

## undergraduate student profile *Collin Davis, '15*

*“Carolina clearly had the best programs, and once I started here I was able to become even more focused on Jewish studies.”*

“For me, it was simply a question of what would I really like to learn about for two years. It wasn’t going to be chemistry or math, or even history. But religious studies, that was interesting to me,” said Collin Davis, ’15, who soon will be the second undergraduate to complete the new degree program in Jewish studies.

Davis transferred to Carolina after earning his Associate of Arts degree at Forsyth Technical Community College, which allowed him to immediately enroll in UNC courses for his major and minor.

“I was looking into schools with religious studies and Hebrew language programs, and knew I wanted to stay in North Carolina,” said Davis. “Carolina clearly had the best programs, and once I started here I was able to become even more focused on Jewish studies. In the two years I have been here,

nearly every class I’ve had has been in Jewish studies or Arabic, which is my minor.”

Since starting at Carolina, he has had courses with 10 different Jewish studies faculty members who are based in five different academic departments.

“The courses have ranged from History of the Holocaust to Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Judaism, from Jewish Humor to Classical Hebrew,” noted Davis. “And the Shalom Y’all: The Jewish Experience in the American South course with Professor Marcie Cohen Ferris was fantastic too. It made me proud to be who I am—a southerner.”

A former professor advised Davis to consider taking Arabic language courses in addition to his Jewish studies pursuits.

“Now with the minor nearly completed, I realize my interest in Jewish studies has broadened to include the Jewish culture in Arab countries,” said Davis. “Right now I’m taking Professor Shemer’s Arab-Jews: Culture, Community, and Co-existence course, which has really showcased how I can combine both Jewish studies and Arabic.”

Davis is also very involved at Hillel. Last year he co-chaired Israel Fest and this year he is director of Sababa, the Jewish cappella group. And he has become the unofficial sukkah builder “due to my height advantage.”

In December, Davis spent two weeks at the Conservative Yeshiva Program in Jerusalem, Israel, which allowed him to delve into his studies in a whole new way. After graduation this May, the former Eagle Scout from Winston-Salem plans to return to Israel for a year, to continue his Talmud studies and make his long-term career plans.

“Initially I considered becoming a professor—lecturing about topics that I like to a captive audience would be fun—but now I think I might go into a different type of teaching, maybe doing Jewish education and outreach efforts,” added Davis. “Whatever path I choose, graduate school is definitely in the plan. I am going to visit universities during spring break so I can have the information with me when I’m back in Israel, trying to figure out my life.”

The degree program, launched in fall 2012, allows students at Carolina to make the study of Jewish history and culture the centerpiece of their undergraduate experience. The degree is offered through the department of Religious Studies, where students earn a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies with a Concentration in Jewish Studies. This is the first official undergraduate degree program in Jewish studies to be offered by an institution in the state of North Carolina. For more information, visit [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu).



# from the Director's Desk

## *Springtime on Campus*



**Ruth von Bernuth**  
Director, Carolina Center  
for Jewish Studies

Associate Professor, Department  
of Germanic and Slavic  
Languages and Literatures

rvb@email.unc.edu  
(919) 962-4866

Around 1,300 students have enrolled in 34 Jewish studies courses this academic year. The topics range from “Shalom Y’all: The Jewish Experience in the American South,” “Israeli Popular Culture – The Case of Music,” to “Antisemitism: History, Causes, Consequences.” For many students it is the first encounter with aspects of Jewish culture, religion, and history, but for others it is their second, third, or even tenth course.

Spring is the admission time of the academic season and this year we are able again—thanks to your support—to offer two fellowships and two top-up grants to incoming graduate students. We hope they will accept the offer and start at Carolina in the fall. Last year’s recipients have already become an active part of the Center and have participated in graduate student events such as the visit of a graduate student speaker and our lunch time seminars.

