

Paul E. Nahme

Curriculum Vitae

Associate Professor of Judaic Studies and Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Program in Judaic Studies
Department of Religious Studies
Brown University
Judaic Studies, 163 George St., Brown University, Box 1826, Providence, RI 02912
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Academic Positions

2023-present: Brown University. Associate Professor (with tenure) of Judaic Studies and Religious Studies.
2014-2023: Brown University. Dorot Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies (tenure-track), Department of Religious Studies and Program in Judaic Studies.
2013-2014: University of Kansas. Assistant Professor (tenure-track), Department of Religious Studies.

Administrative Positions

2025-present: Director of the Program in Judaic Studies, Brown University.
Spring 2024: Director of Graduate Studies, Religious Studies, Brown University.
2023-2024: Director of Undergraduate Studies, Judaic Studies, Brown University.

Fellowships

2019-2020: Harvard University. Harry Starr Fellow in Judaica, Center for Judaic Studies.
2017-2020: Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, Research Fellow.
2016: University of Pennsylvania. Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.
2011-2013: NYU School of Law. Scholar-in-Residence, Tikvah Center for Law and Jewish Civilization.
2011-2013: Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University. Graduate Fellow, Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization.

Education

2008-2013: University of Toronto. Ph.D., Department for the Study of Religion (Collaborative Program with the Centre for Jewish Studies).
2006-2008: University of Toronto. M.A., Department for the Study of Religion.
2002-2006: University of Toronto, Innis College. H.B.A. (with High Distinction) in Philosophy; minors in Semiotics and Communication Theory and in Sexual Diversity Studies.

Other Education

2012-2014: Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, Riverdale, New York.
2007: Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, Israel.

Awards and Honours

2017: Richard B. Salomon Faculty Research Award (\$15,000).
2016: Brown Humanities Research Fund.
2016: Brown Faculty Travel and Research Fund.
2008-2011: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Canada Graduate Scholarship.

Publications

Books

Ghost People: Race, Religion, and the Affective Sources of Jewish Identity (Oxford University Press, 2024).
Hermann Cohen and the Crisis of Liberalism: The Enchantment of the Public Sphere (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019).

Finalist: National Jewish Book Award, 2019.

Edited Volumes

Covenantal Thinking: Essays on the Philosophy and Theology of David Novak, co-edited with Yaniv Feller (University of Toronto Press, 2024).

Manuscripts in Preparation

America's Rebbe: Chabad and the Spirit of American Religion (working title).

The Loss of Surprise: Disagreement and the Conditions of Thinking (working title).

Popular Writing

"Taking a Sabbatical: Rethinking Covid-19—and the world we want to return to after the pandemic—through the lens of the Biblical Jubilee." [Tablet Magazine article](#), July 2, 2020.

"Jewish life has thrived on my campus, amid pro-Palestinian protests — here's what Trump doesn't understand." [The Forward article](#), April 10, 2025.

Articles

"Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Or, On what it feels like to be a hyphen." Roundtable on "Arabs & Jews? Disruptive Frames, Relationality, and Imagined Futures." *International Journal of Middle-East Studies*, forthcoming.

"'Three generations are all that exist in any moment in time': A Kabbalistic Theory of Historical Progress and Generational Ascent in the Writings of R. Shlomo Elyashuv (Leshem Shevo Ve-Akhlama)" (with Shaul Magid). *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, Vol. 34 (2026): 69-101.

"Reconsidering 'Law' and 'Halakha' in Modern Jewish Thought." In *New Perspectives on Jewish Law*, ed. Suzanne Last Stone and Yonatan Brafman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2025).

"Enchanted Thinking: Towards a Genealogy of Mithnagdism and Talmudic Conceptualism (Lomdus)." In *Unsettling Jewish Knowledge: Text, Contingency, Desire*, eds. Anne C. Dailey, Martin Kavka, and Lital Levy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023).

"Ghosted: Jewishness and the Haunted Hegemony of Racial Modernity." *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 102, no. 2 (2022): 204-236.

