Shalom Haverim –

This has been an exciting year for the Judaic Studies Department at the University of Cincinnati. We made excellent progress in achieving our ambitious strategic plan; we hired Assistant Professor Michal Raucher, a rising star in Judaic Studies; we made our research known nationally and internationally by presenting scholarly papers at conferences and by publishing our research; we taught an array of exciting Judaic Studies courses; and we fostered new partnerships across campus and in the community.

The long-running and popular Jacob and Jennie L. Lichter Lectures were especially exciting this year as we explored the topic, “Foodaism: Do Jews Make Food or Does Food Make Jews?” The series was presented in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, the Mayerson JCC, the Ohio Council for the Humanities, UC’s Taft Research Center, and the Cincinnati Hillel Student Foundation. We even had a chance to cook with Claudia Roden, a top Jewish food intellectual and author. As the world commemorates the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, we brought a number of stimulating guest presentations which included titles: “Defending History in Eastern Europe: Holocaust Distortion,” by Ephraim Zuroff, Director of The Simon Wiesenthal Center – Israel (in partnership with the Taft Center and CHHE); “Israel and the Palestinians: Is the Circle of War Inevitable?” by award winning journalist Linda Gradstein; and “Not as Sheep to the Slaughter: The Uprising in Auschwitz/Birkenau” by Judaic Studies Senior Professor Steven Bowman. Our first Visiting Fellow of the Center for Jewish Cultures and Ideas, Professor Tamara Zwick (University of South Florida), gave a luncheon presentation to our faculty and students.

The department has accepted the first students into its Joint UC-HUC Graduate Program in Judaic Studies; one of these students, Caroline Sim, is the third to be accepted to the HUC-JIR Rabbinic Program in the past two years. We also added a new certificate in Biblical Studies to the existing certificates in Religious Studies and Modern Hebrew. This certificate enables us to further increase the number of our undergraduate baccalaureate students. Our students are excited about the range of courses we offer and praise us in our formal course evaluations.

This January, Mrs. Beatrice Winkler, the wife of the late UC President Emeritus, Professor Henry Winkler, and our long-time President of the Friends of Judaic Studies, celebrated her 90th birthday. Please join me in wishing Bea MAZAL TOV! Todah Rabah — thank you so much for being a Friend of Judaic Studies and for your continued support. Without the generous support of individuals like you, the Judaic Studies Department would not have the strength or the capacity to address the growing level of interest that surrounds it! We look forward to new opportunities and new challenges.

Professor Gila Naveh,  
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The world commemorates this year, 70 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.
FOODAISM: Do Jews Make Food or Does Food Make Jews?

The Jacob and Jennie L. Lichter Lecture Series 2014-2015: “Foodaism: Do Jews Make Food or Does Food Make Jews?” was organized by Professors Ari Finkelstein and Matthew Kraus, in collaboration with the entire Judaic Studies team. Cosponsored by the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, Ohio Humanities Council, Taft Research Center, Mayerson JCC, and Cincinnati Hillel, this year’s Lichter Lecture series brought in three outstanding presenters who extended the investigation of Jewish food and food practices to broader issues concerning the nature of Judaism and Jewish identity.

In “Crying Fowl: How Chicken Upsets the Kosher Laws,” Professor Jordan Rosenblum (University of Wisconsin) discussed various opposing rabbinic and other Jewish traditions on mixing chicken with dairy, demonstrating that the modern position was not yet “fully baked.” Professor Jenna Weissman Joselit (George Washington University) contextualized the famous “Trefa Banquet” within a pattern of communal ruptures based on food. Her stimulating lecture on “The Great Vinegar Controversy of 1986 and Other Food Fights in American Jewish History” enraptured the audience with an account of how the discovery of un-kosher vinegar in a pickled herring jar led to personal loss, economic damage in the millions of dollars, and an overhaul of the kosher certification industry.

