



Yeshiva University

Office of the President

My Dear Friends,

One of the life lessons I learned from our Bubbe, who was a Holocaust survivor, is to never shut the door to our brothers and sisters who are in need. Born in Poland, Bubbe survived the war years hiding in forests and caves to avoid the Nazis. After the war, she was a refugee in a neighboring country to Poland. With an empty pot in hand and no food to eat, she turned to the Jewish residents living comfortably in their houses. Often, she was turned away and treated disdainfully due to her impoverished state. She walked away from those experiences with a deep understanding of Jewish responsibility, especially to those whose life circumstances left them displaced and alone.

As the flagship Jewish university, we take very seriously our mission of educating our students to become the leaders of tomorrow. The values and knowledge transmitted both in and outside the classroom during these formative years are essential to our students' personal development and growth. While we have a set curriculum and planned events and experiences, an essential element of Jewish education is learning how to respond in moments of crisis.

Together, we have prayed for the victims of the war in Ukraine in our services and houses of study; we have studied in their honor and for their salvation; and we have directed our charity to help them in this time of need. As a top-tier university with world-class educational resources, we have gathered our incredible professors from our various schools and programs to shed light during this time of darkness. We have organized a series of public discussions on the causes and consequences of this historic moment, bringing together experts in cybersecurity, economics, politics, history, law, psychology, culture and Jewish thought to flesh out the many different dimensions of this troubled time. (See below for schedule.)

But to educate leaders, it is not enough to talk about it; one needs to show up. And so a cohort of our students are embarking to Vienna on Sunday to spend a week helping the multitudes of refugees who are being hosted in the city, adding some comfort and perhaps even joy to the Jewish refugees in their celebration of Purim.

This is a joint project of our new Sacks-Herenstein Center for Values and Leadership and our Office of Student Life. I want to thank Dr. Chaim Nissel, Rabbi Josh Weisberg and Aliza Abrams Konig for their quick and impressive work organizing logistics, and Dr. Erica Brown and Rabbi Josh Blass, who will be

accompanying our students on the trip, as well as our lay leadership who partnered by underwriting it. Upon issuing the call, we immediately reached our capacity of 27 people, as over a hundred students volunteered to leave their lives here and join in the effort.

This effort reflects the Torat Chesed we teach at YU and is a testament to the caliber of our students who are personally and directly responding to the needs of those in crisis.

The Rabbis teach us that the fatal flaw of the Jewish community in the days of Purim that led to the evil decree of destruction was that they were dispersed and scattered (“*am mefuzar u-mefurad*”), and the beginning of their salvation was when Esther gathered them together to respond as one united people (“*lech kenos es kol ha-yehudim*”). That is why we celebrate the holiday not only by reading the story but by giving gifts to the poor and supplying food to our neighbors, as the whole point of the story is unity through action.

We are living through troubling times. The strong response by our administrators, faculty, lay leadership and students fills me with hope for a better tomorrow.

Well after she reached her 100th birthday, Bubbe visited Yeshiva University to attend my Investiture. Sadly she passed away soon after. But especially after her difficult post-war experiences in Europe, I am pleased that she had the opportunity that day to meet our students and community who I know would give her much pride.

May the merit of our collective work together bring peace and joy to the world.

Warmest regards,



Ari Berman

As our students are representing all of us, we have created a [donate button](#) for all who want to contribute to help the refugees in Vienna who we meet purchase food.

[DONATE HERE](#)

**Educational Programs in Response to Crisis in
Ukraine**

War by Other Means: The Legal, Cyber and Economic Fronts in the War in Ukraine

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 | 8 p.m.

Featuring

Dr. Selma Botman: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Ronnie Perelis: Director, Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs
Deborah Pearlstein: Professor of Law, Cardozo Law School, Co-Director Floersheimer Center for Constitutional Democracy
Dr. James Kahn: Henry and Bertha Kressel University Professor of Economics Chair, Department of Economics
Sivan Tehila: Program Director, M.S. in Cybersecurity, Katz School of Science and Health

Ukraine: Past, Present, Future

Sunday, March 13, 2022 | 11:30 a.m. ET

Featuring

Natan Sharansky: Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center
Aleksander Kwasniewski: Former President of Poland
Ruslan Kavatsiuk: Deputy CEO, Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center

[WATCH HERE](#)

Freedom, Human Rights and Jewish Values: The War in Ukraine

Tuesday, March 15, 2022 | 8 p.m.

Featuring

Rabbi Yosef Blau: Mashgiach Ruchani [Spiritual Supervisor], Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS)
Suzanne Last Stone: University Professor of Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at Cardozo Law School; Professor of Law; Director, Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization
Dr. Joseph Luders: David and Ruth Gottesman Chair in Political Science; Associate Professor of Political Science; Chair, Department of Political Science

Elegy for Odessa

Monday, March 28, 2022 | 8 p.m.

Moderated by

Dr. Jess Olson: Associate Professor of Jewish History

Featuring

Dr. Jacob Wisse: Associate Professor of Art History

Dr. Val Vinokur: Associate Professor of Literary Studies, the New School

***Trauma and Repair: Psychologists and Social Workers
Reflect on the Ukraine Crisis***

Monday, April 4, 2022 | 8 p.m.

Moderated by

Dr. Jess Olson: Associate Professor of Jewish History

Featuring

Dr. Jordan Bate: Assistant Professor, Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology

Dr. Vera Békés: Assistant Professor, Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology

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