



NEWS

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CONTACT: Joyce Kamen 513.543.8109
Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth (513) 556-3808

NATIONAL TEACHERS' SEMINAR ON JEWISH CULTURE AND THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE HELD IN CINCINNATI

*Intensive 6-day seminar hosted by
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives*

CINCINNATI, OH:--- Twenty-two teachers and educators from private and public middle schools and high schools across the country gathered in Cincinnati July 25-30 for an intensive 6-day National Teachers' Seminar on *"Culture and Identity, Past and Present: Exploring the Jewish Experience Through Texts, Films and Literature."* Hosted and co-sponsored by The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Drs. Mark A. Raider and Miriam B. Raider-Roth co-directed the seminar under the auspices of the University of Cincinnati's Center for Studies in Jewish Education and Culture—established in 2006. A \$65,000 grant by the Posen Foundation underwrote the cost of the seminar.

"The seminar is a superb opportunity to learn about Judaism as a rich culture, steeped in a rich history," says Dr. Miriam Raider-Roth, director of UC's Center for Studies in Jewish Education and Culture. "Bringing together the fields of Education



Seminar participants gather for a group photo.

and Jewish Studies, we examined how the rich tapestry of modern Jewish texts can serve as a useful springboard for asking important questions about the place of Jews and other minorities in the lives of our students, schools, and society as a whole."

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“We are delighted and honored to collaborate on this important seminar,” said Dr. Gary P. Zola, executive director of the American Jewish Archives. “Educating present and future generations of young people about Jewish culture and the American Jewish experience is critical to the AJA’s mission. I applaud the Posen Foundation for helping to make this unique opportunity available to teachers from all walks of our society.” Using innovative pedagogical approaches and strategies, the seminar underscored the place of Jewish text study in learning and teaching practices. A thematic focus on archival materials as well as prose, novels, paintings, political cartoons, films, and field trips provided participants with an opportunity to study the processes of the modernization and secularization of Jewish identity in the context of the history, culture, and literature of the Jewish people from the 17th century to the present.

Seminar participants also researched Cincinnati as a case study for understanding American Jewish history. Drawing on collections housed by the AJA, including the records of the Chestnut Street Cemetery, Plum Street Temple, the Phoenix Club, Walnut Hills Cemetery, and the former location of Adath Israel synagogue, the participants designed and implemented a field trip of historic Jewish sites in the area. The project underscored Cincinnati’s significance in American Jewish history and served as a model of how field trips can be used to teach students about key themes in the American experience including immigration, ethnic minorities, civic rights, changes over time in the urban landscape, and culture and identity.

During the intensive week, the group attended a special production of David Ives’ hit off-Broadway play, “New Jerusalem: The Interrogation of Baruch de Spinoza,” performed by the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company and guest directed by Ari Roth, artistic director of Washington, DC’s Theater J. The Cincinnati Shakespeare Company and the Posen Foundation cosponsored the event, which was offered free to the public and included a post-production discussion with Raider, Roth, and the cast about the use of theater and art to explore history.

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“We look forward to collaborating with the American Jewish Archives and the Posen Foundation again next year,” said Dr. Mark A. Raider, project director of the Posen Foundation Education Project. “The seminar is the product of several years of ongoing study and research about the connections between education, the study of Jewish culture, and professional development for teachers. Our Center is gaining recognition nationally and internationally as a leader in this area of academic work.”

For more information, please contact Joyce Kamen at 513.543.8109/ joyce@kamencreative.com.

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The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, founded in 1947 by its namesake on the Cincinnati, Ohio, campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. The Marcus Center contains over 15,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, nearprint materials, photographs, audio and videotapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials.

ATTACHMENTS

**“Culture and Identity, Past and Present: Exploring the Jewish Experience
Through Texts, Films and Literature.”**

TEACHING FACULTY

Dr. Elie Holzer (Bar Ilan University, Israel)
Dr. Mark A. Raider (University of Cincinnati)
Dr. Miriam B. Raider-Roth (University of Cincinnati)
Dr. Haim O. Rechnitzer (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion)

RESEARCH FACULTY

Dr. Vicki Stieha (University of Cincinnati)
Dr. Beth Yeager (University of California, Santa Barbara)

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS' SCHOOLS/INSTITUTIONS

Alice Deal Middle School, Washington, DC
Evanston Township High School, Chicago, IL
Hebrew Language Academy, Brooklyn, NY
Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
Lakota East High School, Cincinnati, OH
Little Miami Local School District, Morrow, OH
Lyons Community School, Brooklyn, NY
Mason High School, Mason, OH
New Orleans; Jewish Day School, New Orleans, LA
Palmer Trinity School, Miami, FL
Valley Temple, Cincinnati, OH
Village Academy Schools, Westerville, OH
Walnut Hills High School, Cincinnati, OH
Woodrow Wilson Senior High School, Washington, DC.

ABOUT THE SEMINAR'S CO-SPONSORS

The **Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives** is committed to preserving a documentary heritage of the religious, organizational, economic, cultural, personal, social and family life of American Jewry. Located on the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the AJA houses over ten million pages of documentation. It contains nearly 8,000 linear feet of archives, manuscripts, near print materials, photographs, audio and video tapes, microfilm, and genealogical materials. The AJA plays a unique role in both preserving American Jewish history and imparting it to the next generation.

The **Center for Studies in Jewish Education and Culture** at the University of Cincinnati seeks to advance our theoretical understandings of culture, relationship, and identity and to develop new models for teachers' professional development. Established in 2006, the Center has been nationally and internationally recognized for its contribution to the fields of education and Jewish education. The Center has received grants from the Ohio Humanities Council, The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, The Fisher Family Foundation and the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati. Dr. Raider-Roth is currently a Principal Investigator of a grant funded by the Covenant Foundation, and has served as faculty in the prestigious Mandel Foundation Teacher Educator Institute. The Center offers rigorous courses of study including a Graduate Certificate in Jewish Education focused on developing and improving educators' pedagogical understandings and practices as well as the development of general content knowledge of Jewish culture and history.

The **Posen Foundation** sees Judaism as a culture — a rich, vital culture that includes all aspects of Jewish history and philosophy, heritages, languages, literatures, material culture, creative works and religion — but is not solely a religion. At the heart of its mission is a deep commitment to Jewish culture, and the belief that education can make a meaningful difference in Jewish life. The Foundation works internationally as a service provider to support secular Jewish education and educational initiatives on modern Jewish culture and the process of Jewish secularization.