

# The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel

*Fall 2022 Newsletter*



**Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the  
Jewish Studies Program at MSU (1992-2022)**

This year we celebrate an important milestone: 30 years of the Jewish Studies Program at MSU!

Back in the fall of 1992, faculty members Barry Gross, Steve Weiland, Ken Waltzer, and the College of Arts and Letters Dean John Eadie, had the vision to establish a Jewish Studies Program at MSU, with the support of MSU President Peter McPherson. The program began with a handful of courses and faculty, and a tiny budget. And the program flourished, guided by the vision and hard work of our former directors and faculty, the support of the Advisory Board chaired by Michael Serling, of MSU administrators, and of our many community members who established endowments to support faculty, students, and the program overall. At each stage, it has received crucial support from College of Arts and Letters Deans, most recently from Dean Chris Long.

Over the past 30 years, we have had tremendous growth across all aspects of the program. Our core and affiliated faculty have grown exponentially, including the establishment of two endowed chairs; our course offerings and the number of Jewish Studies minors and students taking Jewish Studies courses has grown as well. We built on our strengths in American Jewish history, culture, and literature; European Jewish History and Holocaust Studies, Hebrew, Judaism, and Israel Studies, to become a national leader in Jewish Studies and Israel Studies. We have established three faculty-led study abroad programs to Israel and sponsored a total twenty-eight visiting scholars. Our rich and extensive programming is attended by several thousand students, faculty, and community members each year. (Please see our data on the next page.) One of the program's distinguishing features is our emphasis on teaching and mentoring our students -- primarily undergraduates -- fostering the close interaction of faculty, students, and community members. (See the program for our sixth annual Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference, and alumni and student highlights, in this newsletter).

With their naming gift in September 2018, we transformed into the Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel. The Serling's generous gift has enabled us to build on all our strengths, as well as provide more support for Israeli visiting scholars, expanded course offerings, research, study abroad and internship opportunities for students in Israel, and future research collaboration between MSU faculty and Israeli colleagues in diverse fields.

Part of our vision is to use the interdisciplinary lens of Jewish Studies/Israel Studies to better understand

current challenges and ways to resolve them. For instance, this semester our programming sheds light on Jewish perspectives on reproductive freedom, including as an issue of religious freedom. Expert scholars from across the country will provide their insights, followed by comments by two prominent Jewish women MI policymakers, Representative Elissa Slotkin and Attorney General Dana Nessel. We are also bringing prominent Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiators together, to discuss their vision for a confederation facilitating a two-state solution in which Israel and an independent Palestinian state could peacefully live alongside one another. Our teaching, research, and programming also examines environmental challenges and solutions, innovations in entrepreneurship, as well as how diverse Jewish experiences in the U.S., Europe, Israel, and other parts of the world shed light on minority/majority relations, nationalist identities, and the diversity of religious and ethnic identities.

While we celebrate a supportive environment at MSU for the Serling Institute and for our students, we also aim to increase awareness of both antisemitism and Islamophobia on our campus. We have made strides towards achieving that goal by offering courses on antisemitism, the Holocaust, American Jewish History, and European Jewish History. The Serling Institute faculty, staff and students wrote the *Guide on Antisemitism for the MSU Community* as a resource for the MSU community, which we are introducing this Fall. The Institute has participated in six annual forums where students share experiences of antisemitism, has conducted training sessions for over six hundred residential advisors and intercultural aides, and has given an additional half dozen workshops on antisemitism across the university. We are now working to include training on how to recognize and combat antisemitism and Islamophobia into orientation sessions for new students, faculty, and staff, and for residential advisors, as well as reinstating the MSU Dialogues on Religion and Ethnicity, for which we created the curriculum in collaboration with faculty and students in Muslim Studies.

We are inspired to build in all these areas to make even more contributions over the next decade!

**Professor Yael Aronoff**

Director of The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel.

If you have any questions about our Institute please email me at [aronoffy@msu.edu](mailto:aronoffy@msu.edu) or call me at 517-303-6019.



## Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Jewish Studies Program at MSU

**Over the last 30 years:**

» The Institute has grown to include 6 core faculty members, 26 affiliated faculty members and 4 visiting scholars. We have hosted 28 visiting scholars.

» Serling Institute faculty have been awarded 8 HARP Faculty Awards, 4 MSU Teacher Scholar Awards, and have published 25 books related to Jewish Studies/Israel Studies.

» 325 students have specialized/minored in Jewish Studies, with a record 56 in 2021-22.

» More than 300 MSU students studied in Israel on our faculty-led study abroad programs.

» About 12,800 students have taken Jewish Studies courses, with a record 926 students enrolled in 39 courses in 2021-22.

» Jewish Studies minors have received 40 awards; including 26 Jewish Studies Achievement Awards, 1 Rhodes Scholarship, 1 Marshall Scholarship, 1 Udall Scholarship, and 3 MSU nominations for the Truman Scholarship.

» 348 student scholarships have been awarded through the Serling Institute: 230 Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy for Study Abroad; 10 Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy for Hebrew; 11 Albert and Sharie Gladner for Study in Israel; 38 Ed and Dot Slade for Israel Study; 14 Serling Modern Israel; 6 Katzmann & Gilbert; 31 Ada Weintraub Finifter Hebrew; 3 James & Anna Hersh for Student Interns and 5 Ada Weintraub Finifter Student Achievement.

» The Institute has sponsored more than 364 lectures, films, exhibits, and concerts with more than 20,000 in attendance.



Michael and Elaine Serling



Michael Serling, Elie Weisel, and Jeff Leib, MSU campus, 1999

\*Please email us at [jewishst@msu.edu](mailto:jewishst@msu.edu) with any questions on how to access our events online or if you would like to be added to our listserv to get email reminders of our upcoming events and more!

## “Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians in the ‘Non-negotiations’ Era, 2000-2022” by Yuval Benziman

**Wednesday, September 14th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm**  
**Club Spartan (3rd Floor, Case Hall)**

After the collapse of the Palestinian-Israeli Camp David peace negotiations in 2000, both sides accused each other of being a “non-partner.” In the 22 years that passed since, there were few official negotiations between the parties. While both sides have claimed at different times that official peace negotiations would be unsuccessful, the reality of the conflict forces them to talk to each other. This lecture will discuss seven methods to provide necessary communication.



**Yuval Benziman** was a fellow of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel in 2015-2016, taught three semesters at James Madison College, and is now returning to MSU to teach in the 2022 Fall semester. He is a Senior Faculty Lecturer in the Conflict Research, Management and Resolution Program of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, and the holder of the Katia & Hans Guth-Dreyfus Lectureship for Conflict Resolution and the Law. He also teaches in the School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy and in the School of Psychology in the Reichman University (IDC Herzliya).

## Please join us for an introduction to The Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel *Guide on Antisemitism for the MSU Community*

**Monday, September 19th from 5:00 - 5:30 pm**  
**Lake Superior Room, 3rd Floor, MSU Union Building, 49 Abbot Rd**

Please join us for an introduction to *The Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel Guide on Antisemitism* for the MSU Community. The guide was written by faculty, staff, and students of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel in order to assist the MSU community to better recognize antisemitism when it emerges on campus and to understand its impacts. There will be a short presentation by Professors Yael Aronoff, Kirsten Fermaglich, and Amy Simon, followed by questions and discussion. Printed copies of the guide will be available for all attendees.



