

Jewish Studies Program

Fall Semester 2015



Michigan State University

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Yael Aronoff, Director
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Notes from the Director

MSU's Jewish Studies Program is very pleased to announce we will begin a job search this fall for the new **William and Audrey Farber Family Chair in Holocaust Studies and European Jewish History**. This will be the first such chair in Michigan, and one of about 20 across the country. This teacher-scholar will be a joint appointment between **James Madison College** and the **Department of History**. The Farbers have committed \$1.5 million and Michael and Elaine Serling have generously committed an additional \$500,000 toward the endowment. The University requires that the endowment reach \$3 million and we will fundraise the additional million.

We are also pleased to announce that **Ed Brill** and his sister **Leslie Van Brandt** have donated \$150,000 in memory of their brother **Michael Brill** to Jewish Studies. This gift will enable the MSU Library to contract with the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (a Steven Spielberg project with over 50,000 survivor testimonies) for up to 10 years. This will be an incredible resource for faculty and students to conduct primary research. Only 25 American universities have such access.

The Jewish Studies Program also will continue to build its Israel Studies programming as well as our students' exposure to Israeli Visiting Scholars. For the first time, we have the privilege of hosting two Israeli Visiting Scholars this year through the generosity of **Michael and Elaine Serling**. Our returning Serling Israeli Visiting Scholar is renowned environmental historian, lawyer, and political activist **Alon Tal**. Professor Tal taught two classes at James Madison College

last year; he will teach two Israel-focused environmental law and science policy classes this fall. From the generosity of the Israel Institute, as well as the Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar Endowment, we are also hosting Professor **Yuval Benziman** to teach four classes at James Madison College on Israeli Politics, Society, and Culture; Israeli Foreign Policy; conflict resolution and peace negotiations; and the cultural contexts for studying Israel. We look forward to their enriching our community through teaching and public lectures.

We are pleased that, after suspension during the summer 2014 Gaza war, the MSU Risk Committee reinstated our study abroad programs to Israeli universities in December 2014. Our former Serling Visiting Israeli scholar, anthropologist **Chen Bram**, led the program at Hebrew University this summer with ten students. **Deborah Margolis**, our MSU librarian, assisted with the program. Two other MSU students studied on their own at other Israeli universities, including **Daniel Feenstra**, who studied entrepreneurship at the Technion.

We are also pleased to welcome three new faculty to Jewish Studies this year. Professor **Yore Kedem**, a native speaker who taught intermediate and advanced level Hebrew for many years at the University of Illinois, is joining us to teach first and second year Hebrew. He is also heading the MSU Summer Study Abroad program in Israel in Summer 2016. **Matthew Kaufman**, who is completing his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, will be visiting lecturer in Religious Studies this year, replacing **Benjamin Pollock** who is teaching at Hebrew

University in Jerusalem. We also welcome **Lev Raphael** as a new affiliate of Jewish Studies. He was born and raised in New York City, is the son of Holocaust survivors, is the author and co-author of 25 books in a dozen different genres, and is a leading figure in American-Jewish Literature.

Warm congratulations goes to **Viki Gietzel**, our administrative assistant and fiscal officer, who was awarded the JoAnn Vanden Bergh Non-Academic Staff Award in June. Viki is the epitome of excellence and integrity, and is invaluable to our program.

Recently, the proposed nuclear arms deal with Iran has been hotly debated. The Jewish Studies Program will sponsor a panel discussion on this issue on September 28, and will help host a talk by **Dennis Ross** on November 5. Ambassador Ross has been involved in negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians over many years and in multiple administrations, and has taken a lead role in developing US policies toward Iran. He served two years as special assistant to President Obama and National Security Council senior director for the Central Region, and a year as special advisor to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

We also look forward to a symposium on Greek Jewry during the Holocaust, our monthly faculty-student research seminars, our 11th Annual Israeli Film Festival, the annual Kessler film event, and other lectures. We hope to see you at our events and join us in our vibrant intellectual community!

