

Jewish Studies Program

Spring Semester 2015



Michigan State University

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Yael Aronoff, Director
Michael Serling, Chair, Advisory Board
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Notes from the Director

Our Jewish Studies Program had an exciting fall semester, hosting eight outside speakers and screening one film. This spring we are having fourteen speakers in addition to our 10th Annual Israeli Film Festival. We are co-sponsoring events with a dozen units and programs across the university throughout the year, and continuing our monthly Jewish Studies research seminars with faculty and students.

In October, Ken Waltzer and I participated in the first Committee on Institutional Cooperation meetings of Directors of Jewish Studies in Ann Arbor (which included 15 universities, including the Big Ten Conference Institutions). We are doing as well as, or better than, our peer universities in terms of student minors, and have stronger programming in Israel Studies, including our study abroad programs, than many. This was a nice opportunity to collaborate, share ideas for speakers and grants, and communicate about similar challenges.

As the Jewish Studies specialization transitions into being a minor, we continue to look for new opportunities for our students. In November, the Jewish Stud-

ies faculty had lunch with Jewish Studies specialists and those interested in exploring the minor. We now have a student president of the minors, Aaron Wald, who helped initiate ideas, including some changes to the website. Brad Isaakson, who has just completed his Jewish Studies minor, will be interning with Jewish Studies this spring for his James Madison College internship credit. One of Brad's tasks will be aiding me in compiling a list of Israel and Jewish Studies related internships for students.

The Jewish Studies faculty had a productive meeting in November, and will have a longer retreat this January. We will be brainstorming possible future positions, programs, speakers, and symposiums. Some ideas include: a team-taught class introducing students to Jewish Studies; a Jewish Studies graduate certificate; and one-credit opportunities for our students who attend our co-curricular events and compose related writing assignments. We have also drafted a description for a new endowed position in Holocaust Studies, and have started fundraising for that position.

We are looking forward to an intellec-

tually engaging and celebratory spring. Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar Alon Tal will join us and teach two classes in James Madison College. We will also be celebrating Ken Waltzer's contributions to MSU, James Madison College, and, of course, Jewish Studies. Please mark your calendars on March 27 and 28 for this celebration!

We're happy to report that MSU has re-instated all six of the study abroad programs in Israel. Chen Bram, last year's Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar, will lead the summer program at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 2015.

We also will be carefully observing Israeli politics as that country prepares for new elections on March 17. Parties are negotiating coalitions, new parties are being formed, and others are choosing new leaders. The elections, and the new coalition government, could have a profound impact on important domestic issues as well as foreign policy. We look forward to watching these developments and thinking through the implications with you on March 25th.

~ Yael Aronoff, Professor and Director

22nd Annual Rabin Holocaust Lecture

Wednesday, April 15, 7:00 pm
Kellogg Center, Lincoln Room

*"Anti-Semitism in the 21st Century:
An Illusion? Or Time to Start Worrying?"*

Deborah E. Lipstadt, Dorot Professor of
Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies,
Emory University



Anti-Semitism, particularly in Europe, has been on the rise. Is this trend real? Is it linked to events in the Middle East? If it is indeed a real phenomenon, what are the causes? Co-sponsored with James Madison College and the Center for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies.

Professor Ken Waltzer's Big Bash Retirement Celebration

Friday & Saturday, March 27-28
Kellogg Center

James Madison College and Jewish Studies will commemorate Ken Waltzer's 43-year career at MSU with a welcome reception, panel discussions, special speakers, music, and an enjoyable dinner and social events.

