



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



FALL 2023 NEWSLETTER

DIRECTOR NOTES

This past summer, we’ve witnessed numerous events that remind us of the urgency of the work we do at the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel. At home, even as we witnessed the sentencing of the perpetrator of the Tree of Life Massacre in Pittsburgh in 2018, we learned of a grave threat of violence against a local East Lansing synagogue – a threat that was thwarted by the FBI. At the same time, we witnessed the ongoing struggle of hundreds of thousands of Israelis, as they took to the streets for weeks on end to fight for Israeli democracy. And, climate change produced disruptions in the Middle East and around the world, affecting all regardless of nationality or religion. These are among the urgent issues that we continue to address this academic year.

As an Institute that engages in the academic study of Israel, we made a statement on March 27, 2023 in support of those hundreds of thousands of Israelis from all walks of Israeli society and state institutions who were peacefully protesting the government’s efforts to weaken Israeli democracy by weakening Israel’s High Court as a check on the government. Those protests continue despite the passing of some elements of that legislation, and we continue to support them.

Given these concerning circumstances, it is as important as ever that we have courses, programming, and education abroad opportunities which are able to contribute to the understanding of timely issues. In that vein, we welcome four Israeli visiting scholars to MSU this year, who will be collectively teaching 7 courses in 2 different Colleges, on topics ranging from politics and society, to environmental issues, to Israeli cinema and literature, to multi-sensory performance. We are happy to collaborate with the Theater Department and the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities of the College of Arts and Letters, and with James Madison College in these endeavors. We also are excited that 21 students were able to learn first-hand about the complexities of Israeli society this summer through the Serling Institute education abroad program to the Hebrew University and through the College of Music, all supported by our generous scholarships.

This Fall, our programming includes symposia on the crisis of Israeli democracy, and on challenges and opportunities created by climate change in the Middle East. At a time when intercommunal dialogue is increasingly difficult, we feature discussions between Jewish Israelis, Druze Israelis, and Palestinians, who are working together to address climate change, enhance Israeli democracy, increase empathy for those who have lost family members, and envision a future for a shared Jerusalem.

We are deepening our collaborations with the College of Music, including on a Sephardic Jewish classical music concert that includes our faculty affiliate, Professor Guy Yehudah. We are also collaborating on two concerts – one at the JCC in West Bloomfield, and one at MSU -- that feature the music of Holocaust survivor Leo Spellman, and will include screenings of a documentary about him and his music, as well as a short lecture by Professor Amy Simon, William and Audrey Farber Chair in Holocaust Studies and European Jewish History.

We continue deepening our collaboration with Muslim Studies on educating about both antisemitism and Islamophobia. Our faculty, staff, and students teamed up to run a virtual 4-part “Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia” for the MSU community this past spring through the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion. The team was awarded the 2023 Award for Outstanding Community Partnership for contributions to MSU Dialogues from the MSU Office for Institutional Diversity. Due to the success of the program, we are offering this series again this Fall and in the Spring.

Please see the highlights of the many accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni in the newsletter. Professor Laura Yares will discuss her book, *Jewish Sunday Schools: Teaching Religion in Nineteenth Century America*, (NYU Press, 2023) this Fall, and Professor Amy Simon will discuss her book *Emotions in Yiddish Ghetto Diaries: Encountering Persecutors and Questioning Humanity* (Routledge, 2023) this Spring. Finally, I am pleased to welcome Professor Kirsten Fermaglich as Associate Director this year. Professor Fermaglich – who served last year as a National Archives Distinguished Scholar to research systemic racism in the federal government -- will assist with advising students, participate in the “Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia,” and help develop a 1 credit online course on antisemitism.

We look forward to seeing you at our stimulating programs this Fall!

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 or call me at 517-303-6019.

ACADEMIC NEWS

Yael Aronoff’s chapter, “Jerusalem: My Favorite City in the World!” was published in 2023 in *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Jewish Perspectives and Reflections*, Eds. Saliba Sarsar and Carole Monica C. Burnett, Jerusalem Peace Institute and Noble Book Publishing Inc. She participated in three roundtables at the Association of Israel Studies (AIS) Annual Conference at New York University, June 26-28, 2023: “Roundtable on Israeli Democracy: Where From and Where to? The Israeli Democracy Index 2003-2022,” “The 2022 Israeli Elections in a Comparative, International and Historical Context,” and “Understanding Territorial Withdrawal: Israeli Occupations and Exits.” She also serves on the Board of the AIS, was on the programming committee for the conference, and chaired the nominations committee. Dr. Aronoff also gave several lectures to different communities and universities. These include: The University of Cincinnati Jacob and Jennie L. Lichter Lecture Series in Judaic Studies, “Israeli Democracy in Crisis” on November 13, 2023; “Antisemitism on College Campuses,” virtual presentation to the Jewish Community Center in Tokyo, Japan, May 24, 2023; “How Does Today’s Israel Reflect and/or Conflict with the Zionist Dream?” Adat Shalom Synagogue, Farmington Hills, Michigan, May 3, 2023; “From Conflict to Conversation: A Community Workshop on Israel, Palestine, and Antisemitism,” Temple Israel, West Bloomfield, Michigan, May 1, 2023.

Sherman Garnett published an article, “In and Above the Fray: Czesław Miłosz as a Political Thinker,” in the book, *Czesław Miłosz i wiek XXI (Czeslaw Milosz and the 21st Century)*. The book contains contributions from leading scholars of Miłosz. The volume is edited by Joanna Zach and published this spring by the Jagellonian University Press in Krakow.

