

Jacob Perlow Series (2017-2026)

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Bread & Torah

March 2026, Falstaffs, Dining Hall, Wyckoff Center

Three workshops with Rabbi Linda Motzkin and Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein: a documentary screening of “This is How a Torah is Written” followed by a Q & A session with Rabbi Motzkin and student participation in a Torah Proof Reading; Rabbi Rubenstein and students prepared traditional Jewish baked goods for a Shabbat celebration and discussed Mitzvot in action; and Rabbi Motzkin taught about sacred stories behind the Hebrew letters and led an amulet writing workshop using ink and parchment. Organized by the Office of Jewish Student Life/Office of Campus Life and Engagement with funding support from the Jacob Perlow fund.

Modernity and Jewish Life at the End of the Ottoman Empire: A Conversation

February 2026, Wyckoff Center

Murat Yildiz (History) engaged with guest scholar Dina Danon, Associate Professor of Judaic Studies and History at Binghamton University. Co-sponsored by the departments of History, International Affairs, and Religious Studies.

Journalism During Turbulent Times

October 2025, Wyckoff Center

Israeli journalist, broadcaster, and media historian Gilad Halpern participated in a public conversation on “Podcasting the Middle East: Tel Aviv Review” and gave a lecture on “The Role of Journalism in Times of Crisis: Israel, the Middle East, and Beyond.” Halpern’s residency included class visits, a lunchtime conversation with students, and the recording at Skidmore of a podcast episode. Co-sponsored with the departments of History, Political Science, International Affairs, and MDOCS.

CHAIA – Days of Intonement

September 2025, Tang Museum

Klezmer-techno fusion artist CHAIA appeared at Days of Intonement, a space for music, sound, and reflection during the Jewish High Holidays. CHAIA offered a hands-on Kleztronica workshop and a DJ set performance. Organized by MDOCS with co-sponsorship by Media and Film Studies and the Tang Museum and with funding support from the Jacob Perlow fund.

This Is Your Song Too: Phish and Contemporary Jewish Identity

March 2024, Emerson Auditorium

Skidmore alumni Oren Kroll-Zeldin '03 and Ariella Werden-Ryan '04 gave a book talk on their new co-edited work *This Is Your Song Too: Phish and Contemporary Jewish Identity* (Penn State University Press, 2023). Proposed by Ryan Overbey (Religious Studies) and co-sponsored by the Religious Studies Department and the Music Department.

Accessing the Sacred: Creating Torah and Art

February-March 2024, Payne Room in the Tang Museum

Rabbi Linda Motzkin presented a multipart series: a lecture on “Women and the Making of Torah” about women’s involvement in the Jewish scribal tradition and the process of Torah production; a display of Rabbi Linda’s scribal art accompanied by an artist’s talk; and a hands-on educational workshop in which students, faculty, staff, and the public were invited to take part in the Community Torah Project by helping with the preparation of a local deerskin for use as parchment. Proposed by Alexandra Prince & Gregory Spinner (Religious Studies) and co-sponsored by the Religious Studies Department and the Tang

Teaching Museum with additional support by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, American Studies Department, History Department, and John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative.

Joseph Alpar: Jewish history and the Music of the Ottoman Middle East

October and November 2024, Zankel

Ethnomusicologist, performer, and educator Joseph Alpar offered a series of workshops and a performance exploring the intertwined histories of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Ottoman Empire through music. Co-sponsored by the departments of Music, Environmental Studies and Sciences, Religious Studies, Political Science, and History.

Creation Care and the Climate Crisis: What can we do? A Jewish Perspective

October 2023, Gannett Auditorium and across campus

A residency and lecture by Madeline Hirschland, Executive Director of Creation Care Partners, on climate crisis, social justice, and faith communities. Activities included a multi-faith congregational workshop, a workshop for climate change/activism with Skidmore students, and class visits in Environmental Studies and Sciences and in Religious Studies. Proposed by Nurcan Atalan-Helicke (Environmental Studies and Sciences) and co-sponsored by the Environmental Studies and Sciences program, Religious Studies Department, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, Skidmore Hillel, Skidmore Environmental Action Club, Temple Sinai, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs, and Presbyterian United Church.

