

Benjamin Schreier

Mitrani Family Professor of Jewish Studies
Professor of English and Jewish Studies
Pennsylvania State University
Editor, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*

Contact:

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Fields of Expertise and Teaching Interests:

Jewish American Literature and Culture; Arab American Literature; Post-1900 American Literature and Culture; Intellectuals; Theory of Identity; Ethnic and National Discourses; Cultural and Critical Theory; Modernism and Postmodernism; Literary History; Film; Cold War Culture

Education:

Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

Ph.D., English and American literature, May 2003

M.A., English and American literature, May 1996

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Graduate Studies, Program in Cultural and Critical Studies, 1994-1995

Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

B.A., High Honors, English Literature with minor in Philosophy, May 1994

Academic Employment:

2018—

Pennsylvania State University: Mitrani Family Professor of Jewish Studies
Professor of English and Jewish Studies

2015—2020

Pennsylvania State University: Director, Jewish Studies Program

2014—2015

Pennsylvania State University: Interim Director, Jewish Studies Program

2014—2018

Pennsylvania State University: Lea P. and Malvin E. Bank Early Career Professor
Associate Professor of English and Jewish Studies

2008—2014

Pennsylvania State University: Lea P. and Malvin E. Bank Early Career Professor
Assistant Professor of English and Jewish Studies

2006—2008

Pennsylvania State University: Lea P. and Malvin E. Bank Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish
American Literature, Jewish Studies Program

2005—2006

Wake Forest University: Visiting Assistant Professor, English Department

2004—2005

University of Illinois at Chicago: Lecturer, English Department

Publications:

Books, authored:

- *The Rise and Fall of Jewish American Literature: Ethnic Studies and the Challenge of Identity*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.
- *The Impossible Jew: Identity and the Reconstruction of Jewish American Literature*, NYU Press, 2015.
- *The Power of Negative Thinking: Cynicism and the History of Modern American Literature*, University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Books, edited:

- *The Year's Work in Nerds, Wonks, and Neocons*, co-editor, Indiana University Press, 2017.
- *Studies in Irreversibility: Texts and Contexts*, editor, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Articles/Book Chapters:

- "A Theory of the Palestinian American Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, forthcoming.
- "The Discourse of Arab American Literature: A Genealogy for Beginning," *MELUS*, forthcoming.
- "The Zionist's Gambit: Israel Politics, the 'Antisemitism' Ruse, and the Rightist Weaponization of Identity," *Left Theory and the Alt-Right*, ed. Jeffrey Di Leo and Sophia McClennen, Routledge, forthcoming.
- "Slouching Towards Bethlehem: A Critique of Jewish American Literary Historical Zionism," *Cultural Critique*, forthcoming.
- "Jewish American Literature Against the World," *American Literary History* 33.4 (2021): 733-755.
- "Whither Roth Given Bailey" (Review essay of Philip Roth: *The Biography*) by Blake Bailey, *Symplokē* 29.1-2 (2021): 617-627.
- "A Polemical Confession," *Shofar* 37.2 (2019), Special Issue on Narrative Writing: 107-121.
- "The History of Jewish American Literary History: A Critical Genealogy of Emergence," *American Literature* 91.1 (March 2019), 121-50.
- "'Our Country and Our Culture' in the Era of Americanist and Modernist Studies: Reading the New York Intellectuals After Historicism," *Symplokē* 25.1-2 (December 2017), 277-94.
- "Introduction: Working in and on Nerds, Wonks, and Neocons, This Year and to Come" (co-authored with Jonathan Eburne), *The Year's Work in Nerds, Wonks, and Neocons*, Indiana University Press, 2017; 1-26.
- "Filming Identity in the Jewish American Postwar; Or, On the Uses and Abuses of Periodization for Jewish Studies," *Shofar* 34.3 (Spring 2016), 76-101.
- "Jewish American Fiction, 1945-1970," commissioned chapter for *Cambridge History of Jewish American Literature*, Cambridge University Press, 2016: 124-43.
- "Literary Historical Zionism: Irving Kristol, Alexander Portnoy, and the State of the Jews," *Contemporary Literature* 55.4 (Winter 2014), 760-791.
- "The End of Promiscuity," commissioned review essay in *American Literary History* 27.1 (Spring 2015), pp. 162-171.
- "New York Intellectual/Neo-con/Jewish; or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Ignore

Ruth Wisse," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 31.1 (Spring 2012), pp. 97-108.