For more information, please contact Kim Allan at al-lank@msu.edu or 517-353-3381. Ticket reservations can be made online at www.jmc.msu.edu



Jewish Studies Events

Friday, January 16

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar
“*We Really Like Winston Better Than Weinstein! New York City Jews and Name-changing in the Postwar Era*”
Kirsten Fermaglich, Department of History, MSU
10:00–11:30 am, Wells Hall B-342

Tuesday, January 20

Guest Lecture
“*What’s Missing in Middle East Reporting*”
Mark Lavie, former Mideast AP journalist, 1999–2014
7:00 pm, *RCAH Theater, Snyder Hall C-20*

Thursday, January 22

Guest Lecture
“*Water Scarcity in the Middle East: Can Technology Be the Game Changer?*”
Alon Tal, Ben Gurion University
7:00–8:30 pm, JMC Library, 322 South Case Hall

Wednesday, January 28

Faculty Panel Discussion
“*Analyzing Ari Shavit’s My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*”
Guest: Ari Shavit
Panelists: Yael Aronoff, Ken Waltzer, and Marc Bernstein
3:30–5:00 pm, Wells Hall B-342

Wednesday, January 28

Guest Lecture
“*My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*”
Ari Shavit, Israeli reporter and columnist for *Haaretz*
7:00–8:30 pm, Case Hall, 3rd Floor, Club Spartan

Tuesday, February 3

Forestry Hanover Seminar Series
“*All the Trees of the Forest: The Extraordinary Story of Israel’s Woodlands*”
Alon Tal, Ben Gurion University
4:00–5:00 pm, Natural Resources Room 225

Tuesday, February 3,

Jonathan Netanyahu Memorial Lecture
“*The EU and its Working Definition of Anti-Semitism*”
R. Amy Elman, Department of Political Science, Kalamazoo College
7:00–8:30 pm, JMC Library, 322 South Case Hall

Wednesday, February 18,

Michael Brill Memorial Lecture
“*Tracking Time in Auschwitz*”
Alan Rosen, International School for Holocaust Studies
7:00–8:30 pm, JMC Library, 322 South Case Hall

Friday, February 20

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar
“*Nobility and Monstrosity in Elye Levita’s 16th Century Yiddish Chivalric Romance, Bove-bukh*”
Margot B. Valles, Integrative Studies in Arts & Humanities, MSU
10:00–11:30 am, Wells Hall B-342

Friday, February 27

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar
“*Anti-Zionism to Zionism: Reform Judaism and Temple Beth El of Detroit’s Alternate Course*”
Laura Williams, Jewish Studies Specialist at MSU
10:00–11:30 am, Wells Hall B-342

Friday, March 20

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar
“*The Maurerschulen (Brick Mason Schools) at Auschwitz*”
Ken Waltzer, Professor Emeritus, James Madison College, MSU
10:00–11:30 am, Wells Hall B-342

Sunday, March 22

Monday, March 23
10th Annual Israeli Film Festival
Various times, Wells Hall B-122

Wednesday, March 25

“*The Implications of the March 17 Israeli Elections*”
Yael Aronoff, James Madison College, MSU
7:00 pm, JMC Library, 322 South Case Hall

Friday, March 27

Saturday, March 28
Ken Waltzer’s Big Bash Retirement Celebration
Various times, Kellogg Center

Wednesday, April 1

Ada Finifter Memorial Lecture
“*Freedom and Death: The Holocaust and Greek Jewry*”
Steven B. Bowman, Department of History, University of Cincinnati
7:00 pm, JMC Library, 322 South Case Hall

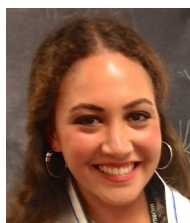
Wednesday, April 15

22nd Rabin Holocaust Lecture / Brill Memorial Lecture
“*Anti-Semitism in the 21st Century: An Illusion? Or Time to Start Worrying?*”
Deborah E. Lipstadt, Dorot Professor, Emory University
7:00 pm, Kellogg Center, Lincoln Room

Friday, April 24

Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar
“*Living Beyond Terrorism: Israeli Stories of Hope and Healing*”
Zieva Konvisser, Israel Center for Treatment of Psychotrauma
10:00–11:30 am, Wells Hall B-342

