

# YIFTACH OFEK, PHD

LECTURER IN THE CORE CURRICULUM AND THE DEPARTMENT OF  
PHILOSOPHY AND JEWISH THOUGHT  
SHALEM COLLEGE, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

<https://www.yiftachofek.com/> | [yiftach.ofek@gmail.com](mailto:yiftach.ofek@gmail.com)

(Updated: February 2026)

## EDUCATION

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>PhD</b> | <b>University of Chicago Divinity School (August 2021)</b><br>Dissertation: “The ‘New Jew’ of Zionist Historiography: The Social Vision and Historical Imagination of Yitzhak Baer, Gershom Scholem, and Yehezkel Kaufmann”<br>Committee: Paul Mendes-Flohr (Chair), Na’ama Rokem, Shalom Ratzabi<br>Examinations: History and Memory in Jewish Thought (Paul Mendes-Flohr)<br>The Zionist Idea (Paul Mendes-Flohr, Na’ama Rokem)<br>Medieval Jewish and Islamic Philosophy (James Robinson)<br>Criticism and Literary Theory (Richard Rosengarten) |
| <b>MA</b>  | <b>Harvard University (November 2014)</b><br>Thesis: “Jacob Taubes and the Meaning of Jewish History”<br>Advisor: Peter Gordon (History)  |
| <b>MA</b>  | <b>University of Chicago Masters Program in the Social Sciences (August 2011)</b><br>Thesis: “Christianity as a Problem in the Political Philosophy of Alexis de Tocqueville”<br>Advisor: Nathan Tarcov (Political Science; Committee on Social Thought)  |
| <b>BA</b>  | <b>University of York, UK (July 2005)</b><br>Thesis: “Leo Strauss’s Critique of Nietzsche”<br>Advisor: Jon Parkin (Politics)  |

## AREAS OF TEACHING COMPETENCE

- Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of History
- Continental Philosophy
- American Intellectual History
- Israeli Intellectual History
- Jewish Thought and History

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Academic</b>                                 | <b>Shalem College</b>   Jerusalem, Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lecturer in the Core and in the Department of Philosophy and Jewish Thought (October 2024 – Present)</li></ul> <b>University of Chicago</b>   Chicago, IL <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teaching Fellow in the Divinity School and The College (September 2021 – August 2023)</li></ul>                           |
| <b>Professional Experience</b><br>(Select List) | <b>Shalem College</b>   Jerusalem, Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Content Editor (June 2012 – August 2013)</li></ul>  |
| <b>Military Experience</b>                      | <b>IDF Strategic Division</b>   Tel-Aviv, Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Head of NATO and European Union Desk (July 2008 – August 2009)</li></ul> <b>IDF Spokespersons Unit</b>   Tel-Aviv, Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Junior Spokesman to the Foreign Press (Europe and North America), (November 2005 – July 2008)</li></ul> Lieutenant (Res.) in Israel Defense Forces |

## GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>University of Chicago</b> | <b>The Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dissertation Completion Fellowship (2020-21)</li><li>Conference Travel Grant (Oct. 2015)</li></ul> <b>Martin Marty Center for the Public Understanding of Religion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Junior Fellowship (2019-20)</li></ul> <b>Division of the Social Sciences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tuition towards completion of MAPSS Program (1/3) (2010-11)</li></ul> |
| <b>Harvard University</b>    | <b>Sidney L. Solomon Endowed Fellowship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Full scholarship and stipend towards the pursuit of Master of Arts degree (2013-14)</li></ul>   |
| <b>Israel Institute</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Postdoctoral Fellowship (Nov. 2023; declined)</li></ul>   |

**Other  
Fellowships  
and Awards**

**Tikvah Fund Fellowship**

- “Political Thought, Economics and Strategy” (Sept. 2011)

**IDF Officers Training School**

- Outstanding Cadet (Platoon), (June 2007)

**IDF Spokespersons Unit**

- Outstanding Soldier Distinction (Sept. 2006)

**Israel Ministry of Defense**

- Historical Consciousness (*toda'a histori*) Youth Scholarship (Dec. 2002)

**LANGUAGES**

**Hebrew**

Native (High Pass, University of Chicago Proficiency Exam)

