

Call for Papers

Jewish Friendship, 1650-1950
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
26-27 October 2022

This conference seeks to bring together new histories of Jewish intimacy, familiarity and sociability by focusing on Jewish friendships and amical practices during the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

Outside of the *Beit-Midrash* and beyond its intellectual relationships, Jewish friends had to navigate the ethics and obligations of friendship alongside one's commitments to family, the state, and one's professional and religious identifications. We wish to study their strategies in making friends, exchanging gifts or ideas, showing affection, spending time together, and living a meaningful life with the help of friends.

Lawrence Fine's new edited volume, *Friendship in Jewish History, Religion, and Culture* (2021) is an important step in shedding light on the still understudied history of Jewish friendship, as historians grapple with its dual nature as belonging both to the private and public spheres. In the coming fall, we invite scholars of all levels and from diverse disciplines to further contemplate the ways in which friendly intimacy was performed within various spaces; signaled to the non-Jewish world, and took shape within interfaith friendships. We will explore the early modern and modern histories of friendship among a wide range of Jewish subjects, subjectivities and traditions. Two main questions instruct us:

- 1) Could the history of friendship invite a new interpretation of the Jewish past?
- 2) Can we talk about a "Jewish" cultural model of friendship? How did it change over time?

Possible themes:

- The role of friendship in a diasporic society and within Jewish immigration
- Visual representations of Jewish friendships
- Inter-faith friendships between Christians, Muslims and Jews
- Religious polemics in a friendly accord
- Jewish female friendship
- Friendship and Jewish masculinities
- Tensions between friends and the Jewish family
- Friendly networks around the synagogue community
- The material-exchange of friendship
- Jewish spaces of sociability
- The study of groups of friends and Jewish intellectual circles

The event is organized by the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Michigan.

Please send a short abstract (up to 300 words) of your suggested (20 min.) presentation, and a short CV to the organizers Shachar Pinsker and Shai Zamir: shaiz@umich.edu (with the subject: friendship2022).

Deadline for proposals: 5/15/22.