~Yael Aronoff, Professor and Director

Recent and Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 8, 7:00 pm
James Madison Library, 322 South Case Hall

Guest Lecture

"Transboundary Environmental Cooperation Between Israel and its Neighbors"

Alon Tal, Visiting Serling Israeli Scholar,
Ben Gurion University

Friday, September 18, 10:00–11:30 am
Wells Hall B-342

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar

"Latin American Jewish Immigrants in the US"

Steven Gold, Department of Sociology, MSU

Friday, September 25, 12:30–2:00 pm
Wells Hall B-342

Lunch with Jewish Studies Minors, Prospective Minors,
and Jewish Studies Faculty

Monday, September 28, 7:00–8:30 pm
Case Hall, 3rd Floor, Club Spartan

Panel Discussion

"The Proposed Iran Nuclear Deal: Potential Impact on the US and the Middle East"

Panelists: **Yael Aronoff** (JMC faculty, Director of Jewish Studies, Serling Chair in Israel Studies), **Sherman Garnett** (Dean of JMC and professor, former government analyst for nuclear non-proliferation issues), and **Russel Lucas** (JMC faculty, Director of Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities. Muslim Studies faculty)

Thursday, October 8, 12:00 noon
Law College, 3rd Floor, Castle Board Room

Guest Lecture

"Citizen Suits and Environmental Activism in Israel: What Happens When One Country Opened the Gates of its Courts Up to the Public"

Alon Tal, Visiting Serling Israeli Scholar,
Ben Gurion University

Friday, October 9, 10:00–11:30 am
Wells Hall B-342

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar

"Deploying Race Against Assimilation: Horace Kallen Confronts Jews and America"

Matthew Kaufman, Department of Religious Studies,
MSU

Thursday, October 15, 12:00–6:00 pm
Breslin Center

Michigan State University Study Abroad Fair

Learn about the MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program at the Hebrew University/Rothberg School in Jerusalem.

Sunday, October 18, 10:00–12:00 pm
University Club of MSU, 3435 Forest Road, Lansing, MI

Fall Jewish Studies / Hadassah Brunch

"Israel and the Two-Level Game: Internal Changes, External Challenges"

Yuval Benziman, Israel Institute and Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar at MSU

Sunday & Monday, October 18 & 19

Wells Hall B-122

11th Annual MSU Israeli Film Festival

Marc Bernstein, film festival coordinator

Sunday, October 18

1:00 pm ***Gett: The Trial of Vivian Amsalem***
(2014), dirs. Shlomi and Ronit Elkabetz

3:30 pm ***Paris on the Water*** (2014), directed
by **Hadas Ayalon**

4:30 pm ***Next to Her*** (2014), directed by **Asaf Korman**

6:00–7:00 pm Dinner catered by Woody's

7:00 pm ***African Exodus*** (2014), directed by
Brad Rothschild (will lead film discussion)

Monday, October 19

8:00 pm ***A Borrowed Identity*** (2014), directed
by **Fran Riklis**

Monday, November 2, 7:00 pm
International Center, Room 303

Guest Lecture

"Partners against Anti-Semitism: North African Jews and Muslims Respond to the Vichy-Nazi Alliance"

Aomar Boum, Anthropology, UCLA

Thursday, November 5, 7:00 pm
Kellogg Center Auditorium

Guest Lecture

"Doomed to Succeed: The US-Israeli Relationship from Truman to Obama"

Dennis Ross, William Davidson Distinguished
Fellow and counselor, Washington Institute for
Near East Policy

Wednesday, November 18, 3:00–5:00 pm
Wells Hall B-342

Finifter Symposium on Greek Jewry

"Greek Jewry of the Holocaust"

Panelists: **Steven B. Bowman** (University of Cincinnati), **Katerina Kralova** (Charles University, Prague), and **Kenneth Waltzer** (MSU)

Wednesday, November 18, 7:00 pm
James Madison Library, 322 South Case Hall

Finifter Symposium on Greek Jewry

"Reconstituting Greek Jewry after the War"

Katerina Kralova, Charles University, Prague

Tuesday, December 1, 7:00 pm
MSU Main Library, West 4th Floor

Kessler Film Event

"The Zigzag Kid" (2012), directed by **Vincent**

Bal. Presenters: **Yuval Benziman** and **Laura Apol**

Friday, December 4, 10:00–11:30 am
Wells Hall B-342

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research
Seminar

"Radical Orthodoxy and the Controversy over Women's Education"

Ilan Fuchs, Hadassah Brandeis Institute–Project
on Gender, Culture, Religion, and Law

