

Samuel Joseph Kessler

Gustavus Adolphus College
 Department of Religion
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Employment

Assistant Professor of Religion 2018-present
 Åke and Kristina Bonnier Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies
 Department of Religion
 Gustavus Adolphus College

Postdoctoral Fellow in Judaic Studies 2016-2018
 Department of Religion and Culture
 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Education

Ph.D., Religious Studies 2016
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

M.A., Religious Studies 2013
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

B.A., History 2010
 New York University

Monograph

Published

- *The Formation of a Modern Rabbi: The Life and Times of the Viennese Scholar and Preacher Adolf Jellinek*. Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2022.

In Progress

- *The Invention of Midrash: How a Method of Reading Became a Literary Genre*

Edited Volumes

Forthcoming

- Samuel J. Kessler and George Y. Kohler, eds., *Modern Jewish Theology: Writings from the First Hundred Years, 1835-1935*. JPS Anthologies of Jewish Thought. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society/Lincoln: University of Nebraska (December 2023).

In Progress

- Samuel J. Kessler and George Y. Kohler, eds., “*Jewish Faith and the Science Thereof*,” *Essays on the Formative Years of Modern Jewish Theology, 1835-1935*. Maimonides Library for Philosophy and Religion. Leiden: Brill. (Likely publication Spring 2025.)
- James George Frazer, *Diary of a Tour in Greece, 1895*. Edited, with introduction and commentary. (Proposal under review with The Hakluyt Society.)

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Single Author

- “My Father’s Face: Judaism, God, and Ritual Practice in Philip Roth’s *Nemesis, Indignation, and Everyman*,” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 41, no. 1 (2022): 34-59.

- “‘Garrulous, lamenting, whiney, but always interesting’: Heinrich Graetz’s Evolving Characterization of his Contemporaries from the *Diary* to the *History of the Jews*.” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 63, no. 1 (2018): 229-53.
- “Rediscovering the Study of Spanish Kabbalism in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: Adolf Jellinek in Leipzig, 1842-1856.” *PaRDeS: Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e.V.*, “Cultures of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* at 200,” 24 (2018): 125-44.
- “‘A Mighty Shifty Strangeness’: Time, Memory, and Narrative in Lawrence Durrell’s *Avignon Quintet*.” *Deus Loci: The Lawrence Durrell Journal* NS 15 (2016-17): 19-41.
- “Systematization, Theology, and the Baroque *Wunderkammern*: Seeing Nature After Linnaeus,” *Heythrop Journal* 58, no. 3 (May 2017): 432-45.
- “Bernard Malamud in Italy: The Moral Choice of Being Jewish in ‘The Lady of the Lake,’” *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 36, no. 1 (2017): 40-60.
- “Translating Judaism for Modernity: Adolf Jellinek in Leopoldstadt, 1857-1865,” *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 14 (2015): 393-419.
- “Foucault and the Holocaust: Epistemic Shift, Liminality, and the Death Camps,” *Dapim – Studies on the Holocaust* 28, no. 3 (Nov. 2014): 139-54.
- “Religion and the Public University,” *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 19-27.
- “The Sacredness of ‘Secular’ Literature: A Case Study in Walter Benjamin,” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 100-14.

Co-Author

- Emanuel Fiano and Samuel J. Kessler, “‘My Program is Still Broader Than the Sea’: The Scholem-Heschel Correspondence, 1940-1953,” *New German Critique* 148, vol. 50, no. 1 (February 2023): 179-210.
- Dennis D. Gilbride, Laura Shannonhouse, and Samuel J. Kessler, “Utilizing Religious Studies Theory to Access the Sacred in Counseling,” *Counseling and Values* 63, no. 2 (October 2018): 132-46.

In Draft

- “Race & Nation in Adolph Jellinek’s *Der jüdische Stamm*.”
- “James George Frazer & Solomon Schechter: An Unusual Friendship.”
- “Wandering Jews: Travel Writing in the Journals of the early *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.”
- “Remaining Oriental: Depictions of Jews in Nineteenth-Century European Travel Literature from the Near East.”

Guest Editor

- Special Issue, “Roth and Judaism,” *Philip Roth Studies* 18.1 (2022) (with Timothy Parrish).