Highlighting Our Jewish Studies Specialists and Minors



In January 2014 I embarked on the greatest experience of my life, an eight-month journey to Israel. I spent a semester at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where I fell in love with the country, and was offered the opportunity to do a summer internship with the *Jerusalem Post*. I have found ways to share my experience

abroad with the MSU community, such as participating in the 3rd Annual Learning Abroad Conference, and I am searching for ways to return to Israel. ~ *Lia Kamana, Journalism major*

I am a senior, studying human resource management, and I have fulfilled my Jewish Studies specialization requirements through studying abroad in Israel with Professor Yael Aronoff as well as taking multiple Jewish Studies classes with Professor Benjamin Pollock. I have held various positions at MSU's Hillel including Alternative Spring Break Chair, Freshman Engagement Intern, and Team Israel Programming Committee chair, through which I planned Israel Fest. Upon graduation, I will be working for Boeing Defense, Space, & Security in St. Louis. ~ *Sydney Wolf*



I have almost finished my Jewish Studies Specialization, having taken many Hebrew and Jewish History courses. Professor Fermaglich has guided my independent study as part of my Specialization. I was awarded the College of Social Science Dean's Assistantship while I pursue original research for my paper

"Anti-Zionism to Zionism: Reform Judaism and Temple Beth El of Detroit's Alternate Course," which I will present as part of the Jewish Studies Faculty and Student Research Seminar this spring. My major is Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science; Community Governance and Advocacy. On campus I am a Resident Assistant and through Hillel and the Jewish Student Union I have an internship with Destination Detroit and Ask Big Questions. ~ *Laura Williams*

Ken Waltzer has been a mentor to me for many years due to his work on the Holocaust and me being a third generation descendent of a survivor. Through his guidance, I completed a specialization in Jewish Studies and was able to study abroad in Israel with the current director, Yael Aronoff. I also took two years of Hebrew with (now retired) Ellen Rothfeld and Professor Marc Bernstein. Last year I had an internship through the Hillel Center with the Israel on Campus Coalition, and I was delighted that Director Aronoff invited me to intern with the Jewish Studies Program. ~ *Brad Isaakson, James Madison College, International Relations and History majors*



During summer 2013, I participated in the MSU Jewish Studies study abroad in Jerusalem. After returning, I was fortunate to be in Professor Waltzer's last class before his retirement. This past fall I took a course on Jewish literature, taught by acclaimed author Lev Raphael, and completed my senior seminar with Professor Aronoff. I am proud to be the President of Spartans for Israel and serve as the ASMSU Jewish Student Union representative, in addition to being a Hasbara Fellowships Fellow, an AIPAC trained activist, and a former David Project intern. ~ *Aaron Wald, James Madison College, PTC D major*



Professor Ken Waltzer's Big Bash Retirement Celebration March 27–28, 2015

James Madison College and the Jewish Studies Program are sponsoring a celebration for Professor Kenneth Waltzer. After 43 years teaching at James Madison College, including 7 years leading that college, and 10 years directing the Jewish Studies Program, Ken is retiring. Reserve your tickets now to honor his service, teaching, scholarship, and career!



Friday, March 27, 2015, 5:00 to 8:00 pm

All-University Welcome Reception

MSU Kellogg Center, Red Cedar Room

Appetizers provided, cash bar, music, and good vibes.

Saturday, March 28, 2015, 9:00 am to 10:00 pm

Ken Waltzer's Big Bash Retirement Celebration

MSU Kellogg Center

9:00 to 10:00 am. Continental breakfast.

10:15 to 11:45 am. Panel discussion #1.

12:00 to 1:30 pm. Lunch, *with Keynote Speaker: Wallace Jefferson (Urban '85), Attorney and former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas*

1:45 to 3:00 pm. Panel discussion #2.

3:15 to 4:30 pm. Panel discussion #3.

6:30 to 10:00 pm. Dinner, and Roast & Toast Program

For more information, please contact Kim Allan at either allank@msu.edu or 517-353-3381. For ticket reservations, go online at www.jmc.msu.edu and click on the "March 28 / Waltzer Celebration" link in the left margin.

