This semester was my last before retirement. Eighteen years ago, as a late bloomer and newly minted Ph.D., I began my career as an adjunct. I was traveling 100 miles a day to teach five courses a semester, just to make ends meet! As a folklorist with a specialty in Judaics, I did my best to network, and along the way I prepared a mini-exhibition and oral presentation for The Temple Tifereth Israel. There, I met Peter Haas, then transitioning to the old Department of Religion at CWRU. “How’d you like to teach for me at Case?” he asked. I would have crawled under the ocean for that opportunity! Happily, crawling under the ocean wasn’t part of the hiring process, so in 2003, when Peter stepped up as Department Chair, I began teaching here; first as a part-time lecturer, then as a full-time lecturer, and finally as Co-Director of the nascent Judaic Studies Program.

What exciting years those were! We became the new Department of Religious Studies and in 2004, began offering a Judaic Studies minor. We hosted a Midwest Jewish Studies Association conference, received funding to expand library holdings, research travel and speaking engagements, all generating valuable exposure for the Program. We formed a Steering Committee, created enriching programs for students, and in 2008, published the first issue of the JDST eJournal. We added an endowed Professorship in 2010, and when Jay Geller was hired by the History Department, he was able to join the Program. Peter retired in 2016, and in 2019, Alanna Cooper joined us.

There were career milestones for me, as well. In 2000, my dissertation research was written up in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *Ha’aretz*. Then in 2004 my ethnographic research was confirmed by independent genetic research at Stanford University and NYU. This led to publication, and to follow-up research funded by the National Institutes of Health through The Center for Genetic Research Ethics and Law. Several publications resulted (one in its third reprint), including a chapter in *Jews and Genes*, first runner-up for The National Jewish Book Award, recently reprinted in Hebrew. Over the years I was honored more than once for my teaching at CWRU, and above all, I will miss my students.

By now I have been over-joyed in my career, but also—I confess—a bit over-Jewed. My inner folklorist could not resist the siren song of local folklore, resulting in a contract with Indiana University Press for my forthcoming book, *Folklore of Lake Erie*, a joy to write, hopefully a joy to read, and the perfect portal to an exciting new future.

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**featured Faculty**

Prof. Judith Neulander

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**student Awards**

- Caroline Kuntzman
- Emily Cala
- Ari Howard
- Grace Schaller

**student Essay**

- Shane Cooley

**On/Off Campus**

- Peter Haas
- New book

**Courses of Interest**

**Sampling of Paper Titles**

- Lina Wiley
- W. Harrison Smith
- Sophia Cos
- Lauren Spitzman
- Elizabeth Hanna
- Maxwell Speil
- Tim Fry
- Blanche Spiner
- Sasha Grinevich
- Zachary Courtney
- Kimberly Armbruster

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**JDST Information**

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   Phone: (216) 368-2210
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Student Awards and Honors

The Ira and Ruth Bressler Prize
To a student who has done outstanding work in the area of Jewish Studies.

Hometown: Grand Rapids, MI
Academic interests: History and Political Science
Extracurricular Activities: I am a member of CWRU’s Model UN team where I currently serve as Head Delegate, Education Director of the Theta Zeta chapter of Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority, a Student Fellow at the Alliance for Citizen’s Engagement, and I write a biweekly column in The Observer.

The Eudese and Elmer Paull Prizes
To one or several undergraduate or graduate students who demonstrate an interest in Jewish Studies or Jewish contemporary life.

Hometown: Beachwood, OH
Academic Interests: Criminal Law, Juvenile Law, Public Interest Law, and Human Trafficking Advocacy
Extracurricular Activities: I have been the President and VP of the Jewish Law Students Association over the past two years, and have completed over 100 pro bono hours during my time in law school. I also participated in the Human Trafficking Practicum and Death Penalty Lab this year.

Hometown: Jacksonville, FL
Academic Interests: Music Technology
Extracurricular Activities: I play guitar in the Case Jazz Band and have a Jazz combo that plays shows in Cleveland. I love participating in Hillel programs and strive to be the conversation starter within my community to maintain a dialogue that prioritizes intersectionality and mutual understanding.

