

# Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2013



Michigan State University

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## Focus on Israel

MSU Jewish Studies has an active schedule in spring 2013, a good deal of it focused on Israel. Currently, the state that holds the largest concentration of Jews in the world is going through elections and perhaps, in the next six months, facing huge existential questions.

A debate in the blogosphere asks whether Israel is shifting dramatically to the right and the election will be another turning point in Israeli history or Israelis are simply reflecting their pessimism about the peace process while still embracing support for a two-state solution.

**Natalia Mozgovaya**, the young talented chief of *Haaretz*' Washington Bureau will visit Thursday, January 31 to speak about "*The Israeli Elections and Israeli-American Relations*." Following the results, who will Bibi Netanyahu enlist in a coalition government and what will be Israel-United States relations?

We are playing host this semester to a **Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist** at MSU, **Guy Meirson**, who will speak Wednesday, February 13, on "*The Israeli Soldier in Contemporary Israeli Films*." **Guy Meirson** will also be a special guest speaker at the **8<sup>th</sup> Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival** Sunday, March 17, 2013, and at the **Symposium on Hebrew and Israeli Literature** on April 10.

The **8<sup>th</sup> Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival** on Sunday-Monday, March 17-18, will show outstanding recent Israeli films that have won the Ophir (Israeli's Academy Award) or other awards. In addition, we will also be hosting a second evening with filmmaker **Judith Manassen-Ramon**.

The major event of the spring will be our ambitious **Symposium on Hebrew and Israeli Literature**, April 9-10, 2013. Guest speakers will include outstanding Israeli novelist **Meir Shalev** and the well-known University of California-Berkeley scholar **Robert Alter**. The symposium will also bring to MSU six scholars from Israel, New York, California, Florida, and Michigan to explore issues in **Meir Shalev**'s work, in the revival of modern Hebrew as Israel's national language, and in the depiction of war and violence in Israeli cultural products. **Meir Shalev** will offer the opening talk Tuesday, April 9. **Robert Alter** will close the symposium on Wednesday, April 10, speaking on "*Hebrew Poetry Rewriting Job*."

Flyers for the Festival and the Symposium are inside. Special thanks to Professor **Marc Bernstein** who has chaired the committee planning this event and to **Deborah Margolis**, our Jewish Studies librarian. The Symposium is meant to highlight and cele-

brate the opening of the **Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection** in the MSU Libraries, and is supported by a gift from Ritta Rosenberg

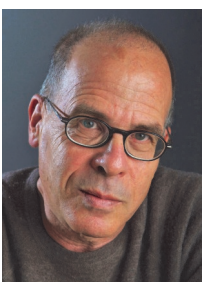
This semester, MSU Jewish Studies will also co-host with James Madison College historian **David E. Fishman** of the Jewish Theological Seminary on Wednesday, February 20, for our annual **Yiddishkeit** lecture. Professor Fishman's lecture will be on "*The Dynamics of Jewish Life in 1930s Vilna*."

Finally, our 21<sup>st</sup> annual **Rabin Lecture on the Holocaust** will be delivered on April 18 by historian **Barbara Epstein** of the University of California-Santa Cruz, who will speak on "*The Minsk Ghetto: Jews and Byelorussians as Allies in Resistance*." Additional Holocaust-related programming will include the April 4 showing of a film-in-progress April 4 by filmmaker **Mitchell Lieber**, called *Rumbula's Echo*, about the Holocaust in Latvia, and the presentation in the **Lenore Marwill Jewish Film Festival** at the Berman Performing Arts Center at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield on April 7, Yom Hashoah Day, of the film *Kinderblock 66*, with **Ken Waltzer**.

~**Ken Waltzer**, Professor and Director

### MSU Symposium on Hebrew and Israeli Literature

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 9-10  
MSU Main Library 4th floor and Wells Hall B-342



Sponsored by MSU Jewish Studies Program and MSU Libraries. The Symposium celebrates the **Irwin T. & Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection**, and featured guests include Israeli novelist **Meir Shalev** (left) and American scholar **Robert Alter** (right).