Steve Gold’s new book chapter and journal article are “Exploring the Creative Israeli Diaspora: Reading Class and Profession in the Diaspora,” by Nir Cohen and Steven J. Gold in the *Routledge Handbook on Middle Eastern Diasporas*, edited by Dalia Abdelhady, Ramy Aly. London: Routledge, 2022 and “Israel’s evolving approach to citizens who have returned to the diaspora,” *Review of Nationalities*, vol.12, no.1, 2022, pp.1-8.

Deborah Margolis attended a conference on the Holocaust at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw in April-May. Additionally, she visited the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, sites in Vilnius, Lithuania (Vilna), the Galicia Jewish Museum, synagogues in Krakow, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Lynn Wolff participated in the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern’s 2023 Regional Institute on “Visual Culture and the Holocaust,”

and spent a week at the USC Dornsife Center for Advanced Genocide Research, working with the Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive. In the summer, she participated in the conference “HistorioGRAPHICS: Framing the Past in Comics.”



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 <https://givingto.msu.edu/gift/?sid=3873>

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



SCAN ME

FALL EVENTS 2023

Members of the MSU community are encouraged to join in person, refreshments will be provided at most events

SYMPOSIUM ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CLIMATE CHANGE: CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY?

with Dr. Shira Efron, Dr. Alon Tal, Dr. Suleiman Halasah and Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed

Tuesday, September 12, 2:45-4:45pm,
JMC Library, 332 Case Hall (3rd floor)
The symposium will be live-streamed on our YouTube
Channel: @serlinginstituteforjewishs8606



The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a climate hotspot. Already the most water-stressed region worldwide, it is warming and drying up at twice the average pace, making some parts of it likely unliveable by mid-century. Climate change could also increase instability in the region, acting as a 'threat multiplier' that exacerbates existing problems. While MENA countries differ in their ability to adapt to climate effects and related security risks, ultimately these transnational impacts reach across borders, undermining regional and global resilience. This creates a clear impetus for regional cooperation. The timing for such cooperation is now opportune, for several reasons. First, climate change initiatives are springing up frequently across the MENA region, illustrating that the topic is at least declaratively high on national agendas. Second, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) respectively are the hosts of COP27 and COP28, putting a spotlight on the region. Further, the flurry of diplomatic activity in the region indicates that MENA countries see more

merit in diplomacy than in conflict, creating space for interest-based collaboration. And because of the cross-border nature of climate effects and their multiplied associated risks – political instability and mass migration, for example – there is a built-in incentive for regional cooperation. Finally, environmental issues are perceived as softer grounds for cooperation that can help to build trust and test the water for dialogue, coordination and even de-escalation in areas of 'hard' security. This panel discussion will unpack the climate threats as well as opportunities facing the MENA region. The participants will also discuss how environmental and science diplomacy build bridges and trust in the Middle East.

Dr. Shira Efron is director of research at Israel Policy Forum and the co-chair of the subgroup on regional cooperation of Israeli President Herzog's climate forum. Dr. Efron is currently on sabbatical from the RAND Corporation, where she founded and led the Israel program between 2016-2022. At RAND, she led and participated in several studies at the nexus of climate change and national security, including on Gaza's water crisis and the implications of climate change for the U.S. Air Force. Several of her studies directly addressed food security challenges in the MENA region, such as making the



case for the Global Dry Land Alliance and a project on GCC food security challenges in partnership with the UAE-based Emerge85. Previously, Dr. Efron was a fellow at several think tanks in Washington, D.C., including the Center for American Progress and Middle East Institute, and at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). She has a PhD and MPhil in policy analysis from RAND's Graduate School, an MA in international relations/international business from New York University.

Dr. Tareq Abu Hamed holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering from Ankara University. He did his first post doctoral research at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, where he worked in the Environmental Sciences and Energy Research Department. His second post doctorate was at the University of Minnesota, in the Solar Energy Laboratory of the Mechanical Engineering Department. Dr. Abu Hamed has published extensively in a wide variety of journals, and has been recognized with several awards, including the Dan David Prize. Tareq served as the Vice Chief Scientist and The Director of Engineering Research for Israel's Ministry of Science, Technology and Space. Tareq is currently the Executive Director of the Arava Institute and a researcher at the Dead Sea and Arava Science Center.



Dr. Suleiman Halasah is a research associate at the Institute for Science Innovation and Society at The University of Oxford, UK, and the co-director of the Jordan-Israel Center for Community, Environment, and Research (JICCER) at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies. Dr. Halasah also directs a Jordanian consulting firm, i.GREENS, that focuses on energy, water and environment. Dr.



Halasah earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Jordan in Amman, and Master of Science and a Doctor of Philosophy in Desert Studies from Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, Israel.

Dr. Alon Tal's career has been a balance between academia and public interest advocacy. He is presently a professor at Tel Aviv University where he previously served as chair of the Department of Public Policy. Between 2021 and 2022, he was member of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, and served as chair of the subcommittee for Environmental and Climate Impacts on Health. Tal has held faculty appointments at Stanford, Ben Gurion, Hebrew, Michigan State, Otago and Harvard Universities. He has founded several environmental organizations including the Israel Union for Environmental Defense, the Arava Institute, and Zafuf, the Israel Forum for Population, Environment, and Society. Between 2010 and 2013 Tal served as chair of Israel's Green Party, "the Green Movement." His most recent book: *Making Climate Tech Work: Policies that Drive Innovation* is due out with Island Press in 2024.



