

# Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2007

Michigan State University

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

## Note from the Director

Jewish Studies classes are filled. *Israeli Politics and Society* is being taught this spring, and *Israeli Culture* is the focus of a general education course spring and summer. *American Jewish Literature*, *American Jewish History*, and *American Jewish Culture* were taught in the fall. *European Jewish History* will be covered next fall, the *Holocaust* is explored in James Madison College and in History this spring. Courses on *Judaism* and on *Modern Jewish Thought* appear in Religious Studies and new efforts are to be made to strengthen study of the *Hebrew Bible*. First and second level *Hebrew* classes have good enrollments and we hope to add a 300-level course next year.

We have a rich set of events this spring. Former Ambassador to Israel **Daniel Kurtzer** will speak on Middle East peace on January 23; **Ilan Peleg**, the Charles A. Dana Professor of Government and Law at Lafayette College, will inaugurate a new lecture series, the Serling Lecture on Modern Israel, March 13, on "*Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State.*" **Matthew Baigell**, Distinguished Professor of Art History at Rutgers University, will speak February 19, exploring "*The Joys and Pleasures of Looking at Jewish Art.*" We will host, with many other sponsors, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Israeli Film Festival*, March 15, 18-19. The Rabin Lecture will be given by **Susan Suleiman**, C. Douglas Dillon Professor of French Civilization at Harvard University, speaking on "*Oneself as Another: Identification and Mourning in Writing About Victims of the Holocaust*" on April 19. Professor Suleiman will also offer the kick-off at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Teachers' Holocaust Education Workshop, April 20.

We are heading back to Israel this summer with a faculty-led program slotted into the new Israel Studies Institute at Hebrew University's Rothberg International School. Yael Aronoff, the new Serling and Friends Israel Studies chair, will lead the program from late June to late July. MSU's Risk Committee recommended and Provost Kim Wilcox approved study abroad in Israel. Scholarship funds (Levy, Slade, and other scholarships) are available to assist eligible students to study in Israel--the deadlines are March 1, 2007. Applications are available on the Jewish Studies webpage, <http://www.jsp.msu.edu>.

Jewish Studies at MSU is part of a burgeoning growth in Jewish Studies at universities and colleges nationwide. At the recent Association for Jewish Studies meeting in San Diego, we met with Jewish Studies programs in the Big Ten and explored developing Yiddish courses on-line, holding regional conferences, and working to expand participation in study in Israel. We also took part in the meeting of Jewish Studies directors nationally, where we explored the range of Jewish Studies programs and touched on issues like Jewish Studies relations with Middle East programs on campuses, with campus Hillels, and with donors. MSU continues to sponsor a distinctive Jewish Studies program focused on undergraduate education, with a specialization open to all majors, and with courses that focus on aspects of the transformation in Jewish global life from Europe to North America and Israel, on study of Hebrew, and on exploration of Jewish life, society, literature, and culture. Please continue to support our program and come and join us for events!

## 15th Annual David and Sarah Rabin Lecture

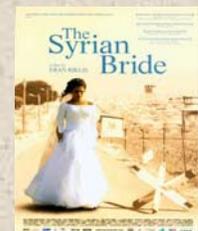
**Susan Rubin Suleiman**, the C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University, will deliver the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual David and Sarah Rabin Lecture on the Holocaust, **Thursday, April 19, 2007**, 7:00 pm, in the MSU Kellogg Center Auditorium. She will also offer the kick-off address at the 9<sup>th</sup> Michigan Teacher's Holocaust Workshop, Friday, April 20, at the Kellogg Center.



Susan Suleiman was born in Budapest, Hungary, and, with her parents, emigrated as a child after the war in 1949 to the U.S. She was educated at Barnard and at Harvard and since 1981 has been in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard. In 1993, she returned to Hungary and wrote a memoir, *Budapest Diary: In Search of the Mother Book* (1996). In her most recent book,

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## 2nd Israeli Film Festival at MSU



Buoyed by the success of the first Israeli Film Festival on campus last spring, when large audiences viewed several award-winning films currently showing in festivals and theaters in major North American cities, including *Ushpizin* and *Turn Left at the End of the World*, this spring Jewish Studies is again hosting a 2<sup>nd</sup> MSU Israeli Film Festival. We will be screening five Israeli films in three days, March 15, 18-19, in 147 Communication Arts and Sciences. Please tell your friends and help us attract even larger audiences than last year.

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## 15th Annual David and Sarah Rabin Lecture (Continued from p. 1)

*Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (2006), she explores issues of memory, memoir, and testimony that are key in our workshop this spring, which focuses on memory, memoir, and teaching with memoir.