**Dr. Yael Aronoff**  
Director of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, Serling Chair in Israel Studies and Professor of International Relations at James Madison College,

**Ariana Mentzel**  
Assistant to the Director of the Serling Institute.  
MA in Government, Diplomacy & Strategy, with a specialization in Conflict Studies, IDC Herzliya.  
BA in International Relations, James Madison College of MSU, minor in Jewish Studies and Muslim Studies.



**Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich**  
Professor of History and Jewish Studies.

**Dr. Amy Simon**  
William and Audrey Farber Family Chair in Holocaust Studies and European Jewish History, Assistant Professor in James Madison College, History, and the Serling Institute.



## Introduction to the Guide on Antisemitism Continued : “Loving Me, Loving Jew: Jews, Gender, and the Anxieties of Belonging” by Sara Horowitz

**Monday, September 19th from 6:00 - 7:30 pm**  
**Lake Superior Room, 3rd Floor, MSU Union Building, 49 Abbot Rd**

**Sara R. Horowitz** is Professor of Comparative Literature and Humanities and former Director of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University. Her authored and edited books include *Shadows in the City of Light: Paris in Post-War French Jewish Writing*; *Hans Günther Adler: Life, Literature, Legacy, and Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction*. She served as president of the Association for Jewish Studies, member of the Academic Committee of the U.S Holocaust Memorial Museum, and founding co-editor of the Azrieli Series of Holocaust Memoirs and of the journal *KEREM*.



## The Leonard Gilman Symposium on “Jewish Perspectives on Reproductive Rights: Jews, Religious Liberty, and Reproductive Freedom in the United States” - Part 1

**Sunday, September 18th from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
**International Center Conference Rooms 303 and 305, 427 N. Shaw Lane**

**Complimentary lunch to follow outside between the International Center and Wells Hall from 1:00 - 2:00 pm**

Featuring three distinguished historians, each of whom will discuss the history of Jews and reproductive freedom in the United States and the ways forward for reproductive freedom in the wake of the Supreme Court’s overturning of *Roe V. Wade*.



**Dr. Rachel Kranson** is the director of the Jewish Studies Program and an associate professor of religious studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She is the author of *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America* (Honorable Mention, Best First Book Award of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society, 2017) and a co-editor of *A Jewish Feminine Mystique?: Jewish Women in Postwar America*. Her current book project, *Religious Misconceptions: American Jews and the Politics of Abortion*, traces the history of American Jews’ engagement in the struggle for reproductive rights and access.



**Dr. Ronit Y. Stahl** is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Berkeley, where she is a faculty affiliate of the religious diversity cluster of the Othering and Belonging Institute, the Center for Jewish Studies, and the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion. Currently a Greenwall Foundation Faculty Scholar in Bioethics, she is working on a new book, *Troubling Conscience: Religious Freedom and Health Care in Modern America*, which examines the long history of religious hospitals, government funding, and conscience rights in the United States. She is the author of the award-winning *Enlisting Faith: How the Military Chaplaincy Shaped Religion and State in Modern America* (Harvard University Press, 2017).



**Dr. Samira K. Mehta** is an associate professor of women and gender studies and of Jewish studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her research and teaching focus on the intersections religion, culture, and gender, including the politics of family life and reproduction in the United States. Her first book, *Beyond Chrismukkah: The Christian-Jewish Blended Family in the United States* (University of North Carolina Press, 2018) was a National Jewish Book Award finalist. Mehta’s current academic book project, *God Bless the Pill: Sexuality and Contraception in Tri-Faith America* examines the role of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant voices in competing moral logics of contraception, population control, and eugenics from the mid-twentieth century to the present and is under contract with the University of North Carolina Press.

## “Diversity as a Mechanism of Depoliticization: The Case of Palestinian Career Women in Israel”

by Dr. Amalia Sa’ar

Wednesday, September 28th from 5:00 - 6:30 pm  
Club Spartan (3rd Floor, Case Hall)



Dr. Sa’ar will address Israel’s recent endorsement of the idea of diversity employment towards its Palestinian-Arab citizens, through the case of Palestinian career women. Her vantage point is the seeming paradox, by which the same governments, over the past two-three decades, have allocated unprecedented funds for Arabs’ economic integration, while simultaneously initiating legislation (notably the Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People) that is designed to curb their symbolic and political entitlements. She argues that, in Israel, “diversity” serves as a mediating concept between two contradictory (yet intertwined) forces: neoliberalism, which compels the state to adopt inclusion measures dictated by international bodies, and the state’s commitment to maintaining its Jewish character. The economic integration of the Palestinian citizens is expected to boost productivity and thus benefit corporations and the national economy as a whole. At the same time, it is expected to improve Palestinians’ own living standards, and thus to tame their political resentment. She discusses the implications of these dynamics through the concept of ‘economic citizenship’: examining what happens when diversity becomes a means of addressing minority groups’ economic interests but not their political aspirations.

**Amalia Sa’ar** is an associate professor and chair of the Anthropology Dept. at the University of Haifa. Her main research topics include the intersections of gender, class and citizenship among the Palestinian citizens of Israel, feminist perspectives on security, and generational relations in the Israeli feminist movement. Her first book, *Economic Citizenship: Neoliberal Paradoxes of Empowerment* (Berghahn Books, 2016) documents economic empowerment projects of low-income Jewish and Palestinian women. Her more recent book, *Diversity: Palestinian Career Women in Israel* (2021, Open University Press, in Hebrew), in collaboration with Hawazin Younis, documents the journeys of Palestinian women medical doctors, lawyers, and high-tech engineers, and applies a critical lens to the idea of diversity employment. Sa’ar’s forthcoming article in *Current Anthropology* draws on both these projects and offers an intersectional analysis of economic citizenship among Palestinians in Israel.

## Serling Lecture on Modern Israel: “Secrets I Won’t Take With Me”

by Yossi Beilin

Friday, October 28th from 12:30 - 2:00  
Club Spartan (3rd Floor, Case Hall)

In his autobiography, Dr. Beilin tells the story of a person who was born in Israel a few weeks after its establishment. Aside from his book telling the story of his country, it is also a suspenseful story of the man behind two major milestones in Israel and in the Jewish world: the Oslo agreement between the PLO and Israel, and the Birthright-Israel project. It is a unique opportunity to understand the motivations, the impediments, and the emotions behind the scenes of the projects which have influenced Israel and world Jewry.

**Yossi Beilin** is a politician and researcher. For 24 years he has held senior positions in the Knesset and the Israeli Government. His most latest ministerial role was as Minister of Justice. Dr. Beilin taught in the Political Science department of Tel Aviv University for 13 years. In 2019-2020 he served as a visiting professor at NYU. In addition to the Oslo process and the Taglit-Birthright project, he initiated the Beilin-Abu Mazen understandings and the Geneva Initiative.

Publications: *Secrets I won’t Take With Me*, 2021; *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement*, 2004; *From Hachula to Geneva*, 2004; *Manual for a Wounded Dove*, 2001; *His Brother’s Keeper*, 2000; *From Socialism to Social Liberalism*, 1999; *The Manual for Leaving Lebanon*, 1998; *Touching Peace*, 1997; *Israel: A Concise Political History*, 1992; *The Roots of Israeli Industry*, 1987; *The Price of Unity*, 1985; *Sons in the Shadow of Their Fathers*, 1984.