### 21<sup>st</sup> David and Sarah Rabin Lecture of the Holocaust "The Minsk Ghetto: Jews and Byelorussians Resistance"

Thursday, April 18, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Lincoln Room, Kellogg Center, MSU

**Barbara Epstein** is an historian and student of social movements at the University of California-Santa Cruz. Why in the Minsk Ghetto did Jews and Byelorussians cooperate in resistance to the Nazi rule? Why did this not happen in the ghettos of Lodz, Warsaw, Riga, and Kovno?



## Recent and Upcoming Events

**Thursday, January 17**

*"Hawks v. Doves, Left v. Right: What's on the Agenda of the Israeli Elections?"*

David Mendelsson, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

A British-born Israeli historian, David Mendelsson teaches the making of the modern Israeli state and society at Hebrew University and in Israel Studies at Hebrew Union College.

4:30 pm, James Madison Library, Case Hall, 3rd Floor



**Thursday, January 31**

7th Annual Michael & Elaine Serling Lecture on Modern Israel  
*"The Israeli Elections and Israeli-American Relations"*

Natasha Mozgovaya, chief U.S. correspondent for *Haaretz*

Born in the former Soviet Union, emigrated with her Russian journalist parents to Israel in 1990, Natasha Mozgovaya has written for Russian newspapers in Israel, worked for Yedioth Ahronoth, and has headed *Haaretz*' Washington bureau since 2008.

4:00 pm, Spartan Club Room, Case Hall, 3rd Floor



**Wednesday, February 13**

*"The Israeli Soldier in Contemporary Israeli Films"*

Guy Meirson, Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist at MSU

Guy Meirson is an Israeli screenwriter and writer who has won numerous awards in Israel and elsewhere. His film, *Rock the Casbah*, recently contended for an Israeli academy award (2012) in the Best Feature Film category.

7:00 pm, Wells Hall B-117



**Wednesday, February 20**

*"Between Determination and Despair: The Dynamics of Jewish Life in 1930s Vilna"*

David E. Fishman, Jewish Theological Seminary

David E. Fishman is professor of Modern Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is also director of *Project Judaica*. Dr. Fishman's books include *Russia's First Modern Jews* and *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*.

5:00 pm, James Madison Library, Case Hall, 3rd Floor



**Sunday-Monday, March 17-18**

**8th Annual Israeli Film Festival**

See attached flyer for complete schedule.

All films are free and open to the public.

147 Comm Arts, MSU



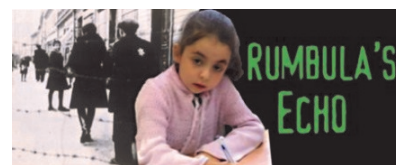
**Thursday, April 4**

Spring 2013 Holocaust Commemoration Programming

Film *Rumbula's Echo*, directed by Mitchell Lieber

This is a work-in-progress screening of a new Holocaust documentary. Director Mitchell Lieber will answer questions about the little-known Holocaust in Latvia and the massacre of 25,000 Jews in the Rumbula Forest, outside Riga, in late November-early December 1941.

7:00-9:00 pm, Wells Hall B-119



**Sunday, April 7**

Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival

Film *Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald* (2012), directed by Rob Cohen

The movie tells the story of rescue inside the concentration camp by the Communist-led international clandestine resistance, and highlights the role of the blockelder of Kinderblock 66, Antonin Kalina.

Kenneth Waltzer will present the film.

5:00 pm, Berman Center, Jewish Community Center, West Bloomfield, MI



**Wednesday, April 10**

MSU Symposium on Hebrew and Israeli Literature: Panels

10:20 am Meir Shalev's Oeuvre

Meir Shalev [author and writer], Robert Alter [UC Berkeley], Rachel Harris [U. Illinois Urbana], Marc Bernstein [MSU]

1:30 pm Revival of Hebrew as a National Language

Miryam Segal [CUNY Queens], Arieh Saposnik [UCLA], Yaakov Herskowitz [U-M]

3:30 pm War and Violence in Israeli Culture

Ranen Omer-Sherman, [U Miami], Daniel Statman [Haifa University], Guy Meirson, [Sam Spiegel Film School, Tel Aviv].