Comedy for Peace

September 2023, Filene Recital Hall

Comedy for Peace features Muslim, Jewish, and Christian stand-up comedians and aims to unite Jewish and Muslim communities through humor and mutual understanding. Co-sponsored by the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

Reimagining Jewish Life in the Middle East and North Africa, 1800-Present

October 2022, Davis Auditorium

A lecture by Lior Sternfeld, associate professor of history and Jewish Studies at Penn State, on narrating Jewish life in the modern Middle East. Proposed and introduced by Murat Yildiz (History). Co-sponsored by the History Department.

Jews and Latinos: Unlikely Partners

October 2022, Gannett Auditorium

A lecture by Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor of Humanities, Latin American, and Latino Culture at Amherst College. Co-Sponsored by Dean of Students Office, Latin American, Caribbean, and Latinx Studies Program, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and the President's Racial Justice Initiative.

Two Truths in One Heart; Two Peoples in One Land

November 2021, Gannett Auditorium

Shadi Abu Awwad and Rabbi Hanan Schlesinger of Roots/Shorashim/Judur shared personal, interconnected stories and presented the challenging grassroots work of the unique collaboration of Palestinians and Israelis that is Roots/Shorashim Judur. Co-sponsored by the President's Racial Justice Initiative, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, Office of Student Diversity Programs, and Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity.

Israel's Multiculturalism

April 2019, Gannett Auditorium

Lian Ryan-Hume, Israel's first Arab Rhodes Scholar, grew up in a liberal Muslim family, attended a Christian high school, and volunteered in a reform Jewish community center. She spoke of celebrating Israel's multicultural character. Co-sponsored by Jewish Student Life.

Seven Myths About the Holocaust

April 2019, Gannett Auditorium

A presentation by Werner Reich, author, magician, and survivor. Co-sponsored by Jewish Student Life and the Office of Student Diversity Programs, with a generous donation from the Dolores Kohl Educational Foundation.

Kosher/Soul?: Black-Jewish Identity Cooking

March 2019, Filene Recital Hall

Food-blogger, culinary historian, and author Michael Twitty lectured as part of a three-day campus residency that also included a public conversation on "Sugar, Slavery, and Power" with Rachel Seligman, Assistant Director for Curatorial Affairs and Malloy Curator at the Tang Teaching Museum. Twitty is a culinary historian personally charged with preparing, preserving, and promoting African American foodways. His cooking and promoting efforts trace the parent traditions of these foodways in Africa and her Diaspora and its legacy in the food culture of the American South. Co-sponsored with the Environmental Studies and Sciences Program, Tang Teaching Museum, Sustainability Office, Intergroup Relations, and the English Department.

***In Her Footsteps* by documentarian Rana Abu Fraiha**

February 2019, Gannett Auditorium

A screening of award-winning Israeli documentarian Rana Abu Fraiha's film *In Her Footsteps* followed by an interview with Sarah Friedland, director of MDOCS Storytellers Institute. The evening was proposed and introduced by Murat Yildiz, Assistant Professor of History. Co-sponsored with History, MDOCS, International Affairs, Political Science, Gender Studies, Religious Studies, Hillel, Muslim Students Association, and the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

From the East Side to the West Side: The Jewish West Side Story

October 2018, Arthur Zankel Music Center, Helen Filene Ladd Hall

A lecture presented by Elizabeth A. Wells, Dean of Arts and Pickard-Bell Chair in Music at Mount Allison University. Co-sponsored by the Music Department and introduced by Sarah Day-O'Connell (Music).

