

Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2012



Michigan State University

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Note from the Director

MSU Jewish Studies is in transition, entering the final three-year period under my leadership. Professor Yael Aronoff (JMC) will serve in spring 2013 as Associate Director to become familiar with program operations, budgets, and the like. Another colleague may serve in 2013-14. Hence, faculty will be able to suggest new and prepared leadership to the Dean for 2014-15.

This spring, 2012, we have an enriched schedule of activities, which includes the two-week visit of Israeli documentary filmmaker **Yael Katzir**, formerly of Beit Berl Academic College. Yael Katzir is the creator of many well-known films, including *Company Jasmine*, about women in the IDF, *Shivah for My Mother*, about family and mourning, and *Praying in her Own Voice*, about the women of the Western Wall. Yael Katzir will teach a short course (one credit) on “From Collective Ideology to Personal Diversity: Israeli Documentary Filmmaking,” which will meet seven evenings March 19-22, 27-29, in 339 Case Hall, 7:00-9:00 pm. Yael Katzir will also be the special guest of MSU Jewish Studies at the 7th Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival to take place Sunday and Monday, March 25-26. Sunday night her newest film, *Violins in Wartime*, is the feature selection.

We will also host the first Michigan showing of the feature-length documentary film, *Kinderblock 66—Return to Buchenwald*, about the return of four Buchenwald boys,

who were sheltered in the children’s block 66 and rescued during the last months of the war, to the 65th commemoration of liberation at Buchenwald near Weimar, Germany. This will be the **20th Annual David and Sara Rabin Holocaust Lecture** and is planned for Tuesday, April 24, 2012, 7:00 pm in the Kellogg Center Auditorium. **Steven Moskovic** of Bigfoot Productions, the executive producer, **Alex Moskovic**, one of the Buchenwald boys, now an accomplished elderly man, and Professor **Kenneth Waltzer**, historian, will talk about the history behind the film, the making of the film, and the film’s meaning. **Liev Schrieber**, the noted actor, narrates the film.

The **Stanley and Selma Hollander Lecture on Jewish Art and Music** was given earlier this semester by **Janet Macoska**, who is the acclaimed photographer for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, on “*Jews in Rock and Roll*.” We also plan to host historian **Melissa Klapper** of Rowan University in New Jersey who will complete the final events in the **Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative** that has been led by Professor **Kirsten Fermaglich** and by **Judith Moses Dworkin** supported by a grant from the Association of Jewish Studies’ Legacy Heritage Fund. She will speak on “*Small Strangers: Immigrant Children in America, 1880-1925*,” in Room W449 at the MSU Library, Thursday, April 26, at 7:00 pm. Earlier that day, at noon in 340

Morrill Hall, Professor Klapper will speak on “*Ballots, Babies and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women’s Pre-WWII Activism*.”

Considerable energy this spring is being expended planning events to occur in 2012-13. While a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Scholar in International Relations slated for James Madison College has fallen through, we are planning to host a Schusterman Visiting Artist during the spring 2013. He is **Benny Barbash**, winner of the Prime Minister’s Prize for Hebrew Literature, an accomplished screenwriter, and the author of the current Israeli TV hit, “*The Naked Truth*.” This program is under consideration by Lions Gate and HBO for American adaptation. **Benny Barbash** will teach screenwriting in the Department of English during spring 2013 and host an ongoing Israeli film series.

Professor **Marc Bernstein** is also heading a planning committee to design a special international conference on Israeli literature which will coincide with the opening of the Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection at the university April 9-11, 2013. We are currently working with Israeli novelist **Meir Shalev** and with renowned American scholar **Robert Alter** to offer the two keynotes at the conference. Stay tuned for more news about these exciting ideas and initiatives.

-Ken Waltzer, Director

Visiting Israeli Fellow



Visiting Israeli Fellow, **Yael Katzir** is teaching a short course on Israeli documentary filmmaking and will be a special guest at the 7th Annual MSU Jewish Studies Israeli Film Festival on Sunday, March 25, talking about her new film, *Violins During Wartime*.

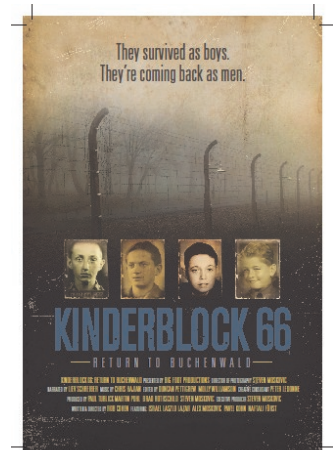
Yael Katzir is an acclaimed Israeli documentary filmmaker and former head of the History Department at Beit Berl Academic College. Her filmography includes *Company Jasmine: Women Officers’ School* (2001); *Shivah for My Mother* (2004), and *Praying in her Own Voice: The Struggle of the Women at the Wall* (2009).