Wells Hall B-342

**Thursday, April 18**

21st David and Sarah Rabin Lecture of the Holocaust

*"The Minsk Ghetto: Jews and Byelorussians as Allies in Resistance"*

Barbara Epstein, University of California-Santa Cruz

In her most recent book, *The Minsk Ghetto: 1941-1943: Jewish Resistance and Soviet Internationalism*

(2008), Barbara Epstein explores the little-known but significant cooperation among Jews and Byelorussians in and around Minsk and what difference it made for targeted Jewish victims under Nazi rule.

7:00-9:00 pm Lincoln Room, Kellogg Center





## Guy Meirson, Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist

MSU Jewish Studies is pleased to be hosting a **Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist** this semester, supported by a grant from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation.

**Guy Meirson** is an Israeli screenwriter and writer who has won numerous awards in Israel and elsewhere, and whose film, *Rock the Casbah*, recently contended for an Israeli academy award (2012) in the Best Feature Film category and is an official selection of the Panorama section in the current Berlin Film Festival 2013. **Guy Meirson** is teaching Screenwriting in the Department of English this semester, and is also participating in the activities of the Jewish Studies Program and visiting several Jewish Studies specialization courses.



**Guy Meirson** was the scriptwriter for *One Small Step* (2003), and co-writer for *The Loners* (2008). He was head writer of *Room Service*, a popular Israeli TV show in 2009. Recently, his script for *Here Comes the Sun* (2012) won first prize at the Haifa Film Festival pitching event and will be produced by Israeli Green Production. **Guy Meirson** teaches screenwriting at the Sam Spiegel Film School in Jerusalem and also in Tel-Hai College in the north of Israel.

**Guy Meirson** will speak on “**The Israeli Soldier in Contemporary Israeli Films**,” on Wednesday, February 13, at 7:00 pm in B-117 Wells Hall. He will also be the centerpiece of a program titled “**Special Event: An Evening with Guy Meirson**” at the **8<sup>th</sup> Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival**, Sunday, March 17, at 7:00 pm in 147 Communication Arts and Sciences Building. You will want to spend this evening with our visitor, who is a special individual.

**Guy Meirson** is accompanied to East Lansing by his wife Natalie Melzer, a translator, and by a lovely kindergarten-aged daughter, Amalya. **Guy** is available for speaking engagements in Michigan while he is here and can be reached through MSU Jewish Studies at 517.432.3493 or via his email at [meirsong@gmail.com](mailto:meirsong@gmail.com).

## MASA Tuition Grants

MASA Israel Journey, a project of the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel, has named MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University’s Rothberg School a designated program in the MASA Israel Summer Initiative for 2013. MASA will provide \$1,000 tuition grants to all MSU students participating in the program.

These MASA grants will be automatically be given via MSU Study Abroad to **all** students, Jewish and non-Jewish, participating in the program. Students therefore need not apply for the MASA tuition grants.

## Summer Study Abroad Programs in Israel: June 9-26 & June 27-July 29

MSU’s Study Abroad Risk and Security Committee has approved study abroad in Israel. The **Nature, Culture, and Environmental Issues in a Green Israel** program will go from June 9-26. The **MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University** will go from June 27-July 29. Registration is required by March 1. Applications for Levy Scholarships (found on the Jewish Studies website) are due also by March 1.

**MSU’s Jewish Studies Summer Program at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem** offers 8 credits in the Arts and Humanities or Social Sciences. The Summer Program is sited at the Rothberg International School.

Professor **Yael Aronoff**, the **Serling and Friends Associate Professor of Israel Studies**, will teach a course on Israeli society and politics; Professor **David Mendelsson** will teach a course on the history of modern Israel.

