

# JEM Programs for 2022-2023

**All JEM Programs for 2022-2023 will be held on Zoom on Mondays at 7:30 p.m**.

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87646273107?pwd=SmhMSDFtWmNqVVA2Qzlva2Vpc3VPUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 4627 3107

Passcode: 305932

1. **Monday, October 24, 2022**

**In the Midst of Civilized Europe: Jews and Ukraine in Times of War**

Speaker: Jeffrey Veidlinger

This evening’s program is dedicated to the memory of Harvey Berman.

This talk will look at the historical fate of Jews in Ukraine during times of war, with a focus on the pogroms of the First World War, the Holocaust, and the Russian-Ukrainian War of 2022.

Jeffrey Veidlinger is Joseph Brodsky Collegiate Professor of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan and is the author of numerous books, including *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918-1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust* and *In the Shadow of the Shtetl: Small-Town Jewish Life in Soviet Ukraine.*

1. **Monday, October 31**

**A Jewish State in the 17th Century? The Difference the History of an Idea Makes to our Thinking Today**

Speaker: Meirav Jones

This program is sponsored by an anonymous donor.

We usually think that the idea of a modern Jewish state emerged from the early Zionist thinkers of the 19th and early 20th Centuries, but the idea actually originated about 250 years earlier. Some of the foundational thinkers of the modern state, including Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and James Harrington, while not Jewish, theorized about political solutions for the Jews and even discussed the possibility of modern Jewish sovereignty. Why did 17th Century thinkers think the Jews needed a state of their own, and how does this history change how we think about the Jewish state of Israel today?

Meirav Jones is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at McMaster University and a Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. She completed her Ph.D. at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2013 and taught at Yale University and Tel Aviv University. Her research focuses on the religious roots of modern political ideas, on modern and Jewish sovereignty, and on incorporating Jewish ideas in how to address current political questions.

1. **Monday, November 7**

**The Man Behind the Man Behind the Book**

Speaker: Rabbi Lawrence Englander

*Prince of Healers* (2021) is our speaker’s recently published debut historical novel centred on the life and times of Moses Maimonides. Our speaker will read passages from his book and discuss how his research into one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of all time inspired him to delve into fiction to reveal Maimonides’ courage in the face of challenge and betrayal.

Rabbi Lawrence A. Englander is the founding rabbi of Solel Congregation, Mississauga, serving since 1973 until his retirement in 2014, where he is now Rabbi Emeritus. In addition, he is Adjunct Rabbi at Temple Sinai in Toronto. In 2005, he was honoured for his community work when he was appointed a member of the Order of Canada.

1. **Monday, November 14**

**Yid, Ego, and Superego: An Analysis of the Jewish Identity of Lucian Freud, Britain’s Most Successful 20th-Century Painter**

Speaker: Sonia Halpern

Sponsors: The Gal Pals – Eight Friends

This presentation will investigate the Jewish identity of Lucian Freud (1922-2011), arguably the most successful British painter of the 20th Century; German-born, his family immigrated to Britain in 1933, with the increasing power of the Nazis. (Within a few years, Lucian’s famous grandfather, Sigmund Freud, would follow). Although Freud’s art does not convey overtly Jewish motifs or themes, one can argue that his uneasy existence as a Jewish youth in pre-war Germany and as a Jewish immigrant in London informed his unconventional professional and personal choices.

Sonia Halpern is an Art Historian and a multi award-winning professor at Western University. She has published academic articles, two collections of poetry, and a book of original music compositions, Sonia has appeared in many local theatrical productions and is a regular contributor to Jewish educational programs in London.

1. **Monday, November 21**

**Finding Nazi-Looted Artwork in North American Museums and Collections**

Speaker: Stephen Borys

Beginning in the 1990s, international pressure began building to resolve the issue of Nazi-looted assets, including artworks. In 1998, 44 nations, including Canada, endorsed the Washington Principles, a document that called upon nations to develop legal and regulatory means to address the issue, and upon museums to identify Nazi-looted artworks and restore them to their Jewish owners. This presentation will discuss the emotional and legal implications of this important work.

