

## **RACHEL GORDAN**

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### **ACADEMIC POSITIONS**

#### **University of Florida**

Assistant Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies  
and Bud Shorstein Fellow in American Jewish Culture 2017-present

#### **Boston University**

Adjunct professor in Jewish Studies 2016-2017

#### **Brandeis University**

Adjunct professor in American Studies, Brandeis. 2016-2017

#### **Hebrew College**

Open Circle Jewish Learning Instructor Spring 2017

#### **National Museum of American Jewish History**

Curriculum Writer for the National Museum of American Jewish History 2016-2017

#### **Hadassah-Brandeis Institute**

Helen Gartner Hammer Scholar-In-Residence fall 2015

#### **University of Toronto**

Program Advisor, American Studies Undergraduate Program 2014-2015  
Ray D. Wolfe Postdoctoral Fellow 2013-2014

#### **Northwestern University**

Postdoctoral Fellow in American Judaism, Northwestern University 2011-2013

### **Education**

Ph.D. Committee on the Study of Religion, Harvard University

M.A.R. Yale Divinity School

B.A. Yale University (American Studies major)

### **Books**

*Postwar Stories: How Books Made Judaism American*, Oxford University Press, summer 2024

- Awarded the Jordan Schnitzler First Book Publication Award of the Association of Jewish Studies
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*How Does One Fight Such Things? The Story of the Woman Behind Gentleman's Agreement*, in-progress

### **Articles in Refereed Journals**

“Midge: A Woman of Her Time But Also of Our Own,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* (2022) 41:2: 2010-2015.

“The Sin of American Jewish Exceptionalism,” *Association of Jewish Studies Review*. 45:2 (November 2021): 282-301.

“The 1940s as the Decade of the Anti-Antisemitism Novel,” *Journal of Religion and American Culture*, 31:1 (Winter 2021): 33-81.

“From Antisemitism to Homophobia: Laura Z. Hobson as Activist Jewish Writer,” *American Jewish History* 104:4 (October 2020): 579-603.

"Inevitably Comparative, But Not Inevitably Positive: The Study of Jews and Judaism Within the Field of Religious Studies," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, Winter 2020.

“The Fabulous Irishman”: Lord Mayor Robert Briscoe’s “Unusual Religious and National Combination” in Cold War America, *American Jewish History* (June, 2018), 401-421.

“Nathan Glazer’s *American Judaism*: Evaluating Post-WWII American Jewish Religion,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* Vol. 105. No. 4 (Fall 2015), 482-506.

“Laura Z. Hobson and the Making of *Gentleman’s Agreement*.” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* (Winter, 2015), 232-256.

“Alfred Kinsey and the Remaking of Jewish Sexuality in the Wake of the Holocaust,” *Jewish Social Studies*. Vol. 20, No. 3 (Spring/Summer 2014), 72-99.

## **Book Chapters**

“Cold War American Judaism,” in *Oxford Companion to American Judaism*, ed. Shari Rabin and Michael Cohen, forthcoming

“What the Jews Believe,” in *New Perspectives in American Jewish History: A Documentary Tribute to Jonathan D. Sarna* (Brandeis University Press), December, 2021.

“New York and American Judaism” in *The Jewish Metropolis: New York City from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. by Daniel Soyer (Academic Studies Press, 2021)

<https://www.academicstudiespress.com/landsandages/the-jewish-metropolis>

“On Blu Greenberg’s *On Women and Judaism*” in *The New Jewish Canon*, edited by Yehuda Kurtzer and Claire Sufrin (Academic Studies Press, 2020.)

<https://www.academicstudiespress.com/emunot/the-new-jewish-canon>

“Four Approaches to Teaching ‘Goodbye, Columbus,’” in *Teaching Jewish-American Literature*, ed. Roberta Rosenberg and Rachel Rubinstein, (MLA, 2020)

<https://www.mla.org/Publications/Bookstore/Options-for-Teaching/Teaching-Jewish-American-Literature>

“Suburban Temple and Postwar American Judaism,” in *Cleveland Jews and the Making of a Midwestern Community* (Rutgers University Press, 2020),

<https://www.rutgersuniversitypress.org/cleveland-jews-and-the-making-of-a-midwestern-community/9781978809949>

“Female *Tallitot*: Creating American Jewish Women’s Religious Experience through Fashion,” in *Fashioning Jews: Clothing, Culture, and Commerce*, ed. Leonard Greenspoon (Purdue University Press, 2013)  
<http://www.thepress.purdue.edu/titles/format/9781612492919>

**Public Essays:**

[“Antisemitism and American Jewish Identity”](#) MyJewishLearning.com

[“For College Students Today, Antisemitism Is Not Old News.”](#) *The Jewish Week*, September 18, 2019.

