“Without food, there is no Torah; without Torah, there is no food” (Pirkei Avot, 3.17). Eating practices are deeply embedded in Jewish civilization including questions of what Jews eat (paschal lambs, permitted food, hamantashen, bagels, gribenes), what Jews do not eat (fruit from the tree of life, pork, and shellfish), when to eat, when not to eat, with whom to eat and how to prepare foods. Recent scholarship exploring these questions expands the analysis of Jewish food into deeper understandings about such issues as Jewish identity formation, historical developments, textual practices, social divisions, assimilation, resistance, ethics, and gender. Works such as Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration by Hasia Diner (2001), In Memory’s Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin by Cara DeSilva (1996), and Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South by Marcie Ferris (2005), are just a sample of the numerous books and articles that explore Jews and food from a multitude of disciplines. Moreover, this marriage between academics and food appears in a number of scholarly cookbooks such as Claudia Roden’s The Book of Jewish Food—An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York (1996) which beautifully weaves together recipes with cultural background and stories. This year’s Lichter Series shares some of these new insights so that we can go beyond a conventional acknowledgement that food plays an essential role in Jewish life to a more sophisticated realization of eating as a practice that reflects and promotes values and ideologies. The series approaches the topic from three angles: Jewish food in antiquity, food and contemporary Jewishness, and modern Jewish food practices.

All lectures are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served after the lecture. Dietary laws observed. Reservations are encouraged: Contact John Brolley, Department of Judaic Studies at (513)556-2297 or john.brolley@uc.edu

Parking: The Department of Judaic Studies will offer a limited number of prepaid parking tickets for senior citizens for the on-campus lectures. In order to secure their ticket, those interested should contact John Brolley at (513)556-2297 or john.brolley@uc.edu
Jordan Rosenblum
Beler Assistant Professor of Classical Rabbinic Literature at University of Wisconsin, Madison

Topic: “Thou Shalt Not Cook a Bird in its Mother’s Milk?: Theorizing the Evolution of a Rabbinic Regulation”
Date: 7:00 pm, Monday, October 20
Location: Taft, 1 Edwards Center, UC Uptown Campus

About the Speaker: Jordan Rosenblum earned his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Brown University in 2008. He was a Starr Fellow at the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University in the Spring of 2009. His research focuses on the literature, culture, and history of the early rabbinic (tannaitic) movement. His book, Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism (Cambridge University Press, 2010), explores the intersection between early rabbinic food regulations and identity construction. Rosenblum has published and taught about such topics as the history of Jews and Chinese food; pork in discourse by and about Jews from antiquity to modernity; kosher olive oil in antiquity; and the connection between cookbooks and identity formation. His work makes him uniquely able to discuss issues of Jewish food laws and practices in Antiquity.

Parking: At Corry Garage

Claudia Roden
Internationally renowned cookbook author and food intellectual.

Title: “Gefilte Fish and Couscous”
Date: 7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 9
Location: Mayerson Jewish Community Center
Mayerson JCC, 3485 Ridge Road, Cincinnati, OH 45236
(South, off of Ronald Reagan Highway)

About the Speaker: Claudia Roden is a food intellectual who integrates popular approaches to food with the academic study of food. She is president of the Oxford Food Symposium on Food & Cookery held at Oxford University on food, its culture and its history. She is best known for her Egyptian approach to Jewish food. She has authored many books about Jewish food including The Book of Jewish Food—An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York (1996); The Good Food of Italy—Region by Region (1990); A Book of Middle Eastern Food (1968); Mediterranean Cookery (1992); and The New Book of Middle Eastern Food (2000). She has served as a foreign food correspondent for The Daily Telegraph, and has traveled to Italy researching that country’s cuisine for The Sunday Times Magazine. She hosted a BBC TV series “Claudia Roden’s Mediterranean Cookery” and authored articles for Gourmet, Food and Wine, Bon Appetit, and Food Arts. She received the James Beard Award for the Best Cookbook of the Year in 1997 and the National Jewish Book Award. She has won six Glenfiddich prizes, most notably the 1992 Food Writer of the Year and the Glenfiddich Trophy. In Italy she was awarded The Premio Orio Vergani and the Premio Maria Luigia, Duchessa di Parma—in recognition of her London Times Sunday Magazine series “The Taste of Italy.” She won a 1999 Versailles Award in France. Prince Claus of the Netherlands acknowledged her with the Prince Claus Award. Her current research studies food within the broader framework of cultural practice.

Parking: Free parking is available at Mayerson JCC.

Jenna Weissman Joselit
Charles E. Smith Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of History, Director of the Program in Judaic Studies at George Washington University

Title: “The Great Vinegar Controversy of 1886 and Other Food Fights in American Jewish History.”
Date: 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 19
Location: McMicken 127, UC Uptown Campus

About the Speaker: Jenna Weissman Joselit practically invented modern Jewish cultural studies and is an authoritative expert on issues of contemporary Jewish food culture within the matrix of general American culture, about which she has published extensively. The explosion of Jewish cookbooks, magazines, television and radio programs on food in recent years demonstrates the popularity of the subject of contemporary food culture. Joselit is a frequent contributor to Gastronomica. Her books include The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, 1880—1950, which received the National Jewish Book Award in History, and A Perfect Fit: Clothes, Character, and the Promise of America. A founding member of NYU’s Working Group on Jews, Media and Religion, she has also been a Senior Fellow at Princeton University’s Center for the Study of American Religion, a fellow at Yale University’s Center for Art and Material Culture and the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Judaic Studies. Most recently, Professor Weissman Joselit has been a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress. She also directs the Master of Arts in Jewish Cultural Arts program at George Washington University. In addition to her academic pursuits, she writes a monthly column on American Jewish culture for The Forward newspaper and is a frequent contributor to The New Republic, TNR Online, and Tablet: The Online Magazine of Jewish Culture.

Parking: Paid parking is available at Stratford Heights and CCM.