2016 Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar Israel Institute Visiting Scholar Yuval Benziman

Yuval Benziman (Ph.D., Hebrew University) is a lecturer on conflict resolution, culture studies, and Israeli studies. In Fall 2015, Dr. Benziman will teach two courses: MC 335 “Israeli Politics, Culture, and Society,” and MC 391 “Conflict and Peace Negotiations: Theory and Practice in the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations.” In Spring 2016, Yuval will teach MC390 “Studying Conflict via Cultural Texts: The Israeli Case,” and MC 492 “Senior Seminar in International Relations: Israel’s Foreign Policy.”



Yuval teaches in the conflict resolution programs at Tel Aviv University and in the School of Government and School of Law in the IDC Hezliya. He also teaches MA seminars about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and about the transformation of the Israeli culture throughout the years at Hebrew University.

Yuval is also part of the Israeli public discourse. He writes policy papers and researches about Israel’s foreign policy for NGOs (Geneva Initiative, Mitvim, Ir Amim), and works on issues regarding conscription and the relations between Israeli society and its military.

New Affiliated Jewish Studies Faculty Matthew Kauffman and Lev Raphael

Matthew Kaufmann (Ph.D. Candidate, Humanities, York University) is a Visiting Instructor of Religious Studies at MSU during the 2015–2016 academic year. His research lies in the intersection of print culture with the history of science and religion, secularism, and Jewish thought.



He is Lowenstein-Weiner Fellow of the American Jewish Archives for 2014-15. Matthew is an ordained rabbi with the Reconstructionist movement, a member of the Reform movement’s rabbinical association, and served as rabbi for Reform and Conservative congregations. Matthew will be teaching REL 310 “Judaism” in Fall 2015 and REL 413 “Jewish Philosophy” in Spring 2016.

Lev Raphael (Ph.D., English, MSU) is a Visiting Assistant Professor in English, the author and co-author of 25 books in a dozen different genres, and is a leading figure in American-Jewish Literature. His first book of short stories, *Dancing on Tisha B’Av*, won a Lambda Literary Award. This fall, he teaches ENG 328 “Readings in Novel & Narrative” that has a focus on anti-Semitism. Along with hundreds of reviews in newspapers, Dr. Raphael has published dozens of essays, articles, and stories in a wide range of publications.



2015–16 Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar Alon Tal

Alon Tal (Ph.D. Harvard School of Public Health; J.D. Hebrew University) is also a 2015 Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar, and will teach MC 351 “Science and Social Policy” and MC/FW 450 “International Environmental Law and Policy” (both using an Israel case study) in Fall 2015.



Dr. Tal was the founding director of Adam Teva V’din, the Israel Union for Environmental Defense from 1990–97, a leading public interest law group. He was chairman of Life and Environment, an umbrella group for eighty environmental organizations in Israel, from 1998–2003.

Dr. Tal represents Israel’s Foreign Ministry at the UN’s Convention to Combat Desertification. He is also co-chair of Israel’s Green Party. Dr. Tal is the author of several environmental policy books, including, *All the Trees of the Forest: Israel’s Woodlands from the Antiquity to the Present*, (Yale University Press, 2013) and *The Land Is Full: Addressing Overpopulation in Israel* (Yale University Press, forthcoming).

New Hebrew Professor Yore Kedem

Yore Kedem (Ph.D., Secondary and Continuing Education, University of Illinois) is Assistant Professor of Hebrew in the Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, Asian, and African Languages. At Illinois, he taught Modern Hebrew and courses on immigration, in addition to leading study abroad courses on immigration and cultural diversity in Israel. At MSU, Yore teaches Hebrew at all levels, emphasizing practical and applicable learning. He also offers an inquiry-based course on immigration as a global issue from local perspectives for the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities. His primary research interests are experiential and aesthetic education, with emphasis on application in music, language, and study abroad.



Yore will be leading the 2016 MSU Summer Study Abroad at Hebrew University. There he will teach the course “Cultural Diversity and Immigration in Israel.”

