

BOSTON COLLEGE

Center for Christian-Jewish Learning

2019-2021 Report



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Report of Ruth Langer, Center Interim Director

The two years since our last report have been, for everyone, years of upheaval thanks to COVID-19. They have also been a period of increased and more overt anti-semitism, both in the US and abroad, making the work of our Center all the more urgent.

One of our significant changes had been anticipated: the retirement in June 2020 of Fr. James Bernauer, S.J., after twelve years as the Center's second director. As we wrote when we announced his retirement:

Under Fr. Bernauer's leadership, the Center has deepened its contributions to academic thinking about the relationship between Jews and Christians, sponsoring innumerable guest lectures, interdepartmental faculty discussions, and robust conferences—including an international conference on Jesuits and Jews. Additionally, Fr. Bernauer developed interdisciplinary and interfaith graduate student seminars on themes of poverty, charity, and altruism in the Abrahamic faiths—giving meaningful support and experience to younger scholars in their contributions to interreligious dialogue and interfaith harmony. Under his tenure, the annual visiting Corcoran Chairs have become an integral and valued element of the Center's academic offerings through their courses, lectures, and conferences. Fr. Bernauer's own scholarship on the Holocaust and the historical relationships between Jesuits and Jews has made significant contributions to the field, and, we hope, will continue in his retirement.

What we had not anticipated was having to cancel our celebration of Fr. Bernauer's years of dedicated leadership as well as all other programs from the onset of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, including an important Corcoran Chair conference on guilt. However, as it became clear that virtual teaching had some merits, we pivoted to envisioning and implementing virtual programming as well. Indeed, as we learned, virtual programming has some real benefits; it has a broader and more lasting impact because it transcends the limits of geography and, in its ongoing recorded presence, of time. Thus, our first program in the fall of 2020 was a delayed virtual but heartfelt Zoom celebration of Fr. Bernauer's latest contribution to the study of Christian-Jewish relations, of his new book, *Jesuit Kaddish: Jesuits, Jews, and Holocaust Remembrance*.

The 2020-2021 academic year was filled with virtual programs, described on subsequent pages, all of which have been recorded and are publicly available on our [YouTube channel](#) and linked through our [website](#). We will continue to offer significant virtual programming in the coming year and likely beyond, not only because of health concerns, but also because Zoom allows us to include in our discussions leading voices from around the world, both as speakers and audience. These will include several collaborations with the academic arm of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. One of these will be a scholars' conference on the Holocaust-era holdings of Catholic archives (including the Vatican), hosted also by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; a second will be a continuing education course offered through the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry's Online: Crossroads program next July.

It has been a privilege and honor to serve as the Center's Interim Director Boston College has just opened a search for the next director, who will be appointed to the Kraft chair held by Fr. Bernauer. I am involved in the search and very much look forward to welcoming and working closely with Fr. Bernauer's successor.

My personal work in Christian-Jewish relations has continued apace. I continue as a co-editor of *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (SCJR), managing its peer review and acceptance process as well as working with authors to prepare their manuscripts for publication. I have been involved in a number of conferences and delivered various lectures. A most fascinating experience involved a conference in Sibiu, Romania, on "The Jews in Byzantine Liturgy" (Summer 2019), for which Fr. Dr. Demetrios Tonia and I developed a comparative paper analyzing the ways that the religious other is present in Byzantine and Jewish liturgies. This paper is in press, and we also shared it as the keynote for the Boston College "Engaging Particularities" conference (2021, postponed from 2020), convened by our comparative theology graduate students. My review of an important book by Gavin D'Costa, *Catholic Doctrines on the Jewish People after Vatican II* published in SCJR led to involvement in a [virtual forum](#) about the book hosted by the Society for Post-

Supersessionist Theology in November 2020, and the contextualization of my original review, now expanded, into a review forum in the journal.

Looking at Jewish liturgy in the context of Christian-Jewish relations continues to be a theme in my work. Prof. Clemens Leonard (University of Muenster, Germany) and I have submitted a major comparative article on liturgy and worship to the *Encyclopedia of Christian-Jewish Relations*. The question of how Judaism teaches about other religions is the subject of “Jewish Universalism?: The Nations in the Rosh Hashanah Liturgy,” published in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*. Another article in press for the *Routledge Handbook of Jewish Ritual and Practice* looks at the influences of Christianity on Jewish liturgy.

My work with German-speaking Christian liturgists also led to an invitation to develop an article on liturgy during the pandemic for a German volume, written as the first wave was ebbing after the 2020 spring holidays. That article has now been republished in expanded form in the peer-reviewed journal, *Contemporary Jewry*. Similarly, the pandemic generated a request from the Yale *ISM Review* for an article reflecting on the historic Jewish liturgical response to disaster, and another from the *Drisha Institute* for a discussion of the High Holy Day liturgy in light of the pandemic.