*Please email us at 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!

*For visitor parking information please visit: <https://maps.msu.edu/interactive/index.php>

FALL EVENTS 2023

FOLLOWING THE SCREENING OF THE MOVIE *THE JUDGE* FOUR EXPERTS WILL DISCUSS: "ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS" with Dr. Yael Aronoff, Dr. Noga Morag-Levine, Dr. Alon Tal and Dr. Rami Zeedan

Thursday, September 14, RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall, 362 Bogue St.

5:00pm Welcome and Intro to *The Judge*

5:15pm Screening of *The Judge* (54m)

6:15-8:00pm a Symposium with **Dr. Yael Aronoff, Dr. Noga Morag-Levine, Dr. Alon Tal and Dr. Rami Zeedan**

The symposium will be live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: @serlinginstituteofjewish8606

A panel of four experts will discuss the new Israeli government's efforts to overhaul the judicial system and weaken the Supreme Court, and more broadly, the domestic and foreign policy implications of the current government's efforts to weaken the checks and balances

system, and to expand and entrench Israeli settler presence on the West Bank. What, they will ask, are the underlying causes and triggers for the government actions, and what are the perspectives of the many people and societal sectors who have been protesting these actions for months? They will also discuss potential implications for a variety of issues, including for Arab-Palestinian society in Israel, for differing Druze and Palestinian narratives about the changes, as well as for women's rights and on environmental protections. They will also discuss the Court's consideration, on September 12th, of the many petitions filed in order to deem the new government's new law unconstitutional. This new law bars the judiciary from striking down decisions by the government and cabinet ministers on the basis of being unreasonable.

Dr. Yael Aronoff is the Director of the Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, is the Serling Chair of Israel Studies, and is Professor of International Relations in James Madison College at MSU. Dr. Aronoff is past President of the Association of Israel Studies. Her book, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace*, (Cambridge University Press 2014), compares and contrasts six Israeli prime ministers and their decision-making on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Dr. Aronoff's co-edited book, *Continuity and Change in Political Culture: Israel and*

Beyond, with Ilan Peleg and Saliba Sarsar, (Lexington Books, 2021), includes contributions from ten leading scholars in political science, anthropology, Israel studies, and Middle East affairs that address the theme



of continuity and change in political culture as a tribute to Professor Myron (Mike) J. Aronoff. Her recent publications include "Jerusalem: My Favorite City in the World!" in *What Jerusalem Means to Us:*

Jewish Perspectives and Reflections, Eds. Saliba Sarsar and Carole Monica C. Burnett, Jerusalem Peace Institute and Noble Book Publishing Inc., 2023; "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," *Handbook of Israeli Democracy*, ed. P.R. Kumaraswamy, Palgrave, 2022; and "The Zionist Center-Left Opposition to the Netanyahu Governments," in *Israel Under Netanyahu: Domestic Politics and Foreign Affairs*, ed. Robert Freedman, Routledge, 2019. Dr. Aronoff has published in *Foreign Policy*, *Israel Studies*, *Israel Studies Review*, and *Political Science Quarterly*, and is on the editorial boards for *Israel Studies Review* and *Israel Studies*.

Dr. Noga Morag-Levine is a professor of law and the George Roumell Faculty Scholar at Michigan State University College of Law. Her teaching and research interests include constitutional law, environmental law and history, and comparative law. She is the author of *Chasing the Wind: Regulating Air Pollution in the Common Law State* (Princeton University Press, 2003) as well as numerous articles. She holds a law degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and



a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to Michigan State, she has been a faculty member or taught courses at the University of Michigan, Princeton University, the

Hebrew University Faculty of Law, and the Law Faculty at Tel Aviv University.



Dr. Alon Tal is professor at Tel Aviv University where he previously served as chair of the Department of Public Policy (See p.5 for more).

Dr. Rami Zeedan is associate professor of Israel Studies in the Jewish Studies program at the University of Kansas. His research focuses on the Arab society in Israel in the context of an ethnic minority in a nation-state while examining several aspects: Arab politics at the national level and integration in the Israeli polity, the status of Arab local governments and local leadership, public opinion, election predictions, and the history of the integration of Arabs in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Dr. Zeedan is the author of several academic articles and two books: *The Arab-Palestinian Society in the Israeli Political System: Integration Versus Segregation in the Twenty-First Century*. (Lexington Books, 2019) and *Battalion of Arabs--The History of the Minorities Unit in the IDF* (Modan, 2015, Hebrew). His current research project aims to discover the role of the IDF minorities' unit in Israel's wars, mainly the War of 1967 (Six-Day War) and the War of 1973 (Yom Kippur War), and how it helped shape the process of integration of the Druze in Israel's society.



THE SERLING INSTITUTE PRESENTS: **18th ANNUAL MSU**

Sunday, September 10

RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall, 362 Bogue St.

