

Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2009

Michigan State University

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Jewish Studies Against Academic Boycott

MSU's Jewish Studies program focuses on the study of Jewish life, particularly the transformation in Jewish life during the past century. What once was central, Europe, is today peripheral; what once were peripheral, North America and Israel, are central. More than 80% of the world's Jews live now in these two centers. More than 40% live in Israel, a thriving modern state with a complex and vital politics, society and culture.

MSU's Jewish Studies' mission involves teaching about Israeli society and culture. Students can study Hebrew through the intermediate level; students can explore issues in Israel Studies or study Israeli literature. Students may study abroad on several programs in Israel. Faculty members regularly travel to Israel and engage in important original research and participate in conferences there.

MSU and Jewish Studies have ties with Israeli universities and Jewish Studies annually hosts Israeli scholars, journalists, filmmakers, and others on campus. Jewish Studies offers an annual Modern Israel lecture and hosts an annual Israeli Film Festival to share insights about Israeli people, society, and culture. These activities explore many facets of Israel and do not advance a singular view.

The call by some colleagues in the wake of the Israel-Hamas Gaza war for the academic and cultural boycott of Israel is offensive to the values of the university, counter-productive in

terms of the search for peace, and a direct attack on the academic freedom of faculty in the Jewish Studies program. We oppose it.

The U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel feigns interest in peace but actively simplifies the conflict and attempts to demonize Israel. It calls on universities to refrain from academic or cultural cooperation with and to boycott Israeli institutions, academics, and performers.

In 2007, in response to the call for an academic and cultural boycott of Israel in Great Britain, more than 300 American university presidents, including MSU President Lou Anna Simon, said: "In seeking to quarantine Israeli universities and scholars, this vote threatens every university committed to fostering scholarly and cultural exchanges that lead to enlightenment, empathy, and a much-needed international marketplace of ideas." The presidents stood firmly "against such intellectually shoddy and politically biased attempts to hijack the central mission of higher education."

The call for such a boycott is also counter-productive to the search for peace – Israeli universities are the loci of advocacy for peace in Israel as well as the leading practitioners of Jewish-Arab cooperation. Israel's institutions of higher education include outstanding scholars of Israeli, Israeli Arab, Druze, Bedouin, and Palestinian life. And many of the most potent critics of Israel's failures to achieve peace are in its

universities.

Finally, such a campaign for closing the free exchange of ideas is counter to our most basic values. The campaign seeks to bar people based on their national origin and to infringe on the academic freedom of those who study Jewish life and cooperate with Israeli scholars and institutions. Proponents of academic and cultural boycott also contribute to a not-so-subtle change in the campus climate, polarizing, slo-ganizing, and demonizing instead of searching for complex truth. This makes it more difficult for students to dialogue and search for truths on both sides of the conflict.

It is difficult for those of us in Jewish Studies to avoid asking why for some people Israel is the incarnation of evil— a pariah state to be excluded from civilized discourse. We stand against such caricaturing of the Jewish state and we see in it echoes of earlier themes directed against the Jews. Once again some people view Jews as an alien presence in a continent; once again Jews stand accused. It is in this light that we see the absolutely insensitive call for boycott, a call with terrible meaning in the history of the Jews. It is also incredible to us that such a campaign to boycott Israel seeks to delegitimize the only democracy in the region. We wish to continue to ensure that MSU students encounter a world of ideas reflecting the complex realities of Israel and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
~ Ken Waltzer, Director



The 17th Annual David & Sarah Rabin Lecture on the Holocaust
Monday, April 20, 2009, 7:00 pm, in the Kellogg Center Lincoln Room
Shlomo Aronson, Professor Emeritus-The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"The Holocaust and the Origins of the State of Israel"

Professor Shlomo Aronson, author of the award-winning, *Hitler, the Allies, and the Jews (2005)*, who is a Schusterman Visiting Professor this spring at the University of Arizona, will speak on the relationship between the Holocaust and the origins of the State of Israel. He will then lead a faculty seminar on Tuesday, April 21, at 4:30 pm in Eustace-Cole Hall (Honors College) on a paper "Israel's Security and the Holocaust: Lessons Learned but Existential Fears Continue," in *Israel Studies* 14:1 (Spring, 2009). Copies will be available from Jewish Studies.

