

Flora Cassen
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1. Education

2008 Ph.D in Hebrew and Judaic Studies, New York University, January 2008
 "The Yellow Badge in Renaissance Italy: A Social and Political Study of Anti-Jewish Discrimination."

2001 M.A. in Comparative History, Brandeis University, May 2001

1999 B.A. in History and Law, Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), with *Grande Distinction*, August 1999

2. Academic Employment

2024— Senior Faculty at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America

2019— Associate Professor of History
 Associate Professor of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies
Washington University in St. Louis

2020–2023 Chair, Department of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies

2017 – 2019 Associate Professor of History
 Van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2011 – 2017 Assistant Professor of History
 Van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Fall 2010 Fellow, Italian Academy
Columbia University

2007 – 2010 Assistant Professor of History
University of Vermont

3. Publications

- Monographs

Forthcoming *Stained Glass: An Expat Jew Reflects on Antisemitism* (New Jewish Press/University of Toronto Press; slated for fall 2025)

2017 Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy: Politics, Religion, and the Power of Symbols (Cambridge University Press, 2017, 225 p.). Reviewed in Jewish History; American Historical Review; Association for Jewish Studies Review; Renaissance Quarterly; Sixteenth-Century Journal. Featured in Haaretz Magazine in [Hebrew](#) and [English](#).

- Edited Books

2025 Co-editor of a peer-reviewed [special issue](#) on the theme of “Motivated Mistranslation” for the *Colonial Latin American Review*

- Peer-Reviewed Articles

2025 “The Origins of Ashkenazi Jews: Can Genetics Help Resolve an Enduring Historical Mystery?” *Jewish Quarterly Review* (115.2, May 2025)

2025 with Stephanie Kirk, “Motivated Mistranslation: Exploring Translation in Colonial Contexts,” *Colonial Latin American Review* (February 2025) 429-436

2025 “Joseph Ha-Kohen’s Sefer Ha-India Ha-hadasha: a Sixteenth-Century Hebrew Translation of Gómara’s Historia General and its Reinterpretation of Spanish Imperialism,” *Colonial Latin American Review* (February 2025) 510-534

2024 “Jewish Refugees in the Belgian Congo: An Ambivalent Privilege?” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 57:4-5 (September 2024), 249-266

2021 “Le chapeau jaune des juifs durant la Renaissance italienne: humiliation et résistance,” *Sigila*, 47 (May 2021) 105-115

2019 “Jewish Travelers in Early Modern Italy: Visible and Invisible Resistance to the Jewish badge,” *European History Yearbook* (November 2019) 73-89

2017 “Early Modern Jewish History: Ongoing Trends, Global Directions,” *Church History and Religious Culture*, 97:3-4 (December 2017), 437-451

2017 “Philip II of Spain and His Italian Jewish Spy,” *Journal of Early Modern History*, 21:4 (September 2017), 318-42

2014 “The Last Spanish Expulsion in Europe: Milan 1565-1597,” *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 38:1 (May 2014), 59-88

- Public Intellectual Work

2025 “The Place of Jewish Studies in an Era of Protests,” [Sources](#) (March 27, 2025)

2025 “Beyond Columbus: What DNA can—and can’t—tell us about Jewish History,” [JQR Blog](#) (April 10, 2025)

2024 “Should Academic Institutions Boycott Israel?” [The Guardian](#) (June 1, 2024)

2024 “Not Antisemites, nor Antizionists: A more Precise Term for Protesters Who want Israel Gone,” [Haaretz](#); republished in [St. Louis Jewish Light](#) (May 10, 2024)

2023 “Hidden in Translation—Jewish Resistance to the Spanish Empire,” [Psyche/Aeon](#) (March 21, 2023)

2023 “Nazi Orders for Jews to wear a star were hateful, but far from unique—a historian traces the long history of antisemitic,” [The Conversation](#); [Smithsonian Magazine](#); [St. Louis Jewish Light](#); [Times of Israel](#); [Religion News Service](#); [The Raw Story](#) (March 14, 2023)