12:30pm Welcome and Intro to ***Cinema Sabaya*** with special broadcast cast members **Amal Murkus** and **Dana Ivgi**

12:45pm Screening of ***Cinema Sabaya*** (1h 31m)

2:15pm Discussion with **Amal Murkus** and **Dana Ivgi**

3:00pm Intro to ***The Narrow Bridge*** with special broadcast guests **Bassam Aramib** and **Rami Elhanan** of the Parents Circle Families Forum

3:15pm Screening of ***The Narrow Bridge*** (1h 20m)

4:35pm Discussion with **Bassam Aramin** and **Rami Elhanan**

5:15-6:00pm Complimentary dinner (location TBA either in Snyder-Phillips or right outside it)

6:00pm Welcome and Intro to ***Here We Are***

6:15pm Screening of ***Here We Are*** (1h 34m)

7:45pm a discussion with **Dr. Vered Weiss** and **Dr. Yore Kedem**

Thursday, September 14

RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall, 362 Bogue St.

5:00pm Welcome and Intro to ***The Judge***

5:15pm Screening of ***The Judge*** (54m)

6:15pm Panel discussion following the film with **Dr. Yael Aronoff**, **Dr. Noga Morag-Levine**, **Dr. Alon Tal** and **Dr. Rami Zeedan**

Free Admission!

No registration required
All the events on September 10th are only in person.

ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 10, 12:30pm:

***Cinema Sabaya* (2021)**

RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall,
362 Bogue St.



Director: Orit Fouks Rotem

Drama

Israel. Language: Hebrew, Arabic (English subtitles)

A group of Arab and Jewish women attend a video workshop at a small town community center run by Rona, a young filmmaker from Tel Aviv, who teaches them to document their lives. As each student shares footage from her home life with the others, their beliefs and preconceptions are challenged and barriers are broken down. The group comes together as mothers, daughters, wives, and women living in a world designed to keep them apart, forming an empowering and lasting bond as they learn more about each other... and themselves. Inspired by writer/director Orit Fouks Rotem's own experiences as a teacher, *Cinema Sabaya* presents a deft and heartfelt portrait of art's capacity to unite disparate communities, moving effortlessly between the gravity of their conversations and the genuine joy generated by this unlikely group of friends. Winner of five Ophir Awards including Best Picture and Best Director and Israel's Official Submission to the 2023 Academy Awards.



Dana Ivgi was most recently nominated for best actress at the Israeli Academy Awards for the feature film *Cinema Sabaya*. The film also won Best Film at the awards. Concurrently with *Cinema Sabaya*, she is also nominated for Best Actress

for the hostage true story thriller *Savoy*. Ivgy is a 10-time nominated and 3-time winner of the Israel Film Academy Awards. Ivgy won a Best Actress "Oscar" for her 2014 performance in the comedy *Zero Motivation*, as the unflappable recruit going through the motions of military service. *Zero Motivation* was the first Israeli film purchased by Netflix after it won best film at the Tribeca Film Festival. She won a Best Supporting Israeli Oscar for her performance in the drama *Next to Her*. In 2004 she won her first Israeli Oscar and got considerable world-wide acclaim for her portrayal of a prostitute's daughter in the movie *Or (My Treasure)*. In 2007 she held her own opposite Juliette Binoche in Amos Gitai's political drama *Disengagement*. In 2009, Ivgi's depiction of the protagonist in *Jaffa*, a Romeo & Juliet-inspired drama about a Jewish girl and an Arab boy, led to another nomination. That same year, she was also nominated for her performance in the intimate drama *Haiu Leilot (There Were Nights)*. In 2021 Ivgi was awarded Best Actress at the Berlin TV awards for *Me-ila (Embezzlement)*. And recently a music video she directed to her own song was chosen to premiere at the Tribeca film festival.

Amal Murkus is a singer and actress of international renown as well as a producer, songwriter and a host of numerous cultural and artistic TV & radio shows. Amal was born in the Galilee, the northwestern part of Palestine (Israel today), in 1968, and she is part of the Palestinian minority who remained in their homeland. She graduated from Beit Tsvi Conservatory for Performance Arts and later from The Musrara Conservatory for Art for Social Change. Amal is a leading pioneer Palestinian singer and actress who has devoted her career to promoting Palestinian music and culture. Murkus has created and released five albums of songs as well as many single releases and collaborations, all inspired by Arab and Palestinian poetry and tunes, world music rhythms and styles. She tours the world with her music. Her extensive vocal range and creative talents enable Murkus to perform in a wide range of genres, from traditional Arab to modern popular Western styles, which paved the way for numerous collaborations with international artists from different styles such as Mercedes Sosa, Joan Baez, Robert Wyatt, Enzo Avitabile, and Stadio, to name a few.



ISRAELI FILM FESTIVAL

Sunday, September 10, 3:00pm: *The Narrow Bridge* (2022)
RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall, 362 Bogue St.



Director: Esther Takac
Documentary
Followed by a discussion with Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan

Australia, Language: English, Arabic, Hebrew
The Narrow Bridge is a searching journey into the souls of four people who, after searing pain, develop strengths they never had before. We watch with wonder as Bushra, Rami, Meytal and Bassam, women and men who lost a child or parent in violent conflict, transform their grief into a bridge for reconciliation. The film follows their paths from devastating trauma to courageous activism. But their stories are not just personal. They all belong to a controversial grassroots movement of broken-hearted people: 'Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families,' who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality. Despite fierce political and family opposition, they refuse to give up.

Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan are compelling individuals; articulate, passionate and frank. Their candid interviews reveal how the violent deaths of their children affected them. They have each traveled a hero's journey with a transformation that is startling and complex.