Professor Shlomo Aronson was born in Palestine during the British Mandate. He was educated at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the University of Munich and the Free University of Berlin. He was a member of the Political Science Department at Hebrew University and director of the university's Center of European Studies. He has been a visiting scholar at UCLA and the University of Arizona this past year.

Events

Wednesday, February 4

Third Annual Michael & Elaine Serling Lecture
On Modern Israel: "Frontier Myths in
America and Israel Compared"

Ilan Troen, Stoll Family Chair in Israel Studies
at Brandeis University

7:00 pm, MSU Union, Green Room



Friday, February 13

"American Jews and Name Changing: 1930-1960"

Kirsten Fermaglich, Assoc. Professor of History,
Michigan State University

12:00-1:30 pm, 321 Linton Hall

Friday, February 20

"Sephardic Jewish Culture in
Moroccan Francophone
Literature and Film"

Safoi Babana-Hampton, Asst. Professor,
Department of French, Classics and Italian,
Michigan State University

12:00-1:30 pm, 321 Linton Hall



Monday, March 2

Stanley & Selma Hollander Jewish Arts and
Music Lecture: Yiddish Radio and Theatre"

Henry Sapoznik, Visiting Professor at
University of Wisconsin-Madison

7:00-8:30 pm, MSU Union, Green Room



Wednesday, March 18

"Israel and Palestine: A Journalist's
Perspective"

Linda Gradstein, NPR Correspondent

7:00-8:30 pm, 339 Case Hall

Co-sponsored with MSU Hillel.



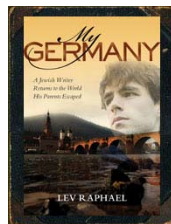
Wednesday, March 25

"My Germany"

Lev Raphael, noted author

3:00-4:30 pm, 303 International Center

Co-sponsored with Linguistics and Languages



Wednesday, April 8

"No Angel at the Fence: Finding a
Holocaust Memoir Fraud"

Kenneth Waltzer, Professor
and Director of Jewish Studies, MSU

12:00-1:30 pm, 321 Linton Hall



Monday, April 20

17th Annual David & Sarah Rabin Lecture
on the Holocaust—"The Holocaust and the
Origins of the State of Israel"

Shlomo Aronson

7:00 pm, Kellogg Center, Lincoln room



Study Abroad in Israel, Summer 2008

Jewish Studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem

June 25—July 29, 2009 (8 cr.)

Deadline: March 31, 2009

This program in the Israel Studies Institute at the Rothberg International School enables students to earn 8 credits in the arts and humanities or social sciences while living and studying at the Hebrew University. Dr. Marc Bernstein is leading the program, which focuses on the history, society and culture of Israel. Two courses, on the Making of Modern Israel, and on The Land of Israel in Historical Perspective, are offered. Courses meet SMWTh, with excursions on T. Jewish Studies offers Levy scholarships to students who meet the eligibility criteria. Contact: msb@msu.edu.

Samaritan Texts

Marc Bernstein, Professor of Hebrew language and literature, is participating as advisor in a special project at MSU to expand access to Samaritan texts via the internet. MSU's Writing in Digital Environments (WIDE) research center has received an NEH grant to digitize twenty pages from two of MSU's Israeli Samaritan Pentateuchs (Torahs) dating from the 15th century.

The Pentateuchs are part of MSU's Chamberlain Warren Collection, the largest collection of Samaritan material in the Western Hemisphere. It is housed in Special Collections. WIDE is working with the A.B. Samaritan Institute in Holon, Israel to create a usable and living archive for the Israelite Samaritan community in Holon and Nablus and for biblical scholars.

