



CoCo Seminar Series Spring 2025

Trailology: Mapping the Boundaries of a New Field of Study

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**Chair of Judaic Studies & Associate Professor of
Israel Studies, Binghamton University**

Monday March 31, 2025 12:00-1:00pm EDT

**Hybrid (EB-T1 & Zoom; meeting link available on
<http://coco.binghamton.edu/>)**



The complexity of trails emerges from various aspects of their nature: humans and animals create them in the course of everyday life and action, but they lie at the roots of modern transportation systems. Trails are lines of damage to soil and vegetation, but they also limit damage by concentrating movement along a single line. Many recreational trails are only minimally built through volunteer labor, but they support multi-billion-dollar industries like outdoor gear and adventure tourism. And though the word "trail" often evokes specific images of recreational use, some of the busiest footpaths in the world are not used by hikers, but by migrants and refugees. Trails have political dimensions and have been used to mobilize national movements and to facilitate attack and military conquest. Though unpaved paths of all kinds are ubiquitous in the fossil record, animal life, human histories and cultures, and landscapes ancient and modern, trails have rarely been explored by scholars as the subject of a field of study. This talk explores "Trailology" as a nascent international and interdisciplinary field of study.

Dr. Shay Rabineau is the Chair of Judaic Studies and an Associate Professor of Israel Studies at Binghamton University. He earned his PhD from Brandeis University and specializes in Israeli environmental history, the historical geography of the Middle East, and walking and pilgrimage routes in Israel/Palestine. His notable work, *Walking the Land: A History of Israeli Hiking Trails*, explores the development of Israel's hiking trail system and its connections to national identity and environmental engagement.

For more information, contact Hiroki Sayama (sayama@binghamton.edu).
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