



## SPRING/SUMMER 2023

- 1 Director's Message
- 2 Graduates of the ESC
- 3 FLAS Recipients
- 5 Undergrad Research
- 5 Pitt students go to Model EUs
- 6 GSPIA students in UK
- 7 Hungary in Pittsburgh
- 8 Harris Miller Awardee
- 9 EUSA Conference at Pitt
- 10 Faculty spotlight: Adam Shear



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear ESC colleagues, students, and friends,

We have come to the end of another academic year, the first since the Pandemic to be almost “normal” again with many activities in-person or hybrid rather than purely virtual. This is also my last message as Randall Halle will take over as the Director of the European Studies Center on July 1. In the last two months of the term, we continued to have many activities. Our new FLAS fellowship winners were chosen in late February by Stephen Lund with the help of Professors Müge K. Finkel, Lina Insana and Marie Young. (This past year’s FLAS scholars are featured on pages 3 and 4). Over spring break, eight GSPIA students and their professors went to Newcastle, England, to evaluate cultural regeneration studies (see article on page 6). The European Studies Center co-sponsored the Undergraduate Research Symposium organized by the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and held on March 31 (see article on page 5). Our March Conversation on Europe, organized and moderated by Professor Mary Rauktis and some of her students in Social Work, was entitled “Climate Change and Migration—What Can the U.S. Learn from Europe?” Panel members included Professor Sheila Vélez Martínez of Pitt’s School of Law and Drs. Carla Malafaia and Cosmin Nada of the University of Porto, Portugal. The final Conversation of the academic year was organized by Vivian Curran, Distinguished Professor of Law at Pitt. She and her guest, Lynn H. Nicholas, author of *The Rape of Europa* and other books, held a fascinating discussion on “The Ongoing Struggle to Recover Nazi-Looted



4200 Wesley W. Posvar Hall  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

412-648-7405  
[esc@pitt.edu](mailto:esc@pitt.edu)  
[www.ucis.pitt.edu/esc](http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/esc)

A Jean Monnet European Union Centre of Excellence  
A US Dept. of Education National Resource Center  
with funding from  
International and Foreign Language Education

With the support of the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



## Director's Message continued

Art." "Europe Today," the one-credit class and lecture series organized by Dr. Pawel Lewicki, Associate Director, was described in the last newsletter. One particularly interesting lecture held on April 5 was on "Norway's Version of the American Dream," presented by the Center's Assistant Director, Stephen Lund. Steve spent several weeks in Norway last summer as a Fulbright Fellow and had the opportunity to meet some of his Norwegian relatives while there. As a follow up to the undergraduate Model EU held at Pitt in February, several Pitt students participated in Model EUs in Seattle and New York City and four will attend a Model EU in Germany in July (see article on page 5). On April 18th we co-sponsored a Hungarian reception (see page 7). Thanks to the contacts of B. Guy Peters, Maurice Falk Professor of American Government, we had two additional guest speakers in the term. On March 27, Dr. Ivo Rollis, Visiting Scholar in Political Science from Latvia (funded by the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation Fellowship Program) discussed "Crisis Resilient Public Administration in the EU Member States: The Case of Latvia and Comparative Perspectives." Then on April 24, Professor Muiris MacCarthaigh from Queen's University Belfast (Northern Ireland) discussed "Brexit, Voice and Loyalty: Post-Brexit Governance Challenges for Ireland, the UK and the EU." On Friday, April 28 all six area studies centers in UCIS gathered in the Charity Randall Theatre to recognize our graduates who were receiving certificates or other awards from the centers. After the ceremony there was a reception in the Pitt Commons Room (see list of awardees below). The end of the term did not end our activities. On May 3 we welcomed representatives of the Jean Monnet in the United States network to the campus. On May 4 we simultaneously hosted "Coffee and Conversation" for our UCIS colleagues and helped with the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) conference which was held at Pitt May 4 to 6 (see article on page 9). And, on May 15, we sadly said *Arrivederci* to Daniela Fargione, our Fulbright Scholar, as she returned to Italy.

