

Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2011



Michigan State University

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Kenneth Waltzer, Director
Michael Serling, Chair, Advisory Board
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Note from the Director: A Decade of Change

MSU's Jewish Studies Program has gotten several big boosts permitting us to start exciting new initiatives. This fall, Michael Serling, head of our Board of Directors, provided a gift of \$1 million to permit partnering with other MSU units to support a Visiting Israeli Scholar one semester annually. Thanks to Michael, we have now also obtained a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor grant to expand this initiative and support a visitor for the full year 2011-12. We are vetting candidates in partnership with the Department of English to select a scholar on Israeli film and literature.

Supported by a MASA grant to expand enrollment in study abroad in Israel, we are also building a brand new MSU spring semester academic program at the Hebrew University to begin in 2012 with courses attractive to new constituencies on campus, including students in Business, Communications, the Social Sciences, and the Arts and Humanities. In connection, we have received a pledge of \$250,000 from industrialist Ed Levy Jr. to expand scholarships for MSU students studying in Israel.

The Association for Jewish Studies also awarded us a public programming grant for 2011-12 on the topic "**Telling Family Stories:**

Jews, Genealogy, and History." Professor Kirsten Fermaglich is leading this initiative which will support major speakers and events on and off campus on Jewish genealogy, the Jewish family in American history, literature, and autobiography. A full schedule will be announced this spring. **Sally Ann Sack**, perhaps the leading Jewish genealogist in the U.S., will speak in a kick-off event on "**Jewish Genealogy in the 21st Century**" at the Jewish Studies-Hadassah Fall brunch on October 16, 2011.

Meantime, we have a vital schedule of activities planned for this spring semester 2011. We will be hosting Israeli writer **Etgar Keret** in a special community event in the Hannah Community Center auditorium on March 31. We will be hosting the sixth annual MSU Israeli Film Festival on March 20-21 (see insert). The Stanley and Selma Hollander Lecture on Jewish Art and Music will involve the film **The Klezmatics: On Holy Ground**, on February 15. And for the David and Sarah Rabin Holocaust Lecture, we will host **Alon Confino** of the University of Virginia speaking on "**A World Without Jews: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.**" This is a joint initiative with the Holocaust Memorial Center on "**New Directions in**

Study of the Holocaust." Professor Confino will lecture at the Center in Farmington Hills on April 13 and at MSU on April 14.

Last, but not least, Jewish Studies faculty members at MSU have been winning lots of recognition and awards. We take pride in their accomplishments which strengthen the program. First, we are celebrating the winning of three MSU Teacher-Scholar Awards in two years during February – **Yael Aronoff** and **Eric Aronoff** won this year and **Ilana Blumberg** won last year. Congratulations! Rumor also has it that, in a closed door luncheon that not even the Jewish Studies director could attend, **Benjamin Pollock** received the prestigious **Salo Baron Award** for the best first book in Jewish Studies this December. Benjamin has also been awarded the prestigious **Padnos Visiting Professorship** in Jewish Studies by the Frankel Judaic Studies Center at the University of Michigan for spring 2012, where he will teach courses in Jewish philosophy. **Ken Waltzer** is selected as the **Winegarden Visiting Professor** at the University of Michigan-Flint in 2011-12 and will be staying on as director of the program for an additional three-year term, 2011-14.
~ Kenneth Waltzer, Director

Special Community Lecture

Etgar Keret

Thursday, March 31

7:00 -9:00 pm

East Lansing Hannah Community Center,
Albert A. White Performing Arts Theater
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing



Best-selling Israeli writer and filmmaker, **Etgar Keret**, hailed as the voice of young Israel and one of its most radical and extraordinary writers, is internationally acclaimed for his short stories offering a window on a surreal world that is at once funny and sad. His books, including *The Bus Driver Who Would Be God*, *The Nimrod Flip-out*, and *Pizzeria Kamikaze*, are bestsellers in Israel and have been published in twenty-two languages. His film, *Jellyfish* (2007), won the Golden Camera (*Camera d'Or*) Award at Cannes.