We will also have to say goodbye to some of our students, who will graduate this year. For the first

time, two graduate students will receive the certificate in Jewish studies. Elissa Sampson and Emma Woelk took extra coursework to fulfill the requirements and their dissertations explore different aspects of Jewish culture and history. Elissa wrote on “Tenement Tales: The Fashioning of 97 Orchard Street” and Emma on “Folk Fiction: Yiddish and the Negotiation of Legacy in Germany after 1945.” We are also delighted for Collin Davis, who will graduate in May with the Jewish studies undergraduate degree and Liliana Gregory, our undergraduate student board member, who will graduate with a minor in Jewish Studies.

This spring we are also thankful to the private support we received, which enabled us to conduct a faculty search in American Jewish Studies. This position will help to fill an important gap in the range of courses we would like to offer in the future. We hope to have our new colleague at Carolina starting next semester. I look forward to providing you an update in the next edition of this newsletter.



**Karen M. Gil**  
Dean  
College of Arts  
and Sciences

## Message From the Dean

Dear Friends,

Your support for the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences has contributed to its being a vibrant place for learning, discovery and engagement at UNC-Chapel Hill. Here are some Center updates that I am delighted to share.

This fall we welcomed a new faculty member to campus: Andrea Dara Cooper, assistant professor and the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Fellow in Modern Jewish Thought and Culture in the Department of Religious Studies. Professor Cooper’s work emphasizes the medieval basis of modern Jewish thought, its interactions with contemporary theoretical interventions and the intersection of religious studies and critical theory. We now have 20 faculty members working in Jewish studies across the College, more than ever before.

Private support also aided our ability to increase the number of grants for research and travel this past year. These grants benefited not only faculty but also graduate and undergraduate students. Providing research and experiential learning opportunities for Carolina students has been one of my priorities as dean.

Equally important are the Center’s fellowships for incoming graduate students who have academic and research interests related to the field of Jewish Studies. These recruitment grants help keep us competitive when targeting outstanding prospective graduate students to study at Carolina.

Thanks to these and similar efforts, our graduate student network has grown to 20 students from nine academic departments who self-identify as working in Jewish Studies. Our graduate students are the teachers and scholars of Jewish thought and understanding of tomorrow, so support for them to advance their research is vital.

The Jewish Studies lecture series continues to be robust, drawing members of the general public as well as the campus community. November’s lecture on the history of bagels and falafel by Hebrew University professor Shaul Stampfer and January’s events on Soviet Jewish Women and Memory and Survival of the Holocaust, are just three examples of the breadth of these topics.

On behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences, I want to thank you for your commitment to the work of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.

# Faculty Profile

## Andrea Dara Cooper



In the midst of her first year on the faculty at Carolina, Andrea Dara Cooper, the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Fellow in Modern Jewish Thought and Culture, has had four new academic courses approved by the College that she will begin teaching in the next academic year: “Modern Jewish Thought” (RELI 224), “Post-Holocaust Ethics and Theology” (RELI 420), “Human Animals in Religion and Ethics” (RELI 79) and “The Sacrifice of Abraham” (RELI 426). Cooper also teaches “Introduction to Jewish Studies,” which acquaints students to the field of Jewish studies as a discipline that spans many academic subfields.

“I am very passionate about the field of Jewish Studies, which is by nature interdisciplinary and therefore provides an excellent liberal arts education that encompasses a wide variety of subjects in the humanities and social sciences,” said Cooper. “I enjoy having the opportunity to introduce students from various backgrounds to this exciting and growing field.”

Cooper earned her Ph.D. from the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University. During her graduate studies, she held a doctoral scholarship from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, the NYU-Cambridge Mainzer Visiting Fellowship at

the University of Cambridge Centre for Gender Studies in Cambridge, England, and was a doctoral scholar in residence at NYU’s Tikvah Center for Law & Jewish Civilization.

