

VADIM PUTZU, Ph.D.

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

- 2015 Ph.D. in Jewish Thought: School of Graduate Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH.
Dissertation Project: *Bottled Poetry / Quencher of Hopes: Wine as a Symbol and as an Instrument in Safedian Kabbalah and Beyond*.
Advisors: Haim Rechnitzer; Barry Kogan
- 2005 M.A. in Comparative History of Religions: University of Lausanne, Switzerland.
Thesis Project: *Mystical Techniques and Altered States of Consciousness in Ecstatic Kabbalah* [French]
Advisors: David Banon; Philippe Bourgeaud
- 2003 Postgraduate Certificate of Specialization in Cultural Sciences: Scuola Internazionale di Alti Studi Scienze della Cultura – Fondazione Collegio San Carlo, Modena, Italy
- 2002 B.A. in Philosophy, *summa cum laude*: University of Turin, Italy
Thesis Project: *Shabbetai Donnolo: A Jewish Sage in Medieval Byzantine Apulia* [Italian]
Advisors: Bruno Chiesa (z"l); Andrea Poma
- 1995 Diploma in Youth Education: Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad, Jerusalem, Israel.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

- 2020- Associate Professor of Judaism, Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO
- 2014-2020 Assistant Professor of Judaism, Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO
- 2011-2014 Visiting Instructor of Judaic Studies, Department of Religious Studies, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster PA
- 2008-2009 Visiting Research Fellow, Rothberg International School, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
- Spring 2008 Instructor, Academy for Adult Interfaith Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH
- 2007-2008 Research and Teaching Assistant, School of Graduate Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati
- 2005-2006 Adjunct Lecturer in Italian Language and Culture, Department of Romance Languages, University of Cincinnati, OH

Courses Taught: “Old Testament/Hebrew Bible”
“Judaism”
“Between Faith and Reason: Topics in Jewish Philosophy”
“Divine Invasions: Religion and Science Fiction”
“From Ezekiel to Madonna: Jewish Mysticism”
“Intoxicating Religions: Wine and Beer in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam”
“Modern Jewish Thought”
“Medieval Jewish Philosophy”
“Study Away in Italy: A Booted History of Judaism”
“Study Away in Israel: The History, Religions, and Politics of Israel”
“Italian Language and Culture”

Independent Studies: “Ecclesiastes and Existentialism”
“Biblical Narratives in Pop Music”

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2004 *Shabbetai Donnolo: Un sapiente ebreo nella Puglia bizantina altomedievale.* Cassano delle Murge: Edizioni Messaggi.

Refereed Journal Articles

- 2019 “Mystical Techniques, Mental Processes, and Altered States of Consciousness in Abraham Abulafia’s Kabbalah: A Reassessment,” *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 41/2, pp. 89-104.
- 2011 “‘Il Leviatano si digerisce con il vino’: Appunti simbolico-enologici su Menachem Azariah da Fano,” *Materia Giudaica* 15-16, pp. 365-374.
- 2010 “Internet = cancro: Gematria ed altri ‘alfabeti spirituali’ nella mistica ebraica,” *Humanitas* 65/5-6, pp. 860-873.

Refereed Book Chapters

- 2021 “Heretical Orthodoxy: Eastern and Western Esotericism in Thomas Moore Johnson’s ‘Platonism’,” in *Esoteric Transfers and Constructions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. Edited by Francesco Piraino and Mark Sedgwick. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 273-296.
- 2020 “Kabbalah in the Ozarks: Thomas Moore Johnson, *The Platonist*, and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor,” in *Kabbalah in America: Ancient Lore in the New World*. Edited by Brian Ogren. Leiden: Brill, pp. 94-112.
- 2019 “Two Hebrew Amulets from the Klau Library: Jewish Magic in the Modern Mediterranean,” in *L’eredità di Salomone: La magia ebraica in Italia e nel Mediterraneo*. Edited by Emma Abate. Firenze: Giuntina, pp. 315-342.