I also continue to write, speak, and teach about the role of the Land and State of Israel in Jewish thought. This has been one of the most fraught topics in dialogue in recent years, literally the proverbial “elephant in the room” when Jews and Christians gather and, in many cases, the reason for dialogue falling apart. Some of my work on this has been very local, trying to enable dialogue in the Boston-area community. However, the volume representing the learnings of a multiyear project sponsored by the International Conference of Christians and Jews, *Enabling Dialogue about the Land: A Resource Book for Jews and Christians*, that I coedited with Philip A. Cunningham and Jesper Svartvik, appeared from Paulist Press in October 2020. I also wrote its overview of Jewish teachings that is among its sixteen essays from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives. The three of us have been speaking about the book and the dialogue process it suggests in many different contexts, nationally and internationally. Through the volume, we seek to help Jews and Christians to listen deeply and better understand each other’s positions and concerns about this beloved and strife-riven area of the Middle East.

Thus, scholarship and the promulgation of scholarship continues to be at the heart of our work as a Center. We look forward to the day—one that seems further off now than it did a few months ago—when we can gather in person, perhaps even break bread together, for conversation and mutual learning.



Ruth Langer
Professor of Jewish Studies
Interim Center Director

Corcoran Visiting Chairs in Christian-Jewish Relations

Katharina von Kellenbach, 2019-2020

Katharina von Kellenbach was the 2019-2020 Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations. Prof. von Kellenbach was formerly Professor of Religious Studies and former Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at St. Mary's College of Maryland, the National Honors College of the State of Maryland. In 2018-2019, she was Convener of the ZIF Research Group "Felix Culpa: Guilt as Culturally Productive Force" at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research (ZIF) in Bielefeld. A native of West Germany, she studied Evangelical Theology in Berlin and Göttingen (1979-1982) and received her PhD in 1990 at Temple University. She became active in Jewish-Christian dialogue and Holocaust Studies while studying in Philadelphia and completed her dissertation on *Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings* (Scholars Press, 1994). Her areas of expertise include Holocaust Studies, Jewish-Christian relations, feminist theology, and interreligious dialogue. Her publications include *Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings* (Oxford University Press, 1994) and *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Lives of Nazi Perpetrators* (Oxford University Press, 2013).



Katharina von Kellenbach

During Dr. von Kellenbach's tenure as the Corcoran Chair, she continued her research on Jewish and Christian perspectives on guilt and memory after atrocity. She delivered a number of lectures, including the 2019 Krister Stendahl Memorial Lecture in Stockholm, Sweden, titled "Guilt as a Productive Force in the Transformation of Jewish-Christian Relations." Dr. von Kellenbach also taught a graduate level course "Coming to Terms with Guilt: Jewish-Christian Relations," edited the academic journal *Crosscurrents* (Vol. 69, Issue 3), and published the article "Guilt and the Transformation of Christian-Jewish Relations" in *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* (Vol. 15). Unfortunately, the conference planned on "Guilt" for March 2020 was cancelled by the pandemic. Indeed, Dr. von Kellenbach was in Germany when borders were closed and was forced to complete her tenure with us virtually.

Jesper Svartvik, 2020-2022

Jesper Svartvik began his tenure as the Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations in September 2020 and will continue in his position for the 2021-2022 academic year. Unfortunately, the pandemic has, so far, forced his "visit" to be virtual, but we are hopeful that he will be able to join us in person later in this coming academic year.



Jesper Svartvik

Dr. Svartvik studied at Lund University in his native Sweden, the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem, and the Hebrew University, and holds a doctorate in New Testament studies from Lund University (2000). He is the former holder of the Krister Stendahl Chair of Theology of Religions, which included teaching and research both in Jerusalem and Lund. In 2019 he was awarded the Raoul Wallenberg Honor from Muhlenberg College "in recognition of his substantial contributions to Jewish-Christian relations." His areas of expertise include New Testament studies, interreligious relations in general, and Jewish-Christian relations in particular.

Dr. Svartvik is the author of twelve books, which include his doctoral thesis *Mark and Mission: Mk 7:1-23 in Its Narrative and Historical Contexts* (Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000) and *Reconciliation and Transformation: Reconsidering Christian Theologies of the Cross* (Wipf & Stock, 2021), and is the co-editor of four volumes: *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today: New Explorations of Theological Interrelationships* (Eerdmans, 2011; Italian translation: Gregorian

& Biblical Press, 2012), *Religious Stereotyping and Interreligious Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), *Krister Among the Jews and Gentiles: Essays in Appreciation of the Life and Work of Krister Stendahl* (Paulist Press, 2018), and *Enabling Dialogue about the Land: A Resource Book for Jews and Christians* (Paulist Press, 2020).

