

GEORGE L. MOSSE/LAURENCE A. WEINSTEIN

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL

Greenfield Summer Institute

Jews and Leisure

July 17-20, 2023

University of Wisconsin-Madison



CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Greenfield Summer Institute

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

From weekly Shabbat to vacations in the Catskills, Jewish leisure takes distinctive forms. Treat yourself to this year's Greenfield Summer Institute for four days of learning and socializing on the UW-Madison campus. Join us as distinguished scholars from across fields explore Algerian villas, Sephardic barbecues, European taverns and cafés, New York City dance halls, Florida beaches, and of course, the game of mahjong, to consider the many ways that Jews have rested, relaxed, reconnected, and restored their spirits.

Space is limited, so please register early.

Can't make it for the whole Institute? You can register for each day's lectures and events separately!

To register, go to: cjs.wisc.edu/greenfield

The Greenfield Summer Institute is sponsored by the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies through the generosity of Larry and Roslyn Greenfield.

**All lectures will be held at Grainger Hall,
975 University Avenue.**

MONDAY, JULY 17

8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Registration

9:00 a.m.

Sephardim in the Sun: From Beaches to Backyard Barbecues

Rachel Smith (Columbia University)

This talk will trace the migration of Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman heartland to the United States and the leisure culture they brought with them. We will consider how their leisure activities—including weekend trips, beach barbecues, and backyard parties—carried over from the Mediterranean to the West Coast, demonstrating continuities with their past while also shifting to reflect their new lives in America.

10:45 a.m.

Scandal on the Dance Floor: Taverns, Ballrooms, Weddings

Sonia Gollance (University College London)

Contemporary popular culture often portrays Jewish mixed dancing as either absolutely forbidden or as the punch line of a dirty joke. Yet long before *Fiddler on the Roof* or *Dirty Dancing*, Jewish writers used partner dance as a powerful metaphor for social changes that transformed Jewish communities between the Enlightenment and the Holocaust. In literary texts depicting settings such as taverns, balls, and weddings, young people challenge the social order through their partner choices on the dance floor, and frequently suffer tragic consequences for their rebellious behavior. Scandalous dance scenes allowed writers to convey their concerns with Jewish modernity while simultaneously entertaining their readers.

1:30 p.m.

Fighting Antisemitism on Vacation:

Wisconsin Resorts in the Postwar Era

Jonathan Pollack (Madison Area Technical College
& University of Wisconsin-Madison)

For families across the Midwest, “Wisconsin” has been the place to go on vacation. Yet well into the mid-twentieth

century, many Wisconsin resorts, like others around the United States, forbade Jews from vacationing there. This talk will trace the history of “restricted” resorts in Wisconsin vacation areas, and Jewish resort owners’ and vacationers’ responses to these restrictions, through the end of exclusionary practices in the years after World War II.

3:15 p.m.

Movie: *The Mambo Kings* (Malecón Films, 2019)

Directed by Lex Gillespie

Running time: 90 minutes

During the 1950s, free-spirited, mostly Jewish dancers from New York City fell head over heels for the mambo, a hot dance from Havana, Cuba. Their love for Latin rhythms earned them a nickname: the “mamboniks.” Directed by Peabody Award winner Lex Gillespie, *The Mambo Kings* tells a surprising, little-known story: how two cultures, Jewish and Latin, met on the dance floor at a time when America was racially segregated, and antisemitism was commonplace. It features a colorful, somewhat zany group of characters now retired yet still dancing in Florida, who spin their tales with heart, humor and chutzpah. For many mamboniks, the affinity for Latin sounds was more than just pure fun: in the years after World War II, dancing helped Jews banish the horrors of the Holocaust and find joy once again. ***Film screening will be followed by Q&A with director Lex Gillespie.***

TUESDAY, JULY 18

8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Registration

9:00 a.m.