2015 MSU Jewish Studies Summer Program Hebrew University in Jerusalem, July 8–August 5

Last year's Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar **Chen Bram** will be leading MSU's Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University, July 8–August 5. He will be teaching "Jerusalem Majolica: Intergroup Relations, Communities, and Identities in Jerusalem and the Galilee" MC390/ISS330B (4 credits). **David Mendelsson** will be teaching "The Emergence of the Modern State of Israel" MC290/IAH211D (4 credits). For more details, contact **Yael Aronoff** (aronoffy@msu.edu).



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Academic News

Yael Aronoff gave talks on her recent book, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace*, to several audiences: the Scholars Seminar on Israel Studies; the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University; as a Keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies at MSU; and as part of the Jewish Studies Faculty Student Research Seminar at MSU. She also presented "Teaching About Israel Today in Higher Education" at the Jewish Studies-Hadassah Brunch, and was a Scholar in Residence in Grand Rapids, MI, and Hoffman, IL.

Safoi Bhana-Hampton's chapter "Espace réel et imaginaire de l'identité juive-marocaine féminine chez Sapho et Eliette Abécasis" ("The Real and Imaginary Space of Female Moroccan Jewish Identity in Sapho and Eliette Abecassis's Writings") was published in *Les Espaces Intimes Féminins dans la Littérature Maghrébine d'Expression Française*. (eds. Robert Elbaz and Françoise Saquer-Sabin) in 2014.

Marc Bernstein's article "Huwiya/Zehut: Identity and Language in the Bilingual Israeli Sitcom 'Arab Labor,'" co-authored with Rivka Bliboim, is forthcoming in *Studies in Language and Society*. He presented his research project "Give Me Your Identity: Linguistic Code-Switching in Sayed Kashua's 'Arab Labor'" at MSU, which was partially funded by a Research Extension Grant from the MSU Office of Study Abroad.

Kirsten Fermaglich presented her research on name-changing at the Association for Jewish Studies conference at two different panels this past December: one was a lightning session on passing and assimilation in Jewish life, and the other was a seminar on American Jewish history and culture in the post-World War II era. She also gave a presentation for the Jewish Genealogical Society of Michigan in January.

Steven Gold was on sabbatical and was a Visiting Scholar, Erasmus Mundus Joint European Masters in International Migration and Social Cohesion (MISOCO), University of Amsterdam and University of Os-nabruck, October–November 2014, where he presented six papers. His chapter "Undocumented Immigrants and Self Employment in the Informal Economy," in Lois Ann Lorentzen (ed.) *Hidden Lives and Human Rights in the United States: Understanding the Controversies and Tragedies of Undocumented Immigration*, was published in 2014, as was his article "Contextual and Family Determinants of Immigrant Women's Self-Employment: The Case of Vietnamese, Russian-Speaking Jews, and Israelis" in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.

Deborah Margolis curated the exhibition "*Revealing the Entire World of the Stranger: Palestinian Israeli Writer Sayed Kashua*," which was on display in the MSU Main Library from September–October 2014.

Benjamin Pollock's "To Infinity and Beyond: Cohen and Rosenzweig on Comportment towards Redemption" appeared as a chapter in *Re-thinking the Messianic Idea in Judaism* (edited by M. Morgan and S. Weitzman). He presented a paper, "Rosenzweig's 'Hygiene of Return': The Jewish People Between *The Star* and the *Lehrhaus*," at a conference on Franz Rosenzweig's Frankfurt period, in Frankfurt, Germany. Benjamin's article, "The Political Perfection of Original Judaism: Pedagogical Governance and Ecclesiastical Power in Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*" will appear in April 2015 in the *Harvard Theological Review*.

Ken Waltzer presented "Family Fragments, Pairs, and Small Groups: Another Look at Social Relations in the Nazi Camps" at the Association for Jewish Studies meeting in Baltimore, MD. He is completing his manuscript "To Tell the Story: The Rescue of Children and Youths at Buchenwald," and will be speaking to the docents about small groups in the camps at the Holocaust Memorial Center on February 8, 2015.