Bassam Aramin lives in Jericho in the West Bank. At the age of 17, he was incarcerated and spent 7 years in an Israeli jail. He went on to study history and holds an MA in Holocaust studies from the University of Bradford, England. In 2005 Bassam was one of the founders of Combatants for Peace, along with Rami's son Elik. He became a member of the Parents Circle in 2007 after losing his 10-year-old daughter Abir, who was killed by an Israeli border policeman in front of her school. Bassam devotes his time and energies to his conviction for a peaceful, non-violent end to the Israeli occupation

and to Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. Bassam was the Palestinian Co-director of the Parents Circle – Families Forum until August 2020.

Rami Elhanan is a 7th generation Jerusalemite on his mother's side. His father was an Auschwitz survivor. He is a retired soldier of three wars. Rami identifies himself as a Jew, an Israeli, and before everything else, a human being. On the first day of the school year in 1997, Rami's 14 years daughter, Smadar, was killed by Palestinian suicide bombers in the center of Jerusalem. A year later, Rami joined the Parents Circle, and speaks before Israeli, Palestinian and International audiences. Rami was the Israeli Co-director of the Parents Circle – Families Forum until August 2020.



Rami Elhanan, whose daughter was blown up getting books for the new school year, and Bassam Aramin, whose daughter was shot dead while sharing sweets with her sister.

Sunday, September 10,
6:00pm: *Here We Are* (2020)
RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall,
362 Bogue St.



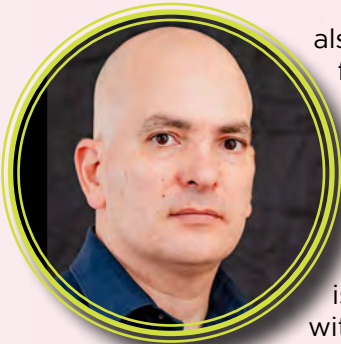
Director: Nir Bergman
Drama
Followed by a Panel discussion with Dr. Vered Weiss, and Dr. Yore Kedem
Israel. Language: Hebrew (English subtitles)

Aharon has devoted his life to raising his son Uri. They live together in a gentle routine, away from the real world. But Uri is autistic, and now as a young adult it might be time for him to live in a specialized home. While on their way to the institution, Aharon decides to run away with his son and hits the road, knowing that Uri is not ready for this separation. Or is it, in fact, his father who is not ready? Nominated for 10 Israeli Ophir Awards.

Dr. Vered Weiss is the Serling Israeli Visiting Scholar and The Israel Institute Teaching Fellow at The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel at Michigan State University (see p.13 for more)



Dr. Yore Kedem is Assistant Professor of Hebrew in the Department of Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures at MSU. In this role, he teaches all Hebrew classes and on occasion an IAH course on immigration. Dr. Kedem led the Jewish Studies Summer Program at Hebrew University in Jerusalem six times, where he taught a class titled Cultural Diversity and Immigration in Israel. Dr. Kedem



also taught courses in Israel for Hebrew University and the University of Illinois. His Advanced Hebrew and Education Abroad classes revolve around students' research projects. These projects investigate issues of students' interest within Israeli society and culture and enable them to work as independent researchers. Almost every year his students present their projects in undergraduate research conferences at MSU.

Thursday, September 14,
5:00pm: *The Judge* (2009)
RCAH Theater, C20 Snyder-Phillips Hall,
362 Bogue St.

Directors: Ram Landes and Ami Teer
Documentary
Followed by a Panel discussion with Dr. Yael Aronoff, Dr. Noga Morag-Levine, Dr. Alon Tal and Dr. Rami Zeedan
Israel, Language: English, Hebrew (English subtitles)



Few judges anywhere have confronted the challenges faced by Aharon Barak, the former Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court. A survivor of the Holocaust, he knows firsthand the dangers posed by intolerance and xenophobia, and spent his career negotiating a delicate balance between Israel as a Jewish state and Israel as a democracy. Though often controversial, his rulings have become textbook cases for law students around the world. During his tenure Barak never spoke to the media. Now that he feels his time is running out, he has agreed to bare his soul—the soul of a judge—on camera for the very first time.

FALL EVENTS 2023

JERUSALEM: HUMANITY'S SHARED GIFT

**Tuesday, October 10, 5:30-7:00pm,
JMC Library, 332 Case Hall (3rd floor)**
This event will be live-streamed on our YouTube
Channel: @serlinginstitute for jewishs8606

Jerusalem is sacred to the followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. For centuries, the world's different traditions have shared, fought over, built, and rebuilt the Holy City. Jerusalem is special for millions worldwide—Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, and others—who revere it and regard it as a precious inheritance from their ancestors, spiritual or physical or both.

Panelists will include three scholars—Dr. Yael Aronoff, Dr. Mohamed Ghumrawi, and Dr. Saliba Sarsar—each of whom contributed to a volume about Jerusalem's meaning for each monotheistic religion (all three envisioned and either edited or co-edited by Dr. Sarsar). Dr. Vered Weiss, who grew up in Jerusalem

and who teaches IAH courses on Jerusalem, will chair the panel. The panel will discuss the significance of Jerusalem to the various communities, its current challenges, as well as visions for how it might be shared and/or divided. These mechanisms will be presented as a path toward advancing the values of faith, justice, equality, reconciliation, and cultural heritage; promoting the city's sacredness; as well as caring for the city as humanity's gift.



