‘BEYOND ANNE FRANK’ & other intriguing topics

The University of Minnesota Center for Jewish Studies is pleased to present its Seventh Annual Community Lecture Series, in cooperation with synagogues, community centers, and sponsoring partners across Minneapolis and St. Paul. Join us as writers and thinkers from varied fields address intriguing questions relevant to the Jewish experience today.

This series is made possible by a generous gift in memory of Julia K. & Harold Segall. Events are free and open to the public. A reception follows each.

The Center for Jewish Studies is a premier center for scholarship, education, and dialogue about Jewish history and culture. With 24 faculty members, the center is an intellectual hub for scholars from diverse fields. Home to an undergraduate program in Jewish studies, the center sponsors classes and conferences, promotes research, supports emerging scholars, partners with the community on cultural activities, and creates bridges for community dialogue.

BEYOND ANNE FRANK: Hidden Children and Jewish Families in Postwar Holland
DIANE WOLF, University of California, Davis

Children placed with non-Jewish families during the Nazi occupation of Holland went on to have survivor experiences markedly different from the experiences of those who suffered in concentration camps. Most found the war years tolerable, but the postwar years traumatic. Drawing on more than 70 survivor interviews, Diane Wolf analyzes the shifting identities, memories, and family dynamics that marked the post-war lives of hidden children and their Jewish families; she also examines the role of the Dutch state and populace in the deportation of over 70 percent of the Jewish population.

Diane Wolf is professor of sociology and director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of California, Davis. Her work focuses on gender and family dynamics amid structural change. Her books include Beyond Anne Frank: When Sociology Confronts the Holocaust (co-edited with Judith Gerson), and Factory Daughters (Honored with the American Sociological Association’s Jessen-Berard Award).

October 4, 2010 • 7:30 p.m., St. Paul JCC
1375 St. Paul Avenue, St. Paul • 651-698-0751
Co-sponsors: U of M Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Department of German, Scandinavian, & Dutch; St. Paul JCC; Children of Holocaust Survivors Association in Minnesota (CHAIM)

A TEST-CASE FOR HUMANITY: Albert Einstein’s Vision of Zionism and Peace
OFER ASHKENAZI, University of Minnesota

By the end of the 1920s Albert Einstein was known worldwide as a devoted supporter of two radical ideologies, pacifism and Zionism. Offer Ashkenazi examines the objectives of Einstein’s 1930 proposal for Jewish-Arab co-existence in Palestine. This proposal and Einstein’s private letters offer an alternative vision of Zionism—one rejected by the Zionist movement throughout the years, but which seems to have influence on Israeli politics today.

Offer Ashkenazi will spend 2010-11 at the University of Minnesota as the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor in Israel Studies in the Department of History and the Center for Jewish Studies. He has taught modern European and Israeli History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has been a visiting lecturer at other institutions. He is the author of A Walk into the Night: Madness and Subjectivity in Weimar Film and many studies on the history of German and Israeli film and Zionism culture in pre-1948 Israel.

November 8, 2010 • 7:30 p.m., Adath Jeshurun Congregation
10500 Hillsdale Lane W., Minnetonka • 952-454-2524
Co-sponsors: Jay Phillips Center for Interfaith Learning, Adath Jeshurun Congregation, U of M Hillel, Hadassah Upper Midwest Region, U of M Department of History, Sabes Jewish Community Center

WHY SOME ASK WHY: Jews, Psychology, and the Reaffirmation of Moral Judgment
EARL SCHWARTZ, Hamline University

By the middle of the 20th century leading psychologists had largely abandoned the idea that moral reasoning was a primary psychological process. Two young researchers, Lawrence Kohlberg and Stanley Milgram, played pivotal roles in restablishing the psychological significance of moral judgment. Both would observe that their Jewish roots were crucial in inspiring and shaping their efforts. Exploring the relationship between their life stories and their work can help us to better understand “why some ask why.”

