



"A Black Wedding in the Cemetery in Poland," by Mayer Kirshenblatt, circa 1892.

The Cholera Wedding:

East European Jews' Magical Ritual to End an Epidemic

**October 18, 7 PM • Dr. Natan Meir, Lorry I. Lokey Chair in Judaic Studies at
Portland State University**

ZOOM CONVOCATION pre-registration: <https://centre.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEsfuChrjgsHtcvIWcQEctQHxVGkWIJf1Rn>

This talk explores the history and meaning of a peculiar ritual that emerged among East European Jews in the 19th century: to stop the spread of an epidemic, the community would marry its most vulnerable and marginalized members—orphans, beggars, and the disabled—to each other in a wedding held in the cemetery. Drawing on various approaches from the fields of social and cultural history, anthropology, folklore, and cultural studies, Dr. Meir will discuss how the ritual spread from Eastern Europe to Ottoman Palestine continuing into the period of the Holocaust. It also asks us to think about the relevance in the context of the current pandemic and its recent revival in response to COVID among some communities in Israel.

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