Dr. Yael Aronoff is the Director of the Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, is the Serling Chair of Israel Studies, and is Professor of International Relations in James Madison College at MSU. (see p.7 for more)



Dr. Mohamed K. Ghumrawi is a Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Politics and International Relations at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, FL. He is also the Associate Director of the

Jaffer Center for Muslim World Studies at FIU and the founding Faculty Director of the "FIU in the Middle East" study abroad program. His research interests include Palestinian-Israeli relations, the Palestinian diaspora, geopolitics of the Middle East, nation-building and state formation, conflict resolution and peace studies.



Dr. Saliba Sarsar, born and raised in Jerusalem, is Professor of Political Science at Monmouth University and President & CEO of the Jerusalem Peace Institute. During 2022-2024, he is also a Visiting Research Collaborator

at Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs. His teaching and scholarly interests focus on the Middle East, Palestinian-Israeli affairs, Jerusalem, and peacebuilding. Dr. Sarsar's most recent authored books are *Peacebuilding in Israeli-Palestinian Relations* and *Jerusalem: The Home in Our Hearts*. His most recent edited books are *The Holy Land Confederation as a Facilitator for the Two-State Solution* and *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Christian Perspectives and Reflections*. His most recent co-edited books are *Inequality and Governance in an Uncertain World*, *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Jewish Perspectives and Reflections*, *What Jerusalem Means to Us: Muslim Perspectives and Reflections*, *Democracy in Crisis Around the World*, and *Continuity and Change in Political Culture: Israel and Beyond*. Dr. Sarsar has been featured in several publications,

including *The New York Times*, and is the recipient of the Award of Academic Excellence from the American Task Force on Palestine; the Global Visionary, the Stafford Presidential Award of Excellence, and the Eugene Simko Faculty Leadership Award from Monmouth University; the Humanitarian Award from the National Conference for Community and Justice; and the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation Award.



Dr. Vered Weiss is the Serling Israeli Visiting Scholar and The Israel Institute Teaching Fellow at The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel at Michigan State University. Dr. Weiss is a

faculty member in the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and teaches courses on Israeli culture, Israeli cinema and television, Hebrew literature, as well as world literature. Dr. Weiss 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 (Lexington, 2023). 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 book with Elana Gomel about Israeli speculative fiction (Liverpool University Press).



FALL EVENTS 2023

BEYOND BAGELS AND BUREKAS: AMERICAN JEWISH LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY by Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor



Monday, October 9, 5:30-7:00pm, B-342 Wells Hall
This event will be live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: @
[serlinginstituteforjewishsh8606](#)

Using quotes and images, this talk highlights the diversity of American Jews by focusing on the diverse uses of “Jewish American English” – enriched primarily by words from Yiddish and Hebrew, but also, in particular ancestral groups, Ladino, Russian, Farsi, Judeo-Arabic, and other languages. Jews of various stripes use subtle variation in language to signal their textual knowledge, religious denomination, generation from immigration, ancestral origin, and orientation toward Israel. In short, “Jewish language” serves not only to distinguish Jews from non-Jews but also to distinguish Jews from Jews.

Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor is Vice Provost and Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies at HUC-JIR (LA) and Adjunct Professor in the University of Southern California Linguistics Department. She received her Ph.D. from Stanford University in Linguistics in 2004. Her books include *Becoming Frum: How Newcomers Learn the Language and Culture of Orthodox Judaism* (Rutgers University Press, 2012) and *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps* (Rutgers University Press, 2020). Dr. Benor is founding co-editor of the *Journal of Jewish Languages* and directs the HUC-JIR Jewish Language Project, which features the Jewish Language Website and the Jewish English Lexicon.

BEYOND RECALL by Dr. Jakob Eisler

Friday, October 13, 10:00-11:30am, B-342 Wells Hall
This event will be live-streamed on our YouTube Channel:
[@serlinginstituteforjewishsh8606](#)

After Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933, antisemitism became a state doctrine. The National Socialists’ aim was the physical destruction of the Jews. Every memory of the sound and voice of Jewish artists was to be consigned to oblivion in the same way as the Yiddish language. On being liberated from Theresienstadt concentration camp, the Berlin Rabbi, Leo Baeck, stated his conviction that the 1,000 year history of the Jews in Germany had come to an irrevocable end. This documentation is proof of the victory of life over death – priceless sound documents have been rescued, then restored with a great expenditure of technological effort and, after sixty years, made available once more for all time. Under constant surveillance by the Gestapo, the members of a Jewish Cultural League [Juedischer Kulturbund] in Berlin were able to pursue their artistic activities and make and distribute records. Some of the titles recorded in Berlin were released in Palestine from 1933 to 1938 – forming part of the early history of Israel’s record industry. These records that are scattered throughout the world for the most part exist only as single copies or test pressings. The repertoire is wide and includes classical music, Yiddish comedians, German cabaret, Palestinian folk songs and, above all, cantorial singing of enormous eloquence.

Dr. Jakob Eisler works as a researcher in the Wuerttembergian Church State Archives in Stuttgart, Germany and as lecturer at the University of Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart. His publication, *Beyond Recall: A Record of Jewish Musical Life in Nazi Germany 1933-1938*, won first prize for the Best Research in Recorded Music from the Association of Recorded Sound Collections in 2002. His research interests include the activities of Europeans and Americans in the 19th century in the Land of Israel, German Jewry in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the history of Israel during the Ottoman period and Mandate eras.



