

Jewish Studies Program

Fall Semester 2008



Michigan State University

College of Arts & Letters
301 Linton Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1044
Telephone: 517-432-3493
Fax: 517-355-4507
Web: www.jsp.msu.edu
E-mail: jewishst@msu.edu

Kenneth Waltzer, Director
Michael Serling, Chair, Advisory Board
Milo Woodard, Administrative Assistant

Jewish Studies Academic Program Review

This past spring, Jewish Studies completed an academic program review requested by the Office of the Provost. In our review, we examined faculty capacity and scholarly achievements, students served in courses and the specialization, courses and curricular needs, outreach and service, and also development activities. Faculty in Jewish Studies reviewed where we are and where we want to go in the next period.

Since 2001, core and affiliated faculty in Jewish Studies have published (or edited) nine books, 25 articles in peer review journals, 25 book chapters, and 20 essay reviews. Core faculty particularly have presented regularly at major Jewish Studies conferences and been invited lecturers at major universities and the U.S. Holocaust Museum. Two faculty won teaching excellence awards. Two core faculty were tenured; two are on the way. An affiliated faculty's book was a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award and won the Sami Rohr Choice Prize.

Since 2001, more than 4,400 students have enrolled in Jewish Studies courses in the specialization, as faculty capacity and effort has expanded. Study of Hebrew has grown significantly, by about 50%, and we now offer 300-level Hebrew. Enrollments have grown in General Education courses, History, English, James Madison and elsewhere, and study abroad in Israel has grown significantly. This past summer, 25 students studied in Israel.

The number of Jewish Studies specialists has also grown. In spring 2008, there were 46 students specializing in Jewish Studies. They came from ten different colleges, with clusters in

James Madison, Social Sciences, and Arts and Letters. Eighty three students pursued the specialization 2001-08.

Jewish Studies courses have provided active learning opportunities to students to learn about Jewish history, life, culture, and public issues in relatively small classes, employing engaging simulations and creative projects, and using new technologies innovatively.

At the same time, the Jewish Studies program has expanded an active annual calendar to include regular lectures and events on campus about *Yiddishkeit*, Jewish music and art, Jewish and Israeli film, the Holocaust, American Jewry, modern Israel, and Israel-Palestine. We have also sponsored an annual Israel Film Festival and an annual Holocaust Education Workshop, and have expanded our presence in southeast Michigan at the Detroit Jewish Book Fair, the Kirschner MSU Recruitment Day, and many other activities.

We have been greatly supported by the community, raising more than \$3,000,000 in current endowments, including the Serling and Friends Chair in Israel Studies and significant scholarships for study abroad in Israel, as well as \$275,000 in annual giving during the period.

At one point at MSU, not long ago, there was no Hebrew instruction, no courses in American Jewish history or Israeli history and culture, no study abroad in Israel, no annual calendar of Jewish Studies activities. Our program has made a significant difference in shaping the curriculum and co-curriculum, supporting faculty scholarship, assisting the university (with Muslim Studies) to focus on a neglected region, the Middle East, and helping

create (with MSU Hillel) a renaissance in Jewish life and study on campus.

During the next period, the Jewish Studies Program seeks to explore new institutional arrangements, broadening fiscal and other kinds of support. We also are interested in making new curricular changes, including creating a Jewish Studies subject code, a new core course, new forms of cross-listed courses, and upper level courses in global Jewish literature and other subjects.

We also are interested in aggressively pursuing new development – endowing and naming the program and director position, a visiting scholar fund, a guaranteed fellowship for specialists in good standing to study abroad, and more.

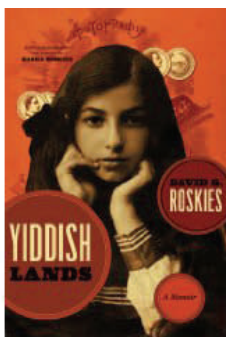
Faculty are also interested to shift emphasis slightly from the formula with which we began, with its focus on the historical transformation of Jewish life during the past century from Europe to two modern centers, America and Israel. Faculty seek to explore where possible also the internal diversity of Jewish life and culture throughout the modern Jewish diaspora and to strengthen study of the interaction of Jewish life and culture with those among whom Jews live or have lived.

We have enormously talented faculty, interested students, and a supportive community. To assess our progress, we have agreed to measure students served, faculty productivity and excellence, curriculum growth, and development successes. We are energized to take up these activities and to find new sources of institutional and community support. Please assist us.

~Ken Waltzer, Director

Yiddishkeit Lecture: "Yiddishlands"

Wednesday, November 5, 7:00 pm
MSU Union Green Room
David G. Roskies discusses his new memoir, *Yiddishlands*, to be published October, 2008. David G. Roskies is the Sol and Evelyn Henkind Chair in Yiddish Literature and Culture at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.