## The Leonard Gilman Symposium on “Jewish Perspectives on Reproductive Rights: Jews, Religious Liberty, and Reproductive Freedom in the United States” - Part 2

Sunday, October 16th from 12:00 - 1:30 pm  
International Center Conference Rooms 303 and 305, 427 N. Shaw Lane

Lecture and discussion by Dr. Gillian Frank from 12:00-1:00 pm  
Representative Elissa Slotkin and Attorney General Dana Nessel will talk about the current fight for reproductive freedom in Michigan in the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe V. Wade*, the case that legalized abortion; Rep. Slotkin will speak at 1:00 pm and Attorney General Nessel at 1:15 pm.



**Dr. Gillian Frank** will discuss the Clergy Consultation Service on Abortion and liberal religious repro activism in Michigan from his forthcoming book *A Sacred Choice*. It centers Jewish history by using Michigan’s 1970 prosecution of an Illinois based rabbi (and the attempts to extradite him) for abortion counseling and referral. He uses this story as a jumping off point to broader questions of abortion & pastoral counseling and abortion travel.

Gillian Frank is a historian of sexuality and religion and a visiting affiliate fellow at Princeton University’s Center for Culture, Society and Religion. He is the author of numerous academic articles on the histories of sexuality, gender and religion (which have appeared in venues like the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *American Jewish History*, and *Gender and History*) and public facing scholarship (with bylines in publications including *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *Jezebel* and *Slate*). He is co-editor of *Devotions and Desires: Histories of Sexuality and Religion in the 20th Century United States* (UNC Press: 2018).

Frank is currently at work on a manuscript called *A Sacred Choice: Liberal Religion and the Struggle for Abortion Before Roe v Wade* (forthcoming UNC Press). You can listen to his podcast *Sexing History*--co-hosted with Lauren Gutterman--which explores how the history of sexuality shapes our present, wherever you stream your shows.

**Representative Elissa Slotkin** is currently in her second term as Congresswoman for Michigan’s 8th Congressional District, which includes all of Ingham County, all of Livingston County, and the Northern portion of Oakland County. Rep. Slotkin has spent her career in national service. She served in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to be a Middle East analyst, working alongside the U.S. military during three tours in Iraq as a militia expert. In between her tours in Iraq, Rep. Slotkin held various defense and intelligence positions under President Bush and President Obama, including roles at the White House and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. In 2011, Rep. Slotkin took a senior position at the Pentagon and, until January 2017, she served as Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.



**Attorney General Dana Nessel** is a former criminal prosecutor and civil rights attorney, Dana Nessel was sworn in as Michigan’s 54th Attorney General on January 1, 2019. She has taken a lead in consumer protection, environmental protection, as well as worked to protect elders from abuse. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University Law School.

## Symposium on “Confederation as a Facilitator of the Two-State Solution” moderated by Dr. Yael Aronoff

**Sunday, October 30th from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Club Spartan (3rd Floor, Case Hall)**

Palestinian and Israeli veteran peace negotiators, researchers, and Middle East policy analysts, will discuss their recent 100 page document “The Holy Land Confederation as a Facilitator for the Two State Solution.” They have presented this vision to the UN Secretary General and to the Biden Administration, and are trying to involve Israeli and Palestinian officials and publics. The speakers all believe that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is soluble, and the best solution for Palestinians and Israelis is the establishment of two states with clear and agreed-upon borders. Most of the contributors hold that a confederal framework may enable both Palestinians and Israelis to break through the current deadlock in the peace process. They believe that this can facilitate a two state solution and have a consequential impact on the culture of peace and on closer cooperation in Israel/Palestine for the good of both peoples.



**Yossi Beilin** is a politician and researcher. For 24 years he has held senior positions in the Knesset and the Israeli Government. His most latest ministerial role was as Minister of Justice. Taught at Tel Aviv University, Department of Political Science, for 13 years. In 2019-2020 he served as a visiting professor at NYU. In addition to the Oslo process and the Taglit-Birthright project, he initiated the Beilin-Abu Mazen understandings and the Geneva Initiative.

Publications: *Secrets I won't Take With Me*, 2021; *The Path to Geneva: The Quest for a Permanent Agreement*, 2004; *From Hachula to Geneva*, 2004; *Manual for a Wounded Dove*, 2001; *His Brother's Keeper*, 2000; *From Socialism to Social Liberalism*, 1999; *The Manual for Leaving Lebanon*, 1998; *Touching Peace*, 1997; *Israel: A Concise Political History*, 1992; *The Roots of Israeli Industry*, 1987; *The Price of Unity*, 1985; *Sons in the*

*Shadow of Their Fathers*, 1984.



**Omar M. Dajani** is a professor of Law at the McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific. In 1999, he was recruited to serve as a legal adviser to the Palestinian negotiating team in peace talks with Israel, ultimately participating in the summits at Camp David and Taba. He then joined the office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO), where he worked on peacebuilding initiatives and played a lead role in marshaling and organizing international efforts to support Palestinian legal and political reforms. Professor Dajani has continued since that time to work as a consultant on a variety of legal infrastructure development and conflict resolution projects in the Middle East and elsewhere - for institutions including the U.S. Department of State, the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center (NOREF), the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, and the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Professor Dajani's scholarly work focuses on the Middle East region and explores diverse topics, including the roles of law in international negotiation processes, the status and protection of religious and ethnic minorities, and the design of political institutions in deeply divided places. His most recent work, *Federalism and Decentralization in the Contemporary Middle East and North Africa* (co-edited with Aslı Bâli), will be published by Cambridge University Press later this year. He earned his JD from Yale Law School and a BA in American Studies and Middle Eastern and Asian History from Northwestern University.



**Hiba Hussein** is the managing partner of the Law Firm of Hussein and Hussein. Under her management the Firm serves a large domestic and international client base on a wide range of legal matters. She practiced law in Washington, DC. Ms. Hussein chairs the Legal Committee to Final Status Negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis. She has served as legal advisor to the peace process negotiations since 1994. Ms. Hussein participates in various meetings that seek to interject innovative thinking to the hard and complex issues involved in the peace process, especially Jerusalem. She has written widely on the peace process, the rule of law, economic development and Jerusalem. She serves on the boards of various educational, professional, cultural, business, and non-profit organizations. She served as a member of the International Advisory Panel

of The American Law Institute and contributed in 2015 to the drafting of *The Restatement of the Law, the Fourth, Foreign Relations Law of the United States*.

Ms. Hussein holds a Juris Doctor from Georgetown University (1992), MA in Political Science from the George Washington University (1986), MSc in Corporate Finance from the University of Sorbonne (2002), BA in Political Science from the University of Tennessee (1982).



**Israela Oron** (Brigadier General, ret.) had a lengthy and distinguished military career. She served in various key positions, breaking through many gender barriers. After her retirement Oron served as deputy national security advisor at Israel's National Security Council. She is a board member of Ben Gurion University, and serves on the board of Commanders for Israel's Security, a leading Israeli security organization. She is one of the founders of “The Geneva Accord,” a draft Permanent Status Agreement to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and serves on their steering committee. She is one of the founders of “Forum Devora,” which promotes inclusions of women in national security decision-making processes and peacemaking negotiations.

She often participates in track 2 peace negotiations and variety of projects regarding possible solutions to the Israeli Palestinian conflict. She is invited to speak on these issues all over the world.