Israeli Folk Dance in Postwar America

Emily Alice Katz (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill)

This talk considers the popularization of Israeli folk dance in the postwar United States through the efforts of Jewish educators and choreographers, American Zionist youth, and non-Jewish aficionados of international folk dance, each of

whom had particular (and sometimes contradictory) goals in mind. In locales as varied as urban classrooms, socialist-Zionist campfires, international folk dance festivals, the Broadway stage, and prime-time television, proponents of Israeli dance brought the medium to increasing, and increasingly diverse, audiences. We'll explore how Israeli folk dance provided participants a legitimate means of navigating Jewish difference, both in the American Jewish community and in the public sphere, within the context of America's Cold War politics.

10:45 a.m.

The Catskills: How the “Jewish Alps” Became America’s Playland

Stephen M. Silverman (Journalist)

There's so much more to the New York mountain range than nostalgic tales of the Borscht Belt might suggest. Truth is, until the early twentieth century, much of the region maintained a strict “No Jews” policy. How did this change? Who were the larger-than-life characters—most of them women—who shaped the Catskills into the world-class cultural and socio-economic force it was? What defined “Catskills humor”—and why did it wield such a persuasive influence on mid-century show business? How did the Catskill resorts serve as the prototypes for Las Vegas, Disney World, and the cruise-ship industry? What brought the Golden Era to its ignominious end? And what is taking place up in the mountains today?

1:30 p.m.

The Politics of Jewish Sports Movements in Interwar Poland

Jack Jacobs (City University of New York)

Acculturation and other factors ultimately contributed to the emergence of a rainbow of Jewish sports movements in interwar Poland. There were major Jewish sports movements which promoted Zionism, and other such movements which were anti-Zionist. Certain Jewish sports movements were socialist in their political orientation, while others were liberal or conservative. What were the relative strengths of the Jewish sports clubs of interwar Poland? How did their

relative strengths shift over time? And what can we learn from study of the Jewish sports movements about Polish Jewry itself?

3:15 p.m.

Movie: *The Last Resort* (2018)

Directed by Dennis Scholl & Kareem Tabsch

Running Time: 70 minutes

Long before the arrival of youth culture and *Miami Vice*, South Beach was home to the largest cluster of Jewish retirees in the country. Drawn by the small apartments, low cost of living, sunny weather, and thriving cultural life, they came in the thousands seeking refuge from the Northeast's brutal winters. By the 1970s, these former New Yorkers were turning from seasonal visitors to year-round residents. In *The Last Resort*, photographers Andy Sweet and Gary Monroe capture the golden paradise of Miami's early years and the changing, turbulent place it became in the 1980s. The film is a warm testament to a community nearly forgotten. ***Film screening will be followed by a group discussion.***

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Registration

9:00 a.m.

Enjoying *The Joys of Yiddish*

Sunny Yudkoff (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

In 1968, Leo Rosten published his bestselling dictionary, *The Joys of Yiddish*. In this talk, we will review the history of the book's creation and reception. We will ask: What was the joy of *The Joys of Yiddish*? And what terms did Rosten offer his readers for expressing that joy?

10:45 a.m.

A Rich Brew: Coffeehouses and Modern Jewish Culture

Shachar Pinsker (University of Michigan)

This is a multimedia presentation on the convergence of

cafés, their urban milieu, and Jewish creativity. It uncovers a network of cafés that were central to the modern Jewish experience in a time of migration and urbanization, from Odessa, Warsaw, Vienna, and Berlin, to New York City and Tel Aviv. We see how Jews who migrated to cities gravitated towards coffeehouses. More broadly, this talk tells the story of global modern Jewish leisure, what it means to be part of the public sphere, and the ways in which cafés present an important backdrop to the changes and challenges of modernity.

1:30 p.m.

Kofman's Sabbath

Adam Stern (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

This lecture will discuss the significance of the Sabbath—or Jewish “day of rest”—in the work of the French philosopher, Sarah Kofman (1934-1994). The talk will couple a biographical portrait of Kofman with an interpretive focus on her book, *Smothered Words* (1987). It is in this late text that she meditates on the relationship between her father's observance of the Sabbath and his death in Auschwitz.

3:15 p.m.

Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture

Annelise Heinz (University of Oregon)

How did a game from China become an iconic element of Jewish American culture? Historian Annelise Heinz, the author of *Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture*, discusses the game's crisscrossing journey across the Pacific and its cultural evolution among Jewish women in the twentieth century. This talk follows the history of one game to think about how, in their daily lives, individuals create and experience cultural change.

5:30 p.m.

Closing Dinner

Grainger Hall

975 University Avenue

THURSDAY, JULY 20

8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast and Registration

9:00 a.m.

Leisure Sites as Sites of Resistance:

The Aboulker Family and the Jewish Underground in Algiers That Helped Win World War II

Ethan Katz (University of California, Berkeley)

When the Allies landed in North Africa in November 1942, their rapid advance was helped in significant part by a resistance network based in Algiers and led by Jewish partisans. Central to this underground was the Aboulker family, a clan of Algerian Jews who traced their roots back many centuries. The family's homes—from a large urban apartment in Algiers to multiple villas in the surrounding regions—became vital to the story of resistance that unfolded during the war. For the future resistance fighters who spent large parts of their childhood within their walls, these leisure sites saw family rituals and stories nurtured and re-enacted in a way that helped to inculcate a sense of duty and destiny. During the war, the same spaces became vital places for the resistance planning, coordination, and gathering.

10:45 a.m.

Jews on the Move: The Jewish Traveler in the Modern World

Lauren B. Strauss (American University)

The image of the Wandering Jew has long been seen as a negative commentary on the instability of Jewish existence. But in today's society, Jewish wanderings are often a matter of choice—an affirmation of identity and a chance to revel in diverse cultures. From twentieth-century nostalgia for the Lower East Side and the Catskills, to young American Jews visiting Israel and Poland, to retirees “returning” to Spain, Portugal, and the Czech Republic, the impetus for Jewish travel is often a blend of spiritual seeking, curiosity, and a search for roots in a vanished world.

12:00 p.m.

Closing Lunch

REGISTRATION/PAYMENT INFORMATION

Fees

The fee for the Greenfield Summer Institute is \$235 for all programming, including the daily continental breakfasts, banquet dinner, and closing lunch. Registration received after July 3 will be subject to a fee increase. *For information about programming, please contact the Center for Jewish Studies by email or phone (listed below).*

A la carte pricing

\$60 to attend lectures and activities on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday

\$40 to attend lectures and activities on Thursday

\$35 to attend banquet dinner (Wednesday)

\$25 to attend closing lunch (Thursday)

Online (Zoom) program

For those unable to attend in person, the lectures at this year's Greenfield will be livestreamed via Zoom. The fee for online attendance is \$175, which includes all lectures and events.

If you have questions about the online option, please call or email us.

Registration Online

Registration information can be found online at cjs.wisc.edu/greenfield. Payment by credit card or check is possible through the online registration form. If you need assistance with registration, please give us a call and we will be happy to assist you. *Please note that you will still need to register online even if you choose to pay by sending a check through the mail.*

Please be sure to register only once!

Confirmation of your registration will be sent to you via email after your registration has been processed. If you have questions about your registration status, please email us.

Registration /payment information continues on next page >

Parking

Underground parking is available in Grainger Hall but must be purchased ahead of time. Information about access to parking can be found on our website.

Lodging

The Institute has blocked rooms at three nearby hotels:

- Fluno Center (\$149)
(608) 441-7117
- Hampton Inn & Suites (\$169)
(608) 255-0360
- Graduate Madison (\$179)
(608) 257-4391

For more information on the amenities and locations of each hotel, as well as to find the online booking links for these hotels, please visit the Greenfield webpage listed below. To make a room reservation by phone, call the number listed above and make sure to mention that you are booking under the Greenfield Summer Institute block.

Questions?

You can reach us by phone or email

Phone: 608.890.3572

Email: greenfield@cjs.wisc.edu



Mahjong game at Green's Lakeside Hotel, Port Jervis, New York, near the Catskill Mountains. From Annelise Heinz's *Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of American Culture*. (Photo by Ted Freudy)



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**Twenty-Third Annual
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