“My interests in Jewish studies began quite early on. Since my time at Hebrew Day School in Toronto, where I studied in Hebrew, French and Yiddish, I have been driven to explore a rich tradition of Jewish thought through a modern academic lens,” said Cooper. “I am very fortunate to be here at Carolina, in the department of Religious Studies, which offers such a comprehensive breadth and scope in its approach. I am also thrilled to be involved with the Center for Jewish Studies, which has a robust program of curricula and events.”

Cooper is currently working on her first book, which examines representations of the family in modern Jewish thought and explores issues of gender and ethics in the work of major figures in the field.

“I consider how their philosophical approaches are shaped by constructions of gender difference. By paying close attention to the theme of family, I focus on some of the more opaque and complicated aspects of these works, and bring them into conversation with contemporary issues,” said Cooper.

### New Course • ANTISEMITISM: HISTORY, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES

I was inspired to teach this course because there has been a resurgence of antisemitism in some parts of the world (including Belgium, where

I grew up) and I wanted to understand this phenomenon from a scholarly perspective. In this new class, I teach the

history of antisemitism from the middle ages to today, focusing on the different ways that antisemitism has manifested itself and how scholars have understood it. The students are



CASSEN

required to write a 20-25 page original research paper on an antisemitic incident. They work on a variety of topics, ranging from massacres of Jews during the crusades to the expulsion from Spain in 1492, to pogroms in 19th century Russia, to the Temple bombing in Atlanta in 1958. I hope that the students will learn the history of antisemitism and, more broadly, gain an understanding of the mechanisms and impacts of negatively stereotyping certain groups of people. I also hope that they will understand (by doing it) what it means to produce serious intellectual and scholarly work.

— *By Flora Cassen, JMA and Sonja van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture, and assistant professor, department of History*

### New First Year Seminar • ISRAELI POPULAR CULTURE – THE CASE OF MUSIC

This seminar is an introduction to the field of Israeli popular culture and is oriented toward students who are interested in learning about Israeli popular culture in a transnational and interdisciplinary frame. Focusing mainly on Israeli popular music, students will make a journey through different genres and styles that represent the cultural richness developed since early Zionism, going through deep social and cultural changes during the last two centuries. My idea for designing this course came directly from my experience researching and teaching Modern Hebrew. I believe that music increases students’ motivation and creates a



SPRINTZIK

news  
BRIEFS



# GRAD STUDENT profile

## Emma Woelk



Emma Woelk recently coordinated the Center's first lecture event geared specifically to graduate students—Andrew Bush, of Vassar College, visited Chapel Hill in October.

"I hope to see these events continue not only so graduate students help shape the intellectual environment but also so they bring in speakers who will be particularly relevant to our studies and our lives. For example, Professor Bush, who works in both Hispanic Studies and Jewish Studies, spoke to us about how to balance multiple research interests long term, as we move forward with our careers."

A study abroad program offering the opportunity to work in a German science lab seemed the ideal experience for Emma Woelk, then a junior at Vassar College who intended to build a science career. Instead, the program served as a wake-up call that changed the course of her life.

"I soon realized that what really interested me was not a science workbench, but German culture and history," said Woelk. "I ended up switching things around, to graduate with a major in German and a minor in biology."

Woelk began studying the German language in junior high school in Austin, Texas. After Vassar, she eventually made her way to Carolina, where she was impressed by the faculty and the interdisciplinary research opportunities.

Woelk's research focuses on Yiddish in post-war Germany, which has led her to New York City for intensive Yiddish language instruction, to Berlin to study Yiddish-language performances in post-war Germany, and even to Buenos Aires, to learn about an actress who worked in both Yiddish- and Spanish-language theater and film. Research and travel grants from the Center helped make these trips a possibility.

"I am exploring how, during the Cold War era, both East and West Germany used Yiddish in the arts as a way to establish its own culture and to

distinguish itself from the 'other' Germany," said Woelk. "I had been drawn to German-Jewish literature, but I didn't enter graduate school thinking of this research topic. My interest in East Germany, and the intersection of history and literature, led me to discuss research topics with Professor von Bernuth. She recalled seeing Yiddish performances in Protestant churches when she was growing up in East Germany and this seed led me to begin studying Yiddish and to pursue the topic for my dissertation."