- 2017 “Tasting Heaven: Wine and the World-to-Come from the Talmud to Safed,” in *Olam ha-zeh v’olam ha-ba: This World and the World to Come in Jewish Belief and Practice. Studies in Jewish Civilization*, vol. 28. Edited by Leonard Greenspoon. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, pp. 151-170.
- 2012 “‘Whoever kills a human being, it is as if he destroys the entire world’: The Humanism of Shabbetai Donnolo between Mysticism and Science,” in *Gli ebrei nel Salento (IX-XVI secolo)*. Edited by Fabrizio Lelli. Galatina: Congedo, pp. 145-164.
- 2004 “La sapienza nel *Sefer hakmonì* di Shabbetai Donnolo e la mistica ebraica nella Puglia del *Sefer Yuhasin*,” in *Shabbetai Donnolo. Scienza e cultura ebraica nell’Italia del secolo X*. Edited by Giancarlo Lacerenza. Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, pp. 105-139.

Encyclopedia Entries

- 2006 “Donnolo, Sabbetai ben Avraham,” in *Enciclopedia filosofica*. Edited by Fondazione Centro Studi Filosofici. Milan: Bompiani, 2006. Vol. 4: 3067.

Book Reviews

- 2021 Review of *Rabbinic Drinking: What Beverages Teach Us about Rabbinic Literature*, by Jordan D. Rosenblum, Oakland, University of California Press, 2020. *Religion* 51/2, pp. 333-335.
- 2019 Review of *Mystical Resistance: Uncovering the Zohar’s Conversations with Christianity*, by Ellen D. Haskell, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016. *Religion* 49/1, pp. 148-152.
- 2015 “The Missing (Slavonic) Link in the Chain of Kabbalah?” Review of Orlov, Andrei A., *Divine Scapegoats: Demonic Mimesis in Early Jewish Mysticism. H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews*.

Work in Progress

“*Bottled Poetry / Quencher of Hopes*”: *Wine as a Symbol and as an Instrument in Safedian Kabbalah and Beyond*. Book manuscript in preparation.

“Wine Drinking in Hasidism: A Kabbalistic Practice?” Journal article in preparation.

Moses David Valle. *Le Sette Giornate di Verità*. Italian and Hebrew text, translated and annotated in English. Book manuscript in preparation.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2019 “Drinking and Intoxication in Ancient and Late Antique Meals”, *Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature*, San Diego, CA (November 25); invited panel respondent

- 2018 “Transhuman Esotericism in the Ozarks: Thomas Moore Johnson’s ‘Platonism’ and the Prophets of H+”, *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion*, Denver, CO (November 18)
- “Kabbalah in the Ozarks: Thomas Moore Johnson, *The Platonist*, and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor”, *Kabbalah in America*, Rice University, Houston, TX (October 28)
- “Ozarkian Kabbalah: Preliminary Notes on the Place of Jewish Esotericism in Thomas Moore Johnson’s ‘Platonism’”, *Common and Comparative Esotericisms: Western, Islamic, and Jewish, Inaugural Conference of the European Network for the Study of Islam and Esotericism*, Centro Studi di Civiltà e Spiritualità Comparete, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy (June 13)
- 2017 “‘Sweetening the Judgment’ across the Mediterranean: An Oenological Interpretation”, *17th World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem, Israel (August 7)
- “Kingdom Come to Muncie: Religion in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*”, *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion - Midwest Region*, Muncie, IN (March 3)
- 2016 “Non-Jews in Jewish Studies: Students, Teachers, and Scholars in North America and in Europe”, *48th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, San Diego, CA (December 19); roundtable organizer
- Roundtable “Rethinking Kabbalah: Theory and Method in the Study of Kabbalah”, *48th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, San Diego, CA (December 19)
- “Teaching, Learning, and Researching Judaic Studies in the Midwest: Challenges and Opportunities”, *Annual Conference of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association*, Springfield, MO (September 11); roundtable organizer
- 2015 “Mystical Techniques, Mental Processes, and Altered States of Consciousness in the Kabbalah of Abraham Abulafia: a Reassessment”, *47th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, Boston, MA (December 13)
- “Two Kabbalists Walk into a Bar: Attitudes toward Wine among 16th-century Jewish Mystics”, *Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion*, Atlanta, GE (November 23)
- “Tasting Heaven: Wine and the World-to-Come from the Talmud to Safed”, *Olam ha-zeh v’olam ha-ba: This world and the world to come in Jewish Belief and Practice*, *28th Annual Klutznick-Harris-Schwalb Symposium on Jewish Civilization*, Omaha and Lincoln, NE (October 25)
- 2014 “Wine Drinking in Hasidism: A Kabbalistic Practice?”, *46th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, Baltimore, MD (December 14)
- 2013 “Wine = Torah: Kabbalistic Variations on a Symbolic Equivalence”, *45th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, Boston, MA (December 17)