Jewish Studies-Hadassah Fall Brunch
Sunday, Oct. 26, 2007, 10:00 am -12:00
MSU University Club
\$20 ticket (\$15 per student)
Reservation (432-3493) and pay at door.
Featured Speaker: Yael Katzir, Visiting Israeli Filmmaker, Beit Berl College, Israel
"Putting Women on the Map:
Irma Lindheim, President of Hadassah"



Jewish Studies Specialists 2008

In spring 2008, Jewish Studies counted 46 specialists, a dozen of whom completed their courses this past May. We are proud of them and note that many are taking positions or preparing for careers that may impact on Jewish life and issues.

Ariana Segal (2008), James Madison International Relations, is currently the new Assistant Director of the Anti-Defamation League Office in Michigan. *Reisa Shanaman* (2008), Social Science-Psychology, is a Fellow of PANIM, the Jewish Institute for Leadership and Values in Washington DC, working with students on issues of social justice. *Nicole Miller* (2008), Social Science-Psychology, is a Fellow of OTZMA in Israel 2008-09 and will attend Washington University-St. Louis in social work.

Jessica Newman (2008), James Madison Social Relations & Policy, is in law school at Washington University-St. Louis. *Michael Epstein* (2008), James Madison IR, is at MSU law school supported by a Dean King Scholarship. *Samantha Dresser* (2008), Social Sciences-Psychology, is at NYU social work school and will seek a joint certificate with Hebrew Union College in Jewish communal service.

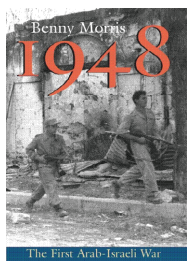
Josh Kaplan (2008), James Madison IR, is a recipient of a Legacy Heritage Fellowship and will be working with the American Israel Political Action Committee in Washington DC or at a think tank. *Avi Davidoff*, (2008), James Madison IR, is with the Bank of America in Chicago. *Rick Kamil* (2008), Arts and Letters-Humanities, is program assistant at Eastern Michigan U. Hillel and plans to attend rabbinical seminary. *Shannon McEvilly* (2008), James Madison-IR, will study Middle Eastern Studies.

Jewish Studies specialists in process are also accomplishing amazing things. *Dan Kuhn* (2009), James Madison IR, interned this summer for the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland, and for the *Jerusalem Post* in Israel. *Abby Misic* (2009), Religious Studies, attended Hebrew University's Rothberg School summer program in Bible Studies. *Rachel Frierson* (2008), James Madison-Political Theory, interned summer 2007 at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Jewish Studies specialists *Eric Awerbuch*, Arts and Letters-Philosophy, *Kallie Eisenberger*, James Madison IR/Political Theory, *Eric Mally*, James Madison-IR, *Rachel Frierson*, *Rebecca Steinman*, Arts and Letters-Humanities, *Ilana Sussman*, Social Science-PLS, and *Marissa Tons*, James Madison IR, were on the MSU summer 2008 program at Hebrew University's Rothberg School.

Upcoming Events

Rubner to Teach Short Course on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



Professor Emeritus Michael Rubner will teach a one-credit course in James Madison College this fall in late September on the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during 1947-1948. The course will cover partition, the war of independence, and the creation of the State of Israel as well as the Palestinian *nakbah* and the origins of the refugee issue. Students are eligible to enroll in MC 300 and adults can participate as lifelong learners. The text is Benny Morris, *1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (2008).

The course will meet Sept. 15-18, 23-25, 7:00-9:00 pm in 339 Case Hall.

Thursday, September 25

"A Jewish Childhood and Survival in France In World War II"

Jacqueline Mendels Birn, Hidden Child in France

3:30-5:00 pm Dean's Conference Room, 320 Linton Hall

Co-sponsored by the U.S. Holocaust Museum and by the Department of French, Classics and Italian.



Tuesday, October 28

"Women's Voice and the Macho Clubs in Israel—the Military and the Religious Establishments"

Yael Katzir, Professor, Independent Producer, Director, Beit Berl College, Israel.

7:00-9:00 pm, 147 Communication Arts & Sciences

Co-sponsored by the Department of Linguistics and Languages.



Monday, November 10

Israeli Film Presentation

"A Fool's Dream," written and directed by Daniel Syrkin and Ido Bahat.

Lev Syrkin, father of director Daniel Syrkin, is a Moscow-born artist. He left an illustrious career in the USSR to realize his dream and come to Israel with his family in 1972.

This film is a journey throughout Israel, connecting Lev's work, his career, and his dreams.

7:15 pm, 147 Communication Arts Building

Co-sponsored by the Department of Linguistics & Languages.



Monday, November 17

"The American-Israel Relation, after the American Election and Before the Israeli Election."