Hometown: Wilton, CT
Academic interest: Mechanical Engineering
Extracurricular activities: Vice President of Society of Women Engineers at CWRU
Who Wrote the Five Books of Moses?
Shane Cooley
Recognition for Outstanding Achievement

The Five Books of Moses comprise The Pentateuch, the first five books of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. These five books, known as the Torah in Jewish tradition, include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Among Orthodox Jews and Conservative Christians, it is widely understood that Moses himself wrote the Torah, as dictated by God. However, recent information from applied linguistics, which compares elements of writing style to determine possible authorship, indicates that multiple authors may have written the Torah. This hypothesis, titled The Documentary Hypothesis, cites four authors referred to as J (Jahwist), E (Elohist), P (Priestly), and D (Deutoronomist) (Baden 2012). In this connection, a bulla, or clay seal now on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, may be the signature of one of these authors.

The practice of applied linguistics can be easily explained by comparing old English to modern English. For instance, if one came upon a book written in Shakespearian prose, then by simply analyzing the style of the text itself one would know the book was likely written much earlier than say, a Harry Potter book. The same principle applies when analyzing the Five Books of Moses. If the writing in one book is more similar to older language styles, one can assume that the specific book belongs to an earlier age. Further, if text from a confirmed author is compared to more than one passage or more than one book, and the prose matches (e.g. distinct figures of speech or patterns of speech) then it can be assumed that the author may be the same person (Coulthard 2004).

Some have argued that applied linguistics is not a valid form of determining identity, theorizing that there are too many similarities in language to properly pinpoint who a specific author might be. But in practice, this very same method of analysis was used by the US Government to catch the Unabomber with practically zero other clues as to Ted Kaczynski’s identity (Coulthard 2004). Since then, the discipline of applied linguistics has been used much more often and has gained respect as a valid form of research. Similarly, the authenticity of the clay seal also faced robust challenges, but according to Christopher Eames (2020), by 2016 all such challenges had been convincingly disputed.

The J and E strands of the Documentary Hypothesis are thought to have been written in the Kingdom of Judah following the destruction of Israel by Assyria, then led by Sargon II, ~720 BCE. The P strand is thought to have been written to help aid in centralizing religious reform during the rule of King Hezekiah, ~700 BCE (Blenkinsopp 2007). It is also likely that priests helped to write this book as it mainly deals with the priestly class and issues of how they should conduct themselves (Baden 2012). The D strand was conceived during the rule of King Josiah, ~620 BCE, and it lays out many rules for how one should conduct one’s self religiously in society (Blenkinsopp 2007). It is suspiciously convenient that when the “lost” Book of Deuteronomy was purportedly “discovered” during Josiah’s reign, Judah was becoming increasingly pagan, the people were splintered, and the situation was highly unstable. Deuteronomy served to define religious procedure and effectively united Judah under a common practice. This unification undoubtedly made King Josiah’s rule more secure and easier to manage, providing Judah with basic societal norms that ultimately strengthened the kingdom as a whole (Barker 2004).

Some linguistic scholars suggest that King Josiah’s scribe, Baruch ben Neriah, was the author of Deuteronomy. Interestingly enough, Deuteronomy’s writing style also coincides with the Book of Jeremiah, the second of the Latter Prophets in the Hebrew Scripture, and the second of the Prophets in the Christian Old Testament (Mastnjak 2016). Therefore, the author of both Deuteronomy, and at least some portions of Jeremiah, was likely King Josiah’s scribe, Baruch ben Neriah. This notion is all the more intriguing because the ancient clay bulla, now on display at the Israel Museum, bears his seal. The bulla is impossible to authenticate 100 percent, since there is no excavated parallel, and because it emerged on the antiquities market and not under academic supervision. But according to Eames (2020), the most current evidence points to its legitimacy, which strongly suggests we now have the name and signature of one of the authors of the The Five Books of Moses.
As we have seen, The Documentary Hypothesis challenges the traditional belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, indicating that the books were actually written by at least four distinct authors over an extended period of time. Through the years this hypothesis has been challenged for legitimacy, just as the authenticity of the bulla imprinted with Baruch ben Neriah’s seal has been challenged. But, ultimately, most scholars agree that more than one author contributed to the Torah, and Baruch ben Neriah is most likely one of them.