## Graduates of the European Studies Center

### Bachelor of Philosophy in Int'l and Area Studies

Regis A. Curtis  
Joseph Montrey (A)  
Danielle Obisie-Orlu (A)

### Certificate in Central European Studies

Christopher John Bekavac  
Regis A. Curtis  
Olivia Mae Maratea  
Victoria Piotkivska

### Certificate in European Union Studies

Tristan C. Cavaness

### Certificate in Mediterranean Studies

Julia A. Ferri  
Dilek Tas (G)

### Certificate in Transatlantic Studies

Olivia Mae Maratea  
Danielle Obisie-Orlu (A)  
Leah Kaye Santorine (G)  
Frances Marie Troiano  
Daniel J. Turillo

### Certificate in West European Studies

Megan V. Conzelmann  
Megan Isabella Debski  
Thomas Joseph Patrick Holmes  
Celia Maiers Cubas  
Olivia Mae Maratea  
Madelyn B. McCollough  
Sarah Moore  
Shannon Paige O'Brien  
Norlando Padilla (G)  
Claire F. Pamerleau

### Related Concentration in European and Eurasian Studies

Cassidy Olivia Glunt  
Tava Mazhindu  
Julianne Weber  
Vivian X. Zauhar

(A) Student Ambassador  
(G) Graduate Student

# FLAS Recipients

The FLAS Fellowship program is a prestigious and competitive federal award that allows eligible Pitt undergraduate and graduate students to compete for fellowships that permit them to devote greater attention to the study of a chosen modern foreign language and area studies specialty. We talked to four FLAS recipients about their experiences and how they plan to use the FLAS award to further their career.

## Joe Patrick



As a Ph.D. student in the Department of Linguistics at Pitt, I can personally attest to the tremendous value of the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) award in my academic journey. The FLAS award has allowed me to focus on my research and writing while supporting me financially and freeing me of some of the teaching and departmental responsibilities normally expected of grad students. Over the course of my time at Pitt, I have been fortunate to receive two academic-year FLAS awards (both for the study of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Serbian—four language varieties taught as one system sometimes referred to as BCMS), including my current award from the European Studies Center, as well as three summer FLAS awards through the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. What I found most beneficial about the FLAS award was the opportunity (in fact, the requirement) to enroll in language and area studies courses related to the region of

study. My research is on the sociolinguistics of the Balkans. This includes countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro—regions which are geopolitically important as a longstanding nexus of powers, but they are also understudied and under taught in the United States. Since I am not originally from this region, these courses have helped me build a solid understanding of the context and history that informs the data I collect for my dissertation. In the past, the FLAS award has also given me the opportunity to study abroad in Montenegro through Pitt's illustrious Summer Language Institute. This is a significant opportunity that I wouldn't have had without the FLAS funding. Thanks to the FLAS awards, I have also been able to study many other regionally important languages—both directly through funding and also indirectly by allowing me time to explore interests outside of my narrow field of research. As I near the completion of my dissertation, I am pursuing various careers in academia, federal government, and NGOs in order to work on issues related to Eastern Europe and the Balkans. I always recommend the FLAS award to any graduate student looking for funding opportunities while improving their understanding and knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.

## Danny Turillo

I am incredibly grateful for the support I have received from the ESC as a FLAS Fellow over the last two years. The Fellowship allowed me to complete a third major in Italian with ease and pull together all of my academic and extracurricular interests through the Transatlantic Studies Certificate. Being able to hone my Italian skills and explore the intersections between art and transatlantic politics in greater depth encouraged me to enroll in the Bachelor of Philosophy program, through which I studied Fascist Italy's film propaganda campaigns in America. As part of that project, I worked with the Frederick Honors College and the ESC to arrange a research trip to Italy last summer—my first time ever traveling to Europe—which was absolutely one of the highlights of my time at Pitt. So many of my most formative and fulfilling collegiate experiences are attributable to the ESC and the FLAS program, and as I look to take what I have learned out into the world as a public servant, I feel incredibly confident in my capabilities after having been able to pursue so many invaluable opportunities in and out of the classroom.