Dr. Stephen Borys is the director and CEO of the Winnipeg Art Gallery and holds an adjunct professorship at the University of Winnipeg. He previously held curatorial posts in the US and at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. Dr. Borys holds an Executive MBA and a Ph.D. in Art History from McGill University.

1. **Monday, November 28**

[**Shostakovich**](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALiCzsa0pW5G92wFlhiKcRMQbikl4lrxLA:1656464976250&q=Shostakovich&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjYzffzvNH4AhUyBDQIHeKQAPQQkeECKAB6BAgCEDI)**, Stalin, and Russian Jews**

Speaker: Joe Gilbert

Sponsor: Lisa Klinger

The great Russian composer Dimitri Shostakovich endured the stresses imposed by Stalin. He was sometimes shunned, but at other times regarded as “a hero.” During anti-Semitic purges, he supported Jewish colleagues and incorporated Jewish themes into his music, for example, in his Symphony No.13*, Babi Yar,* which commemorates this WWII atrocity in words and music. This talk will describe how he survived Stalin’s and Khrushchev’s brutal dictatorships.

Dr. Joseph Gilbertis a retired physician, researcher, research administrator, and hospital executive. As a lifelong fan of classical music, he has in recent years concentrated on studying the interface of Judaism and Jewish subjects with opera, music, and history. He has lectured on these subjects in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Florida, and London, Ontario. His lecture topics include *The Music and Legacy of Felix Mendelssohn*; *French Opera and Anti-Semitism*; *The Dybbuk and The Golem*; *The Portrayal of Jews in Opera*; *Jewish Folk Tales that Have Become Operas*; *Entartete Musik – Degenerate Music*; *Salamone Rossi and Jewish Music in the Italian Renaissance*; *The Shtetl: The Real, The Fictitious, and the Nostalgic*;and *The Shtetl and Hasidism*.

1. **Monday, December 5**

**“For the Dignity of the Jewish Community and for the Honour of Canada”: Brian Mulroney’s Enduring Battle Against Anti-Semitism**

Speakers: Donald Abelson and Monda Halpern

Sponsor: Arlene Gleason

This presentation will discuss the resolve of Brian Mulroney, Canada’s 18th Prime Minister from 1984 to 1993, to combat anti-Semitism in Canada. Professors Abelson and Halpern will explore Mulroney’s efforts to increase the participation of Jews in federal politics, his establishment of The Deschênes Commission (1985-1987) that sought to bring Nazis to justice, and his ongoing support of Israel. This talk reveals a new way of framing Mulroney within the context of his personal convictions regarding the Jews of Canada.

Professor Donald Abelson is Director of the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government, Steven K. Hudson Chair in Canada-US Relations, and Professor of Political Science, St. Francis Xavier University. Before joining StFX, Dr. Abelson served as Director of the Canada-US Institute, Director of the Centre for American Studies, and Chair of the Political Science Department, Western University. Don is an expert on think tanks and has authored many books on the subject, including *Do Think Tanks Matter? Assessing the Impact of Public Policy Institutes* (3rd ed., McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018).

Monda Halpern is a Full Professor in the Department of History at Western University, specializing in North American Jewish History and Women’s History. She is the author of two books published by McGill-Queen’s University Press: *And on That Farm He Had a Wife: Ontario Farm Women and Feminism, 1900-1970* (2001) and *Alice in Shandehland: Scandal and Scorn in the Edelson/Horwitz Murder Case* (2015). Monda is currently writing a book about Canadian Jewish mob boss Bessie Starkman.

1. **Monday, December 12**

**Australia, the Unpromised land**

Speaker: Jacob Steinberg

In this illustrated presentation, the speaker will recount a remarkable story about Dr. Isaac Nachman Steinberg (1888-1957), an Orthodox Jew and a lawyer. He was the Minister of Justice in Vladimir Lenin’s first Government and in 1935 was the co-founder of the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization, whose mission was to try to find a safe haven in Australia for 125,000 European Jewish refugees who had been trying to escape from Europe. Our speaker will describe the extraordinary efforts to seek a settlement place for them.

Jacob Steinberg is an Israeli-born retired multi-national financial consultant who worked as a Project Finance Executive around the world, encountering small and isolated Jewish communities. He was Vice President of Kulanu Canada and earlier was also the coordinator for the Suriname Jewish Community. In addition, he was a keen Australian rules football player.

