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## New Jewish Studies Lecture Series begins Feb. 12 with Abzug author

A new Jewish studies certificate program at Fresno State will launch its first lecture series next week designed to explore the vibrant history and rich culture of the Jewish people.

Dr. Leandra Zarnow of Stanford University will kick-off the series with a lecture entitled “The Making of a ‘People’s’ Politician: Jewish Congresswoman Bella Abzug’s First Career as an Early Civil Rights Lawyer,” Tuesday, Feb. 12 from 3:30-5 p.m., in Engineering East, Room 191.

The second event, April 11 at 4 p.m., will feature Dr. Josh Moss, visiting assistant professor in the Department of Film and Media Studies at UC Santa Barbara.

He will present, “Woody the Gentile: Comedy, Nostalgia and Christian-Jewish Interplay in Woody Allen’s ‘Midnight in Paris,’” in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 followed by a 5 p.m. screening of Allen’s film.

The lectures are free and open to the public.

The [Jewish Studies Certificate Program](#) is in its inaugural semester after gaining approval last fall under the auspices of the Department of History. A certificate may be earned by completing four Jewish Studies courses.

More than 50 students are enrolled in the first two courses this spring: “The Holocaust,” taught by Dr. Melissa Jordine, associate professor of History; and “Jewish American Writers and Films,” taught by Dr. Toni Wein, professor of English.

Next fall, courses will be offered in Hebrew and Middle East Politics, said Dr. Jill Fields, professor of History who is the certificate program coordinator. Additional courses in the future will include Ancient Israel and Jewish Americans and Popular Culture.

*“Jewish Studies programming encourages appreciation of diversity both globally and locally by highlighting specific contributions, perspectives and experiences of Jews around the world,” Fields said.*

Jewish Studies courses are also open to the community through Continuing Education.

The program’s roots are in a student club, the [Jewish Studies Association](#), formed two years ago, and currently boasting approximately 20 members. The president is history major Douglas Leal of

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Fields hopes the program and lecture series will “allow the campus and wider Fresno community to engage with the vibrant history and rich culture of Jewish people.”

Zarnow’s lecture on Tuesday, Feb. 12 is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Central California and Africana Studies.

She will discuss Abzug’s most remarkable cases, from the Willie McGee trial and the Peekskill personal injury lawsuit to her ethical framework as a conservative Jew, her identity as a Left feminist and her commitment to human and civil rights.

Zarnow is an American Council of Learned Societies New Faculty Fellow and teaches in the Department of History at Stanford University. She earned a Bachelor of arts degree in Government and American Studies from Smith College, a master’s degree in U.S. History and a doctorate in History with Doctoral Emphasis in Feminist Studies from UC Santa Barbara.

She has been published in the “Journal of Public Policy, Law and Social Inquiry” and collections “No Permanent Waves and Breaking the Wave.” Her political biography on Abzug will be published by Harvard University Press.

Moss’ April talk is co-sponsored by Fresno State’s Jewish Studies Association, and [Jewish Federation of Central California](#).

He will discuss Woody Allen’s “Midnight in Paris” (2011), one of the director’s most acclaimed films, and his musings on the relationship between life, art and nostalgia. The lecture will examine how the casting of Owen Wilson reconsiders Allen’s career-long engagement with Jewish masculinity.

Moss, who has a doctorate and master’s degree in critical studies from the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts, is a member of the Writer’s Guild of America working as a writer, producer and creator in the entertainment industry. His latest essay “Woody the Gentile: Christian-Jewish Interplay in Woody Allen’s ‘Midnight in Paris,’” will appear in the upcoming collection, “Woody on Rye: Rethinking Jewish Identity in the Films of Woody Allen,” to be published by Rutgers University Press this year.

For more information, contact Fields at 559.278.5414 or [jfields@csufresno.edu](mailto:jfields@csufresno.edu).

**Related links:**

- [Jewish Studies Certificate Program](#)
- [Jewish Federation Central California](#)
- [Formation of Jewish Studies Association](#)
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*(University Communications news student assistant Alejandra Garcia contributed to this copy.)*

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