The highlight of the series was the presentation by internationally renowned cookbook author Claudia Roden. Through a delightful international tour of Jewish recipes (“Gefilte Fish and Couscous”), we learned that food more than reflects culture—it transcends cultural difference by creating community. This is precisely what happened when a broad spectrum of UC students, faculty, and members of the Cincinnati community joined Ms. Roden at Hillel to make bazargan and konafa à la crème. That evening we journeyed with her to a world of Egyptian and Syrian Jewry now only preserved in food and stories. Roden’s warmth, intellectual richness, and breadth of experience filled not only our stomachs, but also our souls.
Food more than reflects culture—it creates community. This is precisely what happened when a broad spectrum of UC students, faculty, and members of the Cincinnati community joined Claudia Roden at Hillel to make bazargan and konafa à la crème.
What Can You Do with a Graduate Certificate in Judaic Studies?
Plenty, says Caroline Sim

My name is Caroline Sim, and I am pursuing a graduate certificate in Judaic Studies. I first took courses in Judaic Studies as a way to prepare for applying to the rabbinical program at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Through the financial support and mentoring received in the Judaic Studies Department, I was able to apply for the graduate certificate program.

I am very fortunate to be studying in this department. The faculty is compassionate as well as academically superlative, encouraging individual and creative thinking while fostering and guiding students to a deeper understanding of the material, incorporating scholastic excellence. I always feel welcome and comfortable exploring ideas with professors, whether or not I study with them. Classes are small, creating a sense of community with fellow students as well as a meaningful rapport with the professor.

In a course I had last semester, one of my classmates was slightly shocked and impressed by how much the professor was willing to do to help a struggling classmate. I know I will integrate the knowledge and understanding I am gaining about Judaic Studies into my future academic and professional pursuits. It is my hope that I will successfully follow the example of the Judaic Studies faculty and incorporate their pedagogical style and personal empathy into my future career as a rabbi.

I would like to thank the Kim and Henry Heiman Family Foundation Fund and the Milton Orchin Fund for their generous support in my pursuit of a graduate certificate in Judaic Studies.

—Caroline Sim

Creating Positive Change: Judaic Studies’ Religious Studies Certificate helps
Jordan Bucey Head for Yale

When I first arrived at the University of Cincinnati as a transfer student in the fall of 2012, I had no idea what to expect. I was so overwhelmed by this new environment and felt lost in the sea of students. Thankfully, my advisor at the time, John Brolley, told me about the Religious Studies certificate in the Judaic Studies Department after I explained to him that I had dreams of becoming an ordained minister. During my first semester, I took two of the required courses for the certificate and quickly realized that it was the perfect choice for me.

Every course I have taken during my time at UC has been important in my personal formation as a student, but the courses offered through the Religious Studies certificate have also helped me to become a better human being. Being able to sit in a classroom with students from completely different cultural backgrounds and religious traditions has forced me to challenge long-held beliefs about organized religion, as well as helped me to discover new and powerful ways to connect with the diverse communities around me. I am so thankful to the Judaic Studies Department for creating the certificate because I now feel more prepared to go out into the world and create positive change.

This fall I will be attending Yale Divinity School, where I will have the honor and privilege of studying through their Master of Divinity Program. Without the Judaic Studies Department and the Religious Studies certificate, I can honestly say I would not be as prepared to take this next step as I am. As I move forward in my educational career, I will take with me incredible conversations with instructors that expanded my scope of what religion is, powerful classroom conversations that opened my eyes to new and beautiful ways of seeing the world, and countless binders filled with lecture notes that I know will serve as vital resources in graduate school. I am proud to be a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, but even more proud to have been a part of the Judaic Studies Department and the Religious Studies Certificate. Thank you for inspiring me to do good things in this world and for believing in me every step of the way. I hope to make you proud.

—Jordan Bucey

The Department of Judaic Studies and the Center for Jewish Cultures and Ideas welcomed Prof. Tamara Zwick (University of South Florida) as a Visiting Fellow of the Center for Jewish Cultures and Ideas for the 2014-2015 academic year. Prof. Zwick’s areas of research include Holocaust History, Modern German, Modern Jewish History, and Gender Theory; her current manuscript project is titled “Writing between the Lines: Women, Kinship, and Bürgertum in Early Nineteenth-Century Hamburg.”

With a generous gift by the Kim and Gary Heiman Family Foundation, the Judaic Studies Department was empowered to create the Center for Jewish Cultures and Ideas in October of 2010; the Center provides a wonderful opportunity for the Department of Judaic Studies and the University of Cincinnati to reach new levels of national and international prominence by supporting scholars from departments in Jewish and related studies from other U.S. colleges and universities.
When did you first realize you wanted to work in higher education? Some time in graduate school, more seriously than musings in Jerusalem's academic and exotic atmosphere.