2022 “My Great-Uncle, the Kapo. What Charles did during the War,” [Slate](#) (November 29, 2022)

2021 “Killing a Dog is Worse than Murdering a Jew: The Antisemitic Injustice of France’s Sarah Halimi Trial,” [Haaretz](#) (April 26, 2021)

2020 “Jews Control the Chinese Labs That Created Coronavirus: White Supremacists’ Dangerous New Conspiracy Theory,” [Haaretz](#) (May 3, 2020)

2019 “Is Antwerp Ready to Reckon with Its Role in the Holocaust?” [The Forward](#) (September 29, 2019)

2019 “De Mythe die de joden al eeuwen achtervolgt,” [De Standaard](#) (March 26, 2019)

2019 "Stop Whining about Your Holocaust Already: What Happens when Europe's Jews Call Out Antisemitism," *Haaretz* (March 15, 2019)

2019 "Jews Don't Get Our Humor: How a Belgian Town is Doubling Down on Its Antisemitism," *Haaretz* (October 28, 2019)

- Book Chapters

2024 "Echoes of the Past: Understanding Today's Antisemitism Through a Medieval Lens," *Responses to October 7*, David Hirsh and Rosa Freedman eds. (Routledge, May 2024)

2019 "Jewish Life in Late Medieval Lombardy," *The Lombard Haggadah*, Sandra Hindman ed., Les Enluminures (2019), 17-25

2018 "The Sausage in the Jews' Pantry: Food and Jewish-Christian Relations in Renaissance Italy," *Global Jewish Foodways: A History*, Hasia Diner and Simone Cinotto eds., University Press of Nebraska (June 2018)

2013 "From Iconic O to Yellow Hat: The Shifting Symbolic Meaning of Jewish Distinctive Signs in Renaissance Italy," *Fashioning Jews, Clothing, Culture, Commerce*, Leonard Greenspoon ed., Studies in Jewish Civilization Series, vol. 24, Purdue University Press (2013), 29-49

- Book Reviews

2020 Review Essay: "Jews and Money: Time for a New Story?" *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 110.2 (April 2020) 373-382

2018 Dana Katz, *The Ghetto of Venice and the Visual Imagination of Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) in H-Net Reviews Online (May 2018)

2017 Francesca Bregoli, *Mediterranean Enlightenment: Livornese Jews, Tuscan Culture, and Eighteenth-Century Reform* (Stanford University Press, 2014) in the *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 22:5 (2017), 647-649

2016 Elisheva Baumgarten and Judah Galinsky eds., *Jews and Christians in Thirteenth century France*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015) in *The Medieval Review Online* (June 2016)

4. Grants and Honors

2025-2028 NEH Editions and Translation Grant (\$298,782)

2021-2021 Washington University in St. Louis, Collaborative Research Seed Grant, (\$15000)

2020-2021 American Academy of Jewish Research, Cross Institutional Research Grant, (\$2500)

Fall 2013 Adjunct Fellow, Herbert D. Katz Center for Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Fall 2013 (\$1500 from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies)

Fall 2010 Research Fellowship, The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies at Columbia University, (\$22,000)

2006-2008 Graduate Fellowship, The Remarque Institute, New York University, (\$36,000)

2007 Frederic C. Lane Fellowship, The Medieval Academy of America, (\$2000)

2007 Doctoral Scholarship, The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, (\$10,000)

2005-2007 Felix Posen Fellowship, The Vidal Sassoon Center for the Study of Antisemitism, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, (\$4000)

2005 Research Fellowship, The Academia Belgica in Rome, (\$3000)

2002 Fritz Halbers Fellowship, The Leo Baeck Institute, New York, (\$2000)

2000-2005 MacCracken Fellowship, New York University, (\$70,000)

5. Unpublished Oral Presentations

- Invited Talks

Future "Jewish Studies after October 7th," Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, UNC Chapel Hill, April 19-20, 2026

Future "The Host Desecration of Brussels: 1370 to the Present," University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, November 11, 2025

2025 "The Host Desecration of Brussels: 1370 to the Present," Johns Hopkins University, April 25, 2025

