cincinnati Press, 2021). She was associate editor of The Torah: A Women's Commentary (CCAR Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Her other writings include Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel (Brill, 2006) and articles on metaphor, biblical poetry, and biblical conceptions of God.

Daniel Fisher-Livne, Ph.D., is Creative Director of HUC-JIR in the Berkshires. He is Assistant Professor of Bible at HUC-JIR and Research Affiliate at the National Humanities Alliance. He is currently writing a cultural biography of the Ark of the Covenant, exploring relationships among objects, places, and collective memory in the Hebrew Bible and ancient Jewish literature through 200 CE.

Rabbi Rex Perlmeter '85

Optional Time for Professional Organization Gathering

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

We are thrilled to be joined by so many alumni and colleagues throughout the weekend! We have set aside this time within the schedule for our partner professional organizations to engage with their constituents. Be on the lookout for more details from the organizations with whom you are affiliated.

Afternoon Text Study

4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

End Shabbat with a text study at Tanglewood, led by Alyssa M. Gray, J.D., Ph.D., discussing how the theme of roots and reinventions plays out within rabbinic literature. Alumni-focused event; open to the public for those interested in deep study of Jewish classical texts.

Location:

Tanglewood
Lenox, MA

Presenter:

Alyssa M. Gray is the Emily S. and Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman Chair in Rabbinics, and Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at HUC-JIR in New York. She received her Ph.D. with distinction in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological Seminary. She also holds an LLM in *Mishpat Ivri* (Jewish law) from the Hebrew University Faculty of Law and a J.D. from the Columbia University School of Law. Gray's scholarly interests are the development of Talmudic literature, the history of Jewish law, and literary studies of post-talmudic legal writings. Her books include *Charity in Rabbinic Judaism: Atonement, Rewards, and Righteousness* (New York and London: Routledge, 2019; paperback ed., 2020) and *A Talmud in Exile: The Influence of Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah on the Formation of Bavli Avodah Zarah* (Brown, 2005; 2nd digital edition; Brown, 2020). She has also published many articles and book chapters and is a contributor to major collaborative projects such as the Oxford Bibliographies in Jewish Studies, *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, and the *Oxford Annotated Mishnah*.

Havdalah and Concert

5:30 p.m., concert begins at 8:00 p.m.

Bring your friends and family for havdalah with HUC-JIR at Tanglewood. Enjoy an evening of contemporary music, beginning with havdalah led by Cantor Jill Abramson '02 (HUC-JIR's Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music). Cantor Abramson will lead a conversation with Rabbi Dan Freeland '79 and Cantor Jeff Klepper '80 as part of the launch of their new book and collection celebrating 50 years of songwriting that began at HUC-JIR as students in the 1970's. This inspiring volume and recordings show the possibilities of collaboration between HUC-JIR's rabbis and cantors, with a long-lasting impact on the Reform movement. All guests will need a ticket for access into Tanglewood for the Boston Symphony Orchestra's performance. During registration, please make sure to let us know if you have season passes or a ticket to the show already.

Location:

Tanglewood Music Center
Lenox, MA

Presenters:

Cantor Jill Abramson '02 is the Director of the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, having previously served as the senior cantor at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale, NY, cantor and director of education at Congregation Sukkat Shalom in suburban Chicago, IL, and sole clergy leader at Congregation Shir Ami in Greenwich, CT. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology from Grinnell College and a Master of Sacred Music and was ordained a by HUC-JIR. Cantor Abramson has a strong commitment to international social justice work, having lived in Cameroon, West Africa, taught English in Indonesia, and conceived an Israeli and Arab teenage choir as part of the international peace program, Building Bridges for Peace.

Since their first meeting in 1972, **Cantor Jeff Klepper '80** and **Rabbi Dan Freeland '79** have participated in a major transformation of the music of the American synagogue, helping to create a new canon of American Jewish music. From their earliest days at the Eisner Camp, through five exciting decades, they have performed at hundreds of congregations, conferences and campuses, releasing eight albums of beloved Jewish songs, including “Lo Alecha” and “Shalom Rav.”

Jeff Klepper is cantor emeritus of Temple Sinai, Sharon, MA, and Dan Freeland is a former Senior Vice-President of the Union for Reform Judaism and recently retired as President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Jeff teaches budding songleaders at Hava Nashira, the annual summer workshop he founded with Debbie Friedman, while Dan is on the board of the Zamir Choral Foundation and coordinates the annual North American Jewish Choral Festival.

SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2024

Progressive Judaism in Today's Political Environment

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Meet Nachman Shai, Ph.D., former Israeli Minister of Diaspora Affairs and the new dean of the HUC-JIR Taube Family campus in Jerusalem. Nachman, in conversation with HUC-JIR President Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D. and Provost Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Ph.D., will reflect on the past, present, and potential futures of progressive Judaism in Israel and North America, and HUC-JIR's role in it.

Location:

Berkshire Botanical Garden
Stockbridge, MA

Presenters:

Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D. is the 10th President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). A leading scholar of political representation and distinguished Jewish communal leader, Dr. Rehfeld's career has bridged both the academic and professional worlds. President Rehfeld received his Ph.D. in political science from the University in Chicago, and served as a member of the tenured faculty in Political Science at Washington University (2001 to 2019) and as President and CEO of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis (2012 to 2019). He held the Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in the Study and Practice of Federalism, McGill University, and had visiting faculty appointments at the Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago, and Libera Università Internazionale Degli Studi Sociali (LUISS Guido Carli), Rome. Rehfeld has served on communal boards in Chicago and St. Louis, and currently serves as a member of the board of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and on the national board of directors for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

Nachman Shai, Ph.D. is the new Dean of HUC-JIR's Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem. He was a member of the Knesset from 2009-2019 and then held the role of Minister of Diaspora Affairs—one of Israel's leading diplomatic positions—in 2021 and 2022. In the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, he was a visiting faculty member at Emory and Duke universities, respectively. Dr. Shai is currently a visiting professor at the University of Haifa. Throughout his career, Dr. Shai has been a respected voice within Israel and globally. As Minister, he established a first-of-its-kind multi-department program for Jewish renewal, which sought to strengthen and advance organizations engaged in the exploration of Jewish culture and what it means to be Jewish.

Dr. Shai has long been an advocate against antisemitism and for creating an environment of inclusivity and connection within Judaism. His combination of academic, government, and leadership experience creates the opportunity for an important perspective as the Jerusalem campus matures and continues to play a vital role in the evolution of HUC-JIR, which spans four campuses and two continents.

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D. '93, is Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is the founder of the American Values, Religious Voices campaign, co-editor of *American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2019) as well as the second volume, *American Values, Religious Voices: Letters of Hope from People of Faith* (University of Cincinnati Press, 2021). She was associate editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2009 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Her other writings include *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Brill, 2006) and articles on metaphor, biblical poetry, and biblical conceptions of God.

**What, Me Jewish? MAD and Jewish Political and Cultural Engagement
2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

When it launched in 1952, MAD Magazine expressed a fresh and arguably deeply Jewish political and cultural critique under editorial director Harvey Kurtzman and publisher William Gaines. MAD has even been called a "Secular Talmud." Join us at the Norman Rockwell Museum for curator-led tours of their new exhibition, *What, Me Worry? The Art and Humor of MAD*. The program will feature a panel situating MAD in the context of Jewish political and cultural engagement, exploring its varied roots and reinventions across time and space.

Location:

Norman Rockwell Museum
Stockbridge, MA