[“They Warned Her Not to Write About Anti-Semitism.”](#) *Tablet*, August 14, 2018.

[“An American Literary Hero’s Complicated Homecoming,”](#) *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 20, 2018

[“Talking God in the United States.”](#) *Los Angeles Review of Books*, August 31, 2017.

[“Jewish City Values,”](#) *Marginalia*, September 24, 2016.

[“A Marriage That Changed the Course of History: What Natalie Zemon Davis, Pioneering Scholar of Early Modern Europe, Owes to Her Husband, and Martin Guerre.”](#) *Tablet: A New Read on Jewish Life*, January 16, 2015.

[“Norman Lamm, Alfred Kinsey, and the Remaking of Jewish Sexuality,”](#) *Forward*, January 11, 2015.

[“Jewish Life in the City: An Interview with Deborah Dash Moore.”](#) *Religion & Politics*, February 10, 2015.

[“Orthodox Sex: Alfred Kinsey and the Re-Making of Jewish Sexuality.”](#) Notches  
<http://notchesblog.com/2014/10/28/orthodox-sex-alfred-kinsey-and-the-re-making-of-jewish-sexuality/>

[“The Precursor to \*Gentleman’s Agreement\*,”](#) *Moment Magazine*, November 11, 2014

[“A Single Adoptive Mother – in 1937,”](#) *The New York Times*, April 25, 2014.

[“Technology, Memory, and Jewish History: An Interview with Novelist Dara Horn,”](#) *Religion & Politics*, February 25, 2014.

[“In a Previously Unpublished Letter, Sam Bronfman Gives Advice to His 13-year-old Son,”](#) *Tablet*, January 28, 2014.

[“Pew and the Jews: ‘So What?’”](#) *Religion Dispatches*, October 7, 2013

[“On Anti-Semitic Tropes and the Naming of the Federal Reserve Chair.”](#) *Religion & Politics*, September 10, 2013.

[“How Phyllis Lambert Changed the Architecture of New York,”](#) *The Jewish Daily Forward*, August 9, 2013.

[“When Was the Last Time a Rabbi Prayed at a Presidential Inauguration?”](#) *Religion & Politics*, January 15, 2013.

[“Laura Z. Hobson and Gentleman’s Agreement.”](#) *Jewish Forward*, February 2013.

[“Sunday Before the Election.”](#) *Religion and Politics*, November 5, 2012.

[“Where is the Jewish Lichtenstein?”](#) “The Arty Semite” blog, *Jewish Forward*, June 21, 2012.

[“Why Taking Offense at Santorum’s ‘Tri-Faith’ Nation is a Good Sign.”](#) *Religion Dispatches*, March 2012.

[“Modern Times.”](#) *Tablet: A New Read on Jewish Life*, February 2012.

[“Marjorie at Fifty-Five.”](#) *Jewish Forward*, September 24, 2010.

Brandeis National Committee Reader’s Guide for Jonathan Sarna’s *American Judaism*, spring 2005

### **Book Reviews:**

Max Lewkowicz, *Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles* (documentary film review), *Journal of American History*, Volume 107, Issue 1, June 2020, Pages 282–284. <https://academic.oup.com/jah/article-abstract/107/1/282/5862248>

Natalie Robins, *The Untold Journey: The Life of Diana Trilling* (Columbia UP, 2017). *American Literary History*, <https://academic.oup.com/alh/pages/the-alh-online-review-series-20>

Rachel Kranson, *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility In Postwar America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), *AJS Review* 44:1 (April 2020): 209-211. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ajs-review/article/abs/rachel-kranson-ambivalent-embrace-jewish-upward-mobility-in-postwar-america-chapel-hill-university-of-north-carolina-press-2017-xiv-232-pp/E93E9FE9C54221B76387EC7F69B909F2>

Christian Wiese and Cornelia Wilhelm *American Jewry: Transcending the European Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016). Published in *History: Reviews of New Books*, Vol. 46, Issue 3 (April 2018): 66-67. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03612759.2018.1436311>

Aaron W. Hughes, *Jacob Neusner: An American Jewish Iconoclast* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), *H-Judaic*, November 2016. <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28655/reviews/153584/gordan-hughes-jacob-neusner-american-iconoclast>.