1. **Monday, January 16, 2023**

**Fleeing Arab Lands: An Analysis of Challenges for Jews**

Speaker: Paul Socken

Naim Kattan’s memoir, *Farewell Babylon* (1976), is one of the many stories of the 850,000 Jews forced to flee Arab lands after the creation of the State of Israel. We will discuss the memoir and gain insight into the plight of those Jews who lost everything and had to start again. In the process, we will also address the issue of today’s refugees, such as those in Ukraine, whose suffering we witness on the news every day. Finally, this talk will demonstrate the significance of the reborn Jewish state for all Jews today.

Professor Paul Socken (Ph.D., University of Toronto) was on the faculty of the University of Waterloo for 37 years and is currently Distinguished Professor Emeritus. He is a former Chairman of the Department of French Studies and the founder of the Jewish Studies programme at Waterloo. He is the author of several books, including *The Edge of the Precipice: Why Read Literature in the Digital Age?* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2013) and has been a contributor to *The Canadian Jewish News* and other Jewish newspapers such as *Algemeiner* and *The Jewish Journal of Los Angeles.*

1. **Monday, January 23**

**The Joint Distribution Committee: The Global Jewish 911**

Speaker: Gail Bass

Sponsor: Hy Goldberg

The “Joint” is not a hangout, a prison, or something you smoke. It is the crucial Jewish organization better known as the JDC or Joint Distribution Committee. This century-old global Jewish 911 has been dedicated to improving lives and strengthening communities in seventy countries. Tonight’s presentation will explore the evolution of this significant group and its role in the lives of Jews around the world.

Gail Bass, an avid world traveller, was introduced to, and impressed by, the Joint while visiting the Jewish community of Tbilisi, Georgia. She looks forward to introducing others to the work of this vital Jewish humanitarian organization.

1. **Monday, January 30**

**Higher Education?: Manifestations of Campus Anti-Semitism in 2023**

Speaker: Rob Nagus

Anti-Semitism on campuses in today’s political climate can take various forms and exist anywhere along the political spectrum. By exploring first-hand experiences and examining broader trends in North America and Europe, this presentation will dissect the many ways anti-Semitism can infiltrate some of our most respected institutions of higher learning.

Rob Nagus is the Executive Director of Jewish London. Prior to holding this position, he worked at the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto where, for more than ten years, he was intimately involved with the Hillel movement as the Director and Senior Director of the Hillels at Queen’s University and the University of Toronto, respectively.

1. **Monday, February 6**

**From the Heart of Europe and Across the Diaspora: The Memorial Scrolls Trust and the Remembrance of the Shoah**

Speaker: Hernan Tesler-Mabé

Every week, tens of thousands of people – including some here in London – listen to readings from Czech Torah scrolls that barely survived the Holocaust; yet most congregants are only vaguely aware of the act’s meaning or significance. The British-based Memorial Scrolls Trust celebrates Jewish life in central Europe by disseminating throughout the diaspora 1,564 Torah scrolls that have been saved from rotting away in a damp warehouse in Prague. This talk will recount the evolution of the Memorial Scrolls Trust and its important role in preserving the memory of obliterated Jewish communities.

Hernan Tesler-Mabé received his Ph.D. in History at the University of Ottawa. He specializes in modern Jewish Studies, with a focus on arts and culture. His most recent publication (*Mahler’s Forgotten Conductor: Heinz Unger and his Search for Jewish Meaning*, 1895-1965) was awarded Best Biography at the 2020 Canadian Jewish Literary Awards. Dr. Tesler-Mabé is President of the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies and Coordinator of the Jewish Studies Program at Huron University College.

1. **Monday, February 13**

**Living with The Philistines**

Speaker: Jim Stevens

Sponsor: This program is sponsored by an anonymous donor.

The story of the Israelites and the Philistines that we read in the Bible leaves us with many unanswered questions. Were these groups friends or foes? Where did they come from? Are the Bible stories real? We will explore this sometimes-troubled relationship with our close neighbours in a fearless analysis of the stories, the history, and the archaeology of these enigmatic people.

Jim Stevens is a retired teacher with a lifelong interest in ancient Biblical history and archaeology. His intellectual curiosity and knowledge compel his audiences to challenge their assumptions about Biblical events.

