

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

WEXNER GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP/
DAVIDSON SCHOLARS PROGRAM

CLASS 33

BIO BOOK



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DIMITRY EKSHTUT

Rabbinite

Yeshivat Chovevei Torah

Dimitry Ekshtut is an educator, musician, and builder of Jewish community. He is the co-founder of Based in Harlem and Kehillat Harlem. Born in Leningrad, Russia, Dimitry immigrated with his family at the age of five to Philadelphia, PA. While in middle and high school, he fell in love with the guitar and jazz music, motivating him to move to New York and pursue a career as a professional musician. He holds a Bachelor's of Music (Jazz Performance) degree and a Master's of Music Education, both from New York University. Dimitry has had an active career teaching music in public, private and charter schools throughout New York City. Dimitry has spent the past four years working to build Jewish community in Harlem. Along with his wife Erica, Dimitry has directed Based in Harlem, a project of Base Hillel, since 2017 and has welcomed over 1,300 unique individuals to his home for *Shabbat*, holiday celebrations, learning and service opportunities. Additionally, Dimitry is a principal leader of Kehillat Harlem, a synagogue and prayer community in Upper Manhattan. Dimitry is currently studying full-time toward rabbinic ordination at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah while continuing his community building and leadership in Harlem.



MICHAEL FINGERMAN

Jewish Professional Leadership

Brandeis University

Michael Fingerman currently lives in Cambridge, MA while pursuing his MA in Jewish Professional Leadership and Social Impact MBA at Brandeis University. Originally from North Bellmore, NY, Michael graduated with a BA in Urban Studies, dual minors in Economics and Social Work, and a certificate in Jewish Studies from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015. He spent the past five years in Atlanta, GA, where he helped build community as a resident of the Moishe House in Toco Hills. Upon graduating, he worked for one year as the Jewish Student Life Coordinator at Emory Hillel and then spent four years working at Ramah Darom first as the Youth and Program Assistant and later as the Camp Program Director. While overseeing scheduling, trips, special programs and logistics for Camp Ramah Darom, he enjoyed his summers living in the North Georgia mountains and now spends his free time exploring the gorgeous nature in the Northeastern states. When they're not traveling, hiking, or camping, Michael and his wife Leah are often found in the kitchen trying out new recipes together.

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ANNIE FORTNOW

Jewish Professional Leadership

Brandeis University

Annie Fortnow is an incoming graduate student at Brandeis University's Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program, planning to pursue a dual Master of Arts in Jewish Professional Leadership and Social Impact MBA from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. After graduating with an undergraduate degree in Environmental Health and Justice from Brandeis University in 2017, Annie became a Springboard Social Justice Fellow at UMass Amherst Hillel, focusing on engaging Jewish students around social change. As a Springboard Fellow, Annie received intensive training from Repair the World in social justice, inclusion, and community organizing as an engagement tool. After two years as a Springboard Fellow at UMass, Annie moved south to work for the JumpSpark Jewish teen initiative at the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. In this role, Annie focuses on relationship building with teens, parents and professionals, and she incubates and funds innovative programming to enhance Jewish teen education and engagement locally. Annie strives to use innovation as a tool to help our Jewish community become more inclusive and equitable for all. In her free time, Annie engages in political activism, improv comedy and hiking.

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RACHEL FRIED

Jewish Education

Yeshiva University

Rachel Fried, originally from Woodmere, NY, is a current student at Yeshiva University's Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS) as well as an MS-MA candidate in a dual degree in Jewish education at the Azrieli School of Jewish Education and Administration and in medieval Jewish history at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Judaic Studies. Rachel spent her undergraduate experience at Stern College for Women, where she organized weekly student-led Torah study groups as president of the *Beit Midrash* (Jewish study hall) Committee and coordinated weekly *Shabbat* services as Stern's Minyan Coordinator. Rachel has spent her summers as a counselor on various Jewish summer programs in the U.S., Israel and Poland, exploring questions of Jewish identity, self and friendship with campers of varying religious backgrounds, nationalities and physical and mental capabilities. In her spare time, Rachel enjoys hiking, reading, drawing and spending quality time with friends.