**Susan Suleiman** has won numerous awards and fellowships, has been president of the American Comparative Literature Association, and was named a Walter Channing Cabot Fellow at Harvard in 2006 in recognition of her academic achievement. She has been a leader in the interdisciplinary study of memory, memoir, and testimony, and of trauma, memory, and creativity.

Susan Suleiman's lecture will be on **"Oneself as Another : Identification and Mourning in Writing about Victims of the Holocaust."**

## MSU's 2nd Israeli Film Festival

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The films to be shown include *Now I Am Free*, about a theater group at an elderly senior club comprised of women from Middle Eastern countries and India who have long



lived in their husband's shadows. Director Gadi Kviatsek of the film department at Beit Berl College will introduce his film on the opening night, Thursday March 15. The films also include

*Two Minutes from Paradise*, directed by Dany Syrkin, about the daughter of a Jewish family dating an Arab, and *Empty Rooms*, directed by Willy Lindwer, which explores the costs of suicide terrorism, focused on the Dolphinarium bombing in 2001, and will be screened on Sunday afternoon, March 18. Middle Eastern food will be available for purchase at the festival early Sunday evening, catered by Woody's Oasis.

The feature film of the festival, *Live and Become*, directed by Radu Mihaileanu, is an epic about an Ethiopian boy who migrates to Israel and grows up in an adopted Israeli family. He emigrates as a part of Operation Moses, the initiative that brought Falasha Jews to Israel. This film has won awards at several international festivals and will be shown Sunday evening, March 18, with a small admission charge. Finally, the last film will be *Syrian Bride*, directed by Eran Riklis, a drama about family life among Arab Druze living on the Golan Heights under Israeli occupation. This film too is a festival award winner.

The film festival is being co-sponsored by the College of Arts and Letters, James Madison College, and the College of Communication Arts and Science, by the Departments of English/Film Studies, History, Linguistics and Languages, and Religious Studies, and by the Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities. Additional support comes from MSU Hillel, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Congregation Kehillat Israel, and the Greater Lansing Jewish Welfare Federation. Ellen Rothfeld, instructor of Hebrew, is coordinating the festival.

## Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, to visit MSU January 23, 2007



Jewish Studies is co-sponsoring the appearance at Michigan State University of former U.S. ambassador to Israel and to Egypt, **Daniel Kurtzer**. Ambassador Kurtzer will appear **Tuesday, January 23, 2007**, at the MSU Kellogg Center auditorium, at 7:00 pm. His lecture entitled **"The Middle East: Ongoing Efforts To Peace,"** will be followed by a reception. Both are free, and open to the public.

Dan Kurtzer has participated in U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East for several decades. This past year he has been S. Daniel Abraham Visiting Professor in Middle Eastern Policy at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University. Kurtzer's appearance is supported by the Greater Lansing Jewish Welfare Federation, the Lester J. Morris Hillel Jewish Student Center, and MSU Jewish Studies.

## Faculty Presentation

**Ken Waltzer** will speak on **"The Rescue of Children and Youth at Buchenwald,"** in 339 Case Hall in James Madison College, **Wednesday, April 11, from 7:00-8:30 pm.**

When American soldiers in the U.S. Third Army liberated Buchenwald April 11, 1945, sixty-two years ago, they were astonished to find 904 children and youth. Most were teenagers but 15 percent were children aged 4-12. How were any of them still alive to be liberated?



Among these children and youth were a future writer and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel, who was 16 years old, and a future Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel, Yisrael Meir Lau (Lulek), who was 8 years old. Little Lulek was held up on the back of a U.S. army truck when German civilians were paraded through the camp, "This was the Fuhrer's enemy!"

## Jewish Studies to Return to Israel!!

Jewish Studies will resume its summer study abroad program in Israel this summer in cooperation with the Hebrew University/Rothberg International School. A new Israel Studies Institute has been created and our program will be slotted in the new institute. A core course will be offered in the mornings by David Mendelsson, on *The Emergence of Modern Israel*, and Professor Yael Aronoff, the Serling Professor of Israel Studies, will lead the MSU program and teach a course on *Israeli Politics and Society* in the afternoons. Students will also take part each week in excursions and learning trips.

Last summer, our return to Israel was cut short by war and rockets. Hopefully, this summer there will be only peace and sunshine. The program will run Sunday June 24 to Thursday, July 26. Classes begin Wednesday, June 27, finals are Wednesday, July 25, and dorms must be vacated Thursday July 26. Applications for study abroad should be completed in the Office of Study Abroad during January or February. Students will be made aware that there is still a State Department travel advisory on Israel and that appropriate guidelines must be followed for safety in Israel. There are scholarships available to assist students studying in Israel; they must be applied for by the deadline: March 1, 2007.