During Dr. Svartvik's tenure as the Corcoran Chair, he has worked on two new books *De sju haven i Bibelns värld [=The Seven Seas in the Biblical World]* (Votum, 2021) and *Reconciliation and Transformation: Reconsidering Christian Theologies of the Cross* (Wipf & Stock, 2021); delivered numerous lectures including "Reading the New Testament without Presupposing Supersessionism: Four Fundamental Issues" and a series of talks on the biblical theme of creation; participated in webinars and presentations on the publication *Enabling Dialogue about the Land* as its co-editor; and written several articles. Dr. Svartvik also taught a graduate seminar "Reading the New Testament without Presupposing Supersessionism" as well as organized and presented at the virtual 2021 Corcoran Chair Conference "'To Arrive Where We Started and Know the Place for the First Time': Exploring Pre-Supersessionist Readings of the New Testament," which garnered international attendance.

Center Courses

Hannah Arendt (James Bernauer, S.J.)

This course examines the range of Hannah Arendt's writings including her reflections on our historical epoch (*Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*) and her program for political and personal renaissance (*The Human Condition*, *Life of the Mind*).

Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue (Ruth Langer) – Theology core course

In 1974, the Vatican explicitly called on Catholics to understand Jews as they understand themselves. In our world of dialogue and post-Holocaust repair of relations, Jews similarly ought to understand Christians. This course explores key topics in the contemporary Christian-Jewish dialogue with the goal of both enabling this understanding of the other and enhancing self-understanding. Students who do not identify with either tradition are welcome to enrich this conversation.

Passover in Midrash and Talmud (Ruth Langer)

Fundamental to any understanding of Judaism is an ability to enter into its formative literature, Midrash and Talmud, the primary texts of Jewish learning. Focusing on texts (in translation) relevant to the celebration of Passover, this course introduces students to the rabbinic approach to Scripture and their means of making it relevant in their (and our) world. This understanding is heightened by comparisons to early Christian modes of discourse on the same themes.

The Holocaust: A Moral History (James Bernauer, S.J.)

The tragic event that ruptured modern Western morality is examined from a variety of perspectives in this course. Students study the testimony of both its victims and its perpetrators. Special attention is given to consideration of the intellectual and moral factors which motivated resistance or excused indifference. The course concludes with interpretations of its meaning for contemporary morality and of its theological significance for Christians and Jews.

Coming to Terms with Guilt: Jewish-Christian Relations (Katharina von Kellenbach)

In preparation for the millennium celebration, Pope John Paul II issued a series of apologies for Christian complicity in historical evils, including the Holocaust, in order to facilitate a "purification of memory." This course explores this concept in its theological, ethical, and political dimensions. What role did the Holocaust play in shifting Christian teachings of Jewish guilt (for the death of Christ) to a recognition of Christian guilt for anti-Judaism? How do religious rituals of teshuvah and penance help individuals and communities confront guilt in the aftermath of political atrocity? Can we speak of the "purification of

memory” in the context of Jewish-Christian relations after the Holocaust? Is Holocaust memory relevant and applicable to other instances of historical injustice, such as slavery, genocide, or sexual violence?

Israel in Jewish Theologies (Ruth Langer)

Israel, both the people and the land, are central to Jewish theology as concrete manifestations of God’s covenants. This course explores the evolving meanings of these concepts from the Bible to today, looking at themes like peoplehood, life in the land, exile from it, and (messianic) return. The second part of the course focuses specifically on the theologies of a range of modern Jewish thinkers, with the goal of helping students to understand aspects of contemporary Israel and its meaning to world Jewry.

Jews and Christians: Understanding the Other (Ruth Langer)

Interreligious dialogue requires interreligious understanding. This course builds a foundation for genuine dialogue between Jews and Christians by posing fundamental theological questions in a comparative context. Students gain an understanding of the other tradition while also deepening their understanding of their own, discussing such matters as the human experience of God, the purpose of human existence, the nature of religious community, and the ways that the communities respond to challenges, both contemporary and ancient.

Reading the New Testament without Presupposing Supersessionism (Jesper Svartvik)

Supersessionism teaches that Christianity has commonalities with Judaism while simultaneously replacing it. Finding expression throughout church history, it has shaped Christian traditions of reading the New Testament. Today, many biblical scholars argue that because the New Testament predates this idea, we need to read the New Testament *without* supersessionist presuppositions. Second Temple Judaism is not in theological contrast with the New Testament, but is its historical context. This course explores these rereadings of the New Testament, focussing on texts like Jesus’ parables, the passion narratives, and the Pauline proclamation that the gospel is “good news” for Jews and gentiles.

