



Carolina Center for Jewish Studies
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news from the center

CAROLINA CENTER *for* JEWISH STUDIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL • FALL 2010 • CCJS.UNC.EDU

The Hebrew Bible *through the ages*

For Professor David Lambert, studying the Hebrew Bible means much more than simply reading the ancient text. He extends his study to explore how the Bible is interpreted through the ages, and how different cultural assumptions alter how people approach the Bible.

Lambert, who joined Carolina's Department of Religious Studies in July as assistant professor of Hebrew Bible, is the newest member of the Center's Jewish Studies faculty. He specializes in the Hebrew Bible, its history of interpretation, and Second Temple Judaism. He also has interests in early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism.



Lambert initially planned to pursue study of medieval Jewish history, but while an undergraduate at Harvard, he became interested in how Jews in the Middle Ages dealt with certain realities that disturbed them in the Bible, which is the product, after all, of an ancient society that existed almost two millennia earlier. From this, his interest in the Bible and how it has been understood and construed has continued to grow.

"I am excited to join the faculty at Carolina and look forward to working in a Religious Studies department that provides a non-denominational context in which to study the Hebrew Bible," said Lambert. "There are very few faculty positions in my field that are in academic departments such as this, rather than in schools of divinity or theology."

This fall, Lambert is teaching "Introduction to the Hebrew Bible" to over 200 undergraduates.

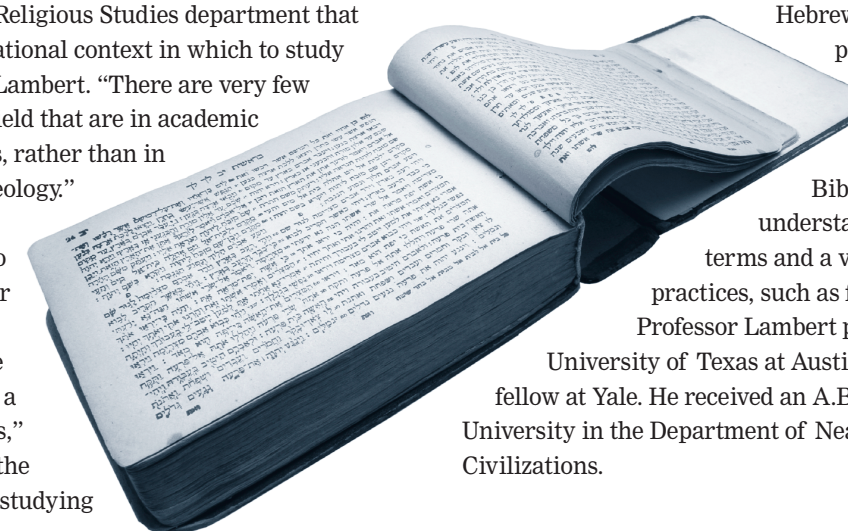
"I am excited that the course is attracting such a large number of students," said Lambert, who cites the long-standing history of studying

religion at Carolina as a big attraction to come to Chapel Hill. "My hope is that students will learn to identify some of the different ways in which our cultural background affects how we read the Bible and to contrast our initial, instinctual readings with possible alternatives." Toward fostering such a dialogue, the course will focus on three broad topics: how God is viewed in the Bible, the role of law, and the idea of redemption.

In the spring, he plans to offer some new courses to Carolina's undergraduates. One, "What is Scripture?", will examine how a certain group of ancient works came together to become "Scripture" and what people have understood the idea of "Scripture," its form and purpose, to be over the history of the West. Another will focus on terms in the Bible that we understand as depicting emotion—love, jealousy, pity. Did people in ancient times experience emotion in much the same way as we do?

Lambert is currently completing a book, "Before Repentance," which explores whether the idea of repentance really operates in the Bible, as most have assumed.