Book Chapters

- “‘Rather a Scientific Than a Religious Question’: Kaufmann Kohler’s Vision of Jewish Theology in Light of Modern Scholarship,” in *‘Jewish Faith and the Science Thereof’: Essays on the Formative Years of Modern Jewish Theology, 1835-1935*, ed. Samuel J. Kessler and George Y. Kohler, Maimonides Library for Philosophy and Religion (Leiden: Brill). (*In progress*.)
- “‘Let There Be No Strife Between Me and You’: On the Relationship Between Judaism and Christianity in an 1859 Sermon by Adolf Jellinek,” in *Religious Knowledge and Positioning*, ed. David Kabisch, Christian Wiese, and Kerstin von der Krone (Berlin: De Gruyter, [2023]). (*In press*.)
- “Architecture,” in *Handbook of Religious Culture in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Anthony J. Steinhoff and Jeffrey T. Zalar (Berlin: De Gruyter, [2024]). (*Forthcoming*.)

Conference Organizer

- Upper Midwest AAR & SBL Regional Conference, Drake University, Des Moines, IA, April 12-13, 2024 (with Timothy Knepper). (*Upcoming*.)

- Jews and Travel Literature in the 19th Century, CUNY, New York, NY, December 5-6, 2023 (with Philip Keisman). (*Upcoming.*)
- Modern Jewish Theology, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 13-14, 2022 (with George Y. Kohler).
- Upper Midwest AAR & SBL Regional Conference, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN, April 1-2, 2022 (with Blake Couey & Elizabeth Coody).

Translations

- In *Modern Jewish Theology: Writings from the First Hundred Years, 1835-1935*, eds. Samuel J. Kessler and George Y. Kohler (JPS/Nebraska, 2023).
 - Hermann Cohen, "Judaism as a Worldview."
 - Manuel Joel, "Towards an Orientation in the Question of Cult."
 - Leopold Stein, "The Necessity of the Written Law."

Book Reviews & Forums

- Martin Nedbal, *Mozart's Operas and National Politics: Canon Formation in Prague from 1791 to the Present*, Journal of Austrian Studies. (*In progress.*)
- Stephan Steiner, *Combating the Hydra: Violence and Resistance in the Habsburg Empire, 1500-1900*, Journal of Austrian Studies. (*In press.*)
- Ruoyu Zhang, ed., *Weltliteratur in der Shanghaier jüdischen Exilpresse (1939-1947)*, Journal of Austrian Studies 56, no. 2 (Summer 2023): 125-128.
- Jonathan L. Milevsky, *Understanding the Evolving Meaning of Reason in David Novak's Natural Law Theory*, Journal of Textual Reasoning 14, no. 1 (March 2023): 138-142.
- Josef P. Mautner, *Ein nationalsozialistisch-katholisches Syndrom: Zugänge zum Werke von Thomas Bernhard*, Journal of Austrian Studies 56, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 102-105.
- Stefan Hanß and Dorothea McEwan, eds., *The Habsburg Mediterranean 1500-1800*, Journal of Austrian Studies 55, no. 3 (Fall 2022): 117-119.
- Stephen Dowden et al., eds. *Thomas Bernhard's Afterlives*, Journal of Austrian Studies 55, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 200-202.
- Marija Wakounig and Ferdinand Kühnel, eds. *Approaching East-Central Europe over the Centuries*, Journal of Austrian Studies 54, no. 2 (Summer 2021): 159-161.
- Katrin Keller and Martin Scheutz, eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Dreißigjährige Krieg*, Journal of Austrian Studies 54, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 125-127.
- Heidi Hakkarainen, *Comical Modernity: Popular Humour and the Transformation of Urban Space in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna*, Journal of Austrian Studies 53, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 97-99.
- Elana Shapira, ed., *Design Dialogue: Jews, Culture and Viennese Modernism/Design Dialog: Juden, Kultur und Wiener Moderne*, Journal of Austrian Studies 53, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 94-96.
- Halina Nitropisch, *Franz Kafkas Roman Das Schloß: Der moderne Mythos des Bewusstseins*, Journal of Austrian Studies 52, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 141-3.
- Vreni Amsler, *Veza Canetti im Kontext des Austromarxismus*, Journal of Austrian Studies 51, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 101-13.
- Thomas A. Lewis, *Why Philosophy Matters for the Study of Religion and Vice Versa*, Syndicate Symposium, <https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/why-philosophy-matters-for-the-study-of-religion-and-vice-versa/>.
- Lutz C. Klevevan, *Lemberg: Die vergessene Mitte Europas*, German Studies Review 41, no. 1 (2018): 182-184.
- Elizabeth Palmer, *Faith in a Hidden God: Luther, Kierkegaard, and the Binding of Isaac*, Reading Religion (May 31, 2018), <http://readingreligion.org/books/faith-hidden-god>.
- Katja Garloff, *Mixed Feelings: Tropes of Love in German Jewish Culture*, German Studies Review 41, no. 1 (2018): 166-8.

