

## [Jewish Engagements in a Time of Crisis](#)

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

August 24, 2020 to October 15, 2020

Location:

Nevada, United States

Subject Fields:

Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Immigration & Migration History / Studies, Jewish History / Studies, Literature, Religious Studies and Theology

This year, the AAR-WR has asked us to examine the timely question: How can religious groups, and Religious Studies, be a potent contributor to the public good amidst our current medical, social, economic, ecological, and political crises? We in Jewish Studies know that the storehouses of Jewish tradition, the methodological approaches of our sub-field, and the experiences of Jews throughout history offer a great deal of wisdom on these topics. How can we, as Jewish Studies scholars, bring our unique perspectives to bear on the Covid-19 pandemic and systemic problems illuminated in its wake?

We believe the following three areas to be especially salient:

1. **Responding to collective trauma.** When communities experience collective tragedy, difficult questions arise regarding how to narrate such events. There are inevitable tensions between the desire to forget and the desire to memorialize and transmit lessons. What should we remember? How should we remember? How do we incorporate painful memories within the broader stories we tell ourselves about who we are? As we know from sad experience, the reconstitution of community rests within these tensions.
2. **Creating and sustaining virtual bonds.** Ever since the destruction of the First Temple, Jews have belonged to a community that traverses geographical distances, and political and cultural boundaries. While there have always been controversies over issues of homeland and diaspora, and worries over acculturation to local norms, Jewish history offers a remarkable example of how a diffuse religious minority can maintain and even strengthen communal ties across vast distances. As communities across the world struggle to adjust to the novel necessity of virtual community-building, how can these lessons inform the wider conversation?
3. **Making difficult ethical decisions.** The global pandemic and other recent crises have cast age-old ethical dilemmas in new light, underscoring the

importance - and urgency - of robust, versatile frameworks for ethical decision-making. Healthcare workers face thorny questions of triage on micro and macro levels. Individuals and leaders must assess risk with incomplete and imperfect data. Societies are struggling to balance commercial and social needs with the moral imperative to preserve life. Minorities and marginalized groups are often especially vulnerable, and pre-existing inequities and injustices are being further exacerbated. How might Jewish legal and ethical principles, Jewish traditions of ethical instruction, and Jews' unique minority experiences be mobilized to address the needs of the times?

We welcome papers responding to the topics outlined above, or to other dimensions of the overlapping crises facing our communities.

Submissions should be sent to the Jewish Studies chairs - Roberta Sabbath ([roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu](mailto:roberta.sabbath@unlv.edu)) and Alexander Marcus ([alexander.marcus@yale.edu](mailto:alexander.marcus@yale.edu)) and should include an abstract of 250 words as well as a Program Participant Form. Also send a c.v. See this link and scroll to the bottom for Program Participant Form: <https://www.aarwr.com/annual-meetings.html>

Contact Info:

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URL:

<https://www.aarwr.com/conference-themes.html>