20th Annual David & Sarah Rabin Lecture

Film - *Kinderblock 66—Return to Buchenwald*

Tuesday, April 24
7:00 -9:00 pm
Kellogg Center Auditorium

Steven Moskovic of Bigfoot Productions, executive producer, **Alex Moskovic**, Buchenwald boy, and **Kenneth Waltzer**, historian, will show and speak about the film on child rescue at Buchenwald.



Recent and Upcoming Events

Sunday, January 22

Seminar: **Kenneth Waltzer**,
Director, Jewish Studies Program.
**"Doing Genealogy, Doing
History, In Nazi Camp Records."**
5:30 pm, MSU Library,
Beaumont Instruction Room.
Part of the *Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative*.



Monday, February 6

**Stanley & Selma Hollander Lecture on
Jewish Art and Music**

Janet Macoska, Rock & Roll Hall of
Fame
**"Jews Rock! A Celebration of Jews in
Rock and Roll."** Photojournalist
Janet Macoska explores American Jews
in Rock and Roll while exhibiting her
photographs.



7:00-9:30 pm, Wonders Hall Kiva, MSU

Monday, February 13

Guest Lecture - **Anti-Semitism:
A Convenient Hatred,"**

Phyllis Goldstein, Facing History &
Ourselves.

Phyllis Goldstein is the senior writer and
researcher on Key Facing History and
Ourselves publications including the latest
edition of **"Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and
Human Behavior,"** as well as **"Anti-Semitism A Convenient
Hatred."**

7:00-8:30 pm, Wonders Hall Kiva, MSU



Friday, February 24

MSU Jewish Studies Faculty Brown Bag
**"Russian-Speaking Jews & Israeli Emigrants
in the U.S.: A Comparison of Migrant
Populations."**

Steve Gold, Department of Sociology, MSU.
Professor Gold compares recent Russian
Jewish and Israeli immigrants in the U.S.

12:00-1:30 pm, Dean's Conference Room, 321 Linton Hall.

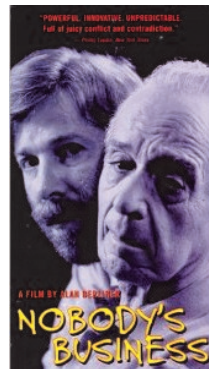


Wednesday, February 29

Film: **"Nobody's Business,"** (1996) directed
by Alan Berliner.

Moderators: **Steve Gold**, Sociology, and
Kirsten Fermaglich, History.
Alan Berliner takes on his reclusive father
as the reluctant subject of this poignant
and graceful study of family history and
memory. What emerges is a uniquely
cinematic biography that finds both humor
and pathos in the swirl of conflicts and af-
fections that bind father and son. Ultimately
this complex portrait is a meeting of the
minds...

This event is part of the Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative.



Saturday, March 24

**"Exploring Your Family History at the Library of Michigan: Doing
Jewish Genealogy"**

Kris Rzepczynski, Library of Michigan, and **Marc Manson**, Jewish
Genealogical Society of Michigan.

1:00-5:00 pm, at The Library of Michigan, 707 W. Kalamazoo St,
Lansing.

This event is part of the Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative.

Sunday & Monday, March 25-26

Seventh Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival

147 Communications Arts & Sciences Building, MSU

Sunday 3/25

1:30 pm **"Precious Life"**

3:30 Feature film: **"Eli & Ben"**

5:30 Catered Meal by Woody's Mediterranean Deli.

6:30 Special Feature - **"Violins in Wartime"**

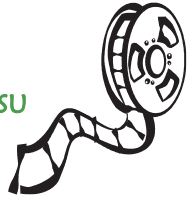
(Special Presentation by Israeli Filmmaker,
Professor **Yael Katzir**.)

Monday 3/26

7:00 **"Souvenirs"**

See Film Festival insert for more details.

All films are free of charge and free parking is
available behind the building.



Tuesday, April 24

20th Annual David and Sarah Rabin Lecture on the Holocaust
Film - **"Kinderblock 66—Return to Buchenwald,"**



Steven Moskovic of Bigfoot Productions, executive producer, **Alex
Moskovic**, Buchenwald boy, and **Kenneth Waltzer**, historian, will
show and speak about the film on child rescue at Buchenwald and the
return of survivors to commemorate liberation 65 years later.