**Dr. Saliba Sarsar** is professor of Political Science at Monmouth University and a visiting scholarly collaborator at Princeton University in 2022-2023. He is also the President/CEO of the Jerusalem Peace Institute. His teaching and research interests focus on the Middle East, Palestinian-Israeli affairs, Jerusalem, and peacebuilding. Among his authored books are *Peacebuilding in Israeli-Palestinian Relations* (2020) and *Jerusalem: The Home in Our Hearts* (2018). His edited books include *The Holy Land Confederation as a Facilitator for the Two-State Solution* (2022) and *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Christian Perspectives and Reflections* (2018). His most recent co-edited books are *Democracy in Crisis Around the World* (2020); *Continuity and Change in Political Culture: Israel and Beyond* (2020), and *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Muslim Perspectives and Reflections* (2021). Dr. Sarsar has three books of poetry:

*Crosswinds*; *Seven Gates of Jerusalem*; and *Portraits: Poems of the Holy Land*.

## “Specters of the Future and Monsters of the Past: Writing (About) Jewish Fantasy”

by Elana Gomel

Tuesday, November 1st from 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
JMC library, Case Hall

Elana Gomel’s latest novel *Nightwood* is a dark fairy tale centered on immigrant experience. The protagonist is Ukrainian. But the history that reverberates through the blood forests and human farmyards of the novel is the history that Jews recognize – in this respect *Nightwood* is a Jewish fantasy, even though there are no explicit Jewish references in it.

The talk will address Jewish history not as an agreed-upon narrative of national identity but rather as a haunted house of traumatic memories and apocalyptic premonitions. Dr. Gomel will argue that only by confronting ghosts of history can the cycle of violence be broken. And the only genre that brings us face to face with our monsters is fantasy.

Gomel’s fantasy, horror and science fiction stories featured in numerous magazines as well as several award-winning anthologies. Some of her recent fantasy novels include *The Hungry Ones*, *The Cryptids* (2019), and *Black House* (2021).

**Elana Gomel** is an associate professor at the Department of English and American Studies at Tel-Aviv University. She has taught and researched at Princeton, Stanford, University of Hong Kong, and Venice International University. She is the author of five academic books and numerous articles on subjects such as narrative theory, posthumanism, science fiction, Dickens, and Victorian culture. Among her books are *Bloodscripts: Writing the Violent Subject* (OSU Press, 2003), *Narrative Space and Time: Representing Impossible Topologies in Literature* (Routledge 2014), and *Science Fiction, Alien Encounters, and the Ethics of Posthumanism: Beyond the Golden Rule* (Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014).



## “Fifth Time’s a Charm? Analyzing the Fifth Israeli Election in Three Years”

by Dr. Yael Aronoff

Wednesday, November 16th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
Club Spartan (3rd Floor, Case Hall)



**Dr. Yael Aronoff** will analyze the 5th Israeli elections in 3 years, looking at the latest results and coalition possibilities and discussing their implications. How will varied possible coalitions shape Israeli domestic and foreign policies? Come join the analysis followed by discussion.

Yael Aronoff is the Director of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel and is the Serling Chair in Israel Studies at Michigan State University. She is also Professor of International Relations at James Madison College. Dr. Aronoff is the past President of the Association of Israel Studies. Dr. Aronoff’s book, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard Liners Opt for Peace*, was published by Cambridge University Press (2014) and she co-edited a book with Dr. Ilan Peleg and Dr. Saliba Sarsar entitled, *Continuity and Change in Political Culture: Israel and*

*Beyond Lexington Books* (2021). Dr. Aronoff has published in *Foreign Policy*, *Israel Studies*, *Israel Studies Review*, and *Political Science Quarterly*. Other recent publications include “Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu,” published in the *Handbook of Israeli Democracy*, ed. P.R. Kumaraswamy, Palgrave, in summer 2022; “The Zionist Center-Left Opposition to the Netanyahu Governments,” in *Israel Under Netanyahu: Domestic Politics and Foreign Affairs*, ed. Robert Freedman, Routledge 2019 and “Israeli Prime Ministers: Transforming the Victimhood Discourse,” in *The Victimhood Discourse in Contemporary Israel*, Ed. Ilan Peleg. Roman & Littlefield, 2019.

## Finifter Lecture: “Language as Identity: the Greek Romaniote Jews in the 20th Century”

by Andreas Bouroutis

Wednesday, December 7th from 7:00 - 8:30 pm  
JMC Library, Case Hall



Greece’s Romaniote Jews are among the oldest and least known Jewish communities of Europe. Living in Greece since before the Common Era, the Romaniotes adopted the Greek language and blended it with Hebrew words, forming a unique dialect in written and oral form. Worshiping in Hebrew and daily speaking in Greek they kept their traditions, customs and habits living along with the local Christian population. During the dark days of persecution and deportation, they kept their Greek identity and language even in the concentration camps.

Marcel Nadjari’s testimony, as a Sonderkommando of the Nazis unspeakable crimes was found in 1980 buried near where Crematorium III was located; a chilling testimony of 13 pages written in Greek. Shortly after his liberation from Auschwitz, Romaniote Jew Haim Kostis from Chalkida wrote a letter to his family in Greek about his suffering. As did the Romaniote Jews who migrated abroad before the war, the surviving Romaniote Jews

kept their language as their unique form of identity: “I am the language I speak.”

**Dr. Andreas Bouroutis** is a historian/political scientist/economist and he is the Ada Weintraub Finifter Visiting Scholar sponsored by the Serling Institute to teach in the History Department during Fall 2022. Dr. Bouroutis came from the Department of Political Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and at the Hellenic Open University. In 2019-2020 he headed the scientific research program “Postwar transformations of Thessaloniki and the fate of the Jewish assets.”

## Recital Series sponsored by WKAR: “Pastorals and Longings: Jewish Heritage Lyricism”

Monday, November 28th from 7:30 - 9:00 pm  
Fairchild Theatre, MSU Auditorium

In partnership with The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, MSU artists present a powerful program of music with Jewish themes. Repertoire includes *Prokofiev’s Overture on Hebrew Themes*, Paul Ben-Haim’s music for clarinet quintet, and Joel Engel’s *Hadibuk (The Possession)*. ARTISTS: Guy Yehuda, clarinet; Dmitri Berlinsky and Yvonne Lam, violin; Eric Nowlin, viola; Suren Bagratuni, cello; Kevin Brown, double bass; Eric Zuber, piano; Gwendolyn Dease, percussion.

For ticket information please see <https://www.music.msu.edu/event-listing/ticket-information>, Room 102, Music Building, 333 West Circle Drive, M-F, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., or call 517-353-5340.



**Visitor parking lot 79 (on W Shaw Lane between Chestnut Rd. and Red Cedar Rd., in front of Spartan Stadium) is close to Wells Hall and Case Hall.**

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# SERLING INSTITUTE SPONSORS THREE ISRAELI SCHOLARS AND ONE GREEK SCHOLAR

## Serling Israeli Visiting Scholars



**Yuval Benziman** was a fellow of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel in 2015-2016, when he taught three semesters at James Madison College. Benziman now returns to MSU to teach in the 2022 fall semester. He is Senior Faculty Lecturer in the Conflict Research, Management and Resolution Program of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, and the holder of the Katia & Hans Guth-Dreyfus Lectureship for Conflict Resolution and the Law. He also teaches in the School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy and in the School of Psychology in the Reichman University (IDC Herzliya).