2024 "Carved in Stone: Antisemitic Imagery in the Cathedral of Brussels," Brit Shalom Congregation, College Park, PA, December 8, 2024

2024 "Sign of the Times: Marking Jewish Identity in the Medieval and Early Modern World," Symposium on the Jewish Badge, Harvard University, November 18, 2024

2024 "Philip II of Spain and the Expulsion of the Jews from Milan in 1599: A Study of Imperial Politics," Conference on Expulsions of Jews in the Middle Ages, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 12-14, 2024

2023 "Present Work and Future Trends in Early Modern Jewish History," NYU Symposium on Early Modern Jewish Studies, May 15-17, 2023

2022 "Antisemitism(s): Past and Present." Three public lectures delivered as the Levine-Moskowitz Scholar-in-Residence at Judea Reform Congregation, June 9-12, 2022

2022 "Joseph Ha-Kohen's Sefer Ha-India Ha-hadasha: Translation as Conquest?" Early Modern Workshop, April 1, 2022

2021 "Antisemitism(s): A Historical and Personal Story." Online talk (Zoom) at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program, University of Puget Sound, April 7, 2021

2019 "Antisemitism in Europe Today." Panel at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington on September 17, 2019

2018 "The Jewish Badge in Renaissance Italy." Book Talk Series at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on November 10, 2018

2017 "The Jewish Badge in Renaissance Italy." Dress and Cultural Difference in Early Modern Europe, organized by the Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG) in Mainz, Germany on October 26-28, 2017

2017 "The Expulsion of the Jews from Milan. Same Event with Views from Different Archives." Early Modern Workshop at Fordham University, NY on August 16-17, 2017

2017 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." Waterloo University, ON, Canada, on January 26, 2017

2016 Speaker at Lecture Series on Early Modern Italian Jewry organized by the Medici Archive Project, at the Streicker Center (Temple Emmanuel) in NY on February 16, 2016

2016 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." Conference commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Ghetto of Venice at the Center for Jewish History, NY on September 19, 2016

2016 "The Ghetto of Venice." Roundtable on the 500th Anniversary of the Ghetto of Venice at the University of Texas at Austin, on September 15, 2016

- 2016 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." Individuals and Legal Institutions in the Mediterranean, Conference at Duke University (March 2016)
- 2015 "How to recognize a Pre-Modern Jew? Badges, Hats, and Other Signs." Medieval Markers of Personhood—Symposium at Duke University (November 2015)
- 2015 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." Trinity College (September 2015)
- 2015 "How to recognize a Pre-Modern Jew? Badges, Hats, and Other Signs." *The Friedman Society Annual Symposium at the Jewish Museum of New York* (March 2015)
- 2014 "The Sausage in the Jews' Pantry: Food and Jewish-Christian Relations in Renaissance Italy." *The Global History of Jewish Food, Università degli Studi di Scienze Gastronomiche, Pollenzo, Italy* (June 2014)
- 2013 "Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy." Judea Reform Congregation, Durham (November 2013)
- 2013 "Marking the Jews in Renaissance Italy." Fearington Village, Chapel Hill (October 2013)
- 2011 "From Yellow badge to Yellow Star: The Jewish badge in History." *Inaugural lecture for the Van der Horst Professorship, UNC Chapel Hill* (November 2011)