Center Programs

Composting Guilt: The Purification of Memory after Atrocity

Katharina von Kellenbach

September 24, 2019

In her first lecture as the Visiting Corcoran Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations, Prof. von Kellenbach spoke about her ongoing work on “guilt as productive force” and her book project *Composting Guilt: The Purification of Memory after Atrocity*. She argued that the body of literature on topics of transitional justice, political reconciliation, forgiveness, apology, and indicate that the concept of purification has so far received little attention. However, the language of purification operates in the background of diverse practices such as the exhumation and ceremonial reburial of the dead, the call for truth commissions to document wrongdoing, and reparation campaigns that apologize and offer restitution. Prof. von Kellenbach’s research asks whether the concept and ritual practice of purification can be used to enhance moral repair in individuals and to serve the restoration of social order in the aftermath of atrocity and systemic human rights abuses, including the Holocaust.



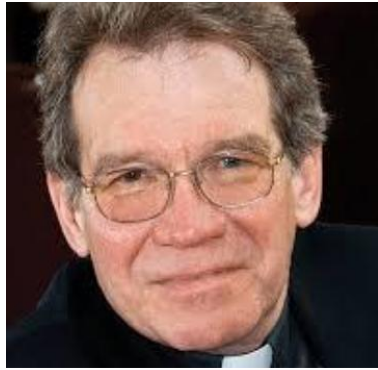
Katharina von Kellenbach

“We are All Children of God”: Interfaith Relations in Twentieth Century Boston

James Bernauer, S.J., and Ruth Langer

October 23, 2019

Prof. James Bernauer, S.J., then Kraft Family Professor and Center Director, delivered the keynote address “That Meant A Lot to Us” at the launch of the exhibit ““We are All Children of God’: Interfaith Relations in Twentieth Century Boston” cosponsored by the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (STM), the Boston College Libraries, and Archdiocese of Boston. Prof. Bernauer spoke of Richard James Cushing, Archbishop of Boston from 1944 until 1970 who was made a Cardinal in 1958 and was a pioneering figure in interfaith relations. Cardinal Cushing’s strides in ecumenical dialogue for mid-twentieth century Catholics foreshadowed *Nostra Aetate* at the Second Vatican Council. Prof. Ruth Langer, Professor of



James Bernauer, S.J.



Ruth Langer

Jewish Studies and then Center Associate Director, spoke as part of the launch’s panel on interfaith relations and dialogue. The exhibit explored advances in interfaith dialogue, particularly between Catholicism and Judaism, during and beyond Cardinal Cushing’s tenure as Archbishop of Boston.

Seventh Annual John Paul II Lecture [\[Video\]](#)

Between the Holocaust and the Nakba: When Genya and Henryk Kowalski Challenged History, Jaffa 1949

Alon Confino

February 9, 2020

Prof. Alon Confino, Pen Tishkach Chair of Holocaust Studies and Professor of History and Jewish Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, delivered the Seventh Annual John Paul II Lecture in Christian-Jewish Relations. In his lecture, Prof. Confino addressed why Genya and Henryk Kowalski, Holocaust survivors, refused to receive an abandoned house in Jaffa in 1949 after the Nakba, and implications and lessons from this episode. While his lecture clarified that he does not seek to draw a parallel or comparison between the Holocaust and Nakba, his talk argued that their linkage allows a new historical and political grammar for relating and narrating their complicated intersections.



Alon Confino

Is There a New Anti-Semitism? [\[Video\]](#)

James Bernauer, S.J., Susannah Heschel, and Mark Silk

February 18, 2020

The Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life and the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning co-sponsored a panel presentation on the disturbing rise of anti-Semitic speech and hate crimes during the past few years. The lecture featured Susannah Heschel, the Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, alongside Mark Silk, Director of the Leonard Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College (Hartford), and James Bernauer, S.J., then Kraft Family Professor and Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College. The event addressed the question: with the perceived rise in anti-Semitic attacks, such as the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue two years ago in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the United States facing a new form of anti-



James Bernauer, S.J.

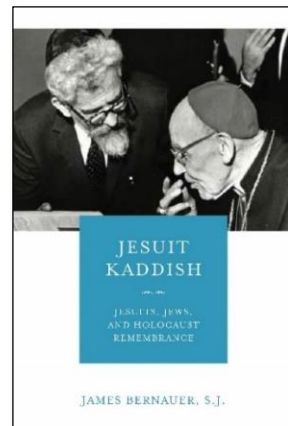
Semitism, or a resurgence of older ideas? Fr. Bernauer argued that two “types” of anti-Semitism have emerged having been shaped since the 1940s. The first of these is Post-Holocaust anti-Semitism, which uses many of the same pre-Holocaust arguments against Jewish people including paranoia to create a false narrative of “control” over politics and economics. The second is post-Israeli and a failure by the public to properly distinguish between Jewish people and the Israeli government.

Jesuit Kaddish: Jesuits, Jews, and Holocaust Remembrance [\[Video\]](#)

James Bernauer, S.J.