"The word repentance actually does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. In the post-biblical period, as repentance takes on new significance, people come to read repentance into the Bible, developing new understandings of certain Hebrew terms and a variety of ancient Israelite practices, such as fasting and confession." Professor Lambert previously taught at the University of Texas at Austin and was a post-doctoral fellow at Yale. He received an A.B. and Ph.D. from Harvard University in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.



upcoming events

COMMUNITY LECTURES

Sept. 27, 7:30 p.m.
Richard Elliott Friedman,
The Death of the Gods

Oct. 23, 7:30 p.m.
Film Screening, *Down Home*

Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.
Hasia Diner, *Fitting Memorials*

ACADEMIC LECTURES

Nov. 15, 6:00 p.m.
Allen Wells, *Lives in the Balance*

Please visit our Web site at ccjs.unc.edu for more event information. If you'd like to receive updates about upcoming events, please join our listserv by emailing us at ccjs@unc.edu. In the email message, please provide both your email and mailing addresses.

make a difference through annual support

When you make an annual gift to the Center, you help us accomplish all our activities—from expanding our academic program, to hosting compelling events, to supporting faculty and students with their research initiatives.

Your annual gift—whether \$25 or \$25,000—will make a powerful difference, especially when combined with the annual support of other like-minded alumni, parents, and friends.

Last year, in admittedly difficult economic times, the Center's annual fund receipts were down considerably from the prior year. Through careful planning, none of our programs will be eliminated this year, but we are working with a very tight operating budget.

Please consider making an annual gift to the Center this academic year. Your support is very important to our students, faculty and greater community. To make a gift, please use the enclosed gift envelope or visit our Web site at ccjs.unc.edu to make a safe, secure gift online.

If you are already an annual donor to the Center, please know that your support is greatly appreciated.



Dr. Jonathan M. Hess
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from the director's desk welcoming a new Academic Year

This fall, the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies is again starting off the academic year with a bang, with new faculty, new courses and an exciting menu of speakers who will be visiting the campus in the coming months.

With a new faculty member in Hebrew Bible on campus and a new hire just made in Jewish history, we are getting close to the point when we can launch a comprehensive major in Jewish Studies. We'll look forward to reporting on our plans for a B.A. in Jewish Studies in upcoming issues of *News from the Center*.

The ambitions we have for the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies are not modest.

Indeed, we are well on our way to transforming Carolina into one of the leading universities in the nation where students can study Jewish history and culture. Increasingly, incoming students are jumping at the new opportunities we are giving them, and they have come to expect distinguished excellence in Jewish Studies from a truly great university like Carolina. Please know how grateful all of us who work and teach at Carolina are for your inspiring support. We know that the amazing success story of the Center would be unimaginable without each and every gift. Thanks so much for your investment in the future of Jewish Studies at Carolina!

news briefs

Associate Director JONATHAN BOYARIN

Jonathan Boyarin, who joined Carolina's Department of Religious Studies in 2007 as the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Distinguished Professor of Modern Jewish Thought, has been appointed associate director for the Center. He will work with Jonathan Hess on long-range planning for the Center, curriculum development, fund raising and public outreach.

Advisory Board MEMBERS

Four members of the Center's Advisory Board have rotated off the board after serving terms since 2002: Barry Schochet, Harvey Colchamiro, Jay Schwartz and Gary Kaminsky. Their enthusiasm and support through the years has been tremendous and will be missed. Joining the Advisory Board this year are Rhonda Silver of New Jersey, Lori B. Wittlin of Washington, D.C. and Gary J. Kaminsky of New York (no relation to the other Gary Kaminsky!).

Van der Horst PROFESSORSHIP

Flora Cassen will join Carolina's History department next academic year as the JMA and Sonja Van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture. She previously was an assistant professor at the University of Vermont and this academic year she holds a fellowship at Columbia University. Her research focus is Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History. She holds a B.A. from the Free University of Brussels, an M.A. from Brandeis

University and a Ph.D. in History and Judaic Studies from New York University.