Herb Keinon, Diplomatic Correspondent for the Jerusalem Post

7:00 pm, 339 Case Hall

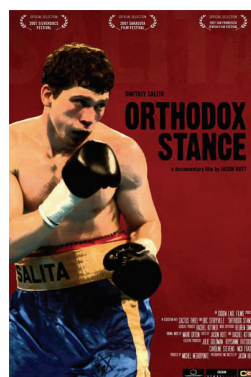
Co-sponsored by MSU Hillel



Wednesday, November 19

MSU Library Colloquia Series and MSU Jewish Studies present The 2008 Kessler Film Event, *"Orthodox Stance,"* a documentary portrait of Dmitriy Salita, an orthodox Jewish professional boxer. Commentary and discussion to follow with Kirsten Fermaglich, Associate Professor of History and Steve Weiland, Professor of Education.

7:00 pm, 4th Floor, MSU Library



2008 MSU Israel Studies Summer Program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

By Professor Marc Bernstein

—*There is no way Israel will ever leave my heart. There is forever a special place in my heart for this land and what it means to me!*
—*This really has been a trip of a lifetime! It was absolutely amazing.*
—*Between learning about Jerusalem and gaining an understanding of the Zionist movement the trip to Israel was a great success and a whole lot of fun. Meeting new people and learning more about a new culture was fantastic and enlightening.*
—*How do you sum up the best experience of your life (and I'm not using this term lightly, I truly believe it)? This is definitely something that I can remember for a lifetime and tell my kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids, and that's good enough for me.*

These quotes convey some of the excitement and lasting memories generated by the 2008 MSU Jewish Studies summer program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Twenty MSU undergraduates from a broad range of backgrounds and academic interests participated in the program which takes place in the Israel Studies Institute of the Rothberg International School. This year's overwhelming response was assisted by the Levy and Slade scholarships administered by JSP, which offered 18 scholarships to help defray the costs of this rigorous eight-credit program.

Professor Marc Bernstein led the program and taught a course on the historical geography and culture of Jerusalem, taking advantage of the students' presence in Jerusalem to delve into the city's rich past, explore its present, and look to possible futures. Students learned about the major events in Jerusalem's history, its place in the human imagination, and its significance over the millennia as a source for tremendous cultural innovation. Central to our considerations was the notion of constructed collective memory and the competition over sacred space. Field trips to diverse archaeological and cultural treasures close at hand, under the guidance of professional guide Barak Zemer, traced the history of Jerusalem from its ancient Canaanite origins down to the present. Students kept academic response journals and completed final research projects.

Students also took a course taught by Dr. David Mendelsson on the emergence of the modern State of Israel in which they surveyed ideological, political and social developments surrounding the collective identity of the Jewish community in Palestine from the beginnings of political Zionism through the sixty years of statehood. As part of this course, students were able to explore the National Cemetery at Mt. Herzl, areas of the Galilee and the North, as well as important historical sites in Tel Aviv.

Kallie Eisenberger summed up her experience: Israel was not at all what I anticipated it to be. The little expectations that I had coming in were immediately erased on day one, and I am so glad for this. Almost everyday we had some type of tour in the city and this, in my opinion, was something of extreme value that I hope the program in the coming years continues to do. I really felt that I learned so much more about the history and complexity of Jerusalem by being physically present instead of being taught about them only in a classroom. I cannot even begin to explain what it felt like to stand on Temple Mount, touch the Western Wall, and go inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Our trip truly encompassed aspects of each of the Abrahamic religions, which I deeply appreciated and found to be extremely interesting.... While we were there for five short weeks, I know that everything I learned, saw, and experienced will stick with me for a lifetime. Standing on top of Masada and looking across to the sun rising over the Dead Sea and Jordan, looking up at the Dome of Rock, and even wandering the Old City with friends are irreplaceable memories for me and I sincerely feel that going on study abroad was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Check out the blog (msuisrael.blogspot.com) to view the students' trip and lecture reports, as well as the results of their research projects.

Marc Bernstein will again be leading the Program in 2009. For more details about the program, contact him at msb@msu.edu and see: <http://studyabroad.msu.edu/programs/israeljewish.html>.



MSU Jewish Studies group in the Old City of Jerusalem.

MSU Green Israel Study Abroad Program

By Professor Michael Kaplowitz

The inaugural MSU Green Israel Program in cooperation with Keren Kayemet Lelsrael-Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF) June 10-25, 2008 focused on natural

resource and environmental management in Israel and attracted five students. Students studied at Tel Aviv University and Tel-Hai College in Kfar Giladi and briefly heard lectures at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. They did hands-on fieldwork in the Tel Dan Nature Reserve, Biriya Forest, and Hula Lake Reserve.