- "The Failure of Identity: Towards a New Literary History of Philip Roth's Unrecognizable Jew," *Jewish Social Studies* 17.2 (Winter 2011), pp. 501-35.
- "Against the Dialectic of Nation: Abraham Cahan and Desire's Spectral Jew," *Modern Fiction Studies* 57.2 (Summer 2011), pp. 276-99.
- "Jewish-American Novel," *Encyclopedia of the Novel*, ed. Peter Logan, Blackwell Publishing, 2011, 10 MS pp.
- "Jew Historicism: Delmore Schwartz and Overdetermination," *Prooftexts* 27.3 (Fall 2007), pp. 500-530.
- "Desire's Second Act: Race, Criticism, and *The Great Gatsby's* Cynical Americanism," *Twentieth Century Literature* 53.2 (Summer 2007), pp. 153-181.
- "Ethnic Poetics and the Irreversibility of 'Jewishness' in Delmore Schwartz," *Studies in Irreversibility*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007, pp. 61-82.

Reviews:

- "For a Ruthless Critique of All That Exists: Literature in an Age of Capitalist Realism" by Robert T. Tally, *Symplokē*, forthcoming (2,983 words).
- "A Hundred Acres of America: The Geography of Jewish American Literary History" by Michael Hoberman, *Shofar* 38.1 (Spring 2020): 269-272.
- "Sounds of a New Generation: On Contemporary Jewish-American Literature" by Deborah Wallrabenstein, *American Literary History Online Review Series XVI* (2018).
- "Identity: Fragments, Frankness" by Jean-Luc Nancy, *American Book Review* 36.3 (March/April 2015): 23-24.
- "From Continuity to Contiguity: Toward a New Jewish Literary Thinking" by Dan Miron, *Comparative Literature Studies* 50.4 (2013): 694-697.
- "Klezmer America: Jewishness, Ethnicity, Modernity" by Jonathan Freedman, *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 30 (2011): 107-111.
- "Recovering 'Yiddishland': Threshold Moments in American Literature" by Merle L. Bachman, *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 27 (2008): 106-108.
- "Inauthentic: The Anxiety over Culture and Identity" by Vincent Cheng, *Philip Roth Studies* 2.2 (Fall 2006): 168-171.
- "Notorious H.I.V.: The Media Spectacle of Nushawn Williams," by Thomas Shevory, *Bridge Magazine* 14 (February/March 2005): 43.

Other:

- "No More Letters of Recommendation!," *The Chronicle Review*, May 27, 2022.
- "A Protest against the JCC Conception of Jewish Studies," *AJS Perspectives: The Protest Issue* (Spring 2021), 85-87.
- "Editor's Introduction," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 39.1 (Spring 2020), 1-3.
- "To Hillel and Back: One Jewish Studies Program's Sojourn on the Borderline Between Jewish Community Professionals and Academic Freedom," *AJS Perspectives* (Fall/Winter 2016), 58-9.
- "Editor's Introduction," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 35.1 (Spring 2016), 1.
- "Editor's Introduction," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 33.2 (Fall 2014), ix-x.
- "Editor's Introduction," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 32.2 (Fall 2013), 119-20.
- "Editor's Introduction," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 32.1 (Spring 2013), 1-3.

- “Notes on the Relaunch of *Studies in American Jewish Literature*,” *AJS Perspectives* (Spring 2012), 52-3.
- “Editor’s Introduction,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 31.1 (Spring 2012), pp. 1-5.