- 2012 “Wine Symbolism in Cordovero’s Kabbalah”, *44th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies*, Chicago, IL (December 16)
- “Menachem Azariah da Fano’s Symbolism of Wine”, *Annual Conference of the American Association of Italian Studies*, Charleston, SC (May 3)
- 2010 “Preliminary Notes on the Symbolism of Wine in the Kabbalistic Works of Menachem Azariah da Fano” [Italian], *Percorsi e Incroci della Mistica Ebraica in Italia, XXIV Convegno Internazionale dell’AISG*, Ravenna, Italy (September 2)

INVITED LECTURES (selected)

- 2021 “Jewish Kabbalah in Medieval Salento: Shabbetai Donnolo”, *Conversations, Art and Music*. Jewish Museum Lecce (January 12)
- 2020 “Red Wines”, “Fortified Dessert Wines”, and “Sparkling Wines”, *AGP 300: Wine Appreciation*. International Leadership and Training Center, Missouri State University (July 1, 6, and 8)
- 2019 “Job and Theodicy”, *REL 101: Old Testament/Hebrew Bible*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (November 19)
- “Jewish Funerary Practices and Beliefs”, *REL 338: Death, Dying, and Afterlife*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (February 14)
- 2018 “Judaism Past and Present”, *Johnson Library and Museum Lecture Series*. Johnson Library and Museum, Osceola, MO (November 29)
- “Persia Rules: Judean History from Cyrus to Artaxerxes”, *REL 101: Old Testament/Hebrew Bible*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (September 20)
- “A History of Judaism in Italy in Four Glasses”, *Alternative Spiritual Formation in the Italian Piedmont and Tuscany Program*. National Avenue Christian Church, Rogersville, MO (May 20)
- “Cultural Enology: Perspectives on Wine from the Anthropology of Religion”, *Academic Lecture Series*. English Language Institute, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (February 15)
- 2017 “Hidden Mysteries and Magic: Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism in Renaissance Florence”, *The Medici Archive Project Lecture Series*. The Temple Emanu-El Streicker Center, New York, NY (March 16)
- 2016 “Paradise Lost?: The Garden of Eden Story between the Bible and *Star Trek*”, *REL 510: Archaeology and the Bible*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (November 1)

- “Religion of Science and Science Fiction: The Raelian Movement”, *REL 344: New Religious Movements*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (October 13; repeated November 15, 2018)
- “Late-Antique and Medieval Jewish Catacombs in Italy: Vigna Randanini e Venosa” [Italian], *Seminario di Lingua e Cultura Ebraica*. Dipartimento di Lettere, Lingue, Arti, Italiano e Culture Comparete, Università di Bari, Bari, Italy (May 26)
- “Representations and Uses of Wine in 16th- and 17th-century Jewish Mysticism” [Italian], *Seminario di Storia Moderna. Tra Persecuzione e Tolleranza: Ebrei e Cristiani nell’Età Moderna*. Dipartimento di Storia, Culture e Religioni, Università La Sapienza, Rome, Italy (May 24)
- “The Great Jewish Drinking Mystery”, *REL 397: Religion and Food*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (April 20)
- “Religion and Science in Arthur C. Clarke”, *ENG 366: Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature*. Department of English, Missouri State University (February 5)
- 2015 “Tasting Heaven: Wine and the Afterworld in Some Classic Jewish Texts”, *College of Humanities and Public Affairs Research Forum*. Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (October 13)
- “Judaism: A Historical Survey on One Leg”, *REL 100: Introduction to Religion*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (March 3)
- 2014 “Is there a Jewish Philosophy?”, *Philosophy Club Lectures*. Department of Philosophy, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (October 23)
- “Jewish Women in Early Modern Germany: Gluckel of Hameln”, *REL 570: Women in the History of Christianity*. Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University (October 7)
- 2012 “Taking Spelling Seriously: Abraham Abulafia and *Bee Season*”, *ENG 172: Contemporary Jewish Voices*. Department of English, Franklin & Marshall College (November 29)
- “*Sefer ha-Zohar*: Kabbalah in 13th-century Spain”, *HIS 253: Jewish History I*. Department of History, Franklin & Marshall College (October 26)
- 2011 “Madonna and Pop Kabbalah”, *RST 167: Introduction to American Spiritualities*. Department of Religious Studies, Franklin & Marshall College (November 29)
- 2009 “‘A Man Who Only Drinks Water Has a Secret to Hide:’ Images and Uses of Wine in Jewish Mysticism” [Italian], *The Italian Synagogue of Jerusalem Lecture Series*. Jerusalem, Israel (October 27)
- 2007 “*Sefer Yetzirah*”, *PHI 505. From Earthly Temple to a Spiritual Architecture: An Introduction to Kabbalah*. School of Graduate Studies, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati (October 8)