- Jan Láníček, *Arnošt Frischer and the Jewish Politics of Early 20th-Century Europe*, German Studies Review 41, no. 1 (2018): 189-91.
- Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914-1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City*, German Studies Review 40, no. 3 (2017): 661-3.
- Harald Höbusch, *Mountain of Destiny: Nanga Parbat and Its Path into the German Imagination*, Journal of Austrian Studies 50, no. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 2017): 173-175.

Teaching

Assistant Professor, Gustavus Adolphus College

- 100-level
 - Abraham
 - Holocaust
 - Introduction to Judaism
 - World Religions
- 200-level
 - Evil, Sin, & Suffering
 - Individual & Morality
 - Legends of the Jews
 - Religion & Science
 - Theories & Methods (*Spring 2024*)
- 300-level
 - Mystics of the West
 - Senior Thesis

Grants and Fellowships

Research Grants & Fellowships

- Eighth Session of the International Forum of Young Scholars on East European Jewry, Prague, Czech Republic, July 3-6, 2017.
- NEH Institute on “Problems in the Study of Religion,” The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, May 31-June 17, 2016.
- Dissertation Research Fellowship, The Graduate School, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Spring 2016.
- Leo Baeck Institute-DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst), Fall 2015.
- Society of Fellows, Counsel for European Studies, Duke University, June 2015.
- American Academy for Jewish Research, July 2015.
- Title VIII Short-term Research Grant (for East European Studies), Global Europe Program, The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, June 2015.
- Research Fellowship, Simon-Dubnow-Institut, Leipzig, June and July 2013.

Professional Presentations

- Roundtable Participant, “Teaching Jewish Theology: A Roundtable Discussion,” Association for Jewish Studies, San Francisco, CA, December 17-19, 2023. (*Upcoming*.)
- Paper, “Mapping the *Bavli* Through Text and Travel: The Case of Adolphe Neubauer’s *La Géographie du Talmud* (1868),” Jews and Travel Literature in the 19th Century, CUNY, New York, NY, December 5-6, 2023. (*Upcoming*.)
- Paper, “Theodicy and the Spirits of Evil in the Theological Writings of Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler (1843-1926),” American Academy of Religion, Denver, CO, November 21, 2022.
- Paper, “A Jewish National Race in the Great European Family: Adolf Jellinek’s *Der jüdische Stamm*,” 18th World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, August 9, 2022.
- Paper, “The Wedding of Rabbinics and Science in the Theology of Kaufmann Kohler,” Modern Jewish Theology, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, Israel, June 13-14, 2022.
- Paper, “A Question of Dogma: Perspectives on Theology in Modern Judaism,” Upper