19th Annual David & Sarah Rabin Lecture On the Holocaust

Thursday, April 14

Dr. Alon Confino

Professor of History, the University
of Virginia

**"A World Without Jews: Nazi
Germany and the Holocaust."**

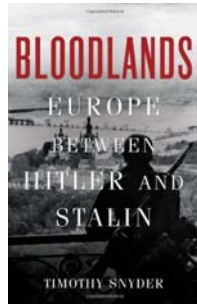


7:00-9:00 p.m., Lincoln Room, Kellogg Center. Reception after. Prof. Confino's forthcoming *A World Without Jews: Nazi Germany, Representations of the Past, and the Holocaust*, explores German memory and fantasy which underlie the persecution and extermination of the Jews. His is a cultural approach to the study of the Holocaust. Prof. Confino's other new book, *Foundational Pasts: An Essay in Holocaust Interpretation*, will appear later this year.

Upcoming Events

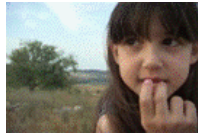
Thursday, January 20

Talking Books: A Series -Spring 2011
Timothy Snyder: **"Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin"** (2010).
Discussants: Dean Sherman Garnett, Prof. Kenneth Waltzer
12:00-1:30 pm, James Madison College Library, Case Hall.
"History of a high order," says Timothy Garton Ash.



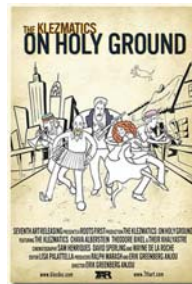
Thursday, February 3

Jewish Studies/Hillel Jewish Student Center
Film Event
"Reflections of Jerusalem on the Screen."
Israeli Film Director, **Yoram Honig**
Mr. Honig presents his 2006 award winning film, **"First Lesson In Peace,"** "which explores the Israeli-Arab conflict through the eyes of his six-year-old daughter."
7:00-9:00 pm, 147 Communication Arts Building.



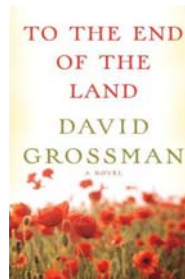
Tuesday, February 15

Stanley & Selma Hollander Lecture On
Jewish Music and Art
"The Klezmatics - On Holy Ground"
A feature-length documentary about the New York-based band, **The Klezmatics**, winner of a Grammy Award for Best World Music. Rooted in klezmer music and Yiddish arrangements, we follow the group from the American heartland to Poland and Budapest, into the recording studio and onto the concert stage.
7:00-9:30 pm, 1478 Communication Arts Building



Friday, February 25

Talking Books: A Series -Spring 2011
David Grossman: **"To the End of the Land"** (2010).
From one of Israel's most acclaimed writers comes a novel of extraordinary power about family life—the greatest human drama—and about the cost of war.
Discussant: Prof. Marc Bernstein
12:00-1:30 pm, Honor's College Lounge, 2nd Floor, Eustace-Cole Hall.



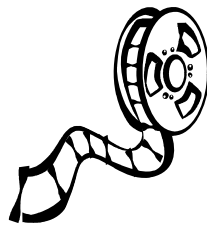
Sunday & Monday, March 20-21

Fifth Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival
147 Communications Arts & Sciences
Sunday 3/20

2:00 pm. "Missing Father"
4:30 "Hummas For Two"
5:30 Catered Meal by Woody's
6:30 Feature Film: "A Matter of Size"

Monday 3/21

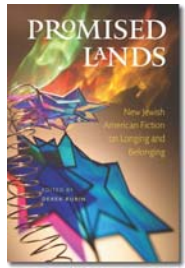
7:00 "Jelly Fish" (Etgar Keret to be here 3/31)



See Film Festival insert for more details.
All films are free of charge.

Wednesday, March 23

Talking Books: A Series -Spring 2011
Derek Rubin, ed., **"Promised Lands"** (2010).
This vibrant anthology showcases new, unpublished short stories by a rapidly growing crop of highly talented young Jewish American fiction writers. It provides a rich reading experience and a unique window onto Jewish American life and culture at the beginning of the twenty-first century.
Discussants: Prof. Kirsten Fermaglich, Prof. Ilana Blumberg
12:00-1:30 pm, Honor's College Lounge, 2nd Floor, Eustace-Cole Hall.



Thursday, March 31

Serling Israel Fund Special Community Lecture
Etgar Keret
Best-selling Israeli writer and filmmaker, Etgar Keret, hailed as the voice of young Israel and one of its most radical and extraordinary writers, is Internationally acclaimed for his short stories that offer a window on a surreal world that is at once funny and sad. His books are bestsellers in Israel and have been published in twenty-two languages.
7:00-9:00 pm, East Lansing Hannah Community Center, Albert A. White Performing Arts Theater 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing; Admission Free



Thursday, April 14

19th Annual David & Sarah Rabin
Lecture on the Holocaust
Dr. Alon Confino
Professor of History, University of Virginia
"A World Without Jews: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust"
This lecture will also be given at the Holocaust Memorial Center, Zekelman Family Campus, in Farmington Hills, on Wed. April 13. It offers a new cultural history approach to the Holocaust. Lincoln Room, the Kellogg Center, MSU
A public reception will follow.