Jennifer Glaser, *Borrowed Voices: Writing and Racial Ventriloquism in the Jewish American Imagination* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 38:1 (2019): 76-79. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/720959>

Tahneer Oksman, *How Come Jewish Boys Get to Keep Their Noses? Women and Jewish American Identity in Contemporary Graphic Memoirs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), *Contemporary Jewry*, July 2016, Volume 36, Issue 2, 279-284.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12397-016-9168-3>

Deborah Dash Moore, *Urban Origins of American Judaism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), *Journal of the American Jewish Archives*, 2015, Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 82-84.

Kerri P. Steinberg, *Jewish Mad Men: Advertising and the Design of the American Jewish Experience* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015), *AJS Review*, April 2016, Vol. 40, issue 1, 209-211.

Dianne Ashton, *Hanukkah in America: a History* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), *Marginalia: A Review of Books in History, Theology, and Religion*, March 10, 2014.

“Jews and Obscenity: Is it a Thing?” review of Josh Lambert’s *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* for *Religion Dispatches*, January 24, 2014.

Shirli Brautbar. *From Fashion to Politics: Hadassah and Jewish American Women in the Post World War II Era* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011), *Journal of American Jewish History*, October 2013.

James E. Young. *The Posen Library Jewish Culture and Civilization, Vol. 10* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), *H-Judaic*, Winter, 2013.

Herman Wouk, *The Lawgiver* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012). *The Forward*. November, 2012.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jeffrey Shandler. *Anne Frank Unbound: Media, Imagination, and Memory* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012) in *Lilith Magazine*, winter 2012.

Deborah Feldman, *Unorthodox* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 2012) in *Lilith Magazine*, summer 2012.

Dana Evan Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), *H-Judaic*, April 16, 2012.

Hasia Diner, Shira Kohn, and Rachel Kranson, eds. *A Jewish Feminine Mystique? Jewish Women in Postwar America* (Rutgers University Press, 2010), *Hadassah Magazine*, spring, 2012.

Nora Rubel, *Doubling the Devout: the Ultra-Orthodox in the Jewish American Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) in *Lillith Magazine*, Winter, 2012.

Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford, 2011) in *Journal of the American Jewish Archives*.

David Gelernter, *Americanism: The Fourth Great Western Religion*. (New York: Doubleday, 2007) in *Journal of Jewish Identities* 1:2 (July 2008): 146-148.

Michael Lorge and Gary Zola, *A Place of Our Own: the Rise of Reform Jewish Camping* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2006) in the *Journal of the American Jewish Archives* 59: 1 (fall, 2008): 127-128.

Jack Wertheimer, *Imagining the American Jewish Community* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2007) in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 27.3 (spring 2009): 203-205.

#### Reference Works:

“Chaim Potok” in *American National Biography Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

“Jewish Americans” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Social History* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

“Humanistic Judaism,” “Havurah Movement,” “World Union for Progressive Jewry,” “Jewish Theological Seminary,” “Workmen’s Circle,” “Yeshiva University,” “Zionism in America,” in *Cambridge Dictionary of Jewish History Religion, and Culture* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2011).

#### **Conference and Workshop presentation**

“Is America Different? A Conversation About American Jewish Exceptionalism,” Association for Jewish Studies, December 2020.

“Activist Writers of the 1940s: Anti-antisemitism in Women-Authored Fiction,” American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Conference, May 25-29, 2020

“What the Bible means for Jews,” *Transnational Transformations: How the Circulation of Populations, Ideas, and Texts Has Shaped Jewish Life in the Americas* conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, July 16-17, 2019.

“Midcentury Middlebrow American Jewish Culture” pre-circulated paper for Reception and American Jewish Literature seminar at Association of Jewish Studies, San Diego, December 2019.