The aim is to bring together two distinct groups of users - textual scholars and members of the Israelite Samaritan community via an online environment in which they can view and interpret the Samaritan texts and interact with one another. Jim Ridolfo, Ph.D. student in writing, who received a Levy Scholarship to study Hebrew at Haifa University in 2008, is a key leader in the project.

MSU Hebrew 102 Pilots New Learning Program

Ellen Rothfeld will begin piloting a program called E-Tone, an electronic news digest in Hebrew, in Hebrew 102 this semester. MSU will be the first university in the U.S. to use this program. E-Tone, developed by the Jerusalem based Ulpan-Or, features text and audio of current news items that have been broadcast in Israel. Its developers are providing a free subscription to MSU Hebrew 102 students, who will receive the material weekly by email, allowing them to download it to their computers and portable players (IPods, etc.). It is anticipated that incorporating this program into the Hebrew classes will dramatically improve students' Hebrew proficiency skills and broaden their understanding of Israeli culture and society.

Jewish Studies Advisory Board

Michael Serling, Chair

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Ken Waltzer and Milo Woodard, Newsletter Co-editors

Monday, April 27

"Telling the Story—The Rescue of Children and Youths at Buchenwald: New Holocaust Scholarship for the Next Generation"

Kenneth Waltzer, Professor and Director of Jewish Studies, MSU.

7:00 pm, The Holocaust Memorial Center, 28123 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills.
RSVP Brenda Samson at 517--884-1038.

To be introduced by Kim Wilcox, Provost of MSU.

This is a joint undertaking involving MSU Jewish Studies, MSU Development, MSU Alumni Association, the College of Arts and Letters, and University Relations.

TELLING THE STORY



The Rescue of Children and Youths at Buchenwald

New Holocaust scholarship for the next generation



The Story of Exodus: The Passover Haggadah

The Kresge Art Museum and MSU Jewish Studies together with the MSU Library invite you to attend an exhibition (March 21 – April 15, 2009) that includes over 35 Passover Haggadot on loan from the Jewish Heritage Collection, Special Collections, at the University of Michigan.

Ilana Blumberg, Jewish Studies and James Madison College, held a Gallery Talk on the history of the Haggadah at the opening reception on March 24.

A book discussion, *"People of the Book"* by Geraldine Brooks, led by Marc Bernstein, Jewish Studies and College of Arts & Letters was held on April 1. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Geraldine Brooks explores the story of the mysterious 15th century Sarajevo Haggadah.

Kresge Art Museum is exhibiting the earlier historical Haggadot showing the influence of medieval Christian illustrations on the Haggadah as well as more recent artistic Haggadot by Ben Shahn and David Moss.

MSU Library Special Collections is exhibiting a range of American and Israeli 20th century Haggadot, including such things as consumer-product, feminist, and kibbutznik Haggadot, that have appeared in the two contemporary centers of global Jewish life.

The exhibition is funded by a special grant from the College of Arts and Letters. MSU Jewish Studies is pleased to work with Susan Bandes and the Kresge Art Museum during this 50th anniversary year of the Kresge Art Museum.

Fourth Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival: March 29-30 ~ 147 Communication Arts & Sciences

Children of the Sun

Sunday, March 29
at 7:00 pm
Free

With Miri Talmon-Bohm,
Visiting Schusterman Professor
At the University of Wisconsin-
Madison



Arab Labor

Sunday, March 29
at 4:00 pm
Free



Noodle

Sunday, March 29
at 7:00 pm
\$5 adults
\$3 students & seniors



Lady Kul El Arab

Monday, March 30
at 7:00 pm
Free





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Academic News

Yael Aronoff's essay, "*From Hawks to Peacemakers: A Comparison of Two Israeli Prime Ministers*," will appear in **Israel Studies Forum** 24:1 (Summer 2009). Another essay, "*From Warfare to Withdrawal: The Legacy of Ariel Sharon*," is under review. Professor Aronoff continues writing her book *When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace*, and has been invited to participate in a conference on "Democracy, Religion, and Conflict: The Dilemmas of Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking" at the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs, the Maxwell School Syracuse University in March 2009.