I can't help but notice that your scholarship spans a broad and intriguing spectrum— from women in the Bible to medieval Judaism to Holocaust studies. What got you interested in these areas of study? "Women in the Bible" was developed as a course during my sojourn as Hillel Assistant at Mount Holyoke College in the late 1970s. I figured a simple course reading and translating of the relevant texts would assist the students there. Holocaust studies developed from an invitation to participate in an important conference in Washington D.C. in 1978 where the Greek Right and Left decided to talk. I was able to develop some of the material I gathered during my earlier Fulbright years in Greece. Ultimately this interest produced two books and numerous articles and reviews. My interest in medieval Jewish history began as an undergraduate, developed during graduate studies in Jerusalem and switched to Byzantine Jewry while in doctoral studies at OSU in Columbus; I was introduced to the two great libraries at UC and HUC during the year after my doctoral exams. This shift produced my major book on Byzantine Jewry and numerous articles and conference experiences.

Can you talk about a couple of the rewards and a couple of the challenges you’ve encountered in your work? I began reading science fiction when very young and history shortly after. My career has indulged this vice and allowed me to travel widely in this country and abroad, and to teach a wide variety of students. My main challenges were to decide which languages not to study and to regret these decisions, which I occasionally try to redress. Languages both for conversation and research are essential for a good historian. Fortunately I was blessed with a family that enjoyed my peripatetic career before settling in Cincinnati.

If you could identify one "best thing" about your time at UC, what would it be? Cincinnati is one of the three cities [in the Aristotelian sense] that I identified early. Boston, where I was born and received my initial education; San Francisco before it fell off the grid, although my experience at Berkeley was most rewarding; and Cincinnati, which turned out to be the best place to raise the family. Cincinnati was a real city when I came first in 1968 and I was fortunate to find an academic home here.
Judaic Studies Welcomes New Faculty Scholar, Michal Raucher ➤ Michal Raucher joined the faculty of Judaic Studies in August 2014 as assistant professor of Modern Israel and Jewish Thought. She comes with expertise on women in Judaism, particularly Israeli women, and Jewish ethics. This year Dr. Raucher taught “Women in Jewish Civilization,” “Modern Israel,” “Modern Jewish History,” and “Basic Hebrew 2.” Professor Raucher has taken students to the Jerusalem Imax, the Auschwitz exhibit at the Freedom Center, and the American Jewish Archives. She has invited guest speakers, showed documentaries, and Skyped-in colleagues from around the United States so that students’ learning experience would be varied, dynamic, and stimulating. Prof. Raucher was awarded a $5,000 technology grant from the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning at UC to incorporate cutting-edge technology into her class.

Dr. Raucher also received almost $2,000 from UC to attend the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association and the Society of Jewish Ethics, where she is a board member. Dr. Raucher delivered an invited paper at Arizona State University on reproductive ethics among Haredi women in Jerusalem, another on pro-life politics in Israel, and a third on ethnography and Jewish ethics. Her work on pro-life politics in Israel was highlighted in UC Magazine. In addition to her research, writing, and teaching, Prof. Raucher is a consultant for the United Nations Population Fund, where she participates in a working group on gender, religion, and reproductive and sexual health.

Steven Bowman, Faculty ➤ Professor Steven Bowman spent a fruitful research trip to Florence and Israel last spring where he continued work on his monograph on the Book of Yosippon. He delivered a paper in Athens, Greece on the Jews in the Resistance based on his recent book (now in a Hebrew revised version to be published by the Ben Zvi Institute) and papers at two Josephus Workshops in Oxford (United Kingdom). He has published chapters on the Greek-Jewish Resistance during WWII in two separate volumes [Catholic UP designated a Choice outstanding book and Berghahn Publications], a chapter on the Jews in late Byzantium [Brill] and a Geniza fragment in a Memorial volume to be published in Spain. He also has several book manuscripts with presses. He was invited to three presentations in April in Michigan, Chicago, and Washington D.C., the latter a symposium before Congress and a Taft lecture on April 16. He teaches courses on women in the Bible, Medieval Jewish history, Jews and Arabs, Jerusalem, and the Holocaust, and will retire at the end of the Spring 2015 semester.

John Brolley, Faculty ➤ This year Mr. Brolley introduced two new undergraduate courses: “Survey of the New Testament” and “Jesus, Judaism, and History.” In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he continues to coordinate the department’s Certificate in Religious Studies as well as the new Certificate in Biblical Studies. This year Mr. Brolley also was elected to serve on UC’s Faculty Grievance Committee.

