

Call for Papers

Jewish Studies in Challenging Times: Junior Scholars and the Making of the Field

Venue: University of Wrocław, Tadeusz Taube Department of Jewish Studies (Wrocław, Poland)

Date: 13–15 September, 2027

Conference language: English

Submission deadline: 1 October 2026

Submissions and inquiries: conferences[at]v-j-s.org

Organised by

- Polskie Towarzystwo Studiów Żydowskich (Polish Association for Jewish Studies)
- Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, Centrum judaistických studií (Palacký University Olomouc, Center for Jewish Studies)
- Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie, Instytut Judaistyki (Jagiellonian University Kraków, Institute of Jewish Studies)
- Uniwersytet Łódzki, Centrum Studiów Żydowskich im. Filipa Friedmana (University of Łódź, Philip Friedman Centre for Jewish Studies)
- Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Katedra Judaistyki im. Tadeusza Taubego (University of Wrocław, Tadeusz Taube Department of Jewish Studies)
- Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien (Association for Jewish Studies Germany)

About the Conference

The three-day conference takes the current state and the future of Jewish Studies in perspective against the backdrop of a range of challenges that affect the humanities as a whole and Jewish Studies in particular.

Across Central and Eastern Europe – and well beyond – Jewish Studies departments and programmes face declining student numbers, the closure or merging of fields of study with limited resources, funding cuts, rising antisemitism on campus and in society after 7 October 2023, anti-democratic tendencies in higher-education policy, and the rapid transformation of research and teaching through digital tools and generative AI. At the same time, new opportunities are emerging: new forms of cross-border and interdisciplinary cooperation, innovative digital methodologies, and a renewed public interest in Jewish history, religion and culture.

To tackle these challenges within the field of Jewish studies, we invite junior scholars to share perspectives, develop joint ideas and strategies, and identify opportunities for cooperation across institutions, countries and disciplines. Building on this exchange, the conference seeks to bring together best-practice examples of how current social, political and economic transformations have been and can be addressed by junior and established scholars. It looks at how M.A. students, doctoral candidates and early career post-doctoral scholars cope with these changes and asks how

serious engagement with Jewish Studies can be fostered and sustained beyond questions of funding. A key aim is to translate this conversation into lasting collaborations – between people, institutions and countries – that strengthen the field across borders.

The conference's regional focus is in Central and Eastern Europe, with particular attention to Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Ukraine, where Jewish Studies face comparable structural tasks. There are, however, no geographical limits: contributions from any region and on any context are very welcome.

Who Should Apply

The conference addresses explicitly junior scholars – advanced M.A. students, PhD candidates and early career Post-Docs in Jewish Studies, Judaic Studies, Holocaust Studies and adjacent fields (history, religious studies, various philologies, literary and cultural studies, philosophy, social sciences, Digital Humanities, museum and memorial-site studies). We particularly welcome contributions from scholars whose research is directly or indirectly shaped by the challenges and prospects of the field. Applicants need not be affiliated with a dedicated Jewish Studies department or programme; those working on Jewish topics within larger or related programmes are equally encouraged to apply.

Suggested Topics and Panels

We invite proposals that address – but are not limited to – the following thematic areas. Contributions may take the form of a focused case study, a reflection on individual research practice, or a more programmatic argument:

- **Artificial Intelligence as Opportunity and Risk** – generative AI and Digital Humanities as both new tools and new challenges for research, teaching and scholarly integrity in Jewish Studies; questions of data, sources, authorship and method.
- **Jewish Languages, Philological Training and AI** – Hebrew, Yiddish, Aramaic, Ladino, Judaeo-Arabic and other Jewish languages in the age of LLMs and machine translation: what are the changes for students, teachers and researchers, which pedagogical innovations and new tools are emerging, and what is the continued place of classical philological training?
- **Digitisation, Open Access and Research Infrastructures** – digital editions, databases, open data, and the implications for Jewish Studies scholarship.
- **Jewish Studies after 7 October 2023** – antisemitism on campus, polarised classrooms, the challenges of teaching and researching in the field.
- **Anti-democratic Tendencies, Political Pressure and Academic Freedom** – political interference in research and curricula, self-censorship, solidarity and advocacy among junior scholars.
- **Funding, Institutional Structures and „Kleine Fächer“** – the place of Jewish Studies within faculties; cuts, mergers, and strategies for institutional survival and renewal; perspectives and success stories from departments that do not teach Jewish studies.

- **Cross-border and Interdisciplinary Cooperation** – opportunities and specific forms of cooperation for junior scholars across disciplinary and geographical boundaries: joint seminars and summer schools, Erasmus+ and exchange programmes, co-supervision, peer-led reading groups and writing circles, shared digital infrastructures and emerging early-career networks.
- **Self-Empowerment and Junior-Scholar Agency** – strategies through which early-career researchers can shape their own working conditions, visibility and intellectual agenda within and beyond their home institutions.
- **Mutual Support across Borders** – formats and structures through which junior scholars can support one another in coping with current challenges: peer mentoring, collective writing, cross-institutional working groups, joint advocacy, shared resources.
- **Jewish Studies in Non-Jewish Societies** – the dynamics of researching and teaching Jewish topics in contexts where most students, teachers and funders are non-Jewish.
- **Career Paths beyond Tenure** – early-career trajectories within and outside academia (museums, archives, libraries, memorial sites, cultural institutions, public history).
- **Public Engagement and Knowledge Transfer** – museums, memorial sites, Jewish communities, and the public role of Jewish Studies.

How to Submit

Please send your proposal as a single PDF document containing the following:

- An abstract of 200–300 words for a 15-minute paper.
- A short biographical note of approx. 100 words (current position, institution, research focus).

Deadline: 1 October 2026.

Please send submissions to: [conferences\[at\]v-j-s.org](mailto:conferences[at]v-j-s.org)

Notifications of acceptance will be sent out in October 2026.

Travel and Accommodation

The organisers seek funding to cover the travel and accommodation costs of accepted participants. Updated information will be sent out to accepted speakers as soon as the question of funding is clarified. Applicants are encouraged to explore complementary support from their home institutions.

Contact

For any questions concerning the conference, the call, or the submission procedure, please contact the organising team at: [conferences\[at\]v-j-s.org](mailto:conferences[at]v-j-s.org)

We look forward to your contributions.