



THE LAURA & ALVIN SIEGAL  
LIFELONG LEARNING  
PROGRAM

# Jewish Explorations

Lectures • Programs • Views

Dear Friends,

Have you seen the great lineup of local talent who will be teaching and lecturing for us this spring at CWRU-Siegal? I featured a number of instructors in last week's column (which you can see [here](#)), and continue this week to provide you with behind-the-scenes notes and introductions to six more, including CWRU-Siegal Executive Director, Brian Amkraut and myself. Enjoy!

**Debbi Perkul** – Growing up, Debbi's mother told stories about her adventurous ancestor, Rae Landy (pictured right), who traveled from Cleveland to Jerusalem in 1914, with one other fellow nurse. Strong-willed, compassionate and intrepid, Rae and her traveling companion laid foundations for the city's first nursing system, under the auspices of the new Zionist organization, Hadassah. The documents she left behind provide a fascinating view of daily life in Jerusalem under Ottoman rule - which Debbi shares in her newly published book *Winds over Jerusalem*, and in her [February lecture](#).



**Brian Amkraut** – Back in the olden days, when internet technology was still relatively new, Brian was among the early adapters of live video-conferencing to teach students who were scattered in various locales across the country. Exploring how social media and digital platforms can shape Jewish community and educational goals, Brian began speaking and publishing on the topic. His course (which I will be co-teaching) [Jewish Texts and Changing Technology](#), grows out of this long-standing interest. Technology is not just out there – as a tool for us to use – it insinuates itself into the way we engage with and think about Jewish history, identity and culture.



**Alanna Cooper** – Fifteen years ago, I was part of a small group in Cambridge, MA, that was working to build a new synagogue congregation. We were filled with energy but short on resources. So when the organization "Save-a-Torah" offered us a Torah scroll, which had supposedly been rescued from the ashes of the Holocaust, we accepted amidst celebration. Later, we learned we had been duped, when the head of "Save-a-Torah" was brought to court and eventually jailed for fraud. This experience has haunted me, leading me to explore American Jews' intense interest in Holocaust scrolls. I look forward to sharing my thoughts with you during my [March lecture](#) on the topic.

**Larry Josefovitz** – For 30 years, Larry served as a full-time cantor here in Cleveland (at Park Synagogue) and in Highland Park, IL. In addition to applying his talents to the synagogue setting, Larry is a long-time teacher, who brings his love of opera and other classical music forms to the public. He is particularly interested in the work of the controversial composer, Richard Wagner, who is known not only for his artistry, but for his anti-Semitic views, and his influence in the Nazi regime. Larry's upcoming [course](#) –

which focuses on Wagner's final opera, *Parsifal* – explores the question of whether a composer's art can (or should) stand on its own, separate from its creator.

**Donna Rumenik** – A licensed psychologist, with a PhD in psychology, and a second PhD in sociology, Donna has taught in both disciplines at CWRU, John Carroll, and Ursuline. In addition, Donna has done extensive international research and training at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, at Ukrainian Catholic University, and at Yahad-In Unum in France. Donna brings all this experience to CWRU-Siegal, where she has been teaching on the Holocaust and Holocaust memory since 2013. This spring, Donna's [course](#) focuses on her important work filling in the missing gaps of experiences specific to women, who carried different burdens during the Holocaust.

**Eric Kisch** – Eric's career was in marketing research, but his real love has always been music. He went on the air in January 2004 with Musical Passions, a one-hour weekly program on WCLV-FM, which is still going strong after over 770 shows. Lucky for CWRU-Siegal, Eric has brought his work sharing his favorite artists into our classrooms. In the past, he has taught on the life and work of Leonard Bernstein, on immigrant contributions to American classical music, and on music in totalitarian societies. This spring, he [focuses on the work of conductors](#), asking why some can really take you into a "better world" (as Schubert put it) while others, who do a perfectly competent job, leave your emotions untouched.



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