September 16, 2020

The Center hosted a virtual book launch for James Bernauer’s *Jesuit Kaddish: Jesuits, Jews, and Holocaust Remembrance* (Notre Dame Press, 2020). *Jesuit Kaddish* examines Jesuit hostility toward Judaism prior to the Holocaust, and then examines the development of a new understanding of the Catholic Church’s relation to Judaism that culminated with Vatican II’s landmark decree *Nostra Aetate*. Fr. Bernauer’s historical study is spiritually ambitious in its desire to have this story of the Jesuits’ relation to Jews and Judaism contribute to interreligious reconciliation. Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, and Brett McLaughlin, S.J., Ph.D. student in Theology at Boston College, delivered responses.



Reading the New Testament Without Presupposing Supersessionism: Four Fundamental Issues

Jesper Svartvik [\[Video\]](#)

September 23, 2020

In his first lecture as the Corcoran Visiting Chair in Christian-Jewish Relations, Dr. Jesper Svartvik spoke about the growing number of Jews and Christians who no longer define and describe their religions in terms of being against each other, but rather as two authentic expressions of faith, both based upon the biblical texts. He explained that this reality encourages us to reread the New Testament texts without presupposing supersessionism, and he suggested four fundamental issues which must be addressed in this endeavor: the portrayal of the Pharisees, the New Testament’s (especially the Gospel of John’s) discussions of “the Jews,” the role of the Law in the Pauline epistles, and, finally, the impact of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Dr. Svartvik posited that exploring these four fundamental issues reveals a new landscape in which Judaism manifests itself not as the theological contrast of Christianity, but as its historical context.



Jesper Svartvik

The Bible With and Without Jesus: how Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently

Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler [\[Video\]](#)

November 4, 2020

Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, and Prof. Marc Zvi Brettler, Professor of Jewish Studies at Duke University, spoke about their



Marc Zvi Brettler

latest publication *The Bible With and Without Jesus* (HarperCollins, 2020), which emphasizes how Jews and Christians can learn from and understand each other better by exploring how they read many of the same Bible stories through different lenses. Prof. Levine and Prof. Brettler compared Jewish, Christian, and academic interpretations of ancient narratives, offering a deeper understanding of these contrasting views and illuminating the historical and literary significance of the Bible and its place in our culture. They spoke of not only what Jews and Christians can learn from each other but how to appreciate the distinctive perspectives of each other.



Amy-Jill Levine

**Religious Resources to Combat Racism
Fall 2020**

Together with the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, the Center co-sponsored and facilitated this three-part seminar series for Boston College faculty.

October 6, 2020 [\[Video\]](#)

“Mining the Christian Tradition for Resources to Combat Racism” with Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones (Theology Department) and Vincent Rougeau (College of the Holy Cross), convened by Mark Massa, S.J. (Boisi Center)



October 20, 2020 [\[Video\]](#)

“Toward Understanding Another's Reality: Narrative Empathy, Reconciliation, and Racism” with Theresa O’Keefe (School of Theology and Ministry) and Rabbi Benjamin Samuels (Congregation Shaarei Tefillah), convened by Ruth Langer (Theology Department and Center for Christian-Jewish Learning)



October 27, 2020 [\[Video\]](#)

“Narrative, Restorative Justice and the Need for Truth in Racial Equality” with Yavilah McCoy (Dimension, Inc.) and Joshua Snyder (Theology Department), convened by Joy Moore (Pine Manor Institute for Student Success)



White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism: Lessons from the Capitol Attack Jonathan D. Sarna [\[Video\]](#)

January 13, 2021

Prof. Jonathan Sarna, University Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, delivered a lecture explaining the anti-Semitic symbols present during the January 6, 2020 United States Capitol attack. Prof. Sarna explained the history, themes, and relevance of these hate symbols—both covert and overt—and the significance of their continual existence in American society.



Jonathan D. Sarna



One of the rioters, at left, who broke into the Capitol was wearing a hoodie emblazoned with “Camp Auschwitz.” ITV

Film Screening of *Holy Silence*

January 31, 2021

The Center co-sponsored a screening of the documentary film *Holy Silence* which addresses the questions: How did the Vatican react to the Holocaust during WWII? What was the response of the Vatican to the rise of Adolf Hitler and racist policies? It takes a close look at what Pope Pius XII knew, as well as reactions of others at the Vatican, and his relationship with his predecessor Pius XI. The film includes interviews with American officials from priests to presidents, as well as documentary evidence from this dark period of history, and the behind the scenes actions that were taken to try to help its victims. A panel discussion with Prof. Charles Gallagher, S.J., Associate Professor of History at Boston College (who appears in the film), and Rob Leikind, Director, American Jewish Committee (AJC) New England followed the screening. This event was hosted by Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center.