## Caden Breeze



As an MPIA student at GSPIA, international experiences are essential for my professional development. Winning the Summer FLAS award through the ESC to study Portuguese intensively in Portugal gave me the opportunity to experience Europe for the first time and investigate the linguistic variation present in the Portuguese language (due to its presence in four different continents). Lisbon is home to speakers of not only European Portuguese but also many speakers of the Brazilian, Cape Verdean, Angolan and Mozambican variations of the language. Living in Portugal over the summer allowed me to learn about the unique experiences that people from all over the world have had in Portugal and across Europe. Additionally, interacting with people from different countries at my language school in Lisbon opened my eyes to how the European community perceives the U.S. and the misconceptions that harm relations. I am pursuing a career in the federal government, so bolstering my resume with a complementary language to Spanish,

my 2nd language, will help distinguish me as a candidate and will open opportunities for me throughout my career. I am incredibly grateful for the FLAS-funded experience because the coursework allowed me to expand my knowledge base of the Lusophone world into Africa as well, thanks to a Mozambican professor!

## Leah Santorine

I am a third-year student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and in addition to my J.D. I will receive a certificate in International & Comparative Law as well as a graduate certificate in Transatlantic Studies from the European Studies Center. I received the FLAS Fellowship to continue my study of Italian at the graduate level and I have enjoyed the opportunity to improve my Italian language writing skills. I've had several opportunities to use my language skills professionally both during my internship on the Europe & Eurasia team at the Commercial Law Development Program at the U.S. Department of Commerce and with U.S. Army JAG Corps in Vicenza, Italy. Following graduation and upon admission to the bar, I plan on pursuing a career as a Judge Advocate in the U.S. Army JAG Corps.



## Undergraduates Present Their Research

On March 31, 19 undergraduates from nine universities presented their research at the European and Eurasian Undergraduate Research Symposium, which was back in person at Pitt. Organized by the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies and co-sponsored by the ESC, UCIS, the Consortium for Educational Resources on Islamic Studies, the Graduate Organization for the Study of Europe and Central Asia, and the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, the conference began with a keynote address by Fulbright Visiting



Professor, Dr. Éva Lovra, from Hungary, whose talk was entitled “Urban Tissue Typology in Habsburg Central Europe (1867-1918).” There were seven sessions over the day featuring themes ranging from “Soft Power|Hard Power,” “Democracy’s Decline,” “Perspectives on the War against Ukraine,” to “Gender in Focus,” “Socialist Utopias, Dystopias, and Realities,” “International Law Perspectives on the War against Ukraine,” and finally to “Liminality, Borderland, and the Other” and “Trauma in Central European History and Story-Telling.” The eight students from Pitt who presented papers were Zain Adamo, Karim Abouelenein, Margaret M. Barnes, Jack Gallick, Griffin Emory Meckler-Culbertson, Victoria Piontkivska, Benjamin Sommer, and Alexis Waksmunski. The other 11 students were from American Universities except for Anipa Almazbek kyzy, who came from the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The chairs and discussants for each session were Pitt faculty, graduate students, and staff including: Dr. Misha Appeltova, Eve Barden, Professor Nancy Condee, Dr. Olga Kuchinskaya, Dijana Mujkanovic, Tymur Mykhailov, and Melinda Szabo. The conference concluded with a reception in the Global Hub, where participants could see an exhibit commemorating the Chernobyl Disaster through Art and Culture, curated by Dr. Olga Klimova of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature.