The JMA and Sonja van der Horst Distinguished Professorship was established by the children of the late Johannes and Sonja van der Horst (Charles van der Horst, Roger van der Horst, Jacqueline van der Horst Sergeant '82, and Tatjana Schwendinger) with reparation funds that were awarded to their mother.



In June, a small group of alumni and friends of the Center joined Professor Jonathan Boyarin and his wife, Elissa Sampson, on a walking tour of New York's Lower East Side.

2010–2011 Public Events

CAROLINA CENTER for JEWISH STUDIES

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community events



The Death of the Gods: Or Why a Monotheistic God Speaks in the Plural

Eli N. Evans Distinguished Lecture in Jewish Studies

Monday, September 27, 7:30 p.m.

William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education

RICHARD ELLIOTT FRIEDMAN, bestselling author and professor of Jewish Studies at University of Georgia, will examine how, and when, the ancient Israelites made the transition from a pagan religion to monotheism.



Film Screening: *Down Home*

Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lecture on the Jewish Experience in the American South

Saturday, October 23, 7:30 p.m.

Carroll Hall

PANEL DISCUSSION follows the film, which shares remarkable stories of Jewish life in North Carolina, from its pioneering settlers to the diverse communities of today.



Fitting Memorials: Postwar American Jews and the Memory of the Holocaust

Monday, December 6, 7:30 p.m.

Location TBA - check our Web site for details

HASIA DINIER, director of the Goldstein-Goren Center for American Jewish History at New York University, will discuss how American Jewry dealt with the tragedy of the Holocaust in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

This lecture is made possible by a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation in honor of Eli N. Evans, '58.



The Israeli-Palestinian Dispute: A Report from the Field

Monday, February 28, 7:30 p.m.

William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education

ETHAN BRONNER, Jerusalem bureau chief for *The New York Times* since 2008, will discuss what it is like to report on this complex issue, and will focus on shifts in relations between the United States and Israel, developments in the Palestinian Authority, Gaza and the Iran question.

This lecture is made possible by a grant from the Charles H. Revson Foundation in honor of Eli N. Evans, '58.

the Uhlman family seminar

This two-day seminar is planned for Spring 2011. Please check our Web site for event topics, speakers, dates and registration fees. The seminar is offered by the Program in Humanities and Human Values and is made possible by a grant from the Uhlman Family Fund.

special events cosponsored by the Center

Against Indifference

ELIE WIESEL

Sunday, October 10, Time TBA
Memorial Hall

Free and open to public — tickets available through Memorial Hall. Check our Web site for details.

Presented by the Douglas Hunt Lectureship and North Carolina Hillel. Co-sponsored by the Center and other campus groups.



Art, Community and Culture **TONY KUSHNER** with **JOSEPH HAJ**

Frey Foundation Distinguished Visiting Professor in the College of Arts and Sciences
Sunday, April 10, 7:00 p.m.
Memorial Hall

Check our Web site for details.



academic lectures

Lives in the Balance: The United States, the Dominican Republic, and the Rescue of European Jews during World War II

Monday, November 15

6:00 p.m., FedEx Global Education Center, Room 4003

ALLEN WELLS, Bowdoin College

Co-sponsored by the Institute for the Study of the Americas

Conflicting Memories: The Arabs and the Holocaust

Kaplan-Brauer Lecture on the Contribution of Judaism to Civilization

Monday, January 24

5:30 p.m., Hyde Hall

OMAR KAMIL, Dubnow Institute, Germany

The Transformation of the Jews: A Historical Outline 1750–1950

The Morris, Ida and Alan Heilig Lectureship in Jewish Studies

Monday, March 21

5:30 p.m., Hyde Hall

DAN DINER, University of Leipzig, Germany.



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All lectures and seminars are free and open to the public, with the exception of the Uhlman Family Seminar. For event updates, please subscribe to our listserv by emailing us at ccjs@unc.edu or visit our Web site at ccjs.unc.edu.

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