7:00-9:00 pm, Kellogg Center Auditorium

Thursday, April 26

Brown Bag Colloquium

**"Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace:
American Jewish Women's Pre-World War II
Activism,"**

Melissa R. Klapper, Rowan University

*This is part of the Telling Family Stories:
Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative and is
cosponsored by the Center for Gender in a Global Context.*

12:00 noon, 340 Morrill Hall, History Department



Thursday, April 26

Lecture

"Small Strangers: immigrant Children in America, 1880-1925"

Melissa R. Klapper, Rowan University

This is part of the *Telling Family Stories: Jews, Genealogy, and History Initiative* and also part of the MSU Library Colloquium Series.

7:00 pm, MSU Main Library, Room W449

Bringing Israel to MSU

With support from the Michael and Elaine Serling Visiting Israel Scholars fund, MSU Jewish Studies has been working to bring Israel to MSU in the form of a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Scholar in 2012-13 and also a Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist in spring 2013. However, **Ben Mor**, political scientist, from Haifa, was unable to accept our invitation to teach in James Madison College due to health issues in his family. But **Benny Barbash**, screenwriter and novelist, has accepted our invitation to teach screenwriting during spring in the Department of English.



Benny Barbash is the author of the novel, *My First Sony*, as well as three other novels, and has written the current Israeli TV hit, *The Naked Truth*, and has recently been awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literature. His film, *Beyond the Walls*, [in Hebrew, MeAhorei HaSoragim], in 1984 was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Foreign Film. He will have an office in Wells Hall, where the Department of English is moving.

MSU Jewish Studies Abroad

With regret, the MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University for summer 2012 has been cancelled. Only five students signed up, making the program unable to go. Currently, there are seven students studying spring 2012 at Hebrew University, five in the new MSU Spring Semester in Jerusalem program, including three Jewish Studies specialists, **Helena Bentley**, **Leah Firestone**, and **Adam Zeidan**, and two more in Hebrew University's new Arabic immersion program, including Jewish Studies specialist **Ashley Delamater**. **Rina Bergman**, Jewish Studies specialist, is at Tel Aviv University.

In Memoriam: Ada Weintraub Finifter

MSU Jewish Studies sadly acknowledges the death of Professor **Ada Weintraub Finifter**, internationally known political scientist and former editor of the *American Political Science Review*, who passed away in New York during fall 2011. Ada was a friend and patron of MSU Jewish Studies and we acknowledge her planned endowment gift, which places high priority on projects and initiatives to highlight the study of Romaniote Jewry, or the Jews of Greece, as well as on support of faculty scholarship and student scholarships. Romaniote Jewry formed a separate and distinctive strand in the large mass Jewish migration of the Ellis Island era from Europe to New York, and the Kehilla Kadosha Janina Synagogue, on Broome Street, in the Lower East Side, which was formed by Jews from Iania, Greece, numbered among its founders Ada Finifter's grandfather. We will sponsor a visiting lecture in October 2012 by **Marcia H. Ikononopoulos**, who is the museum director of the restored Kehilla Kadosha Janina Synagogue and a serious student of Romaniote Jewry, who also knew Ada. We hope to consult on ideas about using the endowment.

MSU Spring Semester at Hebrew University, 2012

Given seed funding by one of eight MASA grants nationally to expand student enrollment in study abroad in Israel, MSU launched the first Spring Semester in Jerusalem at Hebrew University this semester. Seven MSU students are studying at the Rothberg School and in English language courses offered in the main faculty departments at Hebrew University while living in dormitories on Mount Scopus.



News From Current and Recent Jewish Studies Graduates

Alex Burkow is completing a master's program in terror and security studies at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya, Israel, and will soon be looking for work in the security field. **Geoff Levin** is switching into the Ph.D.



program at the School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and is being considered for a Schusterman Israeli Scholar Award. **Daniel Bittker** is planning on entering rabbinical school. **Ben Rosner** is a Begin Fellow at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem this year and has recently been accepted for study next year at Georgetown.

Sara Kirsch is completing an MA in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University and working as a high school debate coach. **Ariana Segal**, who earlier completed an MA in Conflict Resolution at the IDC in Herzliya, Israel, is selected to be part of the American Jewish Committee's ACCESS delegation of young American Jewish women to the Women as Global Leaders conference in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates during mid-March, 2012.

Ashley Delamater will study in the MA program in conflict resolution at Kings College, London in 2012-13. **Paul Newall** completed his MA in Conflict Resolution from Kings College and is now working at "Our Shared Future" at the British Council in Washington D.C.. **Rebecca Farnum** has won a Marshall Scholarship and will study international development and water policy at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, Great Britain. She will also study environmental policy at Oxford University the following year.

Ortal Lieberman is doing Hebrew translation work and cataloguing the new Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection for the MSU Library. **Marissa Perry** is a Fulbright Scholarship and also a DAAD [Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst] Scholarship winner, to support work on "Transitional Justice in Freiburg." This research on postwar anti-Nazi trials in Freiburg will be done in collaboration with the Seminar für Wissenschaftliche Politik at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg.