## Pitt Students Travel to Model EUs

In our winter newsletter, we reported on our high school Model EU held in December and our Undergraduate Model EU held at Pitt in February. The February MEU was only the first of several Model EUs for some of our students. With generous support from the EU Delegation with a “Getting to Know Europe” grant, Pitt students are competing in a “circuit” of domestic Model EU simulations this year, along with students from our partner universities, Florida International University (FIU) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Trevor Weinstock and Sydney Wilhelmy, from Pitt’s Oakland campus, represented Slovenia at the 2023 West Coast Model EU in Seattle March 3-4, hosted by the University of Washington’s Center for West European Studies. Tamanna Khan, Mackenzie Linderman and Holly Levy, also from Pitt-Oakland, represented Spain at the Model EU in New York City March 30 to April 1, hosted by the Institute for European Union Studies of the State University of New York (SUNY). Pitt Law School student, Barrie Wiener, served as Model EU advisor for these two off-campus MEUs and accompanied the students to New York City. In July, four Pitt students and recent graduates (Catalina Alemañy, Kathleen Brett, Danielle Obisie-Orlu and Trevor Weinstock) along with eight UNC and FIU students and recent graduates, will visit EU Institutions in Brussels and then participate in a Model EU in Mainz, Germany. They will be accompanied by Samantha Moik, our Engagement Coordinator, and Kayla Bassett Andrade from UNC.

## GSPIA Students Conduct Research in UK



Thanks to a European Union network grant on Transatlantic Perspectives on Energy and Cities (TPEC) between the ESC at the University of Pittsburgh, Newcastle University in the U.K., and Sciences Po Lyon and University Jean Monnet Saint-Etienne in France, eight students in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) were able to travel with their professors to Newcastle-upon-Tyne over spring break to evaluate cultural regeneration strategies in North East England after Covid-19. The students were part of a spring term class entitled “Urban Cultural Regeneration After Crisis” taught by Dr. Sabina Deitrick of GSPIA and Dr. Michael Glass of the Urban Studies Program. The students were Sophie Beacom, Martin Eddy Harvey, Eric Macadangdang, Nicholas Pitrone, Sara Roach, Shrinath Suresh, May Wang, and Clara Weibel.

North East England suffered an industrial decline in the second half of the 20th century, and many urban areas in the region have used arts, culture and creativity for economic regeneration. However, Covid 19 dramatically disrupted these efforts. The students analyzed the new Cultural and Creative Zone (CCZ) program at three sites—Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Shields, and Berwick-upon-Tweed—as well as an older area of cultural regeneration in the Ouseburn Valley area of Newcastle. Their goal was to evaluate how cultural regeneration strategies are employed, experienced, and perceived in the post-COVID era. During their week in Newcastle, they interviewed over 50 stakeholders and visited sites in the three zones and Ouseburn Valley. They also conducted content analysis of strategic plans, COVID-19 reports, and local publications. On April 24th the students presented their final report and recommendations in a hybrid meeting with an audience of over 25 including many of the people they worked with in England. Their final report is available on [www.cures.pitt.edu](http://www.cures.pitt.edu).