“Paradoxical Kabbalah: The Popularity of Jewish Esotericism”. Congregation Adath Israel, Cincinnati OH (February 25; repeated at Congregation Shaarai Shomayim, Lancaster PA, February 6, 2012)

2005 “Shabbetai Donnolo between Mysticism and Science”, *Humanism and the Rabbinic Tradition in Italy and Beyond, The Gisella Levi Cahnman Open Seminar*. Primo Levi Center for Italian Jewish Studies at the Center for Jewish History, New York, NY (November 30)

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

2018 Award for Excellence in Study Away Programming, Cultural Competence category, Missouri State University

2017 International Travel Award, Missouri State University

2016 Study Away Exploratory Fund, Missouri State University

2010-2011 Doctoral Scholarship, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture

2010 Dissertation Grant, Targum Shlishi Foundation

2009 Presidential Fellowship, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Jerusalem, Israel

2008-2009 Doctoral Fellowship for research in Israel, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hosting institution: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

2006-2008 The Jacob Ziskind Memorial Fellowship, School of Graduate Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH

2004-2006 Ralph Irwin and Julia Winter Cohen Fellowship, School of Graduate Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH

2002-2003 Fondazione Collegio San Carlo Maintenance Grant, Scuola Internazionale di Alti Studi Scienze della Cultura - Fondazione Collegio San Carlo, Modena, Italy

2003 Primo Levi Foundation Prize for outstanding undergraduate thesis in Jewish Studies, Fondazione di Cultura Ebraica “Primo Levi”, Florence, Italy

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

2016 “*Collaborative Approaches to Developing Faculty-Led Programs*” Workshop, NAFSA Core Education Program, NAFSA Region IV Conference, Springfield, MO (October 24-25)

Master Advisor Workshop, Academic Advisement Center, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (August 11-12)

- “The Intimate Sea: Jews, Families, and Networks in the Mediterranean” Symposium, Philip & Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies, Lehigh University and Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università del Salento, Lecce, Italy (May 30-June 1)*
- 2015 *“Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers” Professional Development Workshop, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (January 21-February 11)*
- 2014 *“Teaching Tips and Troubleshooting for New(er) Teachers” Professional Development Workshop, Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (August 26-September 30)*
- 2009 *Max and Hilde Kochmann Summer School for PhD Students in Modern European Jewish History and Culture, University College London and Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, UK (July)*
- “Sociology of Contemporary Mysticism” Seminar, Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel (April-July)*
- 2008 *The Manfred R. Lehmann Memorial Master Workshop in the History of the Jewish Book, Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA (May)*
- Posen Faculty Seminar on Secular Jewish History and Culture, Department of Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH (January-May)*
- 2007 *“De Moses Mendelssohn à Gershom Scholem. Pour une histoire du judaïsme allemand” Seminar, taught by Dominique Bourel, Scuola Internazionale di Alti Studi Scienze della Cultura – Fondazione Collegio San Carlo, Modena, Italy (June)*
- 2004 *“Jewish Kabbalah and Italian Renaissance” Seminar, taught by Moshe Idel, Scuola Internazionale di Alti Studi Scienze della Cultura – Fondazione Collegio San Carlo, Modena, Italy (February)*