His fields of interests include conflict resolution, official and unofficial negotiations, cultural studies, and collective narratives. In the past two years he published articles about how world leaders -- including the Israeli Prime Minister -- framed the COVID-19 pandemic when addressing their constituencies; an article mapping the different strategies that Israelis and Palestinians used in

order to conduct negotiations in the past 20 years, even while declaring that no negotiations are taking place and describing their rival as a “non-partner”; a study about the way an Israel satire show (“Zehu-Ze”) portrayed Israeli society during the pandemic, mocking Israel’s polices while also nostalgically yearning for a sense of togetherness, wishing to unite society but doing so by giving preference to parts of society over others; and more.

Yuval is also a practitioner of the field of conflict resolution. He works and collaborates with different Israeli think tanks, institutions, and NGOs, including the joint Israeli-Palestinian Geneva Initiative in which he took the role of editing a 400-page document detailing all aspects of a potential draft-agreement between the sides. He is currently co-authoring a guide for reconciliation.

When not being in MSU, he lives with his wife and three kids in Hulda, a Kibbutz in the center of Israel.

**Dr. Harry Yuklea** is returning to teach at MSU for a fifth term as Serling Visiting Israeli Professor at MSU on a joint appointment by Serling Institute and Broad Business College. As an academic and practitioner, Dr. Yuklea taught his courses at Hebrew University, The Technion and Tel Aviv University in Israel as well as in India, Greece, Argentina, and Uruguay. His academic expertise area is entrepreneurial economics, finance, and policy design fields.

This Fall semester, Dr. Yuklea will be teaching the FI491-003 “Economics and Finance of Innovations” and IBUS211-01 “Culture and Business in Middle East” courses virtually. Both are taught using Israeli examples and using the Israeli context. In addition, Dr. Yuklea serves in the International Advisory Board of Broad College and is involved in initiatives intended to increase the cooperation between Israelis and Michigianians such as the Michigan Israel Business Accelerator.



## Israel Institute Teaching Fellow and Serling Israeli Visiting scholar



### Dr. Vered Weiss

This Fall Dr. Vered Weiss will join The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel as the Israel Institute Teaching Fellow and Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar. Weiss will also be a faculty member of the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities here at MSU. Previously Weiss was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Program in Jewish Culture and Society at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and The Israel Institute Teaching Fellow at San Francisco State University and Sonoma State University. Weiss teaches courses on Israel and Jerusalem, Israeli literature and poetry, Israeli cinema and television, as well as courses on Jewish women writers, and gender in Hebrew literature. Weiss also teaches courses on world literature and cinema, including courses on vampires, monsters in film and literature, and a course on spatiality in speculative film and literature. Weiss’ publications include articles about Israeli literature and culture, and she recently

published an article about *Juda*, the Israeli television series about Jewish vampires. She is co-editor of *Tracing Topographies: Revisiting the Concentration Camps Seventy Years after the Liberation of Auschwitz* (Routledge, 2017), and is co-editing a volume about Israeli culture and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Her current research project explores the interplay between the location of marginalized characters and the ways in which narrative empathy is formulated in literature, and she is also collaborating on a co-edited volume about Israeli speculative fiction.

## Ada Weintraub Finifter Visiting Scholar

**Dr. Andreas Bouroutis** is a historian/political scientist/economist and he is the Ada Weintraub Finifter Visiting Scholar sponsored by the Serling Institute to teach in the History Department during Fall 2022. He will teach History 201H: Historical Methods and Skills, and ISS 325: War and Revolution. A part of both courses will focus on the life and culture of the Romaniote Jews in Greece.

Dr. Bouroutis came from the Department of Political Sciences at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and at the Hellenic Open University. In 2019-2020 he headed the scientific research program “Postwar transformations of Thessaloniki and the fate of the Jewish assets.”

Dr. Bouroutis was a scholar of the education exchange program between Greece and Germany (DAAD) in 2013 and twice a bursary of the Italian State (2016-2019). In 2018 he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Yad Vashem Holocaust Research Institute in Jerusalem. His research interests includes multicultural societies (Mediterranean port cities) and transnational aspects, state transformation and imperialism (Balkans – Europe), and Jewish communities in Greece and the Balkans.

Dr. Bouroutis’ books include *After the war: Thessaloniki and the fate of the Jewish fortunes*, Alexandria Publications, Athens 2021; *Holocaust in Thessaloniki. The Italians and the Jewish Students of Umberto Primo School*, Alexandria Publications, Athens 2020; and *The Bourgeoisie and the European School Institutions in Thessaloniki (1888- 1943)*, Cultural and Social Breakthrough on a Late Empire City, Romi Press, Thessaloniki 2018.



# A Glance Back: Celebrating the Sixth Annual Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference April 29, 2022

## Panel 1: *The Second World War and the Aftermath of the Holocaust* Discussant: Professor Amy Simon

- **Avi Cohen** *"Israel Was Not a Reparation for the Holocaust and How this Myth Has Perpetuated Antisemitism"*
- **Talia Gruber** *"Holocaust Survivors and the Immigration to North America Post-World War II"*
- **Leah Welch** *"Hidden Hate or Hate Hardly Hidden?: Following the Life of a Holocaust Denial Ad on College Campuses in the Early 1990s"*

## Panel 2: *Examining Antisemitism on the MSU Campus* Discussant: Professor Ben Lorch

- **Ian Donahue** *"Jewish on Campus: A Student Ethnography in Uncertain Times"*
- **Morgan Wolf** *"Exploring the Effects of Antisemitism on the MSU Jewish Community"*
- **Troy Distelrath** *"Contradictions Within Communism: Antisemitism in Marx's "'Egalitarian' System"*

## Panel 3: *In Prof. Marc Bernstein's Honor*

### Lunch

- Toast in honor of Professor Marc Bernstein's retirement
- Faculty honorable mentions: Professor Amy Simons's Teacher-Scholar Award and Professor Yore Kedem's Excellence in Service to Education Abroad Award
- Student honorable mentions: Serling Institute Student Achievement Awards Samantha Chaben, Troy Distelrath and Leah Welch

### Keynote and Discussion

**David Mindell**, Jewish Studies Minor Alumnus 2009

Mr. Mindell discussed his experience applying what he learned through the curriculum of the Jewish Studies minor, including his visits to Israel, to his career in consumer protection law at a nationally recognized plaintiff's law firm, Edelson PC.