Contact Professor Yael Aronoff at [aronoff@msu.edu](mailto:aronoff@msu.edu); or Professor Ken Waltzer, Director, at [waltzer@msu.edu](mailto:waltzer@msu.edu) for more information.

## What's Wrong with Jimmy Carter's Book on Israel and Palestine?

Jimmy Carter's recent book, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*, raises questions about Carter's fair-mindedness. Although Carter is a respected former president who in his post-presidency has sought to do global good, Carter disqualifies himself in the Middle East peace process with his one-sided screed against Israel.

Critics have pointed out that Carter's book is shaped by a pronounced anti-Israel bias. Carter blames Israel for all failures in peacemaking. He sees all Israeli leaders as inflexible, including Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak. At the same time, he writes favorably about Yassir Arafat, the PLO, even about Hamas.

Carter's views on the history of recent negotiations also clash sharply with those of former President Clinton and Ambassador Dennis Ross, who were participants. Ross recently charged Carter with lying about what was offered at Camp David. Most importantly, Carter criticizes Israel's wall as an apartheid wall and describes the oppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories as more terrible than apartheid was in South Africa.

Carter argues that a dual system of passes, roads, settlements (dual ethnic access to land), and laws applies in the West Bank, creating a segregated system for two peoples. There is some truth in this – the Palestinian plight is a difficult one, and Israeli occupation leads to degrading, humiliating encounters. But the reasons for the system, Carter insists, are Israel's hardheartedness and refusal to change. For Carter, Palestinian rejectionism and armed violence play no role whatsoever. Carter ignores that Israel in recent years sought to give up settlements, withdraw from Gaza, and abandon parts of the West Bank, only to be responded to with violence and terrorism.

If the goal is to get both sides to abandon their myths and move toward coexistence, Carter, the polemicist, has actually made such work more difficult. Speaking harsh truths to both sides might be a real service to peace; but Carter repeats uncritically all the myths and fictions on the Palestinian and Arab side that have helped shape the current reality.



Against the charge his book is one-sided, Carter says that he merely seeks to share knowledge he gained monitoring elections in

Palestine. In addition, he claims that debate on Israel/Palestine for thirty years has been severely restrained in the U.S. because of the AIPAC lobby. Carter gets positively creepy when he points to a conspiracy to dampen debate located in a powerful pro-Israeli lobby and that includes college campuses with large Jewish enrollments. Actually, the issue gets more attention in the media and on campuses than any other issue save Iraq.

Carter's Christian moralism reflects a limited and flawed view of the conflict. Douglas Brinkley's depiction in *The Unfinished Presidency* of an "inner-directed" man guided by his own willful reading of history and his faith to do "right," rings true – and therefore his book so deeply disappoints. A champion of human rights calls his readers to moral action regarding the holy land while simplifying and caricaturing in black and white the much more difficult, grey, and complex moral subject he seeks to redeem.

-KW

Monday, January 29, 2007

ONE VOICE



Speakers from the One Voice movement, which seeks to encourage dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, and to empower moderate majorities, will present at James Madison College, MSU, Monday night, January 29, 2007, from 7:00-9:00 pm, in 339 Case Hall. The appearance of One Voice youth leaders is sponsored by James Madison College, Jewish Studies, and Muslim Studies.

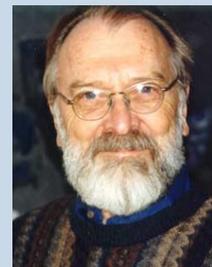


*One Voice* was created in 2002 and seeks to reframe the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a conflict of moderate majorities vs. extremist minorities. *One Voice* has offices in Tel Aviv, Ramallah, and New York, sends Israeli and Palestinian youth leaders to speak in North American colleges and universities, recruits youth leaders at Israeli and Palestinian universities, engages in grassroots civic action in Israel and Palestine, and has won support among leading names in American and Israeli life, in Palestine, and in the Arab world. *One Voice* emphasizes non-violent action, democracy, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Monday, February 19, 2007

Lecture by **Matthew Baigell**, Art History Professor at Rutgers University, MSU Union Green Room, 7:00 pm

**Matthew Baigell**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art History at Rutgers University, will speak on "*The Joys and Pleasures of Looking at Jewish Art.*" Monday, February 19, 2007, 7:00 pm, in the MSU Union Green Room. This lecture and slide show is sponsored by the Stanley and Selma Hollander Endowment for Jewish Music and Art.



Mathew Baigell is the author of *Jewish American Art: An Introduction* (2006); *American Artists, Jewish Images* (2006); *Artist and Identity in Twentieth-Century America* (2001); and *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust* (1997).