Invited Talks:

- American Jewish Literary Studies Working Group, Invited Workshop Participant, Grant Center for the American Jewish Experience, Tulane University, October 2022
- “Who Counts and How? Reckoning with Continuity and Community,” Invited Roundtable Participant, Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania (online), December 2021
- “Rethinking American Jewish Literary Studies in the # MeToo Era (Or: Enough with Philip Roth),” Invited Roundtable Participant, UCLA (online), December 2021
- “The Rise and Fall of Jewish American Literature: A Brief World-History,” Invited Lecture, University of Texas at Austin, April 2019
- “Jewish Literature, ‘the World,’ and Jewish Studies’ Bad Faith,” Invited Symposium Presentation, “Twenty-First Century Jewish Writing and the World,” University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign, March 2019
- “Yiddish and the Invention of Jewish American Literature,” Invited Symposium Presentation, “The Highs and Lows of Sholem Aleichem: Yiddish Literature and the Pursuit of Popular Writing,” University of Wisconsin—Madison, November 2017
- “The History of Jewish American Literary History,” Invited Lecture, Wake Forest University, March 2016
- “‘Can’t you ever forget your Jews?’; or, Why Jews Aren’t Normal: The Unrepresentable Jewish Future of Philip Roth’s *The Counterlife*,” Invited Lecture, University of South Carolina, February 2013
- “The Jewish American Novel and the Creation of Jewish Americans,” Invited Lecture, Columbia, South Carolina JCC, February 2013

Conference and Symposium Participation:

- “Palestinian American Literature versus Palestinian Literature,” Modern Language Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, January 2023
- “Fascist Intellectuals and the Canons of Jewish Studies,” Panel Chair and Respondent, Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Boston, December 2022
- “The Futures of Palestinian American Literature,” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Denver, December 2022
- “Arab American Literature’s Intertextual Literary History,” American Literary Association Symposium on The Historical Imagination in American Literature, Santa Fe, October 2022
- “Looking Back at *MAUS*: The Americanization of the Holocaust and the Future History of the Graphic Novel,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, April 2022
- “The Resistant Discourse of Arab American Literature,” MELUS Conference, New Orleans, March 2022
- “Generation and National Displacement in Palestinian American Literature,” Modern

- Language Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, January 2022
- “The Zionist’s Gambit: Israel Politics, the ‘Anti-Semitism’ Ruse, and the Rightist Weaponization of Identity,” Modern Language Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, January 2022
 - “Decentering Jewish Literature,” Panel Organizer and Moderator, Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, December 2021
 - “Jewish Studies and the Racial Politics of Knowledge: Challenging White and Secular Epistemologies,” Panel Organizer and Moderator, Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, December 2021
 - “Arab American Literature Is About Arab American Literature,” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Online, November 2021
 - “William Peter Blatty and the Secret Jewish History of Arab American Literature,” Society for Comparative Literature and the Arts Conference, Austin, TX, October 2021
 - “Blacklists in Theory/Practice/History,” Panel Organizer, Modern Language Association Annual Conference, Online, January 2021
 - “What SHOULD Israel Mean to Jewish Studies?,” Roundtable Organizer, Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Online, December 2020
 - “Beyond Zionism: Palestinian American Literature and Institutional Possibility,” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Online, October 2020
 - “Racism, Jews, America,” Panel Organizer and Chair, Modern Language Association Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, January 2020
 - “Jews and the Twentieth-Century Political Geographies of American Visual Culture,” Panel Organizer and Chair, Modern Language Association Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, January 2020
 - “Reception and American Jewish Literature,” Research Seminar Participant, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, San Diego, CA, December 2019.
 - “Dubiously Jewish Literature,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2019.
 - “Philip Roth’s Successors,” Roundtable Participant, American Literature Association Conference, Boston, MA, May 2019.
 - “Identity as Catachresis,” American Comparative Literature Association Conference, Washington, DC, March 2019.
 - “20th Century Jewish Literature Revisited: Graduate Student Works-in-Progress,” Respondent, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, MA, December 2018.
 - “Local Markers to Analytic Categories: Nation, Race, and Sect Between Governmentality and Scholarship,” Roundtable Participant, MESA Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2018.
 - “The Cultural Capital of Jewish American Literature,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2018.
 - “After Multiculturalism, Beyond ‘Is It Good for the Jews?,’” Roundtable Organizer and Participant, American Jewish Historical Society Biennial Scholars Conference, Philadelphia, June 2018
 - “Irving Howe and the Politics of Literary Canonicity,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Washington, DC, December 2017
 - “Navigating Jewish Campus and Community Debates on Israel/Palestine in the Age of