Earl Schwartz is on the religious faculty at Hamline University and directs Hamline’s Social Justice Program. He is the author of Moral Development: A Practical Guide for Jewish Teachers and co-author (with Rabbi Barry Cryton) of When Life is in the Balance: Life and Death Decisions in the Light of Jewish Tradition.

March 7, 2011 • 7:30 p.m., Temple Israel
2324 Emerson Avenue S., Minneapolis • 612-377-8880
Co-sponsors: Talmud Torah of St. Paul, Sabes Jewish Community Center, Temple Israel

HAVE FRENCH JEWS TURNED RIGHT? Anti-Semitism, Israel, and Ideological Change in France
BRUNO CHAOUAT, University of Minnesota

Since 9/11 and the second intifada, the Left has often charged Jews with becoming increasingly right-wing. This charge is based on the support of Jews for Israel and the United States, both deemed reactionary countries by many on the Left in France and Europe. Bruno Chaouat analyzes whether French Jews have turned to the Right by examining debates among those on the Left and by exploring the reactions of the French Jewish community to recent waves of anti-Semitic violence in relation to the Middle East conflict.

Bruno Chaouat is associate professor of French and Jewish studies and director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota. His publications include a book on Chateaubriand and autobiography, many articles on 19th-century French literature, edited volumes on shame and terror, and essays on anti-Semitism and Holocaust testimony in France. He is now completing a book project titled ”French Envy: France After Anti-Semitism.”

February 10, 2011 • 7:30 p.m., Temple of Aaron Synagogue
616 S. Mississippi River Boulevard, St. Paul • 651-698-8874
Co-sponsors: U of M Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, U of M Hillel, Temple of Aaron, St. Paul JCC, United Jewish Fund and Council

DISCREDITING THE BIBLE, REDISCOVERING TORAH: Modern Judaism Encounters with Biblical Criticism
MARA BENJAMIN, St. Olaf College

The challenge to biblical authority, starting in the 17th century, was critical to the development of modern political and intellectual life; it paved the way for the Enlightenment and for democratic government and pluralistic nation-states. But it had serious repercussions for religion. Mara Benjamin examines the special significance that the critique of biblical authority had for Judaism’s textual traditions, and thinkers have argued for a robust embrace of the Torah in Jewish life alongside their embrace of biblical criticism.

Mara Benjamin is assistant professor of religion at St. Olaf College. She previously held the Hazel D. Cole Fellowship in Jewish Studies at the University of Washington and the Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Postdoctoral Fellowship in Jewish Studies at Yale University. A specialist on modern Jewish thought, she is the author of Ransoming the Bible: Reinvigorating Scripture for Jewish Modernity.

December 8, 2010 • 7:30 p.m., Beth Jacob Congregation
1179 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights • 651-452-2226
Co-sponsors: U of M Classical & Near Eastern Studies, Religious Studies Program; St. Paul JCC, United Jewish Fund and Council; Beth Jacob Congregation

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More Events

Photo by Dawn Villella

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has been a visiting lecturer at other institutions. He is the author of "Ransoming the Bible: Reinvigorating Scripture for Jewish Modernity."
Battlefield ethics is among the hardest issue any legal system confronts because the starting point is that there are situations in which you can kill innocent people on the battlefield. Michael Broyde explores when, if, and how people may be killed in the course of battle in the Jewish tradition. This issue has implications both for the Israeli military and for Jewish soldiers outside of Israel.

Michael Broyde is professor of law at Emory University and the academic director of Emory’s Law and Religion Program. He is also a dayan (member) of the Beth Din of America, the country’s largest Jewish law court, and was the founding rabbi of the Young Israel synagogue in Atlanta. He has published 5 books and more than 75 articles on various aspects of law and religion and Jewish law. His most recent book is Innovation in Jewish Law: A Case Study of Chiddush in Havineinu.

April 28, 2011    7:30 p.m., Beth El Synagogue
5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park    952-920-3512
Co-sponsors: Congregation Darchei Noam, Cardozo Society, Sabes Jewish Community Center