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ZACHARY GOLDBERGER

Jewish Education

Brandeis University

Zach Goldberger currently resides in Boston, Mass., as a first-year graduate student in the Jewish Educational Leadership program in the Hornstein school at Brandeis University. Before attending graduate school, Zach served as the Youth Director at Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan, and as a Teen Network Weaver for the Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Through these roles, he experienced a full spectrum of Jewish youth work from teaching, programming, leading trips to Israel, community building and working with an incredible group of kids, teens and adults. Zach studied History at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC, and worked with a wide variety of Jewish communities during undergrad. He helped build a strong Jewish presence on NC State's campus as the president of Hillel, traveled all over the world as a fellow in the URJ Klal Yisrael Fellowship, and worked in camps as the Program Director of 6 Points and as a FJC Cornerstone fellow. This summer Zach will be the Head of TLV at Tamarack Camps in Michigan. Outside of school and work, Zach enjoys running, playing basketball, cooking, searching for restaurants seen on Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives, and adding to his record collection.



ARIELLE KRULE

Rabbinate

Yeshivat Maharat

Arielle Krule is a student in the core *semikha* track at Yeshivat Maharat (2025). She comes to Maharat after her success directing the Jewish Learning Fellowship, the largest Jewish educational program on campus in North America. She is also a clinician for adolescents and adults at the Jewish Board for Family and Children's Services and the director of the CUNY Hillel Social Work Fellowship for MSW candidates across the New York City area. She has her BSW, MSW, SIFI certification, and certificate in Spirituality and Social Work from NYU and a certificate in Experiential Education from M2: The Institute for Experiential Jewish Education. Arielle is a Wexner Graduate Fellow/Davidson Scholar. Previously, Arielle was formerly a BBYO International Teen President, birth doula, yoga teacher and women's health educator. Arielle and her husband Jackson live in Brooklyn, where they are community conveners, Burning Man attendees, Prospect Heights Shul members and artisanal *challah* bakers.



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ALEX MALANYCH

*Rabbinite/Jewish Education
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College*

Alex Malanych currently lives in Pittsburgh, PA, and works as the Director of Teen Engagement and Leadership for the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh, overseeing the Diller Teen Fellows program and the Samuel M. Goldston Teen Philanthropy Project. Over the past decade, Alex has worked with a variety of Jewish camps, synagogues and non-profits as an educator, including Camp Kingswood, NFTY, BBYO and Emma Kaufmann Camp as a Chizuk Fellow. Alex is passionate about helping others develop deeper connections to social justice, leadership and Jewish expression through experiential learning. After completing a Master's in English at the University of Vermont, Alex pursued graduate research at the University of Pittsburgh focused on queer Jewish liturgy before earning a Master's in Jewish Education from Gratz College. This summer, Alex will be joining the staff at Camp Havaya before starting at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Fall 2021.



KAREN MARTIN

*Rabbinite
Hebrew Union College*

Karen Martin is a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. Prior to rabbinical school, Karen was Executive Director at Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati, OH. During her time at Rockdale Temple, Karen modernized systems, grew and supported her staff team, and helped to found shabbatCTY, a joyful and itinerant *Shabbat* experience in Cincinnati's urban core. She also served on the Board of Cincinnati Hillel. Previously, Karen worked as Assistant Director of Metro Chicago Hillel and was Director of the Lewis Summer Internship Program (LSIP) for the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. During her time in Chicago, Karen also taught religious school for many years at Anshe Emet Synagogue. Karen has an MA in Jewish Professional Studies from the Spertus Institute of Learning and Leadership, an MA in the Humanities from the University of Chicago, and a BA from Kenyon College where she majored in English and Creative Writing.