Eighth Annual John Paul II Lecture [\[Video\]](#)

“Walking You Make the Road”:

Discerning the Way in Jewish-Christian Relations Today

Mary C. Boys

February 11, 2021

Mary C. Boys, SNJM, Skinner and McAlpin Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, delivered the Center’s Seventh Annual John Paul II Lecture in Christian-Jewish Relations. In her lecture, she focused on ameliorating the chasm between what historians and biblical scholars are learning about religious groups in the Mediterranean world of antiquity, and how many—if not most—Christians understand the New Testament passages that arose in that context. Prof. Boys laid out a synthesis of the most salient scholarship regarding terminology, rhetoric, categories, and methods in the hopes of providing a framework for a narrative about reorienting the origin stories of Judaism and Christianity.



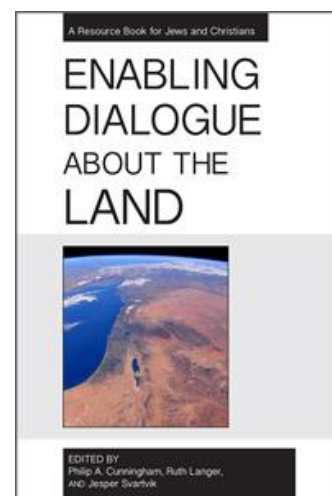
Mary C. Boys

Enabling Dialogue about the Land [\[Video\]](#)

Ruth Langer and Jesper Svartvik, among others

February 21, 2021

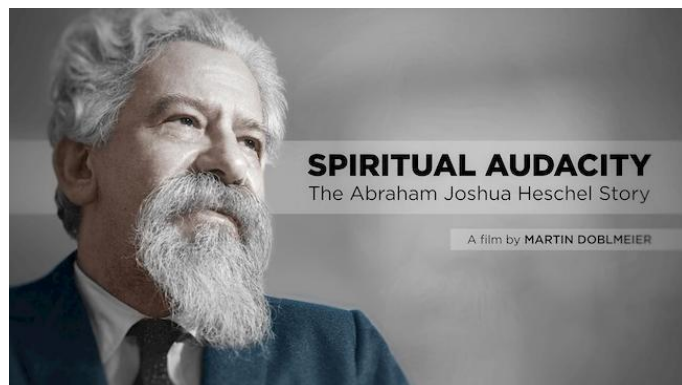
Ruth Langer, Professor of Jewish Studies and Interim Director of the Center, and Jesper Svartvik, 2020-2022 Corcoran Visiting Chair, were among the speakers in the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) webinar celebrating the publication of *Enabling Dialogue about the Land: A Resource Book for Jews and Christians* (Paulist Press, 2020). Prof. Langer and Dr. Svartvik were both editors of the book, which comprises essays from 16 contributing scholars who engaged for several years in the “Promise, Land, and Hope” research project of the International Council for Christians and Jews (ICCJ). The international team of scholars sought to answer: “What understandings might the project develop that could serve as resources for constructive dialogue about Israeli-Palestinian issues?” The book is the result of their research and field testing of a dialogue process they named “Partners in Hope,” designed for Christians and Jews who gather for discussion in academic and congregational settings. While not intending to “solve” the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Enabling Dialogue* encourages interreligious conversation that moves away from endless disputes over politics and encourages engaging with differences in seeking a path toward constructive understanding.



Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story [\[Video\]](#)

March 22, 2021

The Center co-sponsored with the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life a film screening and panel discussion of *Spiritual Audacity: The Abraham Joshua Heschel Story*. This documentary examines



Heschel’s significant involvement in civil rights, including his roles as a mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the entire Civil Rights Movement, as a leading critic of the Vietnam War, as a champion for Soviet Jews, and as a pioneer in the work of interfaith dialogue. A conversation with filmmaker Martin Doblmeier and Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College Susannah Heschel followed the screening.

Discussions About Race in the Classroom

Spring 2021

With the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, the Center facilitated a second three-part seminar series for Boston College Theology faculty and doctoral students. Seminar speakers were all members of Boston College's PULSE Service Learning faculty. While not directly addressing Christian-Jewish relations, this seminar was an expression of our two traditions' commitment to social justice and repairing our world.

February 10, 2021 [\[Video\]](#)

“Cultivating Helpful Dynamics” with Marina McCoy and Meghan Sweeney, convened by Mark Massa, S.J. (Boisi Center)



March 10, 2021 [\[Video\]](#)

“Creating Constructive Conversations” with Elizabeth Antus and Gregory Fried, convened by Ruth Langer (Theology Department and Center for Christian-Jewish Learning)



April 7, 2021 [\[Video\]](#)

“Developing Practical and Integrative Assignments” with Matthew Kruger and Mary Troxell, convened by Mark Massa, S.J.



