

Archives Put the Spotlight on Longstanding Jewish History in Colorado



Two University programs are working to preserve and publicize the history of the Jewish experience in the Rocky Mountain West: the Ira M. and Peryle Hayutin Beck Memorial Archives and the Rocky Mountain Jewish Historical Society (RMJHS).

The Archives highlight pivotal contributions of the Denver Jewish community to build Denver's infrastructure, especially in the pioneer days. Recently it has focused on integrating its primary source material into course curricula across DU disciplines. Faculty and

students from a range of departments, including history, geography and business, have explored the collection.

"Nothing highlights CJS's mission more than students working in interdisciplinary ways with Jewish primary source materials," said Professor Sarah Pessin, director of the Center of Judaic Studies, which houses both the Beck Archives and RMJHS in partnership with University Libraries. "It's an exciting diversity-enhancing model for learning that helps students think in creative and integrative ways about how the histories, texts and artifacts of different cultures connect up with their own areas of study."

The Archives are also open to the public. [Viewings are by appointment](#) on campus in the Ida and Max Fogel Family Reading Room at the Anderson Academic Commons. [Read more...](#)

[Photo: National Jewish Health, c. 1907]

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Art Educator Receives Award from the White House

Introducing her student to First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House was a career highlight for Susan Jenson (MA '98, art history). Jenson is the executive director of the Downtown Aurora Visual Arts (DAVA), where she's worked as an arts educator since getting her master's degree in art history from DU's School of Art and Art History in 1998.



Under Jenson's leadership, DAVA's after-school arts program serves more than 1,000 Aurora, CO, children annually. DAVA's Job Training in the Arts program received the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award (NAHYP) in 2014. According to the White House, "each year NAHYP recognizes 12 of the country's best creative youth development programs for using engagement in the arts and humanities to increase academic achievement, graduation rates and college enrollment."

"Education does not stop when the school days end—and the arts reignite interest in learning and experimentation," said Jenson. "Winning the national award was the ultimate validation that what we are doing at DAVA works. Arts education expands kids' reach to careers they might never have considered by providing a gateway to any career that requires adaptability, attention to detail, self-efficacy, communication skills, etc." [Read more...](#)

[Photo: Susan Jenson and job training student Boris Cochajil accept a 2014 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from First Lady Michelle Obama.]

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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Studies the Philosophy of Video Games

Video gamers may be looking for adventure more than philosophy when they pick up a game controller, but they are increasingly being exposed to philosophical views and questions, according to Jere Surber, professor of philosophy.



Surber has been studying philosophy and pop culture (film, rock music, literature) since the early '90s. He learned about video games from his daughters, and “dived into gamer culture.” Before long, he discovered that there were more interesting philosophical issues and possibilities in video games than he had realized.

“One issue has to do with questions about the artificial intelligence of non-player characters, either your enemies or followers, whose behavior is controlled by the game program,” said Surber. “Another concerns the relation between avatars, the player’s own representation within the game, and the concept of self-identity.”

“Video games have become increasingly philosophically sophisticated, not only in the ever more complex issues that they present but also in revealing their own explicit and reflective awareness about philosophical issues,” he said. [Read More...](#)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Senior Advocates for a Liberal Arts Education

Early in his college education, Chris Bach was being steered towards a business or science education as a means to develop “practical life skills.” Instead, he followed his instincts and pursued an education in the liberal arts.



“While business and science are both excellent fields to study, I truly believe that only a liberal arts education will give you the fundamental skills to tackle any problem you may encounter,” said Bach, a senior political science and history major who has an eye towards law school.

“A liberal arts education forces you to come to conclusions only after considering evidence and rationally thinking through the entirety of an issue,” he added. “I don’t think there are more ‘practical life skills’ than having the ability to think critically and make rational decisions.” [Read More...](#)

FEATURED EVENTS

RECITAL: December 13, 3:00-4:00 p.m. - 17th Annual Holiday Carillon Recital

Join us for this annual performance by DU Carillonneur Carol Jickling Lens, who will play her holiday favorites. A video camera in the playing cabin will capture how the instrument is played and project on a video screen below for all to watch. Those who would like to climb the 95 steps may take a tour of the tower. This free concert is open air and will be played snow or shine on the Williams Carillon at the [Ritchie Wellness Center](#).

FACULTY LECTURE: January 7, 4:00 p.m. - Virginia Woolf’s Disparaged Spinster Cousins:

Plumbing the Archive

Though Virginia Woolf cruelly ridiculed her three Stephen cousins throughout her diaries and letters, the lives of Katharine, Rosamond and Dorothea Stephen exemplify the struggles of late-Victorian middle class women to pursue the few vocations open to single women. At this lecture, you'll hear from English Professor Eleanor McNees about the sources of Woolf's antipathy and the Stephen sisters' forgotten legacies. Located in the [Anderson Academic Commons](#) Special Events Room. [Register today](#).

ART EXHIBITION: January 14-March 6 - *Learning to See Color*

The study of color is vast. Within the last half century, the transition from the Industrial to the Digital Age has brought fundamental changes in the ways we perceive and think about color, raising questions like: Does color "exist" or is it just an artifact of our perception? Is color the same everywhere and for everyone? *Learning to See Color* explores these questions through discussions of artworks, comparing and contrasting ideas and practices on color. On view at the Vicki Myhren Gallery in the [Shwayder Art Building](#).

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