

## **[EVENT: Columbia University Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies Book Talk—Josh Lambert, "The Literary Mafia" \(February 6\)](#)**

Discussion published by Nathaniel Askanase on Monday, January 30, 2023

**Join the Institute on Monday, February 6, 2023 at 12:00 PM for a Book Talk with Josh Lambert, author of *The Literary Mafia: Jews, Publishing, and Postwar American Literature*. This event is in-person at IIJS.**

In the 1960s and 1970s, complaints about a “Jewish literary mafia” were everywhere. Although a conspiracy of Jews colluding to control publishing in the United States never actually existed, such accusations reflected a genuine transformation from an industry notorious for excluding Jews to one in which they arguably had become the most influential figures.

**Josh Lambert** examines the dynamics between Jewish editors and Jewish writers; how Jewish women exposed the misogyny they faced from publishers; and how children of literary parents have struggled with and benefited from their inheritances. Drawing on interviews and tens of thousands of pages of letters and manuscripts, *The Literary Mafia* offers striking new discoveries about celebrated figures such as Lionel Trilling and Gordon Lish, and neglected fiction by writers including Ivan Gold, Ann Birstein, and Trudy Gertler.

In the end, we learn how the success of one minority group has lessons for all who would like to see American literature become more equitable.

**Josh Lambert** is the Sophia Moses Robison Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and English, and director of the Jewish Studies Program, at Wellesley College. His books include *Unclean Lips: Obscenity, Jews, and American Culture* (2014) and, co-edited with Ilan Stavans, *How Yiddish Changed America and How America Changed Yiddish* (2020). He's written recently for the *New York Times Book Review*, *Jewish Currents*, *Literary Hub*, and *Lilith*, and he serves as a judge for the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature.

**Please register for this event on [Eventbrite](#).**

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Related date:

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