“Teaching *Gentleman’s Agreement* as Part of Teaching Antisemitism” at the Center for Jewish History 2019-2020 Understanding and Teaching Antisemitism workshop, March 20, 2020. (scheduled as in-person presentation at the CJH, but took place over Zoom with workshop members).

“The Past, Present and Future of American Jewish Studies” Roundtable, Association of Jewish Studies, Boston, December 2018.

“Jewish Studies in the Age of Trump” Roundtable, Association of Jewish Studies, Boston, December 2018.

“Reclaiming the Middlebrow: Laura Z. Hobson as an American Jewish Writer,” American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Conference, Philadelphia, June 2017.

“The Jews of Cleveland: A Case Study of the Evolution of Jewish Identity in Postwar America,” Association of Jewish Studies, Washington D.C., December 2017.

“Jews and the Rhetoric of Hate” Roundtable, Association of Jewish Studies, Washington D.C., 2017

“Between Past and Future: American Religion and the Challenge of the Mid-Twentieth Century” panel at Society for U.S. Intellectual History, Dallas, TX, October 2017.

“Orthodoxy and Secularism in Modern America,” Association of Jewish Studies, San Diego, December 2016.

“The Middlebrow Moment in American Jewish Thought,” Association of Jewish Studies, Boston, December 2015.

“Teaching *Goodbye, Columbus*,” Association of Jewish Studies, Boston, December 2015.

“Jewish Life in the Americas: A Symposium,” Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies. University of Texas, Austin, Nov 1-2, 2015.

“Redefining the Jewish Agenda in American Terms,” Association of Jewish Studies, Baltimore, December 2014.

Seminar: Jewish in Postwar America, 1944-1965: New Approaches,” Association of Jewish Studies, December 2014.

“Jews and the Ethnic Politics of Postwar American Literature,” American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Conference, June 2014

“What Can the Study of American Judaism Bring to Religious Studies?: A Roundtable on Theory and Methods,” American Academy of Religion, November 2013

Chair: Shaul Magid, Indiana University. Panelists: Laura Levitt, Tisa Wenger, Jodi-Eichler-Levine, Rachel Gordan, Laura Tomes

“AJS 2013 Roundtable: Translating the Jewish Narrative Into an American Narrative,” Association of Jewish Studies, December 2013.

“Rabbi Knows Best: The Post-World War II American Rabbi on Kinsey, Kids, and Kitsch.” Association of Jewish Studies, December 2013.

“How-To-Jews: The Instruction Manuals of American Judaism,” Association of Jewish Studies, December 2012.

“Beyond Survival: Ultra-Orthodoxy in the Diaspora” Conference co-chair with Barry Wimpfheimer, October 21-22nd, Northwestern University Jewish Studies 2012.

“This Is My God and the Roots of Postwar Modern Orthodoxy,” American Society of Church History, January 2012.

“Creating an American Judaism” American Judaisms” panel at the American Academy of Religion conference, November, 2011.

“Jewish Women’s Tallitot.” At “Fashioning Jews: Clothing, Culture, and Commerce,” the 23rd Annual Klutznick-Harris Symposium, Omaha, NE (October, 2011).

“Presenting the Miracle of Israel to Protestant America: ‘The Greatest Years of Jewish History’ or ‘The Let-down of American Zionism.’” at the Association of Historians of America, Boston, MA (January, 2011).

“A Postwar Judaism for Loyal Americans.” To be presented at the Association of Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, MA (December 2010).

“Introduction to Judaism’ Texts: Learning to Possess Religion in Postwar American Suburbia.” Presented at the 2010 Biennial Scholars’ Conference on American Jewish History, New York, NY (June 2010).

“Gentleman’s Agreement and Crossfire: Anti-Semitism at the Movies.” Presented at American Academy of Religion Conference, Montreal (November, 2009).

“Post-World War II American Judaism at the Movies.” Presented at the Association of Jewish Studies Conference, Los Angeles, CA (December, 2009).

“Explaining Judaism to the Nation.” Presented at the Association of Jewish Studies, panel presentation, Washington, D.C., (December 2008).