## Panel 4: *Israeli Foreign Policy* Discussant: Professor Yael Aronoff

- **Sami Chaben** *"The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Military and Political Effectiveness of Operation Pillar of Defense (2012) and Operation Protective Edge (2014)"*

## Panel 5: *Jewish American Culture Past and Present* Discussant: Professor Kirsten Fermaglich

- **Maegan Jankowski** *"God of Vengeance: Prostitution, White Slavery, Theatre and its Connections with the Jewish Community Across Europe and the Americas in the Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century"*
- **Shimon Likhtman** *"Well, Talk About Bad Taste!" - Holocaust Consciousness through Humor in Mel Brooks' The Producers"*

**Jordan Robinson** *"Jewish Humans of Metro Detroit"*

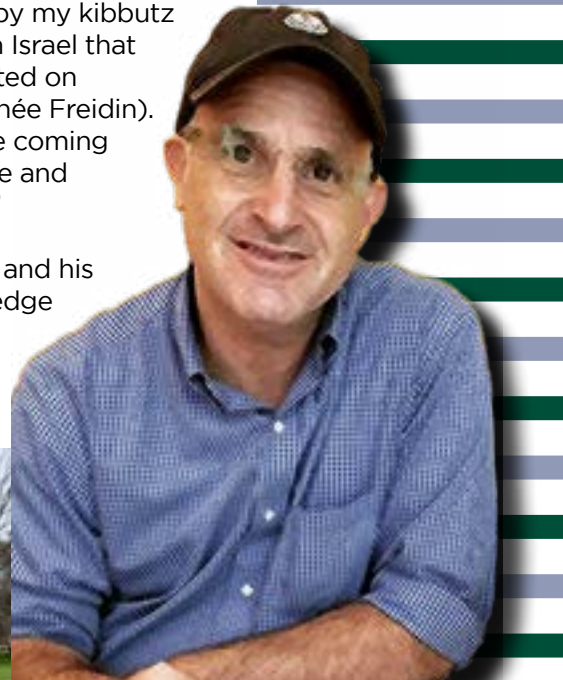


# Tribute to Dr. Marc Bernstein

Dr. Marc Bernstein retired from MSU after 21 years serving as a core member of our Institute. He taught modern Hebrew language and literature as well as courses on Israeli culture and society, including Israeli Cinema and Modern Hebrew Literature. Dr. Bernstein led the Study Abroad Israel program for four years. He was a member of the Israeli Film Festival Committee for most years and coordinated the festival for two. A former student of his, Zack Colman '10, said, "I really valued Marc Bernstein's curriculum that summer, as he tried to stretch our imaginations of what Israel is and could be by taking us to Silwan, a majority Palestinian neighborhood in Jerusalem, and bringing cross-cultural speakers to our classrooms. It was truly an enriching experience and helped to guide my future studies and the journalism I practice today..." Dr. Bernstein has been the recipient of a Fulbright award and an NEH summer fellowship and is a member of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew, the Association for Jewish Studies, the Israel Studies Association, and the Society for Judaic-Arabic Studies. Dr. Bernstein is the author of *Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations Between Judaism and Islam* (2006), which focuses on a Judeo-Arabic account of the biblical Joseph and explores the interdependence of Muslim and Jewish traditions around shared sacred figures.

Dr. Bernstein will pursue an exciting new project: the establishment, with a group of close friends, of a non-profit organic farm in Israel. He describes the project in this way: "We, a team of people coming from education, social work, business, agriculture backgrounds and led by my kibbutz brother, Nir, have decided to set up a small self-sufficient organic farm in Israel that will be a rehabilitative center for veterans of PTSD. The farm will be located on Moshav Hemed and will be named for my kibbutz mother, Ruca Lahav (née Freidin). We're making steady progress; the plan is to be up and running after the coming fall holidays and we're currently engaged in developing the infrastructure and fundraising to support the farm during the initial 3-year start-up period."

The Serling Institute and greater MSU community will miss Dr. Bernstein and his myriad of strong contributions to our program, and his wealth of knowledge and experience. We honored Dr. Bernstein at our 6th annual Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference on Friday, April 29th, with a panel of former students and colleagues that spoke to Marc, expressing the great impact he had on their time at MSU.



## Academic News

**Yael Aronoff's** chapter, "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," was published in the *Handbook of Israeli Democracy*, ed. P.R. Kumaraswamy, Palgrave, in summer 2022. Dr. Aronoff is writing a chapter for Saliba Sarsar, ed. *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Jewish Perspectives and Reflections*, forthcoming in 2023. She will be participating in the Roundtable, "Global Perspectives on Jewish Studies and Israel Studies: Methods, Approaches and Debates," at the annual conference of the Association of Jewish Studies, December 18-20, 2022, Boston. Dr. Aronoff will give the lecture, "Fifth's Time's a Charm? Prospects for the Fifth Israeli Election in Three Years" on August 22, 2022 at Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Southfield, Michigan.

**Sherman Garnett's** essay, "In and Above the Fray: Miłosz as a Political Thinker," will appear in the book, *Czesław Miłosz and the XXI Century*, ed. Joanna Zach, (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, forthcoming in 2023). The article is based on the opening chapters of his book manuscript on Czesław Miłosz's political thought as a part of his poetic project. Other contributors to the book include noted Polonists and Polish cultural figures, such as Aleksandr Fiut, Joanna Zach, Clare Cavanagh, Lillian Valee, Tomas Venclova, and Adam Zagajewski.

**Steven Gold's** chapter "Segmented and Transnational Identity formation in the Israeli Diaspora" in *Israel and the Diaspora: Jewish Connectivity in a Changing World* is edited by Robert Kenedy, Uzi Rebhun and Carl Ehrlich, Springer, 2022, and "Adaptation and Identity Formation in the Israeli Diaspora" is in Johnson D.J., Chuang S.S., Gluzman J. (eds) *Re/Formation and Identity*, 2022. Dr. Gold's book review of Geoffrey Cameron's *Send Them Here: Religion, Politics and Refugee Resettlement in North America* was published in *Church History*, 90(4), 998-1000, December 2021.

**Deborah Margolis's** article, "Delving into a Diverse Library Resource: Faculty and Librarians Allied for Digital Holocaust Research and Pedagogy," is about the Serling Institute faculty's team taught Honors College seminar using the USC Shoah Visual History Archive. The article is forthcoming in *LOEX Quarterly*.

**Amy Simon** will be presenting her paper, "The Deepening Darkness: Emotions in Yiddish Holocaust Diaries" at the "Emotions and Holocaust Studies" workshop, hosted by Goethe University, Frankfurt, September 13-14 and at the German Studies Association Annual Conference in Houston, Texas, September 15-18.

**Laura Yares** was co-chair of the conference "Art and Artistry as Jewish Learning," held at Brandeis University from June 12-13. This conference convened scholars, artists and Jewish educators to explore the arts as an educational medium for exploring Judaism and Jewishness. She published a article titled "The Material Inventories of Millennial Jewish Lives: Affective Learning and Jewish

Consumer Culture at the National Museum of American Jewish History Gift Shop," in the journal *Material Religion*. This article was based on data from her ongoing study of Jewish learning in cultural arts settings.

**Lynn L. Wolff** received a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to work on her current book project that explores the visual dimension of Holocaust testimony. With this research support, she spent the spring semester at the Institute for Art and Image Studies at the Humboldt University in Berlin. In the summer, she participated in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Curt C. and Else Silberman Seminar for Faculty on the topic of "Teaching Holocaust Photography". This two-week-long virtual seminar brought together faculty and graduate students from institutions across North America to consider what constitutes Holocaust photography and how to use images when teaching about the Holocaust.



Please consider the Serling Institute in your charitable giving this year, to support our mission to educate students and future leaders on Jewish Studies and Modern Israel. You may scan here to donate

or give online at <http://jsp.msu.edu/giving>

and click on the Give Now button. If you wish to make a gift via check, please make your check payable to Michigan State

University and in the memo section include Serling Institute. Please mail it to: University Advancement, Spartan Way, 535 Chestnut Road Room 300, East Lansing, MI 48824.

If you have questions about giving, please contact: Christine Radtke, CFRE, Sr. Director of Development, College of Arts & Letters at 517.353.4725 or email at [radtkech@msu.edu](mailto:radtkech@msu.edu)



# THE SERLING INSTITUTE SUMMER PROGRAM AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY

By Yore Kedem



In June-July 2022, the Serling Institute Summer Education Program took place over 24 days on the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A diverse group of eight students from a variety of colleges

at MSU participated in taking two courses.