A Virtual Film Event Commemorating Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day [\[Video\]](#)

The Shoah in Film: History from the Ashes

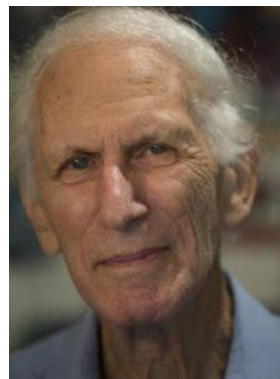
John and Susan Michalczyk with Robert Hilliard

April 8, 2021

In honor of Yom HaShoah, Boston College professors and documentary filmmakers John and Susan Michalczyk presented and discussed clips from their series of Holocaust films: *The Cross and the Star: Jews, Christians and the Holocaust* (1997), *Nazi Medicine: In the Shadow of the Reich* (1997), *Displaced: Miracle at St. Ottilien* (2002), *Creating Harmony: The Displaced Persons' Orchestra at St. Ottilien* (2007), and *Nazi Law: Legally Blind* (2016). Robert Hilliard, featured in the film *Creating Harmony*, spoke about his experiences as a 19-year-old American soldier in 1945 and his letter-writing campaign to raise awareness of the deplorable conditions at displaced person camp St. Ottilien. Hilliard's letter eventually reached President Truman and resulted in improved conditions at the camp, a powerful testimony to the difference an individual, even in a modest position, can make for the lives of many others. This event was co-sponsored by the Boston College Theology Department, Film Studies Program, Hillel, and Campus Ministry. This event was also co-sponsored by the Consulate General of Israel to New England.



Eternal Flame in the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem



(L-R) John Michalczyk, Susan Michalczyk, Robert Hilliard

Workshop “Facilitating Dialogue about the Land and State of Israel”

Philip A. Cunningham, Adam Gregerman, Ruth Langer, Jesper Svartvik

June 21, 2021

The Center hosted a virtual workshop as part of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) Annual Conference on the publication *Enabling Dialogue about the Land: A Resource Book for Jews and Christians* (Paulist Press, 2020) with the books editors: Philip A. Cunningham, Professor of Theology and Director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations of Saint Joseph's University; Adam Gregerman, Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia; Ruth Langer, Professor of Jewish Studies and Interim Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College; and Jesper Svartvik, 2020-2022 Corcoran Visiting Chair. Workshop participants examined

texts from diverse voices and perspectives both to understand the religious assumptions and reasoning of their authors and to deepen their own understanding of how one's own presuppositions emerge.



(L-R) Philip A. Cunningham, Adam Gregerman, Ruth Langer, Jesper Svartvik

Jewish-Christian Lecture Series

The Center invites Boston College professors teaching a course with connections to Jewish-Christian relations to apply for Center sponsorship of a guest lecturer for his or her course. These lectures are open to the greater Boston College community in addition to professors' students.

Hannah Arendt and the Global Refugee Crisis

Serena Parekh

September 26, 2019

Prof. Serena Parekh, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Northeastern University, spoke in Prof. James Bernauer's "Hannah Arendt" class about understanding our moral obligations to stateless people and, drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, the need to reconceptualize the harm of statelessness as entailing both a political harm and an ontological harm.



Serena Parekh

What Can We Say about Jewish Groups during the Second Temple Period?"

Shaye J. D. Cohen

November 12, 2019



Shaye J. D. Cohen

Prof. Shaye J. D. Cohen, Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy at Harvard University, spoke in Prof. Angela Harkins' "Second Temple Judaisms" class about scholars' understanding of Judaism during the Hellenistic period and various Jewish groups during the late Second Temple period.

The History of Jewish Mysticism [\[Video\]](#)

David Maayan

September 23, 2020



David Maayan

Rabbi David Maayan, a Ph.D. student in Theology at Boston College, spoke in Prof. Catherine Cornille's "Comparative Mysticism" course on the history and contemporary practices of Jewish mysticism.

Germany's Post Holocaust Payout: Compensation, Reparations, and Transitional Justice [\[Video\]](#)

Nir Eisikovits

October 22, 2020

Prof. Nir Eisikovits, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Applied Ethics Center at UMass Boston, spoke in Prof. Gregory Fried's "Law and Interpretation" class on the example of Germany's reparations to Jews and to Israel after World War II and the debate around German reparations, which raises questions about the role of forgiveness and atonement in politics and the conflicting understandings of the obligation to forgive.



Nir Eisikovits

The Significance of Jerusalem in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam [\[Video\]](#)

Raphael Jospe

November 12, 2020

Dr. Raphael Jospe, professor emeritus of Jewish philosophy at Ariel University, spoke in Prof. Ruth Langer's class "Jews and Christians: Understanding the Other" about the significance of Jerusalem in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.



Raphael Jospe

Concepts of God in Twentieth Century Jewish Thought

Paul Franks

February 17, 2021

Prof. Paul Franks, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Judaic Studies at Yale University, spoke in Prof. Karin Nisenbaum's "Concepts of God in Twentieth Century Jewish Thought" class on the topic of Kabbalah and German Idealism.