- Midwest AAR-SBL Regional Conference, St. Peter, MN, April 1, 2022.
- Paper, “The Wandering Jew: The Historicization of Mizrahi Jews in Nineteenth-Century European Travel Literature and Its Reception Among Ashkenazim,” Association for Jewish Studies, [Online], December 14, 2020.
 - Paper, “Writing About God in an Age of Science: Kaufmann Kohler’s *Outline of a Systematic Theology of Judaism on a Historical Basis* (1910),” Study of Judaism Unit, American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 24, 2019.
 - Roundtable Participant, “Assessing Jewish-Christian Comparative Theology,” Comparative Theology Unit, American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, November 24, 2019.
 - Paper, “Writing About God in an Age of Science: Kaufmann Kohler’s *Grundriss einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums*,” Grey Areas: Two Centuries of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Heidelberg, Germany, June 18, 2019.
 - Roundtable Participant, “Teaching Enlightenment and Jewish Studies,” Moments of Enlightenment: German Jewish Interactions from the 18th Century to the Present (Jonathan M. Hess Symposium at UNC Chapel Hill), April 14, 2019.
 - Paper, “Rabbis & Romans: Normativity and Extra-Communal Conversation in the Study of Religion,” Upper Midwest Region AAR, St. Paul, MN, April 6, 2019.
 - Paper, “Architectural Aesthetic and Imperial Politics: Four Synagogues in Vienna and Breslau,” Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, MA, December 16, 2018.
 - Paper, “Leopoldstadt: Zion’s Holy and Consecrated Ground,” German Studies Association, Pittsburgh, PA, September 30, 2018.
 - Discussant, “In the Heschel Archives: Material Culture and the Study of Jewish Social Justice Engagement,” Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, DC, December 17, 2017.
 - Paper, “The Disputes of Rav Ashi and Ravina in Vienna: Adolf Jellinek and the Place of the Talmud in Jewish Modernity,” Conference on Sermon Studies, Huntington, WV, October 20, 2017.
 - Paper, “The Rabbi as Historian: Writing the Bridge from Yeshiva to Academia in Nineteenth-Century Central Europe,” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Raleigh, NC, March 4, 2017.
 - Paper, “Between Pulpit and Professor: Three Case Studies on Adolf Jellinek,” The Persona of the Historian: Repertoires and Performances, 1800-2000, Institute for History, Leiden University, The Netherlands, January 27, 2017.
 - Paper, “The *Geschichte der Juden* as *Zeitgeschichte*: Heinrich Graetz’s Evolving Characterization of His Contemporaries,” Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego, CA, December 20, 2016.
 - Paper, “City of the Popes: Archetype, Storytelling, and the Mystical Power of Time in the Novels of Lawrence Durrell,” American Academy of Religion, San Antonio, TX, November 19, 2016.
 - Paper, “Midrash and Mysticism in *Wissenschaft des Judentums*: The Case of Adolf Jellinek,” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Atlanta, GA, March 4-6, 2016.
 - Paper, “A Myriad Languages of Emancipation: The Tower of Babel in the Early Writings of Jewish Modernity,” The 10th International Scientific Conference on Literature and Religion: The Tower of Babel—in Film, Theatre, Art and Music, Riga, Latvia, December 4, 2015.
 - Lecture, “‘The Courage in Science to Sincerity and Truth:’ Adolf Jellinek and the Jewish Scholarly Tradition in Leipzig,” Triangle Intellectual History Seminar, Durham, NC, November 22, 2015.
 - Seminar Participant, “Science, Nature, and Art: From the Age of Goethe to the Present” German Studies Association, Washington DC, October 2-4, 2015.
 - Lecture, “Religion and the Encounter with Modernity: What Can We Learn from Jewish Urbanization,” The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, June 30, 2015. (Available on iTunes; search: “Samuel Kessler”)

- Paper, “At the Temple in Leopoldstadt: Adolf Jellinek and the Politics of Jewish Immigration in 1850s Vienna,” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Nashville, TN, March 8, 2015.
- Paper, “The Story in Future Retrospect: *Monsieur* and the Idealization of Memory in Lawrence Durrell’s *Avignon Quintet*,” Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900, Louisville, KY, February 26-28, 2015.
- Paper, “The Efficacy of the Past in a Changing Present: Adolph Jellinek’s 1864 Talmud Speeches,” German Studies Association, Kansas City, MO, September 21, 2014.
- Paper, “Roth and Jewish Ritual in *Nemesis: Four Novels*,” Philip Roth: Across Cultures, Across Disciplines, St. Gallen, Switzerland, June 13, 2014.
- Lecture, “History of Religion and Science: The Evolution of Conflict,” Religion and Science Symposium, Durham, NC, Saturday, March 29, 2014.
- Paper, “Adolf Jellinek’s Talmud: Tradition and Acculturation in Nineteenth-Century Vienna,” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Atlanta, GE, March 9, 2014.
- Paper, “Jewish Identity as Moral Choice: A Reading of Malamud’s ‘The Lady of the Lake,’” American Academy of Religion, Baltimore, MD, November 24, 2013.
- Paper, “Systematization, Theology, and the Baroque *Wunderkammern*: Seeing Nature After Linnaeus,” Southern Historical Association, Saint Louis, MO, November 3, 2013.
- Paper, “Enlightenment as Totalitarian and the World After the Holocaust,” MTSU 2013 International Holocaust Studies Conference, Murfreesboro, TN, October 16, 2013
- Paper, “Erasmus Darwin & Henry Fuseli: Poetry, Art, and Nature at the turn of the Nineteenth Century,” Northeast Modern Language Association, Boston, MA, March 23, 2013.
- Paper, “Nemesis Divine; or, An Analysis of the Specter of God in Philip Roth’s Late Fiction,” Roth@80, Newark, NJ, March 18, 2013.
- Paper, “Malamud in Italy: The Moral Choice of Being Jewish in ‘The Lady of the Lake,’” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Greenville, SC, March 15, 2013.
- Paper, “The Silverman Prayer Book, Political Zionism, and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America,” Southeast Commission for the Study of Religion, Atlanta, GA, March 3, 2012.
- Paper, “Nietzsche and the Poetical Imperative for Philosophy.” Florida State University Graduate Conference in Religion, Tallahassee, FL, February 18, 2012.
- Paper, “Walter Benjamin and the Material Sacred,” Society for the Anthropology of Religion, Santa Fe, NM, April 30, 2011.
- Respondent, “European Jewish Émigrés and the Shaping of Postwar Culture Conference,” National Humanities Center, Durham, NC, April 3, 2011.