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ROZEETA MAVASHEV

*Jewish Professional Leadership
Hunter College*

A graduate from the College of Staten Island with a BA in Education and English Literature, Rozeeta Mavashev has a passion for education, which motivated her volunteerism and future career path choices. While interning as an Engagement Associate at CSI Hillel, Rozeeta volunteered at The Hebrew Academy for Special Children and Bais Ezra, gaining experience in diverse Jewish non-profit organizations. Today she is the Director of Jewish Student Life at Tanager Hillel, serving as an educator and community organizer striving for a diverse and inclusive community for all students, and working closely with the Mizrahi and Sephardi constituency. Being of Bukharian descent, her ability to cater to the needs of these diverse communities is exemplary. She is pursuing an MSW to provide the tools and guidance needed for her students to gain confidence as Jewish leaders and individuals. Simultaneously, Rozeeta is an aspiring comic who loves to make people laugh, her love of performing arts has grown through her participation in BCI and The People's Improv Theater. As a first-generation American having parents who migrated from Uzbekistan, Rozeeta is the first in her family to pursue a Master's Degree and owes it all to their ongoing support.



SASS OROL

Rabbinate

Jewish Theological Seminary

Sass Orol is a first year rabbinical student at JTS. Before starting rabbinical school in 2020, Sass grew up and worked in North Carolina. In their home community in Raleigh, Sass ran youth groups and programs for their home shul, taught Jewish music at the shul's preschool and at their local JCC day camp, and organized with Carolina Jews for Justice. Sass also completed an MFA in Creative Writing and taught English at NCSU while working on a book of poems with queer Jewish themes. Sass is passionate about words, tunes and rituals, and hopes to continue to lead with a sense of literary and musical inheritance and creativity. In the Spring of 2020, Sass has been teaching an original text curriculum to trans students at NC colleges and universities.



AIDEN PINK

Rabbinate

Jewish Theological Seminary

Aiden Pink is a first-year rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Before returning to school, he served as the deputy news editor of *The Forward*, the national Jewish news organization, where he reported on American and Israeli politics, antisemitism and Jewish institutions. His work received commendations from the American Jewish Press Association and the New York chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Aiden graduated with honors from American University, where he served on the Jewish Student Association board and led *Shabbat* services at Hillel. He has taught at supplemental religious schools in Minnesota and Washington, D.C., and as an independent *b'nai mitzvah* tutor in New York. He is a proud alumnus of Herzl Camp, where he worked for many summers on the education team, and the Minneapolis Jewish Day School, where he later returned to coach its basketball team to an undefeated season. Aiden lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side with his fiancée, Aniko.



SARAH POLLACK

Rabbinate/Jewish Education

Hebrew Collge

Sarah is currently a Rabbinical School student at Hebrew College. Although she grew up in Florida, she now lives in Brooklyn with her wife, Elana. As a child, Sarah felt a strong sense of Jewish identity but lacked formal ways to articulate her spiritual yearning. She immersed herself in Jewish life at The University of Florida while pursuing a BA in Forensic Anthropology. After spending a summer in Uganda as part of a volunteer program with AJWS and a semester abroad at the University of Haifa, Sarah was eager to continue her exploration of Judaism and Jewish Peoplehood. She moved to Jerusalem, where she spent two years learning at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies, first as the Social Justice Fellow, and then on the Judaism and Conflict Resolution track. As a Pardes Fellow, Sarah organized volunteer opportunities and facilitated community-building programming. Her professional journey started at Encounter, where she spent the next four years exploring the ways that Jewish American professionals and lay leadership engage with Palestinians. Sarah most recently worked for Honeymoon Israel as the Director of Community Engagement, empowering young Jewish families to explore their relationships to Jewish community and identity.

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JARED SKOFF

*Rabbinate/Jewish Education
American Jewish University*

Jared Skoff attends the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at AJU in Los Angeles, and is the program director of the National Ramah Commission, implementing conferences and leadership training for members of Ramah's summer staff and year-round fellowships. He has also worked as staff supervisor for Ramah Wisconsin's Tikvah program, where he now serves as an educational consultant, supporting campers and young adults with disabilities. Jared is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, where he studied Jewish, Islamic and Near Eastern Studies. In his free time, he leads workshops on Yiddish dialects and Ashkenazi food culture, in an effort to give people access to undiscovered parts of their identity. Born and raised in Cleveland, Jared is proud to be a 4th generation Ohioan.