11th ANNUAL ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL
Sunday, October 18 & Monday, October 19



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Academic News

Eric Aronoff co-authored an article with Yael Aronoff titled “Bordering on Peace: Spatial Narratives of Border Crossings Between Israel, Jordan and Egypt,” in *The Design of Frontier Spaces: Control and Ambiguity*, eds., Carolyn Loeb and Andreas Luescher (New York: Ashgate, 2015).

Yael Aronoff is participating in the Association for Jewish Studies Distinguished Lectureship Program and received the MSU John K. Hudzik Emerging Leader in Advancing International Studies and Programs award. Dr. Aronoff co-authored with Eric Aronoff “Bordering on Peace: Spatial Narratives of Border Crossings Between Israel, Jordan and Egypt.” She presented “Media Narratives: Deterrence? and participated in two roundtables at the Association of Israel Studies June 1–3, Montreal. She is presenting “The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace” at the University of Wisconsin and Tel Aviv University Symposium “Revolutions, Religion, and the Politics of Negotiating Space,” 8/31–9/1. Dr. Aronoff will lecture on “Shifting Sands in the Middle East: Opportunities and Challenges for Israel,” at Adat Shalom Synagogue, Farmington Hills, MI, October 12. She will participate in a roundtable on “Pedagogy and Politics of Teaching Israel and Palestine on College Campuses” for the Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, December 13–15.

Kirsten Fermaglich’s article, “Too Long, Too Foreign . . . Too Jewish: Jews, Name-changing, and Family Mobility in New York City, 1917–1942,” was published in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* in Spring 2015. She spoke on “Jews, Antisemitism, and Civil Rights Activism” for the Diversity Week Lecture at the MSU Law School in February, and she also presented her research on name-changing for the Big Read program at the Crounse Public Library in Hartland, MI, in April. Dr. Fermaglich was also nominated for a Fintz teaching award this spring for her IAH 211C class on American Jewish culture. This fall, she will be a visiting assistant professor at the Samuel and Jean Frankel Institute of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan.

Steven Fraiberg co-authored an article in *Israel Studies Review* (Volume 30, Issue 1, Spring 2015) titled “Outsmarting the Nation, Together: Subversive Virtual Fraternity in the Israeli Men’s Magazine *Blazer*.” The article examines shifts in Israeli masculine identity in the context of globalization through an analysis of text in the popular magazine *Blazer*.

Steve Gold attended a forum to consider a census category for Americans from the Middle East and North Africa at the US Census in Suitland, MD, in May. Steve is presenting “Latin American Jewish Immigrants in the US” in September as part of the Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar. Steve was quoted in three *Haaretz* articles in June concerning the US Census Bureau’s proposed inclusion of a “Middle East–North Africa” identity category.

Anna Norris presented a paper on “Testimonies from French Women at the French Archival Project *Le Mémorial de la Shoah: A Gender-Specific View at the Shoah*” at the international symposium Exploring Women’s Testimony: Genocide, War, Revolution, the Holocaust and Human Rights at the University of Maine at Augusta, the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine, and Colby College. Her essay on novelist Irène Némirovsky, “Mauvaises mères et filles meurtries dans les textes d’Irène Némirovsky” appeared in *Girls in French and Francophone Literature and Film*, French Literature Series, Brill-Rodopi, in May. Her essay on Holocaust survivor and filmmaker Marceline Loridan Ivens, “Auschwitz-Birkenau 1944-1945: Marceline Loridan-Ivens tourne et retourne son passé” will appear in a special issue of *Women in French Studies, Women and Memory/Femmes et mémoire* this fall.

Benjamin Pollock’s “The Political Perfection of Original Judaism: Pedagogical Governance and Ecclesiastical Power in Mendelssohn’s *Jerusalem*” appeared in the *Harvard Theological Review* in April. In May, Benjamin served as a scholar-in-residence at the Or Chadash synagogue in Oak Park, MI, where he delivered three talks on his new research devoted to the theme of “Jewish Philosophy as Therapy.” Over the 2015–16 academic year, Benjamin will be abroad teaching in the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Kenneth Waltzer published “Reflections on Contemporary Anti-Semitism in Europe” in *Fathom* (Summer 2015). During July, he co-directed the Workshop on Holocaust and Rwanda Testimonies at the University of Michigan–Flint, and in September he is presenting “History and Memory: Children in the Nazi Camps” at the Global Connections Conference: Holocaust Education in a Critical Time, in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.