Ari Finkelstein, Faculty ➤ 2014-2015 has been a busy year. Prof. Finkelstein presented papers at the Society of Biblical Literature Conference in San Diego, California and at the Association for Jewish Studies in Baltimore, Maryland. One of his publications appeared in print in a peer-reviewed book entitled Religious Competition in the Third Century (Ruprecht and Vandenhoek Press, 2014). Also, this semester is the first time Prof. Finkelstein has taught a course on the Dead Sea Scrolls. (The class is great fun!) He has also taught “First Year Modern Hebrew,” a freshman seminar entitled “One Bible: Two Religions, The Old Testament Between Jews and Christians,” and the Judaic Studies capstone course. This is also Prof. Finkelstein’s first year as Graduate Director of the Judaic Studies Graduate Certificate. This year the Taft Research Center published an interview about his research: http://sitecentral.uc.edu/taftcenter/research/foreign_correspondent.aspx. In addition, he sits on the Graduate A&S Council, on a Taft Committee, the University Research Council Committee, the Calendar and Examinations Committee, and is co-chair of the Lichter Lecture Series.

Matthew Kraus, Faculty ➤ Professor Kraus, Undergraduate Director of Judaic Studies, now serves as Book Review editor for H-Judaic and gave a paper at the Annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies.
on “Josephus and Philo on the Rebellion of Korah: Hellenisms not Hellenizations.” He is completing his book manuscript on Jerome’s translation of the Book of Exodus and published reviews of “Jerome’s Epitaph on Paula: A Commentary on the Epitaphium Sanctae Paulae” by Andrew Cain in “The Review of Biblical Literature and The New Reform Judaism: Challenges and Reflections” by Dana Kaplan in American Jewish History. Together with Ari Finkelstein, he coordinated the Lichter Lecture on food and Judaism. He has been collaborating closely with Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion supervising our Jewish Foundation Fellow and taught courses in third-year Hebrew, Jewish History and Chanukah in History. He also taught a course at Rockdale Temple on the Jews of Spain.

Gila Safran Naveh, Department Head ▶️ Gila Safran Naveh is a recipient of the prestigious Mrs. A. B. Dolly Cohen Award for Excellence in Teaching and the George C. Barbour Award for Good Faculty-Student Relations, and is a member of the Academy of Fellows for Teaching and Learning. The Judaic Studies Department Head and Endowed Jewish Foundation Chair has kept busy with duties beyond administering the department and partnering with the community at large; Professor Naveh also engaged in active research and published ‘A Sign of our Times: From ‘Reading’ to ‘Seeing’ and ‘Feeling’ the Holocaust” in the journal Semiotics 2014. She also presented an original scholarly paper, entitled “Desire and Paradox: Tainted Love of Knowledge and Power in Kafka’s Parable ‘Before the Law’” at the Annual Meeting of the Semiotic Society of America in Seattle.

Steven Cahn, Affiliate Faculty ▶️ Prof. Cahn presented an invited lecture for the conference “Schoenberg at 140” at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK, September 14, 2014. Directly related to Judaic Studies, he presented a talk entitled “Harmonic Practice in Salomon Jadassohn’s Jewish Choral Music” at the Conference on Jewish Music and Jewish Identity, Youngstown State University, October 20, 2014.

Janine Hartman, Affiliate Faculty ▶️ This year Prof. Hartman translated, annotated, and contributed to the UC Libraries Digital Humanities Project a second book: “Catulle Mendes’ ‘The Seventy Three Revolutionary Days of the Paris Commune, 1870-1871.’” It is a web-searchable first time translation of the primary source eyewitness account of the Paris Commune and Bloody Week by Catulle Mendes, an emigré Portuguese Jewish writer specializing in poetry and theater, chiefly known for Symbolist poetry, literary journalism, and early popularizing of Wagner.

Ethan Katz, Affiliate Faculty ▶️ Ethan Katz’s book, The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France will appear this fall from Harvard University Press, as will his co-edited book, “Secularism in Question: Jews and Judaism in Modern Times” (University of Pennsylvania Press). In the aftermath of the January attacks in Paris, Ethan has been asked to share his expertise in a number of public settings, giving talks for the Cincinnati Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Relations Council and for UC Hillel, penning an essay in the Los Angeles Review of Books, doing a televised interview on the show “Newsmakers” (WKRC-TV), and blogging for WCPO.