- Public Speaking Engagements as Hartman Scholar

- 2025 Summer teaching in Jerusalem in the Community Leadership and Rabbinic Leadership Programs.
- 2025 "Who's weaponizing antisemitism now?" Zoom session for Hillel professionals, April 24, 2025
- 2025 Denver March 11-12: led two sessions for Denver's Courageous Communities Program.
- 2025 Series of 4 online classes for high school juniors and seniors on Judaism, antisemitism, and the situation on college campuses, February-March, 2025 (30 students)
- 2025 Chicago, January 29-31: led five sessions for Hillel directors; Teen fellowship members and their parents; Lay leadership gathering; Executive directors of Jewish communities; and Senior foundation professionals.
- 2025 Toronto, January 27-28: led three sessions for Teen fellowship members and their parents; Lay leadership gathering; and Senior communal professionals.
- 2025 "Religion, Democracy, and the Zionist Dilemma," Winter Leadership Conference for Jewish Professionals, NY, January 13, 2025
- 2024 Week-long class on power and vulnerability in Jewish History, Ed Fein Seminar for 200 American college students, Jerusalem, December 26-January 2
- 2024 "Why Was the First Jewish Critique of Colonialism Canceled for 500 Years?" Hartman Institute's Board of Directors, NY, December 9, 2024
- 2024 Series of 4 online classes for high school juniors and seniors on Judaism, antisemitism, and the situation on college campuses, November-December 2024 (30 students)
- 2024 "Jewish Peoplehood," Hartman Session for WashU Students, November 20, 2024
- 2024 "Judaism Yes, Zionism No," Jewish Educators Conference, New York, November 19, 2024
- 2024 "How to Have Nuanced Conversations about College in a Post-October 7th World," Jewish Women Philanthropy Group, Detroit, October 13, 2024

- Conference Talks

2023 "Joseph Ha-Kohen's *Sefer Ha-India Ha-hadasha*: Translation as Conquest?" *Renaissance Society of America Conference* (March 2023)

2022 "Joseph ha-Kohen and the Foodways of the Americas," *Association for Jewish Studies Conference* (December 2022)

2021 Respondent: "Reconsidering Hebrew Scholarship in Early Modern catholic Contexts: A Global Enterprise." *Renaissance Society of America Virtual Conference*, April 13-15 and 20-22, 2021

2019 "Jews in Spanish Milan: between Local and Imperial State." *Conference on Jews and State Building*, The University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University (May 5-7, 2019)

2017 "The Jewish Badge in Renaissance Italy." *World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem (August 6-19, 2017)

2016 "Solitary Jews or Micro-Communities? Rethinking Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy." *Renaissance Society of America Conference* (March 2016)

2015 "The Sausage in the Jews' Pantry: Food and Jewish-Christian Relations in Renaissance Italy." *Domestic Devotions Conference*, Cambridge University (July 2015)

2015 "The Sausage in the Jews' Pantry: Food and Jewish-Christian Relations in Renaissance Italy." *Association for Jewish Studies Conference* (December 2015)

2011 "From Iconic O to Yellow Hat: The Shifting Symbolic Meaning of Jewish Distinctive Signs in Renaissance Italy." *Symposium of Jews and Fashion, Creighton University* (October 2011)

2010 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." *Association for Jewish Studies Conference* (December 2010)

2009 "The Expulsion of the Jews from Milan in 1597: New Questions on the Jews and the Spanish Empire." *Seminar of the American Association for Jewish Research* (May 2009)

2009 "Philip II of Spain and his Italian Jewish Spy." *The Renaissance Society of America* (April 2009)

2008 "The Jewish Badge in Renaissance Italy: the Iconic O, the Yellow Hat and the Paradoxes of Distinctive Sign Legislation." *Association for Jewish Studies Conference* (December 2008)

6. Courses Taught

Courses Taught

- At Washington University in St. Louis

JIMES 5023 Jewish Christian Relations (graduate seminar)

History 1021, An Ancient Murder Mystery: The Death of Jesus from the Gospels to Mel Gibson (first-year seminar)

JIMES 208F, Introduction to Jewish Civilization: History and Identity (introductory class)

Hist 334C, Crusade, Conflict, and Coexistence: Jews in Christian Europe (intermediate class)

JIMES 3035, Antisemitism: History and Present (intermediate class)

Hist 5355, Majorities and Minorities in Early Modern Europe (graduate seminar)

- At the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Hist 153, Bible to Broadway: Jewish History to Modern Times (survey course)

Hist 158, Early Modern Europe (survey course)

Hist 190, The Jews in Medieval/Early Modern Europe (survey course)

Hist 250, Antisemitism and Islamophobia (co-taught class)

Hist 308, The European Renaissance and the Jews (intermediate class)