Woelk, who is fluent in German and "working on" her Yiddish and Spanish, will graduate from Carolina in May with a Certificate in Jewish Studies\* along with her Ph.D. from the Carolina-Duke Graduate Program in German Studies. She has just accepted a tenure-track faculty position at Saint Edwards University in Austin, Texas, where she will continue her teaching and research, which will evolve to include the early 20th century.

"I am thrilled to go into teaching. I personally have gained so much out of knowing a foreign language—it's exciting to give that opportunity to others and to see how students will apply their language skills to various majors and careers," added Woelk. "I believe that learning other languages stimulates their thinking, and allows them to contemplate other cultures and to learn to be flexible."

\* Carolina's Jewish studies certificate program for graduate students is the first of its kind at any college or university in North Carolina. The program is available to degree seeking graduate students studying in the humanities and social sciences at Carolina. It includes opportunities for graduate students to explore Jewish languages, culture, literature and history in both their coursework and research endeavors. This May, two graduate students will be awarded the Certificate, Emma and Elissa Sampson.

sense of community and identity in the classroom. I also knew that UNC students would greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn and expand their knowledge about Israel, embarking a journey through lyrics and music, learning about the country, the history, and most importantly the Jewish people who made Israeli culture so unique. Student interest in the course was immediate and the course filled in a few hours. Hopefully, we will offer it again as a First Year seminar and perhaps as a regular course as well.

—By **Hanna Sprintzik**, lecturer in Modern Hebrew, Department of Asian Studies.

### HOLOCAUST IN THE SOVIET UNION

This January I was able to attend "A Research Introduction to the Holocaust in the Soviet Union," a seminar for advanced undergraduate and graduate students at the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington, DC. In 1941, the Soviet Union was home to the largest Jewish population in Europe. Following the German invasion of the Soviet Union, German mobile killing units and local collaborators killed over two million Soviet Jews, in what the French historian Patrick Dubois has referred to as the "Holocaust by bullets." Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, scholars were often denied access to the documents that detail one of the largest campaigns of mass murder during the Holocaust. Over the past two decades, the Holocaust Museum has been at the forefront of conducting and disseminating research on what was, until now, an often-overlooked part of the Holocaust. At the seminar, experts from the Holocaust museum's impressive staff introduced participants to a bevy of contemporary research on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Another major

component of the program was a comprehensive introduction the vast holdings in the Holocaust museum's library and archive. In addition to receiving an excellent introduction to conducting archival research, I was also able to spend time looking at documents related to my master's thesis, which will examine Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union to Germany after World War II. By the end of the seminar I had significantly broadened my area expertise, as well as my network of other junior scholars who are focusing on Jewish, Russian, and German history. On the way to catch my flight back to Chapel Hill, I was already pondering what I will do the next time at the museum.

—By **Max Lazar**, a first year graduate student in the department of History



# HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

## *to the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies*

### *July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014*

#### **GIVING SOCIETIES**

CORNERSTONE SOCIETY  
\$25,000 and above

CHANCELLORS' CIRCLE  
\$10,000 to \$24,999

CAROLINA SOCIETY  
\$5,000 to \$9,999

1793 SOCIETY  
\$2,000 to \$4,999

DEAN'S CIRCLE  
\$1,500 to \$1,999

#### **YOUNG ALUMNI LEVELS**

Gifts made by young alumni qualify for the DEAN'S CIRCLE when they meet the following criteria:

Students: \$250

Classes 2004-2008  
\$1000 and above

Classes 2009-2013  
\$500 and above

The Carolina Center for Jewish Studies in UNC's College of Arts and Sciences gratefully thanks the donors who have supported its students, faculty, and programs during the University's most recent fiscal year, which ran from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. The Center's Honor Roll recognizes donors who made gifts during this period to support its expendable or endowed funds and whose gifts qualify them for membership in one of the giving societies listed.