Jews, Muslims, and Music in the 20th Century Maghrib: A History in Three Records

October 2018, Gannett Auditorium

A multi-media lecture presentation by Chris Silver, Segal Family Assistant Professor in Jewish History and Culture in the Department of Jewish Studies at McGill University. Proposed and introduced by Murat Yildiz (History).

The Power of Palestine: Imperishable in a Transnational World

September 2018, Davis Auditorium

Karam Dana, Associate Professor of Middle East Politics and Islamic Studies at the University of Washington Bothell presented a critical analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a standing-room only audience. Feryaz Ocakli (Political Science) proposed the lecture and introduced the talk.

Gaga: The Movement Language of Physical Research

April 2018, Dance Theater

A residency based on campus-wide participation in Gaga, the language and exploration of physical research developed by the artistic director of Israel's acclaimed Batsheva Dance Company, Ohad Naharin. Culminating in a performance of Naharin's seminal work *Echad Mi Yodea* set on students of the Skidmore Dance Department, the Gaga residency is designed to facilitate a campus-wide physical dialogue surrounding themes in modern Israeli and Jewish culture such as identity, otherness, and humanity. Co-sponsored with the Dance Department.

Inhabiting/Excavating/Sustaining: Understanding *This Place*

March 2018, Tang Museum

A public round-table dialogue inspired by the Tang's exhibition *This Place* to foreground the distinctly Jewish perspective on the land of Israel. This conversation brings together scholar Paul Mendes-Flohr, the Dorothy Grant Maclear Professor of Modern Jewish History and Thought at the University of Chicago Divinity School; archaeologist Jodi Magness, the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism at UNC-Chapel Hill; and international consultant Michael Ben-Eli, founder of the Sustainability Laboratory. Together they will lead a public conversation about "this place" through three interrelated lenses: the identities and communities that inhabit the land, understanding the land through its archaeology, and the complex environmental issues around sustaining the land. Co-presented with the Tang Museum.

Recalling Jewish Calcutta

November 2017, Davis Auditorium

A lecture by Jael Silliman Scholar, author, and curator of www.jewishcalcutta.in with an introduction by Yelena Biberman-Ocakli (Political Science). Co-sponsored by the Political Science Department and MDOCS.

Reclaiming My Dignity: A Talk with a Palestinian Refugee and Human Rights Activist

October 2017, Gannett Auditorium

World-renowned Palestinian-Muslim human rights activist and political analyst Bassem Eid was born and lived in a Palestinian refugee camp. In this talk, he shares his opinions on some of the problems the Palestinian people face and discusses options for the future. Co-presented with Skidmore Hillel, Skidmore Christian Fellowship, HAYAT, and the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.

The Long Struggle for Israel-Palestine

October 2017, Davis Auditorium

A lecture by Jeremy Pressman, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of Middle East Studies at the University of Connecticut with an introduction by Feryaz Ocakli (Political Science). Ending the struggle for Israel-Palestine would require Israeli and Palestinian concessions. This talk considered the one-state and two-state solutions, their differences, the pros and cons of each option, and the obstacles standing in the way of realizing a resolution.

The Invention of Judaism: Torah and Jewish Identity

September 2017, Davis Auditorium

A lecture by John J. Collins, Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale University with an introduction by Gregory Spinner (Religious Studies).

Wrestling with the Dead: Making Art in the Aftermath

June 2017, Tang Museum

Acclaimed graphic novelist Leela Corman spoke about her experience making art and of art's relationship to terrible events in a talk introduced by Gregory Spinner (Religious Studies).

Baruch Spinoza Lectures

February and March 2017, Davis Auditorium

In conjunction with the departments of Philosophy and Religious Studies, the Perlow Series presented a series of three lectures on Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) focusing on his life, his philosophy, and the relation of both to Judaism. Guest lecturers from Johns Hopkins, Yale, and McGill universities presented public lectures, visited Philosophy classes, and conversed over shared meals with our faculty and students. Lectures were introduced by William Lewis and Larry Jorgensen (Philosophy).