“The Conservative Movement and the Making of Judaism as an American Religion.” Presented at Harvard University’s “New Approaches: Home, Nation, and Landedness in Modern Jewish Identity” conference. Cambridge, MA (May, 2008).

“Milton Steinberg and Edith Alpert: Romantic Love in the Making of an American Religious Identity.” Presented at the Boston College Biennial Conference on Religious Identity, Boston, MA (March 2008).

### **Public Talks**

“How Judaism Became an American Religion,” University of Texas, Austin, November 7, 2018.

“Rabbi Philip Bernstein and the Middle Moment in American Jewish Culture and Religion,” University of Rochester Religious Studies/Jewish Studies, April 3, 2017.

“Alfred Kinsey and America’s Third Faith,” at Michigan State University, Religious Studies, November 14, 2016.

“Reconsidering an American Favorite: Gentleman’s Agreement and the Woman Behind the Story,” San Francisco State University, Jewish Studies, December 2, 2015.

“Reconsidering Laura Z. Hobson” at Columbia University Jewish Studies. New York, October 15, 2013.

“A Secular Vision of Religious Tolerance: Laura Hobson’s Liberalism.” Presented at Northwestern University Jewish Studies lunch talk. Evanston, IL. Wednesday, March 13, 2013.

“Creating Post-War American Judaism.” Presented at Northwestern University Jewish Studies lunch talk. Evanston, IL. Thursday, May 10, 2012.



“Lingua Sacra: Negotiating God-Talk in America.” Boston University panel with filmmakers and scholars on the PBS panel, *God In America*. April 28, 2013.

“Toward a New Mode of Jewishness: Grappling with Religion in the 1950s.” Presented at the Samuel Bronfman Foundation, New York, January, 2011.

"Post-WWII American Judaism: People of the Book." Presented at Yale Early Modern and Modern Jewish History Colloquium, New Haven, CT. November, 2010.

“Anti-Semitism at the Movies.” Presented at the Center for Jewish History, New York, NY (March, 2010).

“Post-World War II ‘Introduction to Judaism’ Books” Presented at Harvard Modern Jewish Worlds Workshop, Cambridge, MA (September, 2010)

### **Fellowships/Grants**

2023 Jordan Schnitzler First Book Award

2022 UF Rothman Summer Fellowship

2019 New York Public Library–Fordham Jewish Studies Shvidler Visiting Research Fellow (May 2019)

2018 University of Florida Scholarship Enhancement Summer Fellowship

2016 Jim and Diane Shneer Fellow in Post-Holocaust American Judaism at University of Colorado, Boulder

Berman Foundation Early Career Fellowship, 2015-2016

Hadassah-Brandeis Institute Research Grant, spring 2015

American Academy of Jewish Research Early Career Workshop, 2015

Center for Jewish History Conference Travel Grant December 2014

Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar on *Holocaust Literature: Teaching Fiction and Poetry*, January 2014

American Jewish Archives Marcus Center Director's Fellowship 2012-13

Northwestern Faculty Research Grant (2012-13)

Harvard University Graduate Society Dissertation Completion Fellowship, 2010- 2011

New York Public Library Summer Research Grant, 2010

Harvard Divinity School John L. Loeb Fellowship, 2010

Center for Jewish History Dr. Sophie Bookhalter Fellowship in Jewish Culture, 2009-10

Targum Shlishi Dissertation Grant, 2008

Tauber Institute Graduate Research Award, 2007-8

American Jewish Archives Marcus Center Fellowship. 2007-8

Harvard University Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History Summer Research Grant, 2007

William R. Hutchison Fellowship for Harvard doctoral students in American religious history, 2005

### **Service**

UF Religion department undergraduate curriculum committee, 2020-

UF Religion merit pay committee – 2021-

UF Religion diversity liaison 2021-

UF JST advisory board, 2021-

American Academy of Religion, Religion and Food unit

Jewish Women’s Archive, academic council, 2018-present

UF Religion Graduate Student Association, Advisor August 2017- present  
Jewish Women's Archive, Academic Advisory Council, 2016-present  
American Academy of Religion, Religion and Food unit  
UF Religion Department: merit pay committee, undergraduate curriculum committee,  
Samuel "Bud" Shorstein endowment programming: 3-4 events/semester