"Foreign Spirits in the 'Nation of Kant': Racializing Anti-Semitism and the Secularization of German Philosophy." *Jewish Quarterly Review* vol. 110, no. 1 (2020): 127-160.

"The Questionability of a Future Jewish Philosophy." In *The Future of Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

"Revealing What's Implicit: Maimonides' Account of Creation and Revelation, Beyond Politics and Naturalism." *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* vol. 26, no. 1 (2018): 1-33.

"Wissen und Lomdus: Idealism, Modernity, and History in some Nineteenth-Century Rabbinic and Philosophical Responses to the Wissenschaft des Judentums." *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 110, no. 3 (2017): 393-420.

"God is the Reason: Hermann Cohen's Monotheism and the Liberal Theologico-Political Predicament." *Modern Theology* vol. 33, no. 1 (2016): 116-139.

With Daniel H. Weiss, "Hermann Cohen." In *Oxford Bibliographies in Jewish Studies*, ed. Naomi Seidman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

"Law, Principle, and the Theologico-Political History of Sovereignty." *Political Theology*, vol. 14 no. 4 (2013): 432-479.

Review Essay on Faith and Freedom: Moses Mendelssohn's Theologico-Political Thought by Michah Gottlieb. *Ancient Traditions, New Conversations*, The Blog of the Center for Jewish Law at Cardozo School of Law. May 2013.

"Forces of Law: A Bibliography," with Amy Fischer and Shari Goldberg, supervised by Pamela Klassen. [Religion and Diversity Project bibliography PDF](#) (2011).

Review Essay on *The Jews as a Chosen People: Tradition and Transformation* by S. Leyla Gurkan. *Philosophy East and West: A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy*, vol. 61 no. 1 (2012).

"On Repentance: An Interview with Michael L. Morgan on the Thought of Emil Fackenheim," co-authored with Michael L. Morgan, Karen Nissenbaum, and Jessica Radin. *The University of Toronto Journal for Jewish Thought*, Vol. 2 (2011).

Introduction: "On Repentance," co-authored with Karin Nissenbaum and Jessica Radin. The University of Toronto Journal for Jewish Thought, Vol. 2 (2011).

Introduction: "Religion and Reason," co-authored with Karin Nissenbaum. The University of Toronto Journal for Jewish Thought, Vol. 1 (2010).

Selected Invited Lectures and Paper Presentations

"The Object of Study in Israel Studies." Opening Remarks, Re-Thinking Israel Studies, workshop organized at Brown University, 1-2 March 2026.

"The Spectrality of Racial Affect and the Disavowal of Religion, or On the Jewish Question." Invited lecture at University of California, Irvine, 5 February 2026.

"Racial Affect and the Specter of Jewishness." Invited lecture at San Diego State University, 4 February 2026.

"Feeling in But Not Of: Jewishness and the Future of American Judaism." Institute for Jewish Spirituality and Society, 11 December 2025.

"How Does it Feel to Be a Hyphen?" The Filiation and Affiliation of Jews, Muslims, and Others: Universalisms and Particularisms, workshop hosted by the Program in Judaic Studies and the Center for Middle-East Studies, Brown University, 17 November 2025.

"How Does it Feel to Be a Religio-Racial Problem? Jewishness and the Problem of an American 'Chosen People.'" Invited Lecture, The Body Imagines: Current Research Inspired by the Work of David Novak, University of Toronto, 26 October 2023.

"Jewishness and Affect." Roundtable on "Jew/ISH Histories of Emotions," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, 13 December 2020.

"The Specter of the Orient: Jewishness as a Religio-Racial Affect." Invited lecture hosted by the Graduate Theological Union/UC Berkeley, 12 November 2020.

"Zionism, Pessimism, and the Cruel Optimism of Race." Invited lecture at Dartmouth College, 21 May 2020.

"Jewishness in a Time of Crisis: Lessons from Weimar Germany." Invited talk hosted by Arizona State University and the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix, Scottsdale, AZ, 21 November 2019.

"Jewish Racial Affect and the Haunting of Racial Modernity." Arizona State University, 19 November 2019.