## Hungary in Pittsburgh



“Hungary in Pittsburgh: A Celebration of Hungarian Culture through Food and History” was held in the Global Hub on April 18th as a “teaser” for events to be held in the fall when items related to Hungary and the Hungarian Nationality Room from Pitt’s Library Archives will be on display in the Hillman Library and the Global Hub. Dan Pennell, the Curator for Slavic, European, and Eurasian Studies and the Archive of European Integration, and Clare Withers, the Curator of the Elizabeth Nesbitt Collection, gave an overview of materials in the library’s collections and welcomed input as to what could be placed on display in the fall. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring together people in Pittsburgh’s Hungarian-American Community, many of whom offered remarks about organizations and resources related to Hungary both at Pitt and in the Pittsburgh area. In addition to the librarians, the speakers included: Kati Csoman, Director of the Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs; Zsuzsanna Magdó, Associate Director, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; Jonathan Naser, Chair of the Hungarian Nationality Room Committee; Viktoria Batista, Associate Professor of Hungarian; Éva Lovra, Hungarian Fulbright Visiting Professor; and Katherine Novak, Chair of the Board of National Directors of the William Penn Association, a fraternal benefit association that provides insurance products and was formed by Hungarian Americans more than 130 years ago. Over delicious desserts provided by Judy Torma, owner of Huszar’s Hungarian Restaurant on the Northside, guests shared stories of their own connections to Hungary and Pittsburgh’s Hungarian community and provided Dan and Clare with ideas for the kinds of objects that might be included in the fall displays. Moderated by the ESC Assistant Director, Stephen Lund, the event was cosponsored by the ESC, the Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, the Global Hub, the Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs, and the Hungarian Nationality Room Committee. Look for announcements later in the ESC Weekly Updates regarding the displays and related events in the fall.

## Harris Miller Awardee--Patrick Miller

I would like to start with offering my sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Miller. I will always be incredibly grateful for his generosity in extending me an award to study abroad last summer. It was a truly life-changing personal and academic experience that would not have been possible without your kindness.

For my study abroad experience, I decided to go to Ireland. In my time here at the University of Pittsburgh, my favorite classes have always been the ones I've completed for my Irish Minor, especially my classes with Professor Marie Young for my Irish language credits. Marie suggested the idea of going to the Irish speaking areas of Ireland to learn the language from native speakers through the University of Galway. When the program opened up last spring, I knew I had to take the leap and apply. I was thankfully accepted and enrolled with the University of Galway to learn the Irish language and Gaeltacht culture from locals in the villages of Gweedore in Co. Donegal and Carraroe in Co. Galway over a period of four weeks.

The first two weeks were to be spent in Gweedore. I landed in Dublin airport and made my way over to Galway on the first two-hour leg of what was to be a seven-hour journey up the coast of Ireland into the "forgotten county" of Donegal. It was my first time visiting another country, and it was a truly unreal experience. The road to Donegal isn't a busy one, and it winds in and out of the ocean. It makes you feel as if you are following the edges of Ireland on the map. Passing through sleepy western Irish towns and the ruggedness of Ireland's mountains, it's like a journey into another world. My time spent in Gweedore can only be described as magical. My professors there were incredible.

I spent each day totally immersed in the Irish language, not only in the classroom but in the grocery store, the local 'chipper,' everywhere I was surrounded by the language I love. I spent those days learning how to speak more fluently, perfecting pronunciation and idioms. We learned how to céilí dance at the local pub, went on hikes narrated by one of our professors who was the authority on local folklore, and generally soaked in the magic of Donegal.

We went on educational trips across the border to Northern Ireland to see how the local Irish population there was preserving their language despite threats and conflict. We went to Tory Island to see how the few islanders left in Ireland live. It was in Gweedore that I learned the ancient Gaelic sport of hurling. Upon returning to Pitt this year I decided to join the club hurling team here inspired by that lesson in the local schoolyard and I'm happy to report that our team defeated Notre Dame this year to win the collegiate national championship.

The following two weeks in Carraroe also blew me away. Our professors in this new village were incredible in helping us pick up on the subtleties of the Irish language in Connemara. We polished up our Irish from the first two weeks and were exposed to history of the area. We visited historic sites such as the cottage of Irish revolutionary and ardent Irish-speaker Pádraig Pearse. Connemara was an area where we learned to listen to the land speak to us and see what stories the native Irish place names held. I will always remember feeling the heavy history that the area is steeped in, and the weight of learning that history firsthand from the locals who lived it.