Wednesday, April 27

On Art in the Holocaust: Film Showing
"As Seen Through Their Eyes," with Prof. Ken Waltzer.
As Maya Angelou narrates this powerful documentary, she reveals the story of a brave group of people who fought Hitler with the only weapons they had: charcoal, pencil stubs, shreds of paper and memories etched in their minds. These artists took their fates into their own hands to make compelling statements about the human spirit, enduring against unimaginable odds.
7:00-9:00 pm, Residential College in the Arts and Humanities Auditorium, C20 Snyder Hall



Telling Family Stories Grant — 2011-2012

Jews are always telling family stories, in literature, in film, through family trees, and around the kitchen table. What do these stories mean? How do they help American Jews understand their community, identity, and origins?

Led by Kirsten Fermaglich, the MSU Jewish Studies Program has received a Legacy Heritage public programming grant from the Association of Jewish Studies for a series “*Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History*” for the 2011-2012 academic year. We are one of four universities awarded \$22,000 grants, including the U. of Colorado, U. Washington, and Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Through films, seminars, lectures, workshops, and intergenerational family events, “**Telling Family Stories**” will explore the intersections between personal family stories and academic research into family life. Our programming will include a keynote speech from *Sallyann Sacks*, founding editor of *Avotaynu*, the journal of Jewish genealogy; a conversation with novelist *Faye Moskowitz*, whose books explore the intricacies of Jewish family relationships; a hands-on workshop with *Randy Riley*, genealogy librarian at the Library of Michigan; and more.... Additional sponsors include English and History, the Center for Gender in Global Context, Schuler’s Books, Lansing Hadassah, and the Lansing Jewish Welfare Federation.

Spring 2012—Hebrew University

MSU’s Jewish Studies Program and the MSU Office of Study Abroad have received a MASA grant of \$50,000 – one of 8 such grants awarded to selected universities this year -- to expand study abroad in Israel. The goal we set in applying is to expand student study in Israel by creating a new MSU Spring Semester at Hebrew University, beginning spring 2012. The special feature of this new semester program (augmenting existing summer programs) will be a menu of courses designed to attract students from new college pools because they will be more able to make steady progress in their majors as well as study Hebrew, Israel, or Middle East issues. The new colleges we seek to include are Business, Communication Arts and Sciences, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities as well as the residential colleges.

An MSU delegation is visiting Hebrew University in late February to negotiate the details, meet faculty and staff, and learn about student life and safety. Unlike the summer programs, this will not be an MSU faculty-led program. It will, though, include a core course and core co-curricular seminar. We hope also to include internship opportunities. The MSU delegation includes three student advising professionals who have never before been to Israel or Jerusalem who will help advise and recruit students in the future.

In Memoriam



We acknowledge the passing of Professor Al Rabin last October at age 98. Dr. Rabin was born in Lithuania in 1912, was MSU professor of psychology 1949-1982, and died in 2010. He was a friend of Jewish Studies and endowed our first lecture series in honor of his parents. We miss him.

Serling & Schusterman Visiting Israeli Fellow

Michael and Elaine Serling, special benefactors of MSU’s Jewish Studies Program, have recently pledged \$1 million to provide a transforming gift to raise the program to a higher level. This gift permits us to partner each year with another MSU unit to bring in a visiting Israeli scholar or other Jewish Studies scholar for one semester annually. Our hope is to augment course opportunities for students, influence curricula in departments, and build cooperative links with departments where these faculty will be hosted.

Fortuitously, because of this gift, we have now been able also to obtain a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Fellow grant from the American Israel Cooperative Enterprise (AICE), which will allow us to host a visitor for the entire year. The Serling funds plus partner funds from a cooperating unit provide the required match. In this first initiative, we are working cooperatively with the Department of English and the College of Arts and Letters to select and recruit a candidate to teach courses in film and literature. We hope to announce a successful outcome soon.