"Judaism, Public Religion, and the Minority Past of Protestantism: Two Later Essays by Hermann Cohen." Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, 17 December 2018.

"Blackness, Jewishness, and Race." Invited talk at Columbia-Barnard Hillel, New York, NY, 3 December 2018.

"Foreign Spirits in the 'Nation of Kant': Racializing Anti-Semitism and the Secularization of German Philosophy." Princeton Workshop in Modern Jewish Thought, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, 15 October 2018.

"Butler, Said, and the Orientalist Paradox of a 'Secularist' Indigeneity: A Response to Judah Isseroff." Princeton Workshop in Modern Jewish Thought, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, 15 October 2018.

"Critical Idealism in an Age of Identity Politics: Cohen's Ethics of Minority." Keynote Address at Die Zukunft des kritischen Idealismus: Hermann Cohen nach 100 Jahren / The Future of Critical Idealism: Hermann Cohen After 100 Years, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 29 October 2018.

"God, or How to Untranslate." Response to Hent de Vries and Joan Copjec at Judaism – Christianity – Islam: Untranslatables and Crossovers, A Collaborative Project, Brown University, 12 October 2018.

"Leo Strauss and Zionism: Response to Daniel May." Princeton Workshop in Modern Jewish Thought, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, 23 January 2018.

"Secularism and Semitism: Jewish Class Consciousness Between Race and Religion." American Academy of Religion Annual Conference, Boston, MA, 20 November 2017.

"Race, Religion, and Identity: The Politics of Kantianism and German-Jewish Liberalism." Invited lecture at Indiana University, Bloomington, 20 April 2017.

"Hermann Cohen and the Legacy of German-Jewish Liberalism." Invited lecture at Yale University, 8 March 2017.

"Idealism and Enchanted Thinking in Lithuanian Talmudic Conceptualism." Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, 19 December 2016.

"Messianism and Melancholia in the Thought of Hermann Cohen." Invited paper, the University of Chicago Divinity School, 13 April 2016.

"The Open Secret of Secular Religion: Hermann Cohen on Heine and Spinoza." Invited speaker, Judaism in Modern Philosophy: Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, and the Legacies of German Idealism, Princeton University, 3 April 2016.

- "The Formations of the Secular in Modern Jewish Thought: The Case of Hermann Cohen." Invited lecture, Department of Religious Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 13 April 2015.
- "The Friend, the Enemy, and the Foreigner: Of Jewish Political Myth in Carl Schmitt and Hermann Cohen." Presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies, Baltimore, MD, 16 December 2014.
- "The Formations of the Secular in Modern Jewish Thought: Hermann Cohen's Critique of Pantheism." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, San Diego, CA, 24 November 2014.
- "Legal Idealization in the 'History' of Halakhah: A Cohenian Reading of Brisker Method." Presented at Jewish Studies as Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, 24 March 2014.
- "The Problem of the Secular in Modern Jewish Thought." Invited public lecture at Brown University, Providence, RI, 27 January 2014.
- "Between Marburg and Brisk: Ethics and the Construction of Law in Hermann Cohen and Joseph B. Soloveitchik." Presented at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, 15 December 2013.
- "From Kant to (the new) Hegel: Hermann Cohen's Interpretation of the Noahide and the Aesthetics of the Secular." Presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, 26 November 2013.
- "Between Pantheism and Positivism: Hermann Cohen and the Problem of the Secular in Modern Jewish Thought." Invited Lecture at Department of Religious Studies, University of Kansas, 6 February 2013.
- "Methodological Subversion of the Human Sciences in the Philosophy of Hermann Cohen." Invited Lecture at Department of Religion, Williams College, Williamstown, MA, 9 January 2013.
- "What Contemporary Zionism Can Learn from Hermann Cohen's Religious (Anti-) Zionism." Presented at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 18 December 2012.
- "Law and Jewish Practice in Herman Cohen's Ethics of Pure Will." Presented at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, 19 November 2012.
- "Salomon Maimon and the Jewish Constellations of German Idealism." Invited Response at the New York German Idealism Workshop, New School for Social Research, New York, 12 October 2012.
- "Critique of Prophetic Reason." Colloquium in Religious Studies, Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, 27 October 2011.
- "Anti-Eschatological Religious Reason: Monotheism and Legal Pluralism." Workshop Presentation at Max Planck Institute for Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany, 23 February 2011.
- "Sovereignty in Principle: The latinization of the Church and the 'auto-immunity' of the Judaeo-Christian." 2nd annual Derrida Today International Conference, Goodenough College, University of London, London, UK, 20 July 2010.
- "Natural and Political Science: Reading Cohen's Ethik des reinen Willens with Medieval Eyes." Die Natur des Denkens, das Denken der Natur-Spinoza, Trendelenburg, und H. Cohen, hosted by the Amsterdam Colloquium for Jewish Philosophy and the Hermann Cohen Gesellschaft, Leiden, Netherlands, 22 June 2010.
- "The Hypothesized Jewgreek: Is there such a thing as the Jewish theologico-political?" The 2nd annual University of Toronto Centre for Jewish Studies Graduate Conference, 27 April 2010.
- "The Violence of Principled Law in the Talmud Trial of 1240 and Jewish Law as a Figure of Resistance." Graduate Symposium: "Fighting Religion: Expressions of Violence and Resistance," Centre for the Study of Religion, University of Toronto, 16 April 2010.