Jordan Levin completed a year of work in a Congressional office in Washington D.C. and has moved over to Apple. **Marissa Tons** has been working as an Export Administrator for the past year for IOMAX USA, Inc., which specializes in wireless and network security.



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Academic News

Yael Aronoff spoke at MSU on "The Voice of the People? Democratic Processes and Peace Negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian Context," Center for Advanced Study of International Development and the Center for Gender in Global Context, in November 2011. She will speak on a distinguished panel on "Shifts in Political Decision Making Processes in Israel and Palestine," at a Symposium on Israel in a Changing Middle East, at the Frankel Judaic Studies Center at the UM, Feb. 6, 2012. She will speak on "When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace: The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers," at the new Center for the Study of Jewish Law at the U. of California, Berkeley, March 15, 2012.

Safoi Babana-Hampton will present "André Elbaz: Diasporic Expressions of Moroccan Sephardic Identity in Québec" at the annual 20th-21st French and Francophone Studies International Colloquium, March 29-31, 2012, in Long Beach, CA.

Marc Bernstein has made several contributions to Jewish Studies meriting special recognition, including voluntarily teaching an overload third-year intermediate Hebrew course, helping appraise and acquire the Irwin T. and Shirley Holtzman Israeli Literature Collection, and taking the lead in planning a major Israeli Literature Conference at MSU for spring 2013.

Kirsten Fermaglich's contribution in winning a Legacy Heritage Grant from the Association for Jewish Studies and in planning and directing the *Telling Family Stories Initiative* during 2011-12 also deserves special recognition. Dr. Fermaglich will present "'Try and Find Me:' Name Changing and the Persistence of Antisemitism in the United States, 1940-1960," at the American Historical Association conference in Chicago in January 2012. She is also co-editing the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, which will be published late in 2012.

Steve Gold's book, *The Store in the Hood: A Century of Ethnic Business and Conflict* (2010) is now in paperback. He presented on "Jewish Immigrant Groups in the United States," at a Socio-Demography of American Jewry Conference at Brandeis U. in October, and on "Russian-Speaking Jews and Israeli Emigrants in the U.S: A Comparison of Migrant Populations," at a Conference on the Contemporary Russian-Speaking Jewish Diaspora, at Harvard University in November 2011.

Michael Koppisch, who is in his consultancy year before retiring, spent part of fall 2011 researching in the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris, France.

David Mendelsson has published *Jewish Education in England 1944-1988* with Peter Lang of Oxford. David will be teaching the core course in our new MSU Spring Semester in Jerusalem Program at the Hebrew University this semester.

Anna Norris' essay "The Shoah in Contemporary Women's Filmmaking: Revisiting Personal Memories and Collective History in Rose Bosch's *The Round Up* and Marceline Lorian Ivens' *A Birch Tree Meadow*" will be published in *Studies in French Cinema* (2012). She presented on comedy and the Shoah in European cinema at the International Colloquium on Transgressions in Literature and Film, Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes des Littératures, Université de Provence, France, this past fall.

George Peters gave a presentation at the national conference of the American Association of Teachers of German in Denver November 19, 2011 entitled "Reading Jewish Berlin Today."

Benjamin Pollock talked during fall on Franz Rosenzweig at the Boston University Institute for Philosophy and Religion and as part of a LeFrak Forum series on Modern Jewish Thought at MSU. In spring 2012, Benjamin will publish two new articles: "On the Road to Marcionism: Franz Rosenzweig's Early Theology," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, and "Within Earshot of the Young Hegel," in *German-Jewish Thought Between Religion and Politics*, edited by C. Wiese and M. Urban. Benjamin will be away in spring 2012 as the Padnos Visiting Professor and a Frankel Fellow in Judaic Studies at the UM.

Kenneth Waltzer is the Winegarden Visiting Professor at the UM -Flint during winter, 2012, where he is leading a faculty seminar on "New Directions in Study of the Holocaust" and also working with students in using survivor testimonies in doing original research. He will present on "Utilizing Survivor Testimony to Tell the Story of Rescue In a Concentration Camp" at the "Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence" conference scheduled in Montreal, Canada, March 22-25, 2012 and, with Henry Greenspan of the UM, will offer a pre-conference workshop on working with survivors in retelling their stories.

Steve Weiland presented "Mourning, Reading, and Jewish Identity: Leon Wieseltier and his Books" at the Midwest Jewish Studies Association Meeting at Oakland University in Rochester, MI in October. He presented "Autobiography and Intellectual History: The Late Life Register of Stanley Cavell" at the Society for U.S. Intellectual History meeting in November at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.