The Honor Roll does not include pledge balances, bequests, or other planned gifts to the Center for Jewish Studies. This list has been prepared with great care to ensure its accuracy. To report a mistake, please contact Shontel Grumhaus at (919) 962-6182 or shontel.grumhaus@unc.edu.

*Thank you, once again, for generously supporting the work of the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies.*

#### **Cornerston Society**

*\$25,000 and above*

Anonymous (1)

#### **Chancellor's Circle**

*\$10,000 to \$24,999*

Heather W. and Peter Boneparth, *Lawrence, NY*

Edith and Jonathan B. Fassberg, *New York, NY*

N. Jay Gould, *New York, NY*

Leonid Nevzlin, *Tel Aviv, Israel*

Helene Panzer and Stanley E. Schulman, *Westport, CT*

Rhonda A. and Robert H. Silver, *Montclair, NC*

Eric R. and Lori A. Sklut, *Charlotte, NC*

#### **Carolina Society**

*\$5,000 to \$9,000*

Hal A. and Holly H. Levinson, *Charlotte, NC*

Barbara and Philip V. Moss, *Allendale, NH*

James B. and Susan H. Pittleman, *McLean, VA*

Gary R. and Sandy M. Smiley, *Spartanburg, SC*

Linda and Peter F. Spies, *Monmouth Beach, NJ*

#### **1793 Society**

*\$2,000 to \$4,999*

Harvey Colchamiro, *Greensboro, NC*

Benjamin and Elizabeth W. Cone, *Greensboro, NC*

Henry A. Lowet, *Rye Brook, NY*

Bertram G. and Carol S. Minisman, *Birmingham, AL*

Harry M. Rosenberg, *Raleigh, NC*

Barbara J. and Peter W. Schneider, *Atlanta, GA*

David A. and Julie R. Sheffer, *Charlotte, NC*

Bradley Lewis and Lori B. Wittlin, *Houston, TX*

#### **Dean's Circle**

*\$1,500 to \$1,999*

Bari L. and Jeffrey A. Gorelick, *Charlotte, NC*

Felix Lurye, *New York, NY*

Joanne T. and Jonathan M. Rogoff, *Stillwater, MN*

Laura A. Schaffer, *Summit, NJ*

Kim and Robert A. Wainer, *Greensboro, NC*

#### **Corporations, Foundations and Trusts**

AIG Matching Gifts, *Jersey City, NJ*

Alfred J. Katzin Revocable Trust, *Cooper City, FL*

Alliant Energy Foundation Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*

American Express Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*

BP Foundation Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*

Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, *Chattanooga, TN*

Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, *Memphis, TN*

Community Foundation of New Jersey, *Morristown, NJ*

Cumberland Community Foundation, *Fayetteville, NC*

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, *Cincinnati, OH*

Foundation for the Carolinas, *Charlotte, NC*

Hearn Burkley Commercial, *Columbia, MD*

IBM Corporation Matching Gifts, *RTP, NC*

Jewish Communal Fund, *New York, NY*

Jewish Community Fdn of Metrowest NJ, *Whippany, NJ*

Jewish Community Fdn-Durham/Chapel Hill, *Durham, NC*

Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, *Atlanta, GA*

Jewish Foundation of Greensboro, *Greensboro, NC*

Lawrence J Goldrich Foundation, *Virginia Beach, VA*

Leon Levine Foundation, *Charlotte, NC*

Levy Family Foundation, *Savannah, GA*

Lucius N Littauer Foundation, *New York, NY*

Pepsico Matching Gifts, *Purchase, NY*

Peter J. Frenkel Foundation, Inc., *Rye, NY*

Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*

Philanthropic Fund of Akron Jewish Community, *Akron, OH*

Ryna & Melvin Cohen Family Foundation, *Beltsville, MD*

Silver Family Foundation, *Montclair, NJ*

SunTrust Bank Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*

The Robinson Foundation, Inc., *Greensboro, NC*

The Stuart S & Birdie Gould Foundation, *New York, NY*

The Trout Group, LLC, *New York, NY*

William A Stern Foundation, *Greensboro, NC*

Xcel Energy Foundation Matching Gifts, *Princeton, NJ*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Our 2014 – 2015 public events, encompassing evening lectures, lunchtime academic seminars, film screenings, and the Uhlman Family Seminar, have come to a conclusion and we thank all of you who joined us.