Prof. David Mendelsson taught his class on the Emergence of the State of Israel. This course included daily lectures, and two field trips. On the first Sunday of the program, Prof. Mendelsson took the group to Tel Aviv to see some of the locations discussed in the class, and the streets named for the people who created Israel. Another field trip took the students to Mount Hertzl, where they discussed aspects of Israel's national and secular identities. Prof. Mendelsson

has been teaching this course for our program for many years, and students appreciate his sense of humor and excellent teaching approach.

Cultural Diversity and Immigration in Israel was the other course in this program. Taught by Yore Kedem, Assistant Professor of Hebrew at MSU, this class requires students to interact with locals. To meet Israelis, students did weekly observation exercises in Central Jerusalem, the Old City of Jerusalem, and Central Tel Aviv. For each exercise, students sat in an area and people watched. They documented their observations and interviewed passers-by, shop owners and street performers.

In addition to these field experiences, students went to Ashdod where they met Sharon Eretz to learn about how she came to study in Israel, converted to Judaism and made Aliya (immigrated to Israel). Another trip concentrated on communities and boundaries in Jerusalem. The group went from West



Kibbutz Dalia

Jerusalem, past the bus station for East Jerusalem, and into the Old City. The tour continued from the Muslim Quarter to the Christian Quarter, through Modern Jerusalem to Mea She'arim, a Jewish ultraorthodox neighborhood. Students learned to observe the visible boundaries such as the Ottoman ramparts around the old city or roads that separate neighborhoods, and discussed the boundaries that are invisible to outsiders such as those between the Muslim and Christian quarters. Jerusalem is one of very few places in the world where one can experience thousands of years of history and multiple different cultures within a walking trip that takes less than five hours.

On the third week of class, we went to Kafr Qara to visit the Triangle R&D center, where Dr. Ibrahim Yehia hosted the group. Students learned about the work Dr. Yehia and fellow researchers do to investigate issues that relate directly to the Arab community in the area. We learned about the development of solar panels integrated into greenhouse fabric, and the research into digitization of ancient books and documents in the Muslim world. On the same day, the group went to Kibbutz Dalia where we met Danny Korninsky, who took us on tour of the kibbutz. Danny told us about Dalia's history, how it changed over the

years, and about life on the kibbutz today.

Students wrote research projects for this course. Topics included diversity in the Israeli Defense Forces, messianic Jews, performing Israel through the tourism industry, cultural experiences at the Western Wall, and interracial and interreligious dating/marriage in Israel. Other students completed projects on cultural representations in Israeli popular music, the pressures to have children, and language diversity and opinions in modern Israel.

Students appreciated the program's depth and breadth. Students learned about the challenges and rewards of conducting field research. As Kattiah Richardson reflected:

*"Despite the issues that language obstacles can cause, I did end up with quite a few interviews - many of which were extremely helpful, with people that I did not want to stop telling me their story."*

Daniel Zivian summarized his experience by writing:

*"The study abroad program was thought-provoking, a close look at what Israeli life is like on the ground."*



Triangle R&D Center, Kafr Qara

Photos credit- Yore Kedem

# FACULTY AWARDS

## Amy Simon, MSU Teacher Scholar Award 2022



Dr. Simon is the William and Audrey Farber Family Endowed Chair in Holocaust Studies and European Jewish History. She teaches in James Madison College, the History Department, and is a core faculty member of the Serling Institute.

Dr. Yael Aronoff, Director of the Serling Institute, describes Dr. Simon as a “rising star,” and an invaluable part to the university and the larger MSU and metropolitan Detroit Jewish communities. “Dr. Simon consistently proves to be an exceptional and innovative teacher and mentor, an innovative and productive scholar, and a regular contributor to making MSU a safer and more inclusive campus.”

MSU alumnus Daniel Baum ('18) was a student of Simon's in the fall of 2017 when he enrolled in HST-392: History of the Holocaust. In a reference letter on Simon's behalf he wrote, “I wouldn't be where I am today — or who I am today — without Dr. Simon.” Baum praised Simon's “unique approach to teaching and scholarship,” attributing her methods to helping give voice to his family's Holocaust story and allowing him to discover “how storytelling can help begin the process of healing.”

Teacher-Scholar Awards are awarded to faculty early in their careers who have made a positive impression on their students and colleagues for their dedication to and skill in teaching, and whose instruction is linked to and informed by their research and creative activities. Dr. Simon's research examines victim representations of perpetrators in Yiddish diaries written in the Warsaw, Lodz and Vilna ghettos during World War II. Her interest in the Yiddish language, historically spoken by Ashkenzai Jews, is rooted in her exploration of her own Jewish history and identity.

(Read more here: <https://jmc.msu.edu/news/teacher-scholar-award-amy-simon.html>)

## Yore Kedem, Outstanding Service to Education Abroad Award 2022



Dr. Kedem is Professor of Hebrew in the Department of Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures and is the newest Core Faculty member of the Serling Institute.

Dr. Kedem has exhibited great commitment to students conducting their own research projects as part of their education abroad experience, and to exposing students to the diverse experiences of minorities and immigrants in Israel. He has also been exceptionally innovative in designing a new education abroad program, the first for the Honors College, that bridges learning before and after the education abroad experience. Dr. Yael Aronoff, Director of the Serling Institute, says that Dr. Kedem goes above and beyond for his students and for the education abroad program. Dr. Kedem says, “Learning is not only something that you draw from books, or from doing an experiment in the lab, or from a lecture—learning is what you do when you encounter something that causes you to understand things from a different perspective. A person who has an experience that changes their understanding, becomes a person who is willing to look at things to understand them and to grow in that process.”

The Outstanding Service to Education Abroad Award is given annually to recognize MSU faculty members and academic staff who give their time, energy, and creativity to the development and implementation of education abroad programs that support MSU's commitment to providing students with high-quality international education opportunities.

(Read more here: <https://awards.isp.msu.edu/recipients/recipient/23014>)

# NEW AFFILIATED FACULTY



## Guy Yehuda

Israeli-American clarinetist Guy Yehuda is recognized as one of the most outstanding and unique talents on the international concert stage today. Hailed by composer John Corigliano as “one of the most awe-inspiring clarinetists today,” he has won several international competitions, such as the Heida Hermanns International Woodwind Competition and the Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition as the gold medalist. Mr. Yehuda has toured extensively in Europe, North and South America, Israel, South Korea and China. As principal clarinetist, he has performed with the Israel Philharmonic, Lucerne Contemporary Festival Orchestra, Chicago Civic Orchestra, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, Haifa Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, among others, and has been a guest clarinetist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra. A highly demanded musician, he has performed as soloist and chamber musician around the world, including at the Israeli Chamber Music Festivals in Tel Aviv and Haifa. Yehuda is a sought-after recitalist throughout North America, Europe and Asia. He has performed as soloist in prestigious halls and venues such as Carnegie Hall, Domain Forget, (Canada), Chicago Symphony Hall, Palacio Fuz and Casa di Musica in Portugal, Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv and Dame Myra Hess Chamber Series. Yehuda's discography recordings won many acclaims and rave reviews. His varied discography includes CDs on XII-21, Albany records, and Blue Griffin record labels.