**English**

Native-Level Fluency

**French**

Fluent (High Pass, University of Chicago Proficiency Exam; Harvard Certification Exam; *Certificat Militaire de langue Française* awarded by the French Military; lived in Belgium for 5 years)

**German**

Reading Knowledge (High Pass, University of Chicago Proficiency Exam)

**Dutch**

Reading Knowledge (lived in Belgium for 5 years)

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Shalem  
College**

- Philosophy of History (Hebrew) (2025-26)
- Introduction to Greek Philosophy (Hebrew) (2024-25; 2025-26)
- Introduction to Political Philosophy (Hebrew) (2024-25)

**University of  
Chicago**

- The Global Revolt Against Liberalism (Spring 2023)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought III (Spring 2023)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought I (Autumn 2022)
- Religion: Cosmos, Conscience, and Community III (Spring 2022)
- Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Winter 2022)
- Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to the Medieval Period (Autumn 2021; Autumn 2022)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought I (Autumn 2019)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought III (Teaching Intern, Spring 2019)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought II (Teaching Intern, Winter 2019)
- Classics of Social and Political Thought I (Teaching Intern, Autumn 2018)

**Other  
Teaching  
Experience**

- The Zionist Idea | Tikvah Fellowship Maimonides Program (Teaching Assistant, July 2018)
- Political Thought | Leadership Academy at Ein-Prat, Israel (September 2011 – May 2012)
- American Thought and Literature | Leadership Academy at Ein-Prat, Israel (September 2009 – January 2010)

**Other  
Teaching  
Qualifications**

- Certified Writing Consultant, University of Chicago Writing Program (Spring 2018)

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Academic  
Conferences  
and Other  
Scholarly  
Talks**

- “Trends in American Conservatism: Neoconservatism, Paleoconservatism, (Catholic) Postliberalism” (Hebrew), Herzl Scholars Program, Argaman Institute, Jerusalem, Israel, 07 January 2026.
- “Tocqueville” (Hebrew), Exodus Scholars Program, Argaman Institute, Tel Aviv, 07 December 2025.
- “Israel and the Postliberal World Order,” 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Association of Israel Studies, Haifa, Israel, 8 September 2025.
- “The Revolt Against Liberalism,” (Hebrew), Part I: Trends in American and World Conservatism; Part II: The Rise of Civilizational States. The Herzl Scholars Program, Argaman Institute, Jerusalem, Israel, 21 & 28 April 2025.
- “Post-Liberalism, Post-Modernism, Post-Capitalism: on the Moral Core of Present Discontents,” Southern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, St. Pete Beach, FL, 12 January 2022.
- “The Idea of a Jewish Society: Yitzhak Baer’s *Israel Among the Nations* Reconsidered,” Association for Israel Studies Annual Conference, 7 June 2021.
- “Hayden White and the Possibility of Faith in History,” The Use and Abuse of History for Theology and Ethics: Mining the Past for Present Norms: University of Notre Dame and University of Chicago Fifth Annual Joint Graduate Student Conference, 29 March 2019.
- “Eric Auerbach 101”, The Divinity School “101” Series, University of Chicago, 18 January 2018.
- “Gershom Scholem and Jacob Taubes on Messianism and History,” Midwestern Inter-University Workshop in Jewish Studies, University of Chicago, 2 November 2015.
- “Nachman Krochmal and the Possibility of post-Textual Judaism,” “Ways of Knowing”: Graduate Conference in Religion, Harvard University, 23 October 2015.

## Public Lectures

- “Jacob Taubes and the Meaning of Jewish History,” The Jewish Studies Workshop, The University of Chicago, 20 April 2015.
- “Liberalism and the Jewish Question in the Thought of Leo Strauss” (Hebrew), Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem, 2 May 2013.
- “Lehi and the Struggle for Jewish Independence,” Introductory Talk to the Film “Rage & Glory” (dir. Avi Nesher, 1984), Anshei Sholom Beit Israel Synagogue, Chicago, IL, 20 January 2020.
- “Labor Zionism,” Hillel House, University of Chicago, March 11th, 2019.
- “What is Modern Judaism? Or: Prolegomena to Bialik,” Anshe Emet Synagogue, Chicago, IL, 21 February 2019.
- “The ‘New Jew’: Then and Now,” Temple Israel, Valparaiso, IN, 11 May 2018.
- “Time and Timelessness in Jewish History,” Jacob Berman Community Center, Rehovot, Israel, 30 August 2015.