Paul Franks

2021 Corcoran Chair Conference

“To Arrive Where We Started and Know the Place for the First Time”:

Exploring Pre-Supersessionist Readings of the New Testament

2021 Corcoran Chair Conference

April 11 and 18, 2021 (Virtual)



Caspar David Friedrich, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*

Conference Rationale: In New Testament studies today, the inherent Jewishness of the early Christian movement is taken into consideration to a much greater extent than only a couple of decades ago: both the historical Jesus and the historical Paul are now firmly situated in late Second Temple Judaism, and the post-70 C.E. writers of the New Testament—Paul probably being the only exception—form their theology and write their texts in the wake of the destruction of the Temple, when all branches of Judaism had to cope with the fact that the Sanctuary was no more. When a growing number of current scholars read New Testament texts, they do not portray Judaism as the gloomy background from which Christianity had to be removed in order to glow and grow; on the contrary, they understand that one must return to the Jewish matrix in order to appreciate the New Testament texts more fully. It is as if the renowned, yet enigmatic words of T. S. Eliot could be applied to this area of research: “We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

The Corcoran Chair conference in the spring of 2021 sought to arrive where Christianity started, and sought to know the earliest Christian movement for the first time, before the supersessionism paradigm—which sets Christianity over against Judaism as if they were two separate religious systems—began to govern most of the theological imagination. Papers explored the consequences of pre-supersessionist readings of the New Testament.

Session 1 [\[Video\]](#)

Jesper Svartvik, Boston College

“Those Who Trust Us Educate Us”:

Daniel Deronda’s Quest for His Origins and New Testament Studies

Wendy Farley, San Francisco Theological Seminary

Radical Compassion During Days of Rage

Session 2 [\[Video\]](#)

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Seminary of the Southwest, Austin

The Parable of the Vineyard and the Dynamics of Covenant

Mary C. Boys, Union Theological Seminary

“Questions at the Heart of our Faith”: The Gifts of Non-Supersessionist Christianity

Day 1 Response: Daniel Boyarin (University of California, Berkeley) [\[Video\]](#)

Session 3 [\[Video\]](#)

Daniel C. Ullucci, Stonehill College

Supersessionism, Sacrifices, and the Destruction of the Second Temple

Dieter T. Roth, Boston College

Transfiguring the Transfiguration: Reading Luke 9:35 Adversus Marcionem

Session 4 [\[Video\]](#)

Peter C. Phan, Georgetown University

Non-Supersessionism and Asian Ecclesiology and Christian Mission

R. Kendall Soulen, Candler School of Theology

Jesus and the Unspoken Name: On Recovering a Differentiated Apophaticism

Day 2 Response: Daniel Boyarin (University of California, Berkeley) [\[Video\]](#)

Student Internship Program

The Center established a new student internship program to support undergraduate and graduate students in their understanding and participation in Jewish-Christian relations. These 1-year internships support programs and projects independently conceived and executed by students outside their regular coursework that contribute to interreligious dialogue and interfaith understanding. Internships may be in—but are not limited to—ministerial, pastoral, and educational fields and are conducted under the guidance of an advisor. During the 2020-2021 academic year, The Center supported the year-long research project of junior and 2021 Dean’s Scholar Award recipient Dennis Wieboldt: “The Natural Law Foundation of Interreligious Social Advocacy: A Civil Rights Movement Case Study.” In his research project, which was sponsored by Prof. Mark Massa, S.J., Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, Dennis asks one foundational question: How did Catholics articulate an interreligious foundation for social advocacy during the Civil Rights Movement? Using the work of former Boston College Law School Dean William Kenealy, S.J., as a case study, Dennis’s research demonstrates how appeals to the Natural Law were an effective means of building interreligious consensus behind the cause of racial equality. [\[Video\]](#)



Dennis Wieboldt, Class of 2022

Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations



The Center for Christian-Jewish Learning publishes *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, the electronic journal of the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations (CCJR). Prof. Ruth Langer, Interim Center Director, and Dr. Camille Markey, Center Associate Director, serve on the editorial board, as Co-Editor and Managing Editor respectively. This academic journal, the only one fully dedicated to Christian-Jewish relations, publishes peer-reviewed articles, major addresses from the Council of Center's conferences, and book reviews. It may be accessed freely on the internet at its website, www.bc.edu/scjr.

The Journal publishes peer-reviewed scholarship on the history, theology, and contemporary realities of Jewish-Christian relations and reviews new materials in the field. Volume 14 (2019) included five peer-reviewed articles, including a special section of peer-reviewed articles on the controversy over Edgardo Mortara, one proceeding of the CCJR annual meeting, and 19 reviews. Volume 15 (2020) included six peer-reviewed articles and one article response. Volume 15 also included a special review section on Gavin D’Costa’s *Catholic Doctrines on the Jewish People After Vatican II* (Oxford University Press, 2019) with five reviews and a response from the author, as well as 14 additional book reviews. Volume 16 (2021) has a special focus on guilt, sin, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation in Christian-Jewish relations.