Adrian Parr, Affiliate Faculty ▶️ Adrian Parr (Zaretsky) is the Director of the Taft Research Center and an Affiliate Faculty Member of the Department of Judaic Studies. This year she collaborated with Hebrew Union College to organize “Outspoken: Conscience and Responsibility,” a panel discussion on respectful political discourse and the increasing phenomenon of hate speech on college campuses. The event featured UC President Santa Ono; Dr. Susannah Heschel; President Eli Capilouto of the University of Kentucky; President of Hebrew Union College, Rabbi Aaron Panken; Rabbi Irvin Wise; Pastor Fr. Eugene Contadino; and former Yale Chaplain Bruce Shipman. As a UNESCO co-chair, she has researched water as a strategy for fostering collaborative and peaceful relations between Palestinian and Jewish Israelis in the West Bank. She has been invited to write the catalogue essay for the forthcoming Istanbul Biennale on the UNESCO inscription of the ancient Roman terraces in the West Bank village of Battir as a world heritage site.

Gary Weissman, Affiliate Faculty ▶️ In August 2014 Prof. Weissman took part in a two-week research workshop, “Literary Responses to Genocide in the Post-Holocaust Era,” at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. In October 2014 he presented his paper, “Binary Thinking in the Gray Zone of Moral Judgement,” at the Lessons and Legacies conference on the Holocaust in Boca Raton. In November 2014 he gave a talk titled “Begin Again and Look Closely: Narrating the Holocaust in the Films of Peter Thompson,” following a screening of the short films, “Universal Hotel” and “Universal Citizen” at Purdue University. In December 2014 Prof. Weissman presented his paper, “A Holocaust Survivor on Mars,” as part of a panel he organized, “Very Marginal Holocaust Texts: Alternative Tropes and Traditions,” at the Association for Jewish Studies conference in Baltimore. His paper, “Just Like Clockwork: Temporality in Claude Lanzmann’s Sobibor, October 14, 1943,” has been accepted for the German Studies conference in Washington, D.C. in October 2015 and he has been invited to participate in a workshop, “Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah in the Twenty-First Century,” at the University of Missouri in Nov. 2015.

Arna Fisher, Adjunct Instructor ▶️ This past year Ms. Fisher taught a course entitled “Jewish God Concepts” for the Judaic Studies Department. Beyond campus, she served as instructor for the Wexner Foundation’s Webinar Series, “36 Minutes Live: The Elul Series,” as well as participating in the Foundation’s Alumni Series workshop, “Buber and Levinas: Above and Within.” She also served as faculty for the Wexner Heritage Program where she taught an introductory seminar on “Bible and the Early Rabbincic Era.” In addition, Ms. Fisher served as Scholar in Residence for the Jewish Center (New York), delivered keynote addresses at the Boston Women’s Initiative (“The Redemptive Power of Personal and Communal Narrative”) and Toronto Federation’s Joshua Program for Emerging Jewish Leadership (“Rav and the Butcher: Lessons in Leadership”).

Dana Gregory Griffith, Adjunct Faculty ▶️ This year, along with Mr. Brolley and Prof. Kraus, Dr. Griffith helped put finishing touches on the newly-minted Biblical Studies Certificate. He continues to administer and coordinate the Religious Studies Certificate with Mr. Brolley. His honors seminar, “Understanding Religious Intolerance,” was approved for an unprecedented third year for 2015-16. “Dr. G” was nominated (again) for the President’s Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award for teaching and mentoring of students. His research has resulted in a new course for fall 2015, “Yoga in Its Hindu Matrix;” two other courses are in the works, one in Asian sacred literature in translation and one examining religion in American animated TV series.

Michael Porte, Adjunct Faculty ▶️ Michael Porte is currently teaching a new class he introduced, “The Bible in Film.” He also has taught “Jews in American Film” for Judaic Studies.

Shannon Schaffer, Adjunct Instructor ▶️ Shannon Schaffer will be teaching “Introduction to the Bible” for the first time at the UC-East campus of Clermont College in the Summer II session. With generous cooperation from the Dean’s Office at Clermont College, we hope that many courses will be offered on this campus in the future!
Honor Roll of Donors

We thank the following individuals for their generous donations to the department. These gifts fund scholarships, attract and retain the finest faculty, and enrich the experiences of our undergraduate and graduate students. The following donors who contributed to Judaic Studies from March 2014 – April 2015:

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