The group visited "The Greenhouse" on the Ein Shemer Kibbutz and worked primarily clearing waterways in the Tel Dan Nature Park, measuring and evaluating conifer forest regeneration in Biriya Forest, and trimming trees and clearing habitat in the Hula Valley Reserve. The group visited Arab Israeli villages and a regional project for reclaiming wastewater for

use irrigating Arab olive groves.

There were also exciting visits to archaeological sites with guides at Caesara, Sepphoris, and the Old City in Jerusalem. Faculty and students rafted down the upper Jordan River, visited Nimrod's Fortress, swam in the Sea of Galilee, and went to the Dead Sea.

The program was led by Dr. Michael Kaplowitz of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources who created the new initiative. Students were from the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Natural Science, Business, and the University of Michigan. The program summer 2009 will be led by Dr. Rob Richardson. It will begin at Hebrew University rather than Tel Aviv University and continue at Tel-Hai College and Kibbutz Kfar Giladi.





Michigan State University

College of Arts & Letters
301 Linton Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824-1044

Phone: 517-432-3493
Fax: 517-355-4507
Email: jewishst@msu.edu
www.jsp.msu.edu

MSU is an affirmative-action,
equal-opportunity institution.

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
East Lansing, MI
Permit #21

Academic News

Yael Aronoff presented "*Predicting Peace: An Israeli-Palestinian Final Agreement by 2009?*" at the Association for Israel Studies Conference in New York in May 2008. Yael also participated in two roundtables at the American Political Science Association in August, 2008, where she talked about "*Pursuing Peace to Achieve Security*," and "*Arabs and Israelis after Annapolis: Is The Peace Process Headed Anywhere?*"

Safoi Babana-Hampton researched female Sephardic autobiographical narratives from Morocco this summer. She presented "*Voyage au-dela du Mellah, Voyage au bout du Mellah*" at the International Council of Francophone Studies (CIEF) in France in July, on Gracia Cohen's childhood narratives set in the traditional Moroccan Jewish quarter (the Mellah). She will present on the portrayal of Jewish identity in singer Sapho's postmodern fiction at the Middle East Studies Association in Washington, D.C. in November.

Marc Bernstein was awarded tenure and promoted to associate professor at MSU in spring 2008. Marc led the MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University's Rothberg School in summer 2008 and will do so again in summer 2009. He taught a new course at Hebrew University focused on Jerusalem.

Ilana Blumberg's excellent memoir, *Houses of Study: A Jewish Woman Among Books*, earned the Sami Rohr Jewish Literature Choice Award, which was presented to Ilana in spring 2008 in Jerusalem. Ilana opens the Jewish Book Fair in Ann Arbor with a reading from *Houses of Study* November 5 and will speak at the plenary of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism later the same month. She will speak in December at Spertus College in Chicago on Jewish memoirs of Chicago.

Kirsten Fermaglich was awarded a Milstein Family Research Fellowship for research into Jewish communal life in New York City 2008-09. She will present her new research on "*American Jews and Name-Changing*" at the Religion and American Culture colloquium at MSU this October, and at the Association for Jewish Studies conference in Washington, D.C. in December.

Lynne Goldstein is teaching a new Jewish Studies course this fall in Integrative Studies in Social Science, ISS 315: Global Diversity and Interdependence on *The Jewish Experience*. The course will explore the origins of Judaism, Yiddish civilization, modern Jewish experience, and more.

Anna Norris presented a paper at the Women in French International Conference in Dallas, Texas on self hatred and Jewish anti-Semitism in the works of Irene Nemirovsky (April 2008). Her paper was solicited by the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City, which will open an exhibition on Irene Nemirovsky in September titled "Woman of Letters: Irene Nemirovsky and Suite Francaise."

Benjamin Pollock published an edited collection, *The Philosopher as Witness: Fackenheim and Responses to the Holocaust*, with Michael Morgan, from SUNY Press in spring 2008. This summer he participated in Princeton University's first Workshop in Jewish Thought. His *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy* will appear in spring 2009 from Cambridge University Press.

Keely Stauter-Halsted negotiated a preliminary cooperation agreement for MSU with the Jewish Studies Department at Jagellonian University in Cracow, Poland, this summer. The agreement envisions short-term faculty and graduate student research and teaching exchanges and involves Jewish Studies, History, and Gender and Women's Studies. Keely will deliver a keynote on "*Peasant Antisemitism in Poland*" at an International Workshop on Agrarian History in Lublin in September.

Ken Waltzer delivered the Mona and Otto Weinmann lecture at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in May and was one of 15 scholars supported by the Museum to explore the newly opened Red Cross International Tracing Service archive in Bad Arolsen in June. He will give the Fred Herzog Lecture at John Marshall College of Law in Chicago on "*Opening the Red Cross Archive*" in September, and will present his work on child-saving at Buchenwald at the World Federation of Child Survivors and the Association of Jewish Studies this fall.