- Trump,” Roundtable Participant, Middle East Studies Association Conference, Washington, DC, November 2017
- “Thinking About Identity in the Age of Trump,” World Literatures and the New Totalitarianism conference, London, May 2017
 - “Feeling Jewish,” Panel Respondent, Modern Language Association Conference, Philadelphia, PA, January 2017
 - “Critical Jewish Studies: In Theory and Practice,” Research Seminar Organizer, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, San Diego, CA, December 2016
 - “What Does Jewish American Literature Mean?; Or, How John Updike Helps Us Think about Jewish Studies,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, San Diego, CA, December 2016
 - “Was John Updike a Jewish American Writer?,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2016
 - “Jews and Ethnic Studies,” Panel Respondent, Modern Language Association Conference, Austin, TX, January 2016
 - “Period and Canon: What Happened to Jewish American Literary History?,” Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, December 2015
 - “Jewish American Periodization,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2015
 - “Periodizing Identity/Identity as a Critique of Periodizing,” Symposium member, ACL(x), Columbia, SC, February 2015
 - “Jews in Postwar America, 1945-1960: New Approaches,” Seminar participant, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Baltimore, December 2014
 - “The Uses of Identity in Jewish American Film,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2014
 - “Jews and Ethnic Literary Studies: Contesting Authenticity,” invited talk, CALS Symposium on Alien Form, Pennsylvania State University, March 2014
 - “The Critical Shul I Wouldn't Be Caught Dead In; or, Post-Zionist Jewish American Literary Study?,” MLA Conference, Chicago, January 2014
 - “Jews, Race, America,” Invited symposium member, Indiana University, October 2013
 - “Nerds, Wonks, and Neo-Cons,” Symposium Co-Organizer, Penn State University, April 2013
 - “Why It's Impossible to Teach *Portnoy's Complaint*,” Invited participant in the “Teaching Roth: How, now?” roundtable, Roth@80 Conference, Newark, March 2013
 - “Visioning and Re-visioning Canadian Jewish Literature,” Session organizer and chair, AJS Conference, Chicago, December 2012
 - “Festschrift in Honor of Dan Walden,” Invited roundtable participant, Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, November 2012
 - “The Futures of Jewish American Literature: Celebrating the New *Studies in American Jewish Literature*,” Session organizer and chair, MLA Conference, Seattle, January 2012
 - “Reinterpreting Modern Jewish Literary History: Genre, Language, Text,” Session chair, AJS Conference, Washington, DC, December 2011
 - “The Neoconservative Politics of Jewishness; or, Why Were the New York Intellectuals Jewish?,” Jewish American and Holocaust Literature Symposium, Miami Beach, FL, November 2011
 - “Why Were the New York Intellectuals Jewish?; or, The Secret Relationship Between the

Neo-Cons and the Jews," Invited talk, Comparative Literature Lecture series, Pennsylvania State University, October 2011

- "Sex and Identity in Roth's *The Counterlife*," American Literature Association Conference, Boston, May 2011
- "Of Circumcision and Circumscription; or, Why Jews Aren't Normal: Identity and the Unrepresentable Jewish Future in Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*," Institute for the Arts and Humanities Resident Scholar Lecture, Pennsylvania State University, April 2011
- "Trilling, Schwartz, and the Ordeal of Civility; or, What are we really doing when we practice Jewish American literary history?," Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, December 2010
- "Jewish American Culture Beyond Identity Politics," Session Organizer, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, December 2010
- "Holocaust Pedagogy in a University Setting," Roundtable Participant, Association for Jewish Studies Conference, Boston, December 2010
- "Depression Modernism's Jewish Christs," Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900, Louisville, KY, February 2010
- "Representing 9/11," Panel Chair, Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture since 1900, Louisville, KY, February 2010
- "Does the English Department Have a Jewish Problem," Invited Roundtable Participant, MLA Conference, Philadelphia, December 2009
- "Jonathan Safran Foer's *Stealthy Jews*," American Literature Association Conference, Boston, MA, May 2009
- "Bernard Malamud's Semitism; or, Jews are Other People," 20th Century Literature Conference, Louisville, KY, February 2009
- "Delmore Schwartz and Others," Panel Chair, American Literature Association, Boston, May 2007
- "Delmore Schwartz and the Beginning and End of Jewishness," Invited Talk, Comparative Literature lecture series, Pennsylvania State University, November 2006
- "Delmore Schwartz's 'Jewishness' and the Irreversibility of Thinking," Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference, Atlanta, April 2006
- "Henry Adams's Silence," American Literature Association Conference, Boston, May 2005
- "Culture and Irreversibility," Panel Chair, Northeast Modern Language Association Conference, Cambridge, April 2005
- "Variations on Persistence and Irretrievability in Modern America," Northeast Modern Language Association Conference, Cambridge, April 2005
- "Writing and Justification in William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*," Northeast Modern Language Association Conference, Pittsburgh, March 2004
- "Names and the Ideal in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House*," American Name Society-MLA Conference, New York, December 2002