1. **Monday, February 27**

**A Marriage Campaign: Anxieties over Singlehood in Montreal’s *Jewish Times*, 1914**

Speaker: Michael Kent

With the socio-political backdrop of World War 1 and the first-wave feminist movement, Montreal’s Jewish newspaper, *Jewish Times*, included a significant number of letters in 1914 dedicated to the subject of young Jews and marriage. Specifically, this content expressed concern regarding the seemingly pervasive trend of singlehood, due to its threat to Jewish continuity. This presentation will explore the content and cultural context of these letters in order to illuminate their historical significance amidst the period’s social upheaval.

Michael Kent is the curator of the Jacob M. Lowy Collection of Rare Judaica at Library and Archives Canada. His background as a Judaica librarian also includes work with the Greenberg Families Library at Ottawa’s JCC, St. Paul’s University, and Yeshiva Darche Noam. Michael is also a professor for Algonquin College’s library technician program. In addition to a traditional Yeshiva education, Michael holds Master’s degrees in Religious Studies, Library and Information Studies, and History, all from the University of Ottawa. His research areas include the history of Jewish printing, Canadian Jewish history, and contemporary Jewish life.

1. **Monday, March 13**

**New Yiddish Cinema: The Future of the Past**

Speaker: Rebecca Margolis

Our speaker will describe a 21st-Century corpus of film and television created in Yiddish, a language that few of its creators, actors, or viewers speak. She will examine this transnational cinema, the processes of screen translation in its production, and the reception of cinema in a lesser-used language. She will also demonstrate how the results of these creations resonate with non-Yiddish speakers.

Professor Rebecca (Rivke) Margolis is the Director and Pratt Foundation Chair of Jewish Civilisation at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, Australia. She is a scholar of migration and cultural history with a focus on the transmission and revitalisation of Yiddish. She is currently working on a book entitled *The Supernatural in New Yiddish Cinema: Dybbuks, Demons and a Haunted Jewish Past* as well as a study of the trope of Yiddish as funny on American television.

1. **Monday, March 20**

**A Two-Millennia “Short” History of Jewish Portugal: Heroes and Villains Galore**

Speaker: Fred Ball

Sponsors: Kay and Josh Dubitsky

Join Fred on a whirlwind 55-minute ‘tour’ of Portugal’s Jewish history, although it promises to be a bumpy road! The ‘tour’ is open to Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike. En route, you will be introduced to some excellent as well as terrible individuals whose actions affected Jewish life in Portugal, whether for better or for worse, and will come away convinced that the presence of practicing Jews in Portugal today is nothing less than a miracle.

Fred Ball has made numerous JEM presentations over the years, many dealing with Jewish history and the heroes or heroines who have contributed to our collective survival. Tonight’s presentation is no exception.

**17. Monday, March 27**

**My Jewish Musical Journey**

Speaker: Len Udow

Sponsors: Beryl and Noam Chernick

Len Udow’s story of his musical journey will be most interesting. He is known to Canadian audiences as a singer, songwriter, musician, teacher, and music producer. In six decades of music making, he has performed at folk festivals, and on concert stages, radio, television, and numerous recordings, and has been a band member with the iconic Fred Penner for over 23 years. He has also taught music in St. Boniface Schools, participating in Manitoba’s “Artist in the School” program for over 39 years. In 1992, Len recorded a collection of songs, half of which were written by children, titled “Walk Right In.” For the past twenty-two years Len has brought his kavannah as a composer and teacher to the chazzanut at Temple Shalom, Winnipeg’s Reform congregation.

To receive emailed JEM fliers and updates, please contact Sandra at [sandra@safranhr.com](mailto:sandra@safranhr.com).

Jewish London will post notices about weekly JEM programs on the community eBlasts. To see a list of the season’s JEM programs, please click on [jewishlondon.ca/community-links/](https://jewishlondon.ca/community-links/), then on JEM.

**JEM is co-sponsored by the Martin Bass Fund for Human Resources of Or Shalom, Temple Israel, and Jewish London, with additional support from the Selma Rothfeld Family Endowment Fund of the London Jewish Community Foundation and numerous individual donors.**