EVAN TRAYLOR

*Rabbinate
Hebrew Union College*

Evan Traylor is a first-year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Originally from Oklahoma City, he graduated from the University of Kansas studying political science, Jewish studies and leadership studies. Prior to rabbinical school, Evan worked at the Union for Reform Judaism for four years creating new projects and initiatives in college and young adult engagement. He serves on the leadership team for Jewish Social Justice Roundtable and the Commission on Social Action for the Religious Action Center. Evan is an alum of many URJ youth programs, including the Greene Family Camp, NFTY in Israel and the URJ Kutz Camp. During his freshman year of college, Evan served as the 2012-2013 North American President of NFTY, the Reform Jewish youth movement. Previously, he was an engagement intern for the University of Kansas Hillel, a trustee on the URJ Board, a student member of the Hillel International Board of Directors, a co-founder of the Hillel International Student Cabinet, and was honored with the *New York Jewish Week's* "36 Under 36" Award in 2016. Based in Washington, D.C., Evan is passionate about Judaism, social justice, reading, traveling, and Jayhawk basketball.



JERICO VINCENT

*Rabbinate
ALEPH Ordination Program*

Jericho Vincent is a writer and lecturer. Raised in an ultra-Orthodox rabbinical family, Jericho broke free as an adolescent in search of a self-determined life. While a night student in college, they founded Horizons Academy, an after-school program for at-risk teens. Jericho went on to earn a master's degree in public policy as a Pforzheimer Fellow at Harvard University, training in Public Narrative and Adaptive Leadership. After embarking on a spiritual journey through Buddhism and Sufism, Jericho returned to Judaism to excavate timely wisdom and practices from their family's ancient traditions. Jericho is the author of the memoir *Cut Me Loose* and the co-author of *Legends of the Talmud*. Their essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Rumpus*, *Salon*, *The Daily Beast* and *The Cut*. They have been named to the *Jewish Week's* 36 Under 36 and to *The Forward's* Forward 50 for their writing and their community organizing with ex-ultra-Orthodox Jews. They have lectured on trauma, gender and transformation at colleges, organizations and houses of worship across the country and are certified in Internal Family Systems Therapy coaching. Jericho lives in Brooklyn with their family and is currently studying for the rabbinate.



CHLOE ZELKHA

Rabbinate

Hebrew Union College

Chloe Zelkha is a first-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR in Cincinnati. She has spent the last ten years designing transformative programs for young people and adults. After graduating *summa cum laude* from Carleton College with a BA in Religion, she was trained as a community organizer through the JOIN for Justice Fellowship in Boston where she worked at The Food Project, a youth employment program that brings diverse cohorts of teens together to grow food and connect across difference. Looking to build experiences like these in the Jewish community, she transitioned into a role as Fellowship Director at Urban Adamah, a Jewish farm in Berkeley, where she led semester-long deep dives for young adults into Jewish spirituality, farming, mindfulness and social justice. After her dad died suddenly in 2017, she felt called to grief work and trained as a chaplain at UCSF Hospital, where she earned 3 units of CPE and offered spiritual care to those who were ill and dying. She is the co-founder of the COVID Grief Network, a mutual aid organization that offers free support and community to young adults who have lost someone to COVID-19. Chloe holds a Master's in Education—focusing on transformative experiences—from Harvard University.

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The Wexner Foundation trains and inspires leaders in the North American Jewish Community and the State of Israel. Through diverse, cohort-based educational programs, the Foundation invests in promising professionals and volunteers and gives them tools to exercise transformative leadership. Working in partnership with other foundations, philanthropists and communities, the Foundation strengthens North American Jewish life and Israel's public sector by making their leaders more skilled, visionary and collaborative.

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