Service, Brown University

- Director of Graduate Studies (Spring 2024).
- Director of Undergraduate Studies, Judaic Studies (2023-present).
- Reviewer, Campus Committee for Fulbright Awards, Brown (2018; 2020; 2022).
- Concentration Adviser, Judaic Studies.
- Reviewer, Brown University OVPR Richard B. Salomon Faculty Research Award.
- Director of Undergraduate Studies, Religious Studies (2016-2017).
- Student Research Awards Committee, Judaic Studies.
- Undergraduate Essay Award Committee, Judaic Studies.
- Bishop McVickar Essay Award Committee, Religious Studies (2017).

Service in the Field

External Reviewer, Tenure Dossier, Hamilton Center, University of Florida.
External Reviewer, Tenure Dossier, Graduate Theological Union.
External Reviewer, Mandel Scholion Post-Doctoral Award, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2023).
Board Member, Brown Judaic Studies.
Program Unit Chair, Study of Judaism Section, American Academy of Religion (2015-2021).
Reviewer, Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) program at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) (2015-2016).
Peer Reviewer, Political Theology, Oxford University Press, Modern Theology, Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Harvard Theological Review, Jewish Studies Quarterly, The Journal of Religion, Jewish Quarterly Review, Lateral: The Journal of Cultural Studies; Naharaim: Zeitschrift für deutsch-jüdische Literatur und Kulturgeschichte.
Reviewer, Choice.

Teaching

The Political Theology of the Jewish Question.
Hope, Despair, and Longing in Jewish Thought.
Exodus: Liberation in the Black and Jewish Religious Imaginations (with Andre Willis).
Methods in Religious Studies.
A Game of Thrones: Religion and Nationalism, 1789-1933.
Ethics After Auschwitz?
Foreigners, Refugees, and the Ethics of Minority.
Heidegger, the Jews, and the Crisis of Liberalism.
Race, Religion, and the Secular.
Fascism: 1933-Present.

Graduate Supervision

Celia Stern (Advisor), Ph.D. Religious Studies, 2026.
Lise Miltner (committee member), Ph.D. Religious Studies, 2026.
Angel Calvin (committee member), Ph.D. Religious Studies, 2025.
Josiah Bisbee (committee member), Ph.D. Religious Studies, 2024.
Nechama Chumi Juni (Co-Advisor), Ph.D. Religious Studies, 2021.
Jennifer Greenberg (Co-Advisor), ABD.
Lucy Onderwyzer-Gold (Advisor).
Nicole Collins (Co-Advisor).
Zohar Gitlis (Co-Advisor).
Tessa Findley (committee member).

Professional Memberships

American Academy of Religion.
Association for Jewish Studies.
Secretary and Treasurer, Hermann Cohen Gesellschaft.