Hist 330, Jesus and the Jews: from the Passion to Mel Gibson (intermediate class)
Hist 398, Antisemitism: History, Causes, Consequences (advanced undergraduate seminar)
Hist 451, 1492: Spain and the Expulsion of the Jews (advanced class)
Hist 453, Societies and Cultures of the Mediterranean (advanced class)
Hist 889, Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History (graduate seminar)

- At the University of Vermont

Hist 015 Early Modern Europe (survey course)
Hist 095 The Passion and the Jews (first-year seminar)
Hist 125 The Renaissance (survey course)
Hist 196 The Jews in Europe, 1000-1750 (survey course)
Hist 296 Comparative Expulsions of the Jews (advanced undergraduate seminar)

7. Dissertation Advising

Primary Advisor

Daria Berman (admitted to WashU, Fall 2021)

Dissertation Committee Member

- At Washington University in St. Louis

Mary Andino, The Pursuit of Holiness in Early Modern Southern Italy (defended in April 2021)

- At the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Lindsay Holman, Herzog's Roman Tesseræ: Their Nature and Purpose Revisited
Beth Hasseler, Holy Kings: Royal Cult and the Making of Latin Christendom, c. 1000 – 1250
(defended in April 2018)
Alexandra Locking, A New Senate of Women': Ecclesiastical Reform and the Reimagining of Secular Female Lordship, c. 1050-1125 (defended in March 2017)
Joshua Hevert, Orthodoxy Abroad: John XXII and Global Christendom (defended in May 2016)
Jon Powell, Jordan of Giano's Evangelical Vision: The Battle over the Franciscan Order in the Thirteenth Century (defended in April 2016)

8. Professional Service

- To the Field

2024— Division Chair Medieval and Early Modern Jewries, Association for Jewish Studies
2018— Ombuds Team Member, Association for Jewish Studies, Sexual Misconduct Committee
2020-2021 Member of the Program Committee, Association for Jewish Studies
2017-2019 Member of the Organizing Committee for the Early Modern Workshop

2015-2016 Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Studies Editor for *Reviews in Religious Studies* Journal (published out of Rice University by Wiley Blackwell)

- At Washington University in St. Louis

2024-2026 Member of the Advisory Board, Danforth Center on Religion and Politics
 2024-2025 Director of Graduate Studies in JIMES
 2024-2025 Member (elected) of the Advisory Committee to the Chair, Department of History
 2022-2023 Member of the search committee for the Goldstein Chair in Jewish History and Thought
 2022-2023 Member of the search committee in Race and Ethnicity
 2022-2023 Director of Graduate Studies in JIMES
 2021-2022 Member (elected) of the Advisory Committee to the Chair, Department of History
 2020-2021 Search Committee Member, Cultural Analytics and Digital Literary History, with German, English, Comparative Literature, and Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies
 Fall 2021 Search committee member, Israel Studies Postdoctoral Fellow
 Spring 2021 Search Committee Chair, Hebrew Lecturer, Department of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies
 Fall 2020 Search Committee Chair, Friedman Postdoctoral Fellow
 2020-2023 Chair, Department of Jewish, Islamic, and Middle Eastern Studies
 2020-2022 Graduate Studies Committee Member, Department of History

- At the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

2017-2019 Graduate Studies Committee, Department of History
 2017-2018 Salary Committee (elected), Department of History
 2017-2018 Curriculum Revision Committee, University-Wide Committee
 2017-2018 Grants Review Committee, University-Wide Committee
 2012-2016 Committee on Teaching, Department of History
 2014-2015 Academic Liaison to Board of Trustees, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies
 2014-2015 Grant Review Committee, Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies
 2011, 2014-2015 Undergraduate Studies Committee, Department of History
 2012-2013 Modern Jewish History Search Committee, Department of History
 2012-2014 Grant Review Committee, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies
 2011-2019 Academic Board, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies

- At the University of Vermont

2007-2009 European Studies Committee
 2007-2009 Holocaust Studies Committee

9. Professional Affiliations

American Historical Association
 Renaissance Society of America

Association for Jewish Studies

10. Languages

French, Flemish (Dutch): Native

English and Hebrew: Excellent

Italian and Spanish: Good

Latin and German: Reading knowledge