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Academy of Religion (AAR)
Association for Jewish Studies (AJS)
Midwest Jewish Studies Association (MJSA)
European Network for the Study of Islam and Esotericism (ENSIE)
Italian Association for Jewish Studies (AISG)
Italian Organization of Wine Tasters (ONAV)

DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Missouri State University

Faculty Concerns Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2014-present)

Student Recruitment, Retention, and Publicity Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2018-present)

Ad Hoc Alumni and Community Outreach Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2019-present)

Budget Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2014-2015; 2020-present)

Assessment and Curriculum Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2015-2018)

Scholarships Committee, Department of Religious Studies (2015-2017)

Diversity Council, College of Humanities and Public Affairs (2014-present)

Middle Eastern Studies Committee, College of Humanities and Public Affairs (2017-present)

College Council, College of Humanities and Public Affairs (2017-2019)

Employee Resource Group on Multiculturalism, (2014-2015)

Study Away Advisory Committee (2018-2019)

Ad Hoc Committee on Fighting Anti-Semitism (2018-present)

Public Affairs Conference Advisory Committee (2019-2020)

International Student Orientation, Office of International Services (August 16, 2016; August 9, 2018)

Presidential Scholarships Committee, Office of Enrollment Management and Services (January 27, 2018)

Origin of Religions Panel, Asian Heritage Month, Office of Multicultural Services (April 10, 2018)

HUC-JIR, Cincinnati

Website Discovery Workshop (September 2017)

Library Services/Access Review Committee, Klau Library (2007-2008)

Graduate Executive Committee, School of Graduate Studies (2006-2007)

Admissions Blog (2006-2007)

Annual Tribute Dinner (November 13, 2005)

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Study of Judaism section chair, Midwest AAR (2015-present)

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Committee, UISFL Project *Mideast meets Midwest: Enhancing Middle Eastern Studies in Missouri Universities* (2016-present)

Undergraduate Research Committee, UISFL Project *Mideast meets Midwest: Enhancing Middle Eastern Studies in Missouri Universities* (2016-present)

Regional conference director, Midwest AAR (2020-present)

Editorial Board member for the journal *Religiographies: Representations, Texts, and Lives* (2020-present)

Guest speaker on Judaism, Project *E vissero felici e contenti*, Department of Education, City of Turin (January-June 1996)

“Bears Show How To” Video Series, University Communications, Missouri State University YouTube channel, Springfield (January 21, 2016)

“WineWorld” documentary discussion and wine tasting (April 21, 2016)

Guest speaker on Kabbalah, *The Wright Show*, Meaningoflife.tv (August 8, 2016)

Co-organizer and host, *28th Annual Conference of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association* (September 10-12, 2016)

Italy representative, “Tour of the Globe,” Office of International Services (November 4, 2016)

Defense consultant on Jewish divorce laws, Christian County Circuit Court (February-March 2017)

- Reviewer for Alan Levenson, *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield (July-August 2017)
- Invited participant, *Website Discovery Workshop*, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (September 2017)
- Organizer and co-host, “Icaros” film screening and discussion with movie director Matteo Norzi (February 20, 2019)
- Research proposal evaluator, Israel Science Foundation (February-March 2019)
- Guest speaker on Purim, *Religion Beat*, KSMU Ozarks Public Radio, 91.1 FM, Springfield (March 20, 2019)
- Book chapter referee for *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought, A Special Volume: Festschrift for Moshe Idel*. Edited by Avriel Bar-Levav, Moshe Halbertal, and Ron Margolin. Idra Press, forthcoming (February-April 2019)
- Organizer and co-host, *Thomas Moore Johnson Symposium*, Missouri State University and Johnson Library and Museum (November 7-8, 2019)
- Guest speaker on wine in Kabbalah, JewishDrinking.com (June 9, 2020; February 9, 2021)
- Journal article referee for *Henoch: Historical and Textual Studies in Ancient and Medieval Judaism and Christianity* (October-November 2020)
- Guest speaker on Jewish Kabbalah, Christian Cabala, and occultist Qabala/h, Cuscito, Ergo Sum YouTube channel (March 7, 2021)
- External reviewer for tenure case, Department of Religious Studies, Michigan State University (March 2021)

RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Ancient

Hebrew
Latin
Aramaic (basic knowledge)

Modern

Italian (native)
English
French
Hebrew
Spanish
German (basic knowledge)