Professor Baigell will also lead a faculty seminar open to faculty and students late that afternoon – stay tuned for details.

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Serling lecture on Modern Israel, by **Ilan Peleg** of Lafayette College, 334 a&b Case Hall, 7:00 pm

**Ilan Peleg**, the Charles A Dana Professor of Government and Law at Lafayette College, and editor of *Israel Forum*, will inaugurate a new lecture series in Jewish Studies, delivering the first annual Michael and Elaine Serling Lecture on Modern Israel, Tuesday, March 13, 2007, 7:00 pm, 334 a&b Case Hall. Each year the director of Jewish Studies will work with the Serling Israel Studies Chair and the director of the Hebrew Program to plan a lecture in spring.



Ilan Peleg will speak on "*Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State: Balancing the Particular and the Universal.*" The talk is related to Peleg's new book soon to be out from Cambridge University Press.

Ilan Peleg is an award-winning scholar and teacher at Lafayette College and author of books and articles on Begin's foreign policy, Ben Gurion and Israel's culturekampf, and Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.



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## Academic News

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**Yael Aronoff** published "In Like A Lamb, Out Like A Lion: The Political Conversion of Jimmy Carter," *Political Science Quarterly* 121:3 (Fall 2006) and a review of *Why Leaders Choose War: The Psychology of Prevention*, in *Political Science Quarterly*. She will present "Kadimah: Forward, but Where: The Decline of Ideology in Israeli Politics" at the Israel Studies Meeting in Israel, in June 2007.

**Marc Bernstein's** *Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations between Judaism and Islam* was published by Wayne State U. Press this fall. William Brinner calls it "a fascinating study." Marc also presented on: "Qissat Sayyidna Musa" (The Story of Our Master Moses) at the Association of Jewish Studies meeting in December 2006. He will present at the Israel Studies meeting in Israel in June 2007, and National Association of Hebrew Professors in Sydney, Australia (July 2007).

**Ilana Blumberg's** *Houses of Study: A Jewish Woman Among Books*, will be published by the U. of Nebraska Press in March. Susanna Heschel praises the book for capturing "the voice of a generation of religious Jewish women, in love with Judaism and in love with learning." Mary Gordon observes that, in "its originality of approach, vigor and beauty of style, and fierce honesty," *Houses of Study* is a major contribution to women's studies and to Jewish studies.

**Steve Gold** published "Jewish Israelis in Los Angeles," *Espace-Populations-Sociétés* 1, 2006, 47-60, and presented "After the Cold War: Comparing Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese Youth in the 1980s to Today's Refugees," Russell Sage Foundation, New York, November 2006. He will present on "Terrorism, Economic Crisis and Israeli Trans-nationalism 2000-05," at the American Sociological Association in summer 2007.

**Kirsten Fermaglich** gave an invited paper in November at Wayne State University on her new project, "A Rosenberg By Any Other Name: Some Thoughts on Name-Changing and American Jewish

Identity." She will speak on Jewish women's responses to Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* at NYU in March 2007.

**Mary M. Juzwik** has presented several papers at conferences in fall on oral narratives as classroom discourse genres, including for the National Council of Teachers of English in Nashville and the Watson Conference in Louisville. Her book *Towards a Rhetoric of Teaching: Oral Narrative Performances in a Middle School Classroom*, a study of teaching the Holocaust in a language arts class, will appear from Hampton Press in 2007.

**Michael Koppisch** will travel to Israel this January as part of the Israel Studies Project at the City University of New York, which aims at strengthening understanding about Israel on American campuses.

**Benjamin Pollock** presented on "God is the Truth: Franz Rosenzweig and the Essence of God and the Origin of Truth" at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Washington D.C. in November and will publish "'Thought Going to School with Life?': Fackenheim's Last Philosophical Testament" in the *AJS Review* in Spring 2007.

**Keely Stauter-Halsted** will publish "Generation of Monsters: Jews, Prostitution, and Racial Purity in the 1892 L'viv White Slavery Trial," *Austrian History Yearbook*, in 2007, and will help prepare Albion undergraduates for travel to Poland to help clean Jewish cemeteries. Her review of Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew 1880 to the Present*, appears in *The Journal of Modern History*.

**Ken Waltzer** gave a keynote lecture at the 8<sup>th</sup> Montreal Holocaust Education Series on "*The Rescue of Children and Youth at Buchenwald*" in late October, 2006, and will present on "*The Kovno Boys: Survival in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald, and Mauthausen*," at the 37<sup>th</sup> Holocaust Scholars Conference in Cleveland, April 2007.