Safoi Babana-Hampton's article *Les femmes-récits: Gracia Cohen ou Mémoire judéo-marocaine au féminin [Narrative Women: Gracia Cohen or the Feminization of Moroccan-Jewish Identity]* will appear in **Expression Maghrébines** in summer 2009. She will also present "*L'inscription d'une identité dispersée et recomposée dans 'Les yeux de l'orpheline' de Colette Roumanoff*" ["*Inscribing a Dispersed and Recomposed Identity in Colette Roumanoff's text 'The Eyes of the Orphan Girl'*"] on the diasporic writing of Sephardic Jewish writer C. Roumanoff at the French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium at the University of Minnesota in March, 2009.

Marc Bernstein's *Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations Between Judaism and Islam* will appear in paperback from Wayne State University Press in 2009. Professor Bernstein is teaching a new course on Hebrew literature this spring in English and will be on sabbatical leave during 2009-10 exploring the innovative uses of traditional motifs in the works of modern Hebrew authors. Professor Bernstein is again leading the MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University's Rothberg International School in summer 2009.

Ilana Blumberg's *Houses of Study: A Jewish Woman Among Books* will appear in paperback from Bison Books in March 2009. Ilana Blumberg was a finalist for the Moment Magazine Award (2008) for an Emerging Writer.

Kirsten Fermaglich was awarded an MSU Provost Undergraduate Research Initiative Award to assist in her research on Jewish name-changing this past semester, and has been invited to join the Academic Council of the Jewish Women's Archive Advisory Board. She presented "*Name-Changing and the Paradoxes of American Jewish Economic Life*" at the Association for Jewish Studies meeting in Washington, D.C. in December, 2008.

Steve Gold published "*From Nationality to Peoplehood: Adaptation and Identity Formation in the Israeli Diaspora*," **Diaspora** 13, 2/3 (Fall/Winter 2004): 331-358 (2008). He presented on "*Immigrant Entrepreneurs' Relations with Customers in the Early 20th Century US*," at the American Sociological Association Meeting in Boston in August 2008. "*Transnational Ties During a Time of Crisis: Israeli Emigration, 2000 to 2004*," will appear in **International Migration** in 2009 (with Rona Hart).

David Mendelsson recently published "*Embracing Jewish Day School Education in England 1965-79*," in the **History of Education**.

Anna Norris' essay "*Guerre et identité juive : Irène Némirovsky et la haine de soi*," on writer Irene Nemirovsky will be published in **Women in French Studies**. The essay deals with Jewish anti-semitism and self hatred in her novels and essays.

Benjamin Pollock's book *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy* has been published by Cambridge University Press. During spring, 2009, Professor Pollock will be away from MSU on research leave working on esotericism in the writings of Solomon Maimon.

Keely Stauter-Halsted is on sabbatical 2008-09 working on a book *Out of the Shadows: Prostitution and Social Control in Partitioned Poland*. This fall, Professor Stauter-Halsted initiated a partnership agreement between MSU (including Jewish Studies) and the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland. Professor Stauter-Halsted will provide the keynote address "*Rescue in the Polish Countryside*," accompanying the opening of the exhibit, "Polish Heroes: Those Who Rescued Jews," at the Polish Studies Center at the University of Washington in Seattle in February, 2009.

Ken Waltzer's essay, "*Opening the Red Cross International Tracing Service Archive*," appears in the **John Marshall Journal of Computer and Information Law** 26:1 (January 2009). Professor Waltzer recently presented "*The Rescue of Children and Youths at Buchenwald*" at the Association for Jewish Studies conference in Washington D.C. in December and will participate in a Detroit symposium in May 2009 with Deborah Dash Moore of the Frankel Judaic Center at the University of Michigan connected with the Library of Congress traveling exhibit "From Haven to Home," on American Jewish history.