My four weeks in Ireland were truly a life-changing experience. I came away from it not only leaps and bounds ahead of where I was in terms of fluency, but also much more educated in the history & culture of the Irish speaking regions. As I prepare for life after Pitt, this experience has continued to be relevant for me outside of academics. I can't tell you how many work interviews my experience has been a point of conversation in, or how many times I've talked about it as one of my greatest accomplishments. It was an unbelievable program, and I would not have been able to attend without your generosity. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,  
Patrick Miller



## EUSA Conference Held at Pitt

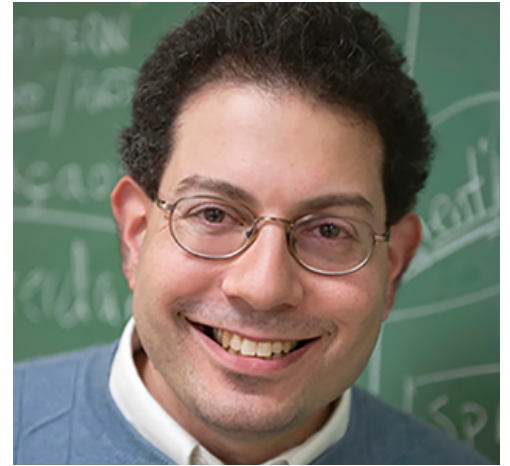
The 18th biennial conference of the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) was held at Pitt from May 4 to 6, with support from the European Studies Center and other organizations. The EUSA is housed at Pitt and Executive Director Joe Figliulo said this was the first time the conference was held at a university rather than a conference hotel. Most attendees apparently preferred the university setting. The theme of the conference was “Beyond Sui Generis? Understanding the EU as a Comparative Polity and an Interdisciplinary Subject.” There were about 300 participants and 75 panels, including three lunch plenaries and three roundtables, covering all aspects of EU studies. One highlight of the conference was the plenary panel on the “Colonial Origins of the EU”, which featured four distinguished historians (Megan Brown, Swarthmore; Hans Kundnani, Chatham House; Emily Marker, Rutgers; and Quinn Slobodian, Wellesley) and with Kaija Schilde as Chair and Daniela Caruso as discussant (both are at Boston University). Figliulo observed that historians are often under-represented and thus this panel was particularly appreciated. Another highlight was awarding the Lifetime Achievement Award to Brigid Laffan, Emeritus Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. Also attending the conference was José-Lorenzo Vallés, Head of Unit, Erasmus+: European Higher Education of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission, who gave a short presentation on grants from the Commission.

During the EUSA conference, our Center, along with the Center for European Studies at the University of North Carolina--Chapel Hill, provided a platform to exchange ideas and topics within the “Jean Monnet in the United States” network (universities in the U.S. who have funding from the European Union). The network had an opportunity to discuss various joint projects, both across the European Studies centers within the network and those supported by the EU. The group also had a very productive meeting with Mr. Vallés and discussed opportunities for EU funding in the future.



## Faculty Spotlight: Adam Shear

Adam Shear, Associate Professor of Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, won a Digital Innovation Award from the Renaissance Society of America (RSA) for his project “Footprints”. Footprints is a database that tracks the circulation of early modern Hebrew and Jewish books. The open-source and open-access tool follows texts from their origins in the printing house to the present-day. Here is what Shear has to say about his work with Footprints:

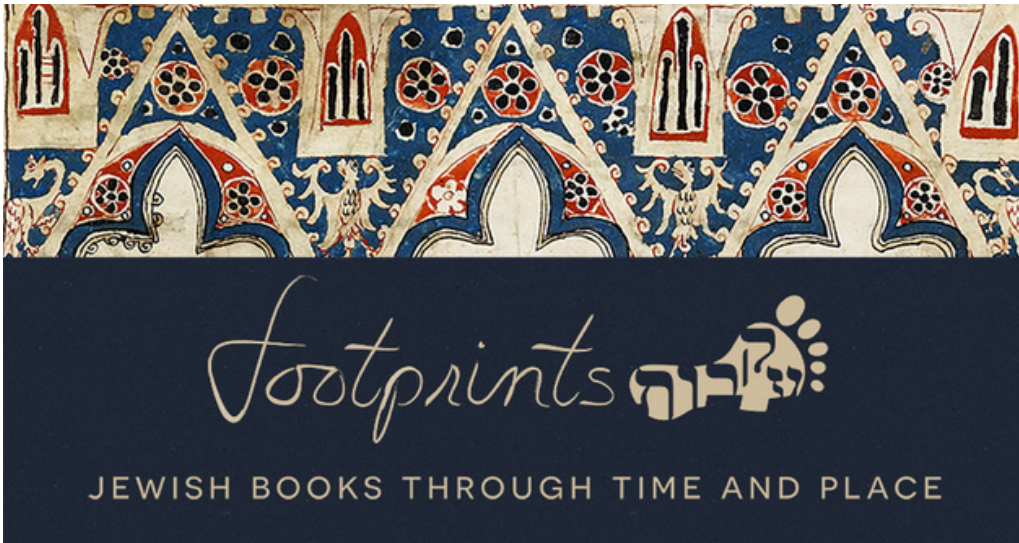


Humanistic scholarship is often solitary. While co-authored books and articles are not uncommon and many scholars join to publish collected studies on a particular topic, the sine qua non for tenure in many fields remains a single-authored book. In the last two decades though, as scholars turn to various forms of digital scholarship, collaboration has become more common in the humanities and allied social sciences. For several years, I have been involved in a collaborative digital project that tracks the movement of early Hebrew printed books from the print shops to the hands of early modern readers, owners, and censors and into modern library collections around the world. This project, Footprints: Jewish Books Through Time and Place (<https://footprints.ctl.columbia.edu/>) was born collaborative and digital.

From 2009 to 2013, I was part of an incredible group of historians, literary scholars, anthropologists, religious studies specialists, librarians, and archivists who met often at the Center for Jewish History as a “Working Group” on the history of Jewish books. We assessed the state of the field, debated the meaning of a “Jewish” book, shared works-in-progress, and talked about what was underexplored and deserving of more research. One of the issues that was underexplored yet vitally important to understanding change in culture over time was the transmission and dissemination of Jewish books across both distance and time. I suggested that the task was too great for one person because most of the evidence would be found scattered across individual copies of books, estate inventories, subscription lists, archival documents recording book sales, and catalogs from libraries and booksellers. Not only would it take more than one person’s lifetime to sift through all this evidence to compile a composite picture, but this material was also often incidental or secondary to the many individual projects being pursued.

What if we could develop a place online, where scholars could deposit these incidental findings? And what if libraries who wanted to share data could also upload material? What if we could then connect these fragments of evidence, often hiding in plain sight as physical evidence or as metadata in library catalog records? What if we could allow scholars to see the dissemination of literary works in different printed editions and in the multiple copies of those editions? Could we link all this data together? None of us were digital humanists by specialization and we began with rather naïve questions. But four of us got together for more discussion and began to educate ourselves. My three collaborators were Michelle Margolis, Judaica librarian at Columbia University; Marjorie Lehman, a professor of Talmud and rabbinic literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; and Joshua Teplitsky at the University of Pennsylvania, an early modern historian who specializes on Ashkenazic Jewish culture in Central and Eastern Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries.

## Faculty Spotlight: Adam Shear



Eventually we groped our way—guided by colleagues in the DH community and at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Columbia University (the homebase for the project)—toward a research methodology, multiple modes of building our dataset, and a relational database that functions as a search and discovery tool for scholars outside the project. Most crucially we had to develop a new conceptualization of encounters between a book and a book user

(what we call a “footprint”) and a taxonomy that let us capture the relationship between different iterations of a book—editions, copies, footprints. Unlike many digital humanities projects, ours has an open-ended and constantly changing dataset. Although we have criteria for inclusion (books in Hebrew or languages that use Hebrew alphabets or in other languages with Jewish content, printed up to 1800), we are constantly adding new data through multiple modes of collaboration—individual scholars entering findings, research assistants working on a particular corpus of materials, uploads of provenance data provided by library catalogs, or datasets ingested from projects with overlapping research interests. As I am writing this, we have 18427 distinct “footprints” in the database. By the time you read this, there may be more. And some of those 18427 entries will be removed or modified as part of our ongoing data integrity checks.