WORLD PREMIERE FILM & SYMPHONIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES LIFE: The Lost Rhapsody: A World War II Survival Story and Musical Legacy

Saturday, October 14, 7:30pm, MSU Fairchild Theatre and Sunday, October 15, 2:15pm, at the JCC’s Berman Center for the Performing Arts in West Bloomfield



The Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel at MSU in collaboration with Michigan State University College of Music and The

Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit’s Lenore Marwil Detroit Jewish Film Festival, proudly presents “The Lost Rhapsody: A World War II Survival Story and Musical Legacy.”

This exclusive event will feature a screening of David Hoffert’s acclaimed documentary film, *The Rhapsody*, about composer and Holocaust survivor Leo Spellman who, at the age of 98, set out on a riveting and emotional journey towards artistic liberation. Composer and Holocaust survivor Leo Spellman’s secret wartime diary and long-lost orchestral masterpiece are the framework that bring his remarkable tale of survival to life. His eighteen months in hiding are portrayed through bold artwork and animation narrated by award-winning actor Stephen Fry.

Before the film, **Professor Amy Simon**, William and Audrey Farber Family Endowed Chair in Holocaust Studies and European Jewish History, MSU’s Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel, James Madison College, and the Department of History, will give a short historical context for the program. She will discuss the importance of wartime diaries, such as Leo Spellman’s, in uncovering the perspectives of Jews at the time of

the Holocaust.

Immediately following the film will be a live performance of Leo Spellman’s 24-minute symphonic masterpiece, “Rhapsody 1939-1945.” The MSU Symphony, conducted by Octavio Más-Arocas, Associate Professor of Music, Director of Orchestras, at Michigan State University, will perform the piece that was lost and forgotten for more than 50 years.

The program concludes with a talkback with the film’s producers, Paul and Brenda Hoffert, moderated by Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO of The Zekelman Holocaust Center.

This is the first time anywhere that the film *The Rhapsody* will be paired with Leo Spellman’s symphonic piece “Rhapsody 1939-1945.” This remarkable program is made possible through a “Making Music Happen” grant from The Center for Arts and Culture at JCC Association, in collaboration with The J’s SAJE (Seminars for Adult Jewish Enrichment) Program, the Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel at MSU, and The Zekelman Holocaust Center.

“THE LOST RHAPSODY”

The MSU program on Saturday, October 14, is free to Serling Institute faculty, staff, and students. The Fairchild Theatre is located at 542 Auditorium Rd, East Lansing.

For more information, please visit [www.music.msu.edu/fairchild](#) or call (517) 355-1855.

The Berman is located at The J, 6600 W. Maple Road, West Bloomfield. Tickets for Sunday, October 15, are \$18 each and can be purchased by visiting [www.jccdet.org/filmfestival](#). For more information, please call (248) 609-3303.

Leo Spellman was born on April 18, 1913 in Poland into a family of revered musicians. His incredible journey, brought to cinematic life so vividly in *The Rhapsody*, began in Furstenfeldbruck, a German DP camp where he started composing “Rhapsody” in 1947. Leo and his wife had miraculously survived the Holocaust, hiding in the forests of Poland and then hiding in an apartment in Ostrowiec with his wife and brother-in-law thanks to the unlikely offer of shelter from a 21-year old Polish student, Henryk Wronski, who hid the couple for 18 torturous months.

FALL EVENTS 2023

CONVERSATIONS ON ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

(Open to MSU Students, Faculty and Staff)

**Oct 19|Nov 9| Nov 30| Dec 5, 5pm-7pm
B-342 Wells Hall**

This past spring, the Serling Institute, the Muslim Studies Program and the MSU Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI) teamed up to run a virtual 4-part series on “Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia” for the MSU community. Facilitators of all four sessions included: from the Serling Institute, Professor Yael Aronoff, Professor Kirsten Fermaglich, Assistant Professor Amy Simon, assistant to the Director Ariana Mentzel, and student Ellie Baden; from Muslim Studies, Program Director and Professor Mohammad Khalil, Associate Professor Morgan Shipley (also a Serling Institute Faculty Affiliate); from IDI, Dr. Vanessa Holmes. They all were awarded the 2023 Award for Outstanding Community Partnership for contributions to MSU Dialogues from the MSU Office for Institutional Diversity. MSU alumnus Nadir Hamid, past ASMSU’s DEI officer and President of the Muslim Student Association and Associate Professor of Political Science Nazita Lajevardi also helped lead and individual session.

In the newly adapted “Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia,” all our participating faculty, staff, and students participated in each of the four sessions, and presented material and helped facilitate discussion in each of the sessions. Faculty experts discussed the history and current manifestations of antisemitism and Islamophobia which occur globally, nationally and on college campuses. In addition to discussions of MSU incidents, participants had the opportunity to share their observations and ideas, while learning to contribute to an inclusive MSU campus community.

Approximately 30 faculty, staff, and students throughout the university participated in all four sessions and gave very positive feedback. One participant reported that “today was an emotional journey through my own past and that of my heritage. I really appreciated the discussion and the materials that were presented;” another concluded “I gained background, history, context, references and opportunities to share difficult experiences and uncomfortable topics. I felt that it was a safe and supportive group and allowed for a lot of nonjudgmental growth.”

The success of this inaugural program has led to a renewal of the Conversations series, taking place in person in both the fall 2023 and spring 2024 semesters, and is only open to MSU faculty, staff, and students (not to community members). We welcome students, faculty, and staff to register for the upcoming Fall sessions!