Courses Taught:

Graduate

- Graduate Seminar in Identity in the American Novel
- Graduate Seminar in Arab American Literature

Graduate Seminar in Contemporary US Political Novels
Graduate Seminar in Postwar US Literary Intellectuals
Graduate Proseminar in US Cold War Prose
Graduate Proseminar in 20th Century American Novel
Graduate Seminar in Intellectual Theory/New York Intellectuals
Graduate Seminar in Jewish American Literature
Graduate Proseminar in American Modernist Prose

Undergraduate

The Graphic Novel
The Holocaust in Film and Literature
First Year Seminar: College Films
Jewish American Short Story
American Comic Film
Jewish American Film
American Literature Survey, 1865-present
American Comedy
Representing Israel and Zionism: Texts and Contexts
Post-Holocaust Literature
Introduction to Critical Reading
Introduction to Jewish American Literature
What is Literature (introduction to the English major)
Authors and Contexts: Philip Roth
Cultures of the New York Jew
Alternative Voices in American Literature
The Ethnicity of Class in American Literature
Jewish Literature: An International Perspective
"Nature," Ecology, and Human Environments
Literature of Frontier and Nation
New York Literature
The Literature of Discontent
Literature of the American 1920s

Fellowships and Honors:

- Humanities Institute Resident Scholar (semester teaching leave and research budget), Penn State University, 2021
- Institute for the Arts and Humanities Resident Scholar (semester teaching leave and research budget), Penn State University, 2010-2011
- William C. Archie Faculty Excellence grant, Wake Forest Univ., 2006
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Year Fellowship, Brandeis Univ., 2000
- English Department Advanced Teaching and Dissertation Fellowship, Brandeis Univ., 1999
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Summer Research Fellowship, Brandeis Univ., 1998
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Teaching Fellowship, Brandeis Univ., 1996-1999
- English Department Fellowship, Brandeis Univ., 1995
- Teaching Fellowship, Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1995 (declined in order to attend Brandeis)

Professional Service:

2019—

MLA Delegate Assembly

2017-2020

National Jewish Book Council Fiction Prize Evaluator

2017

Fulbright Scholar Discipline Peer Reviewer

2015-2020

Executive Committee, MLA Jewish American Forum

2013-2014

Judge, Lyn Ward Graphic Novel Prize, Pennsylvania State University

2011—

Editor, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*

2011-2016

Executive Committee, MLA Jewish Cultural Studies Discussion Group

2010-2011

Graduate Studies Committee, English Department, Penn State

2009-2013

Faculty Senate, Penn State University

2004-2005

Peer Review Committee, First-Year Writing Program, University of Illinois at Chicago

Reader for the following presses and journals:

Bloomsbury Academic

Rutgers University Press

Fordham University Press

Northwestern University Press

Palgrave Macmillan

Pearson

SUNY Press

Oxford University Press

University of Delaware Press

Wayne State University Press

Jewish Social Studies

Contemporary Literature

American Literary History

J19

Journal of Modern Literature

MELUS

Modernism/Modernity

Religion and Literature

Shofar