The collaborative nature of the project goes well beyond the four of us and our technical partners at Columbia. The credits and collaborators’ pages on our website list the dozens of individuals and institutions we have worked with over the years. These include researchers who have sent in their data, libraries that have downloaded data for us to upload, researchers funded by some of the grants that we and library partners have received over the years, and student research assistants and interns, including many from Pitt. (For more on our collaborative model, see our article “Old Texts and New Media: Jewish Books on the Move and a Case for Collaboration,” in *Digital Humanities, Libraries, and Partnerships*, edited by our Pitt colleagues, Robin Kear and Kate Joranson [Chandos Publishing, 2017, pp.61-74]).

We like to think of our project as multifaceted. Like any kind of humanistic scholarship, we have research questions that we pursue as we read and sift our sources. We are also open to the serendipity of the accidental discoveries and microhistories that make our way into the dataset. At the same time, our project can be seen as infrastructural—building a reference tool for others to use with their own research questions.



## Faculty Spotlight Cont.

Footprints has been and continues to be one of the most rewarding aspects of my scholarly life. Conversation with MMJ (as I record it in my calendar) is always a highpoint of my work week and every aspect of the project brings me pleasure—incidentally finding a “footprint” in a source I am examining for another project or in something I am reading; researching the history of a library collection or tracking down biographical information about the owner of a book; checking the accuracy of an entry when I take my turn on data integrity duty. But it is nice to be recognized for all this hard work. That came this spring when the Renaissance Society of America awarded us one of the 2023 Digital Innovation Awards, for “excellence in digital projects that support the study of the Renaissance.” The RSA works across multiple fields (history, art history, literature, religion, music and more) and so it was particularly gratifying to be recognized by scholars who work beyond our own subfields and disciplines.

Pitt and the ESC have played a key role in the development of this project; the ESC has provided funding for some of my research trips that have allowed me to gather sources for the project in multiple European libraries and to discuss the project with colleagues in Europe. I have been able to present aspects of the project for a works-in-progress colloquium sponsored by Jewish Studies. Pitt students have worked on the project through the Dietrich School’s First Experience in Research program and as summer assistants with funding provided by the Dean’s office. Digital humanists at Pitt and CMU were some of our early consultants and we have used the material developed by Allison Langmead (Art History and SCI) for our internal assessment and evaluation processes. And finally, the Medieval & Renaissance Studies Program and the Early Modern Worlds Initiative have offered a community of supportive colleagues across multiple fields who provide intellectual sustenance, a wealth of expertise and specialized knowledge, and collegial cheerleading when that is called for.

It is worth noting that other Pitt early modernists have been recognized by the Renaissance Society of America in recent years. Our award comes after two books by Pitt scholars won the RSA’s Phyllis Goodhart Gordan Prize for the best book in Renaissance studies: in 2022 (Chris Nygren’s *Titian’s Icons: Tradition, Charisma, and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*) and in 2017 (Todd Reeser’s *Setting Plato Straight*.) What an honor for Footprints to join those brilliant pieces of original scholarship.

## ESC NEWSLETTER

### Interim Director

Jo Olson, Ph.D.

### Associate Director

Pawel Lewicki, Ph.D.

### Newsletter Editor

Goldie Segol

For newsletter announcements, comments, or submissions, please email [esc@pitt.edu](mailto:esc@pitt.edu)

*The ESC receives funding from the European Union (through the Erasmus + Programme of the European Commission) and the International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) office of the U.S. Department of Education. The contents are the sole responsibility of the ESC and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the EU or the U.S. Government.*