MSU Jewish Studies Summer 2011



The MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University has attracted 66 students during the past five years. This summer it will be led by Professor Benjamin Pollock of Religious Studies. Program dates are June 26-July 26, 2011; the program fee is \$3,000. The program this year focuses on study and exploration of Jerusalem as sacred space, i.e., on the city as an important site for multiple religions, as well as on the making of modern Israel. Last year, led by Professor Yael Aronoff of James Madison College, the program focused on Israeli politics and society as well as on the making of modern Israel.

Students study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the Rothberg International School and live in Hebrew University dormitories. They take classes in the new Boyar Building and also use Jerusalem for extensive course-related on-site learning. Professor Pollock emphasizes that in his course students will visit key holy sites like the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, learn about the history of Jerusalem to its ancient origins, meet spiritual leaders representing all traditions operating in the city today, and consider the role of religious attitudes towards Jerusalem within the contemporary conflict in the region. For information, contact Prof. Pollock: polloc18@msu.edu; (517) 432-7227.



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Academic News

Yael Aronoff and Eric Aronoff each have won MSU Teacher-Scholar Awards, making three Jewish Studies faculty winners in two years. Mazeltov!

Yael Aronoff has been named book review editor for the journal *Israel Studies Review*. She will present a paper on "The Rules of War in Asymmetric Conflict," at the Association for Israel Studies Conference in June 2011 at Brandeis University.

Eric Aronoff published essays on Willa Cather in *Genre* 43:1 (Spring/Summer, 2010) and in an edited collection about Willa Cather, and presented "We're Hard-Wired For Dreams: Reimagining Genesis and the Human in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*," at the Modern Language Association in Los Angeles, CA during January 2011.

Safoi Babana-Hampton's article, "Bringing into Focus Narrative Text and Subtext in Moroccan Film: Marock's *Hors-Champ*," about Muslim-Jewish relations in Moroccan film, appears in *The Journal of North African Studies* 15:3 (2010) 289-303.

Marc Bernstein presented "Internal Glosses Within Judeo-Arabic Sharh (*Translations of Sacred Hebrew & Aramaic*) Tradition," at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference, in Boston, MA in December.

Ilana Blumberg is completing a book on *Victorian Sacrifice: Ethics and Economics in Mid-Victorian Novels*.

Kirsten Fermaglich gave several presentations on her research on secular Jews and name-changing in twentieth century New York this past fall. She was the lead faculty in obtaining a grant for public programming for the MSU Jewish Studies program from the Association for Jewish Studies, focused on "Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History."

Steve Gold's book, *The Store in the Hood: A Century of Ethnic Business and Conflict*, was published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2010. Steve also had a chapter, "After the Cold War: Comparing Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese Youth in the 1980s to Today's Young Refugees," in *How to*

Help Young Immigrants Succeed (2010), ed. by Gerald Holton and Gerhard Sonert.

Mary M. Juzwik was awarded the 2010 Edward B. Fry Award by the Literary Research Association for an outstanding contribution to literacy research and practice for her book *The Rhetoric of Teaching: Understanding the Dynamics of Holocaust Narratives in an English Classroom* (2009).

Anna Norris presented a paper at the University of London on Marceline Lorian Ivens' film, *La petite prairie au bouleaux* (*Birkenau*), the only film directed by a Holocaust survivor and the only non documentary allowed to be filmed in Birkenau for several decades: "The Indelible Trauma and Impossible Healing in Marceline Lorian Ivens' film, *La petite prairie aux bouleaux*."

Benjamin Pollock's book, *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy* (2009), was awarded the Salo Baron Prize for outstanding first book in Jewish Studies. In the fall, Benjamin's "Franz Rosenzweig's 'Oldest System-Program'" appeared in *New German Critique*. Benjamin is completing a manuscript that rethinks Franz Rosenzweig's famous near-conversion to Christianity in the summer of 1913, and his decision to return to Judaism in the fall of that year.

Kenneth Waltzer presented on "Schooling in a Concentration Camp," at the Association for Jewish Studies Conference in Boston, MA in December 2010. He also spoke at the 2nd International Bergen-Belsen Conference in Hannover, Germany early this semester on "History and Memory: Children and Youths at Buchenwald and Belsen." A documentary film that is based on Ken's work is being prepared by Big Foot Productions in New York, directed by Rob Cohen, titled "Kinderblock 66" <http://www.kinderblock66thefilm.com>.

Steve Weiland presented "Jews and their Books, Again: Contemporary Autobiographers as Readers," at the Midwest Jewish Studies conference that took place in Cleveland in October, 2010.