



Gratz Insider, Fall 2015 - Story Continuation

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### Notable Newsmakers



**Dr. Joshua Gutoff**, assistant professor of Jewish Education and director of the Gratz master's program in Jewish Education, has recorded an ELI Talk entitled "Reading Should Make You a Better Person. Here's How."

ELI Talks are the Jewish version of TED Talks. Their tagline is "Inspired Jewish Ideas," which is exactly the point of these 12-minute presentations. As described on the [ELI Talk website](#), the "speakers' passions result in engaging and inspired talks that teach something new or perhaps counterintuitive." The goal of these talks is to inspire listeners to reflect on these new ideas and to generate discussion.

[Click here to view Dr. Gutoff's ELI Talk.](#)



On November 1st, **Dr. Michael Steinlauf**, professor of history and director of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies program, will deliver the keynote lecture at an event marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Yiddish poet Y.L. Peretz. The lecture, entitled "Hope and Fear: Y.L. Peretz and the Forging of Modern Jewish Culture," is sponsored by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

[Click here for more information.](#)



**Dr. Joseph Davis**, professor of Jewish Thought, director of the Jewish Studies program and academic coordinator of our distance learning program, was one of the participants in the 12th Early Modern Workshop. The Early Modern Workshop is an annual meeting of scholars from all parts of the country, as well as from Israel and Europe, who come together to discuss Jewish history between 1492 and 1800. This year's session, which was held at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, focused on Jews of the early 18th century. Dr. Davis' participation in this workshop was part of his ongoing study of Prague Jews, their letters and

their legends.

At the workshop, Dr. Davis presented a letter sent in 1734 by a Prague Jew, named Samuel Porges, to his cousin, Simon Frankel. In the letter, Porges spelled out the men's shared genealogy: they were both members of the Spira clan. He also told Simon stories about their shared relative, Rabbi Aaron Simon Spira, who was the chief rabbi of Prague in the 1670's.

[Click here for Dr. Davis' translation of this letter.](#)