Students will visit the Supreme Court, the Knesset, and the Israel Democracy Institute; meet with members of Israeli social movements, Israeli academics, and NGOs; and tour the old city of Jerusalem, Masada, the Dead Sea, Qumran, Jaffa, Acre (Akko), Haifa, Yad Vashem, the Sea of Galilee, and Tel Aviv.

Students in the **Green Israel** study abroad program led by Professor **Eric Aronoff** will explore through hands-on activities the role of nature and the environment in Israeli culture while examining environmental challenges and solutions. They will begin at Hebrew University, then travel to the Dead Sea and En Gedi, then journey south into the Arava Valley to the coral reefs in Eilat, and to the ecovillage **Kibbutz Lotan**. This kibbutz employs organic gardening, alternative building techniques, gray water reclamation, and solar energy. Students will also meet with faculty of the **Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research**.

Finally, with faculty in Environmental Science at **Tel Chai College** in the north, students will tend trails in the national park in Tel Chai, conduct soil tests in the Biriya forest with researchers, support reforestation strategies, and help restore wetlands in the Hula Reserve. Some students will return to **Kibbutz Lotan** for an additional three-week civic engagement project.





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## Academic News

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**Yael Aronoff** will participate in the conference “Israel Studies and Jewish Studies in America” at American University in Washington, DC, on March 3, 2013, and will lecture for the MSU Alumni Association on “An Israeli-Palestinian Peace Agreement?” in East Lansing on April 1, 2013. Professor Aronoff is serving as Associate Director of Jewish Studies during spring 2013.

**Marc Bernstein** is leading the planning efforts for the Symposium on Israeli Literature sponsored by MSU Jewish Studies, to coincide with the opening of the Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection April 9-10 at MSU, with special guests Israeli novelist Meir Shalev, UC-Berkeley literary scholar Robert Alter, et. al.

**Ilana Blumberg** is in Israel this year, and has taught a master’s class at Bar Ilan University in the Shaindy Rudoff Graduate Program in Creative Writing. She is participating in a year-long investigation “Zionism and the Land of Israel” at the Elul Center and a year-long program exploring “Violence in Classical Jewish Thought and Contemporary Reality” at the Beit Midrash for Social Justice in Jerusalem.

**Kirsten Fermaglich’s** co-edited volume (with Lisa Fine), the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, appeared in print in December 2012. Kirsten will lecture about Betty Friedan at Rowan University on March 5, 2013.

**Steve Gold** edited (with Stephanie Nawyn) *Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies* (Routledge, 2013). He contributed to the book the chapter “Using Photography in Studies of International Migration” and the chapter “The Contingent Basis of Transnational Networks among Israel Emigrants” to *International Migration and Social Development*, edited by Min Zhou and Guoxion Zhang, published in China.

**Deborah Margolis** and **Kirsten Fermaglich** presented in December 2012 “Telling Family Stories: Finding American Jewish History in Cookbooks and Schoolbooks” at the 44th Association of Jewish Studies’ digital media workshop. Deborah Margolis is preparing an exhibit featuring materials from the Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman collection and archive for display during the Symposium in April 2013.

**Anna Norris** will attend the 6th International Conference on Women and the Holocaust in Israel to present “Simone Lagrange Kadoshe, Guilty to Be Born; a Teenager at Auschwitz” in March 2013. Her essay “Mauvaises mères et fille meurtries dans les textes d'Irène Némirovsky” will appear in volume 40 of *French Literature Series* (2013).

**Benjamin Pollock** was awarded the Jordan Schnitzer Prize for best book (in the past four years) in the field of Jewish thought and philosophy at the 44th Association of Jewish Studies meeting in Chicago on December 16, 2012. The award committee named Professor Pollock’s *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy* “the best book in modern Jewish philosophy in a generation.”

**Kenneth Waltzer** will also participate in the conference “Israel Studies and Jewish Studies in America” on March 3, 2013, and is preparing a workshop (with Teddy Robertson) on “Teaching and Researching with Testimonies,” jointly with the USC Shoah Foundation, to occur at the University of Michigan-Flint from July 15-19, 2013. Kenneth Waltzer is currently co-coordinator of the network of Jewish Studies directors.