Professional Service

Major Advising, Gustavus Adolphus College

- Sophia Martinez (‘23), Benjamin Huff (‘24)

Minor Advising, Gustavus Adolphus College

- Margaret Brandt (‘22); Isabella Johnson (‘22); Zachary Osmundson (‘23); Madeline Himmer (‘23)

Committees, Gustavus Adolphus College

- Academic Technology Committee. (*Fall 2019 – Spring 2022*.)
- LMS Working Group. (*Spring 2021*.)
- Theological Studies Working Group – New Curriculum Implementation. (*Fall 2019 – ongoing*.)
- Steering Committee & Faculty Host, Nobel Conference 2019. (*Fall 2018 – Fall 2019 & Spring – Fall 2023*.)
- Curriculum Development, “Global Citizenship: U.S. Identities and Difference.” (*Fall 2018*.)

Conferences

- Upper Midwest Region, AAR
 - President, Upper Midwest Region, AAR (*June 2023 – May 2025*).
 - Vice President, Upper Midwest Region, AAR (*June 2021 – May 2023*).
 - Interim President, Upper Midwest Region, AAR (*June 2020 – May 2021*).
 - Program Coordinator, Upper Midwest Region, AAR. (*June 2019 – May 2021*.)
- Member, Program Committee, Conference on Sermon Studies, Marshall University.

Advisory Boards

- Sermon Studies Center, Marshall University.

Consortium Member

- Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Minnesota

Manuscript Reviewer

- Bloomsbury Academic

Journal Reviewer

- *Religions*; *Jahrbuch des Dubnow-Instituts*; *AJS Review*; *Journal of Textual Reasoning*

Journal Editorial Boards

- *Sermon Studies*

Student & Community Events

Gustavus Adolphus College

- (See separate list.)

Off-Campus

- (See separate list.)

Community Teaching

- Lecture, “Jews and Humor,” Exploring Religious Questions (organized by Dr. Marcia Bunge), St. Peter, MN, October 16, 2023. (*Upcoming*.)
- Class, “The Opening Paragraph of the Amidah: Connecting Scripture and Liturgy,” Adult Education Series, Tifereth Israel Synagogue, Des Moines, IA, August 19, 2023.
- Class, “When Scripture is Only the Beginning: Four Midrashic Narratives from the Tradition of our Sages,” Adult Education Series, Temple Israel, Minneapolis, MN, Nov. 2022-Feb. 2023.
- Class, “Learning Talmud,” Adult Education Series, Ahavat Achim Synagogue, Atlanta, GA, July-August 2020 / June-August 2021.
- Lecture, “Anti-Semitism in the United States: A Brief History and Current Realities,” Exploring Religious Questions, St. Peter, MN, February 11, 2019.

Languages

German, Hebrew, French

Memberships in Profession Organizations

American Academy of Religion

Association for Jewish Studies

German Studies Association

Lawrence Durrell Society

Philip Roth Society

[Updated 7 September 2023.]