## PUBLICATIONS

### ARTICLES IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

“Politics and Theology in the Historical Works of Yitzhak Baer,” *Religions* 13, no. 6 (2022): 537. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060537>

### CHAPTERS IN EDITED VOLUMES

“Philip Rieff and the Politics of the Cold War,” in *The Philosophy of Philip Rieff: Cultural Conflict, Religion, and the Self*, eds. William G. Batchelder and Michael P Harding, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025), pp. 231-254.

### BOOK REVIEWS IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

Jan Zwicky, *Once upon a Time in the West: Essays on the Politics of Thought and Imagination*, *Philosophy in Review* 44, no. 2 (May 2024): 49-52. <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/pir/article/view/21872>

Jeffrey Bloom, Alec Goldstein, Gil Student (eds.), *Strauss, Spinoza & Sinai: Orthodox Judaism and Modern Questions of Faith*, *Journal for the History of Modern Theology / Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologieggeschichte* 30, no. 1 (November 2023): 183-187. <https://doi.org/10.1515/znth-2023-0006>

Philip von Wussow, *Leo Strauss and the Theopolitics of Culture*, *The Journal of Religion* 102, no. 2 (April 2022): 300-302. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718397>

### BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

“Historical Context,” in Yitzhak Shalev, *The Gavriel Tirosh Affair*, tr. Hillel Halkin, (New Milford, CT and Jerusalem: The Toby Press, 2026), pp. xv-xx.

## ESSAYS IN NON-REFEREED PUBLICATIONS (SELECT LIST)

- “Israel and the Post-Liberal World Order,” *The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy (Commentary)*, (22 September 2025), <https://peacediplomacy.org/2025/09/22/israel-and-the-post-liberal-world-order/>.
- “The End of the American-Jewish Symbiosis?” *Watersheds*, Vol. I: October 7 (February 2024), pp. 107-116.
- “Milan Kundera and the Question of Jewish-Israeli Identity,” *The Hedgehog Review* (Web Exclusive), (28 September 2023), <https://hedgehogreview.com/web-features/thr/posts/kundera-and-the-question-of-jewish-israeli-identity>
- “Paul Gottfried: Apostle of the Old Conservatism” (Hebrew) and Interview with Paul Gottfried (with Yehuda Vizan), *Debak* 14 (March 2022), pp. 447-453; 454-463.
- “Aleksandr Dugin: An Introduction to the Hebrew Reader” (Hebrew) and Interview with Aleksandr Dugin (with Yehuda Vizan), *Debak* 13 (April 2021), pp. 502-510; 511-531.
- “Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Jewish Sovereignty,” *Counterpoint: The University of Chicago Conservative Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (February 2011), pp. 23-29.

## TRANSLATIONS

- Renaud Camus, « Préface au „discours des fleuves de sang“ d'Enoch Powell » (French to Hebrew), with critical footnotes, *Debak* 18 (May 2025), pp. 398-407.
- Allan Tate, “What is Traditional Society?” (English to Hebrew), with Extended Postscript, *Debak* 14 (March 2022), pp. 464-478.

## BOOK REVIEWS IN NON-REFEREED PUBLICATIONS (SELECT LIST)

- Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, new Hebrew translation by Hod Halevi, (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2025) (Hebrew), *HaShiloach*, No. 43 (December 2025), pp. 245-253.
- Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018) (Hebrew), *Kin'at Sofrim*, (April 5, 2023), <https://www.kinatsofrim.com/post/patrick-deneen-why-liberalism-failed-yale-university-press-2018> (publication now defunct.)
- Mordechai Shalev, *Stealing the Gospel: The Literary Essays of Mordechai Shalev* (Hebrew), *HaShiloach*, No. 15 (July 2019), pp. 163-173.
- James Kirchick, *The End of Europe: Dictators, Demagogues, and the Coming Dark Age*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), *Mosaic*, (May 1, 2017), <https://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/politics-current-affairs/2017/05/the-end-of-europe-as-we-know-it/>
- Shimon Peres, *Ben-Gurion: A Political Life*, (New York: Schocken, 2011), *Jewish Review of Books*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 16-18.