Yehuda has given master classes throughout the U.S, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Europe, China, and Israel. He is Associate Professor and Artist Teacher of Clarinet at Michigan State University College of Music, and principal clarinetist with the Lansing Symphony and Jackson Symphony Orchestras. He is the Artistic Director of the Henri Selmer International Summer Academy in Michigan, as well as the clarinet faculty resident at the Vianden Summer Festival in Europe, Aria International Music Festival in Massachusetts and Fresno Summer Orchestra Academy in California.

Yehuda has a strong connection to Israel and its music world. Aside from performing in Israel with some of Israel's best ensembles such as the Tel-Aviv soloists, The Israeli Contemporary Ensemble and more, he continues to work with composers from Israel and commissioning new works. During his recent sabbatical semester to Israel, Yehuda concert toured and recorded a new work written for him by composer Daniel Akiva: *Safaradic Anthology* for clarinet and guitar, to be released soon on CD. Yehuda's interest in Jewish music led to performances around the world of major Jewish works and the launch of the Klezmer group *Guy and the Yehudas* in Jacksonville, Florida. In collaboration with the Serling Institute, and the College of Music, Yehuda plans to bring more Jewish and Israeli art music to Michigan State University and to engage the surrounding community with the experience of Jewish, Israeli music and culture.

# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

## *Rabbi Simon Stratford '12, Social work*

Rabbi Simon Stratford majored in social work and completed a minor in Jewish studies through the Serling Institute. Rabbi Stratford credits his experience learning Hebrew with Ellen Rothfeld and Jewish history, from Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich, as a significant reason he felt prepared to enter rabbinical school upon graduating from Michigan State. In his junior year of college, Rabbi Stratford spent a semester studying abroad at Tel Aviv University, which was an unforgettable experience made possible with support from the Serling Institute. Having been ordained in 2017, Rabbi Stratford served for three years as the rabbi of a small congregation in rural Maryland. Currently, he is the Associate Rabbi and Director of Lifelong Learning at Temple Sholom of Cincinnati. As a rabbi, he strives to lead by example and enrich the Jewish identities of individuals and families through meaningful prayer, ritual, and pastoral care.



## *Samantha Drasnin '15, International Relations*

As part of Samantha's Jewish Studies minor she studied Israeli politics, society, culture, and the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. In 2015, she participated in the Jewish Studies summer study abroad program at Hebrew University, which inspired her to continue exploring Israel and eventually move there. She currently resides in Israel and credits her experiences in the Jewish Studies program and at Michigan State as integral to her decision to move there. She recently earned her master's degree in Security and Diplomacy at Tel Aviv University. Samantha currently works as a research analyst at Windward, a maritime AI company in Tel Aviv that utilizes artificial intelligence to help governments and companies manage maritime-related risk. Samantha's work focuses on identifying vessels and trends within the maritime domain that pose a risk to border security.



## *Sarah Kovan '16, Comparative Cultures and Politics and Human Biology*

Nearly a decade after jointly studying at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem with Professor Yael Aronoff and volunteering for Israel's national emergency medical service, Sarah Kovan continues to work on understanding the barriers to health access in a global health context. Following her time at Michigan State University, Sarah received an MSc in Refugee and Forced Migration Studies and an MSc in Medical Anthropology at the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. Upon returning to the United States, she earned a medical degree at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth before moving south to Boston. Sarah has finally finished her time in the classroom and is now a psychiatry resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She continues to remain interested in the application of social and humanistic studies within the medical practice, as first identified under Professor Aronoff's mentorship, and will be focusing on providing refugee mental health care in her future psychiatric practice.



## *Laura Gottlieb '15, Interdisciplinary Social Science*

Laura Gottlieb took full advantage of the Jewish Studies program at Michigan State University as an undergraduate student. Her Jewish History courses turned into an independent study when she applied for and was awarded the College of Social Science Dean's Assistantship to continue her research on anti-Zionism in the Reform Movement. Laura presented her findings at the Jewish Studies Student and Faculty Research Seminar and at UURAF where she won first place in her section. This work later connected her to her dream job as director of the Rabbi Leo M. Franklin Archives and Prentis Memorial Library at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, MI. Today, she manages the materials she had once researched for her work and collaborates with other community resources to bring Temple Beth El's library and archives collections to new audiences. Laura received the 2022 36 under 36 award by The Well and *Detroit Jewish News*.



## *Micaela Procopi '17, History*

Micaela Procopio discovered a passion for Jewish American history in her junior year with Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich's class, and was awarded the College of Social Science Torch Award. She has gone on to be a PhD student at Gratz College, earning her degree in Holocaust and Genocide studies. She has been honored during Holocaust Remembrance Month for her incredible work advancing our understanding of the Holocaust and our ability to educate future generations about this tragedy.



## *Jordan Robinson '21, International Studies*

Jordan Robinson was a recipient of the College of Social Science Torch Award for promoting diversity and inclusion on campus. Jordan Robinson is a senior in the Michigan State University College of Social Science, studying Interdisciplinary Studies, with minors in Jewish Studies, Leadership of Organizations, and Sociology. A committed student activist, Jordan is being honored during Holocaust Remembrance Month for his commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive campus community by combating antisemitism whenever and wherever it appears.



## *Troy Distelrath '22, Social Relations and Policy*

I'm truly honored to receive the Serling Institute's outstanding student award; entering Michigan State University with little to no connection to Judaism or the Jewish people, I never expected my college career to lead me down such a rich and novel educational path. Although my 2020 study abroad to Israel was cancelled by COVID-19, I had a plethora of outstanding academic experiences in East Lansing thanks to Drs. Amy Simon and Alon Tal. This culminated in my research presentation at the 2022 Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference on "Contradictions Within Communism" and Marxian antisemitism. Beginning this Fall, I'll be building on the lessons I've learned from historians like Drs. Simon, Pegler-Gordon, and others in James Madison College, to teach and develop history curricula at Birch Grove University Prep in Rochester Hills, MI.



## *Leah Welch '22, History*

Leah Welch was awarded the Serling Institute Student Achievement Award in 2022. As Leah puts it, "The Serling Institute became a major part of my time at MSU. I became a Jewish Studies minor after taking a course on American Jewish History during my first year and have taken courses with most of the faculty. Everyone has been so welcoming and lovely. It's a small program and they made me feel like there was a corner of the larger campus that I could feel part of. I was able to attend several of the guest speaker events. I was also able to participate in one of their Freshman Honors Seminars and give two presentations at the end of the year Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference. I worked with Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich on my Honors Thesis covering reactions to American Holocaust Denial and it was the most rewarding academic experience I have had while at MSU. I have one semester left, but I am planning to pursue a dual Master's program in both Library Science and History after I graduate."



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

## *Sydney Burnstein, Social Relations and Policy*

My name is Sydney Burnstein (she/her), and I am the Jewish Studies Student Representative for this academic year. I am currently a Junior majoring in Social Relations and Policy and pursuing a few sustainability-related minors in addition to Jewish Studies. The Serling Institute programs that I have participated in have influenced my college experience in the most positive ways. In the summer of 2021, I studied abroad in Israel with Professor Kedem. On this trip, I met some of my closest college friends and had the opportunity to form a substantive connection with Israel and the Hebrew language. Taking additional courses and attending events offered by the Serling Institute has inspired me to better understand complex stories, engage in dialogue, and enjoy the simple pleasures that learning can provide. I look forward to seeing all of you in Jewish Studies courses and at events in the coming semesters.





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