

Generations and Genealogies
The 4th Annual Polish Jewish Studies Workshop:
Ann Arbor, April 2-4, 2017

Objectives

Founded in 2013, the Polish Jewish Studies Initiative is an international and interdisciplinary working group of scholars from the humanities and social sciences involved in research and teaching at the intersection of Polish and Jewish studies. This collaboration between the University of Illinois at Chicago, Princeton University, and the University of Michigan has generated a series of gatherings bringing together scholars, public intellectuals, and artists working on Polish Jewish themes. Previous workshops were held at Ohio State University (2014), Princeton University (2015), and University of Illinois at Chicago (2016). The University of Michigan (U-M) will host the 2017 Workshop.

The aim of the Polish Jewish Studies Initiative and this workshop is to establish an international forum for communication among scholars working in the growing field of Polish Jewish studies; to identify theoretical and methodological developments and new research; and to create a forum for scholars, educators, and activists who rigorously pursue the study of Polish and Jewish cultures more intentionally.

Event Description

The 2017 workshop will be held April 2-4 in Ann Arbor. It will explore key developments and new directions in the field of Polish Jewish studies, focusing on changing approaches to Polish Jewish culture, scholarship and identity under the rubric of “Generations and Genealogies.” Panelists will explore the following questions:

- How does the **concept of generation** figure in understanding and interpreting Polish Jewish life as well as Polish Jewish relations? Is it a useful concept to make sense of social change, historical ruptures, and continuities? What does it allow us to uncover, what does it conceal?
- Are there distinct **generations of scholarship** in Polish Jewish studies, or more or less coherent genealogies that can be traced?
- Are there distinct **generational identities for Polish Jews**? Are the experiences of Polish Jewishness and Jewish Polishness different for 18th, 19th and 20th centuries Polish Jews? For various postwar generations (e.g., generations of Polish Jews who remained in Poland after WWII, versus those who emigrated to the Americas or Israel)? If so, how? How is the hybridity experienced in different social and national contexts?
- **Generations of Narrative:** How have Polish Jewish narratives, both communal and literary, and Polish narratives about Jews, changed across generations? How is the narration of pre-war, occupied, and post-war periods in Poland different in the writings of different generations of non-Jewish Poles/Polish Jews/diaspora Polish Jews?
- Are there distinct **generations of memory**, or more or less identifiable **genealogies of mnemonic cultures**? Have the public and private ways to remember the Jewish presence in Poland, commemorate and grieve victims of the Holocaust change with postwar **generational change**? **How?**

- How does the experience of March 1968 for Polish Jews and non-Jewish Poles differ? Where does it fit in the Polish national narrative, and what is its place in the broader context of the 1968 upheavals? How is the legacy of the '68 **generation** felt and assessed today in various Polish and Diaspora milieu?
- **Generational attitudes towards Polish Jewish culture.** Within Jewish culture and literatures, key elements of Polish Jewish culture – such as Yiddishkayt, Hasidism, Zionism, Socialism and Polishness – have held radically different meanings and significance for different generations: from idealization, to rejection, to nostalgic recuperation. How have the relationships with certain elements of Polish Jewish culture, and their representation in literature, film and scholarship, changed over time?

Confirmed speakers include Adam Michnik, Antony Polonsky and Agata Tuszyńska.

Proposals (with title, author institutional affiliation and brief abstract) should be emailed to Geneviève Zubrzycki no later than October 15, 2016 at polishjewishconference2017@umich.edu. Travel and lodging of participants will be covered.

Organizer:

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