



Temple Beth Torah

# Lifelong Learning



## Jewish Studies - Lecture of the Month

A monthly lecture and discussion series devoted to exploration of a wide variety of topics in Jewish history and culture led by distinguished scholars and teachers. Lectures are held via Zoom on Tuesday or Thursday of the first week of each month from 7:00pm - 8:15pm.

### Autumn 2022

**October 6**

#### ***The Secret War Against Hate: American Resistance to White Supremacy After 1945***

Steven J. Ross, Ph.D.

On January 6, 2021, Americans were shocked as they watched tens of thousands of self-proclaimed patriots storm the Capitol, many carrying Confederate flags and wearing anti-Semitic sweatshirts. What the nation witnessed that cold winter day was the continuation of a battle that goes back to 1945, when Americans began fighting a more expansive second Civil War over two distinct visions of the future—and have continued fighting ever since. Drawing upon previously untapped spy reports, *The Secret War Against Hate* tells the chilling story of the decades long battle between four major postwar hate group leaders, and the three New York-based anti-fascist groups that fought to stop them.

*Dr. Steven J. Ross is Distinguished Professor of History and Director of the University of Southern California's Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life.*

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**November 3**

#### ***The New New Hebrew: Contemporary Trends in Israeli Culture***

Melissa Weininger, Ph.D.

Israeli culture was built on the Zionist image of the "New Hebrew": a new type of Jew untainted by diaspora Jewish life and committed to Hebrew as the national language. But in the 21st century, with the rise of globalization and transnational cultural influences, contemporary Israeli culture reflects not only the specific history of Hebrew and of Israel but also many influences that challenge the image of the "New Hebrew." This talk will focus on some of the trends in contemporary Israeli literature, art, and music that reflect these challenges.

*Dr. Melissa Weininger is Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies at California State University, Northridge. Her research focuses on Hebrew and Yiddish literature, with an emphasis on contemporary Israeli literature.*

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**December 1**

#### ***King David: History, Myth or Both?***

Elaine Goodfriend, Ph.D.

The Hebrew Bible devotes more chapters to King David than to any other individual but until recently, he was dismissed by modern scholars as largely a mythical character. How can we distinguish between the historical Israelite king and later Jewish myth? What do recently excavated inscriptions add to our understanding of King David?

*Dr. Elaine Goodfriend is a lecturer at California State University, Northridge and teaches courses in History, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from U.C. Berkeley. She has taught at CSUN for the past sixteen years.*

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**January 5**

#### ***Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost History of Global Commerce***

Sarah Stein, Ph.D.

Based upon her award-winning book, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost History of Global Commerce*, winner of the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish literature, this presentation explores the unexpected prominence of Jews in the boom-and-bust ostrich feather trade of the turn of the twentieth century, when feathers were coveted (especially by women consumers) as objects of adornment. We will discuss why Jews were drawn to this and other new economic niches of the modern era, and how they came to play so large a role athwart the entire breadth of the ostrich feather supply chain, from "bird to bonnet," and across the globe.

*Dr. Sarah Abrevaya Stein is Professor of History and the Viterbi Family Endowed Chair in Mediterranean Jewish studies at UCLA as well as the Sady and Ludwig Kahn Director of the Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies.*

*For additional information on the TBT Jewish Studies: Lecture of the Month program, please contact Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D., Director of Education and Operations at Temple Beth Torah, Ventura, CA ([cliff@templebethtorah.com](mailto:cliff@templebethtorah.com))*