References Cited


Feedback on the fall 2020 eJournal:

Congrats on getting an eJournal out in the midst of the pandemic. I just read it and it’s great. Alanna Cooper’s front article was very engaging and exciting. And I loved Blanche Spiner’s student paper on Matza Balls—I had never heard of the “Gefilte Fish” line. I guess there’s always more to learn.

Nice job!

Peter J. Haas
Abba Hillel Silver Professor Emeritus
Shaker Heights, Ohio

Coming Later This Year!

Folklore of Lake Erie by Judith S. Neulander
Indiana University Press

Folklore consists of items with already proven intrigue, bridging gaps of gender, generation, class and ethnicity. This book will familiarize readers with the largely undocumented folklore of Lake Erie from the 17th century to the present, demonstrating how folklorists gain access to the spirit and mentality of a people, place or age, using expressive behavior generated, modified and maintained in local traditions. All readers will come to see what has, and has not, remained unique to a community shaped by a great and foreboding inland sea, and to the extent that readers everywhere can relate to this highly relatable material, some will come to see themselves as well.
Courses of Interest for Fall 2021

**JDST 173**
*Introducing Judaism*
Alanna Cooper

This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Judaism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Jewish religious tradition, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts around the world. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Festivals and Holy Days, Women and Gender, Jewish Ethics. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Offered as RLGN 173 and JDST 173.

**JDST 389**
*History of Zionism*
Jay Geller

This course seeks to elucidate the major strands of Zionism, their origins, how they have interacted, and their impact on contemporary Israeli society. These may include political Zionism, cultural Zionism, socialist (labor) Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, and religious Zionism. This course will also examine the differences in the appeal of Zionism to Jews in different places, such as Western Europe, Eastern Europe and the United States. Offered as HSTY 389 and JDST 389.

For courses in Hebrew and Arabic visit the Modern Languages and Literatures website:
http://www.case.edu/arts/dmll/

6 JDST eJournal Spring 2021
Sampling of Final Paper Titles

A sampling of Student Paper Titles over the past four years of the JDST eJournal
An indication of the diverse interests among students in the Judaic Studies Program

2017
Women at the Well: The Bible, the Grimms and Disney
Lina Wiley

Prophetic Dreams in Torah, Tales and Popular Culture
W. Harrison Smith

Borat: A 21st Century Trickster through a Jewish Lens
Sophia Cos

2018
Jewish “Folk” Genetics: Racialization of a Religious Group
Lauren Spitzman

Feminine Influence on the Material Culture of Passover
Elizabeth Hanna

2019
Unidentified Flying Racists: The Tight Link between Bigotry and UFOlogy
Maxwell Speil

How Perceptions of God Shape Expectations of the Afterlife
Tim Fry

2020
The Four Functions of Matzah Ball Soup
Blanche Spiner

The Rare and Spectacular Image of Powerful Women in Jewish Folktales
Sasha Grinevich

Yaakov Agam: Making the Unseen Visible
Zachary Courtney
By bringing a variety of fields and disciplines to bear on its subject, the Judaic Studies Program at Case Western Reserve University conveys to students the complex interaction of forces that create Jewish ethnic identity. Students completing the program will have a broad knowledge of the field along with the tools necessary for continued academic study of Jewish civilization in all its manifestations.

Support the Program in Judaic Studies

Please consider supporting the Program in Judaic Studies as we continue building on our achievements. You can contribute to our success by making a gift to the College of Arts and Sciences. Your gift allows us to continue to offer opportunities for our students to excel academically and to conduct important research. You can give online at:

giving.case.edu

In spring 2021 students joined a virtual Writers Center Stage event featuring Yotam Ottolenghi, celebrity chef, restaurateur and author of award-winning books on vegetarian cooking, including his famous Jerusalem: A Cookbook (2012 with Sami Tamimi).