We are now busy planning next year's event program. Speakers, topics and dates will be listed in the next edition of this newsletter, posted on our Web site and social media outlets, and promoted in advance to our list serv members.

If you'd like to receive updates about upcoming events, please join our list serv by emailing us at [ccjs@unc.edu](mailto:ccjs@unc.edu). In the email message, please provide both your email and mailing addresses.

## *Faculty and Student Grant Awards 2014-2015*

Thanks to generous private support, this year the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies was able to offer numerous funding awards to undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty.

Funding for these awards was made possible by the Jack O. Spies and Family Jewish Studies Fund, the Howard R. Levine Student Excellence Fund, the Cohen Excellence Fund, the Kaminsky Jewish Fund, the Tau Epsilon Phi Fund, the Shapiro/ZBT Undergraduate Research Fund, the Advisory Board Director's Expendable Fund, and the Fund for Jewish Studies.

**UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND TRAVEL AWARD:** **Stephanie Grant** and **Sarah Hanvy**, to participate in the excavation in Huqoq.

**CHRISTOPHER BROWNING HOLOCAUST STUDIES RESEARCH AND TRAVEL AWARD:** **Caroline Nilsen**, to research the legacy of the SS Lebensborn Program in Norway.

**GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AND TRAVEL AWARDS:** **Travis Alexander**, to research architectural photographer Julius Shulman in Los Angeles; **Brian Bozung**, **Brian Coussens**, **David Culclasure**, **Bradley Erickson**, and **Daniel Schindler** to participate in the Huqoq Excavation; **Sam Kessler**, to research the life and work of Adolf Jellinek; **Scott Krause**, to research German Jewish refugees and Cold War Berlin politics; **Max Lazar**, to research Berlin's German-Jewish community and Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union; **Allison Somogyi**, to research Budapest's Jewish community under Nazi occupation.

**GRADUATE STUDENT SUMMER STIPEND:** **Robin Buller**, to travel to Greece for language classes and to research linguistic minorities in the Holocaust; **Josh Parshall**, to research Yiddish-speaking immigrants in the American South.

**FACULTY RESEARCH AND TRAVEL AWARDS:** **Karen Auerbach**, to research Polish Jewish publishing families; **Andrea Cooper**, to present her research at the Association

for Jewish Studies Conference in Baltimore; **Jodi Magness**, to aid in publishing a final report on her excavations in the Late Roman fort at Yotvata, Israel; **Evyatar Marienberg**, to travel to Israel to conduct research on the history of traditional Jewish sexual guidance.

**FACULTY COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT AWARDS:** **Yaron Shemer**, to bring Israeli filmmaker David Fisher to campus and host a public screening; **Hanna Sprintzik**, to develop new course materials for upcoming study abroad courses taught in Argentina; **Shai Tamari**, to take students in his course on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to meet policy makers and diplomats in DC.

**CAROLINA CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP:** This non-service fellowship supports a graduate student working in Jewish Studies in the advanced stages of his or her career at Carolina. The recipient of the fellowship for the academic year 2015-2016 is **Sarah Workman**. Her dissertation explores contemporary Jewish-American authors' use of fantasy to represent the Holocaust in their work.

**GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT FELLOWSHIPS:** These fellowships offer a \$5,000 stipend to enhance what departments are able to offer when recruiting prospective graduate students. Departments nominate prospective graduate students who have an academic and/or research interest related to the field of Jewish Studies. Applications for the 2015-2016 academic year are currently under review.