Goals include: attaining a greater understanding of the historical contexts of antisemitism and Islamophobia globally and nationally; helping people to recognize antisemitism and Islamophobia when they see them; discussing antisemitic or Islamophobic rhetoric or actions that have happened on the MSU campus, and what can be learned; discussing resources that are available on campus and brainstorming ways that we can increase a sense of inclusion for both affected communities.

Student participation may be used as an Honors option; please check with faculty. Faculty and staff attendance may be considered for annual reviews and promotions. Participants are encouraged to attend all four in-person sessions. Complimentary pizza or Middle Eastern food from Woody’s will be provided at each session [Click here](#) to register for CONVERSATIONS ON ANTISEMITISM AND ISLAMOPHOBIA Oct 19|| Nov 9| Nov 30| Dec 5 5 p.m- 7 p.m ET B-342 Wells Hall or scan this QR code (please use your MSU account for Google):



The Serling Institute faculty and staff are proud of our great collaboration with the Muslim Studies program under the directorship of Professor Mohammad Khalil. In addition to collaboration on these “Conversations on Antisemitism and Islamophobia” we collaborate on training over 300 residential advisors every year to recognize and combat antisemitism and Islamophobia, and provide workshops to units across campus. We co-sponsor programming and we collaborated closely on working on MSU’s new religious observance policy and its implementation. In addition, Laura Yares (core Serling Institute faculty and Religious Studies), Chris Frilingos (Religious Studies and affiliate of the Serling Institute), Mohammad Khalil, and Morgan Shipley (Religious Studies, Muslim Studies, and the Serling Institute) all wrote descriptions of religious holidays and recommended greetings, which are now available on the MSU religious holiday calendar.

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



Dr. Mohammad Hassan Khalil is the Director of the Muslim Studies Program and Professor in the Department of Religious Studies.



Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich is Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Michigan State University.

Dr. Morgan Shipley is the Inaugural Foglio Endowed Chair of Spirituality and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Michigan State University.



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

FALL EVENTS 2023

**TRIO CANTILENA GUEST ARTIST
RECITAL: Ronit Widmann-Levy, voice,
Guy Yehuda, clarinet and Daniel
Akiva, guitar**

**Sunday, November 5, 7:00pm,
Cook Recital Hall, Music Building**

Jerusalém de España-Cantilena is an internationally renowned trio that brings Sephardic Jewish classical music to concert halls worldwide. The trio delivers an impassioned performance of a stirring mixture of works rooted in an ancient Judeo Español culture as depicted through Romansas, Cantigas and Piutim that go as far back as 2000 years ago. Stories of love, loss and longing take center stage in classical concert form, including both traditional and original contemporary works, one of which memorializes the Jewish community of Salonika who perished in the Holocaust. The program explores Jewish music through history, from the medieval Christian period, under the Visigoths, to the period of Moorish rule by Islamic cultures, in which Jewish scholars wrote their tomes in Arabic, as well as the famous period of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the "Catholic Monarchs," and beyond, into the twentieth century.

Complimentary tickets available for Serling Institute faculty, students, and staff. 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.



**Lecture and discussion on Dr. Laura Yares's recently published book:
*JEWISH SUNDAY SCHOOLS: TEACHING RELIGION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA***

**Wednesday, November 15, 5.30-7:00pm,
B-342 Wells Hall
This event will be live-streamed on our YouTube Channel:
[@serlinginstituteofjewish8606](#)**

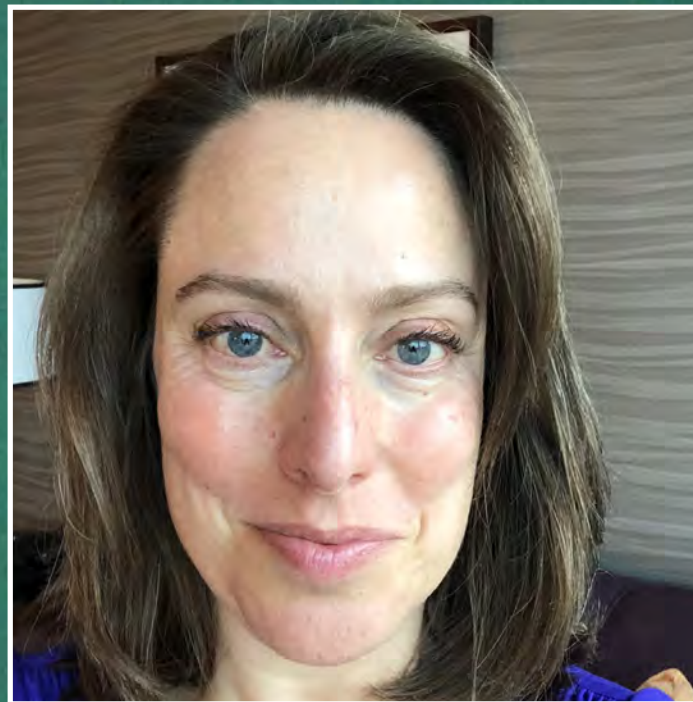
Laura Yares will discuss her book, *Jewish Sunday Schools: Teaching Religion in Nineteenth Century America*, (NYU Press, 2023).

It chronicles the development of the Sunday school as a mechanism for Jewish education in America, and analyzes its distinctively religious curricula. The first Jewish Sunday school in America was founded by a pioneering group of women in 1838. It soon grew to an entire system, led by women, that educated vast numbers of Jewish youth across the country. Debates soon swirled, however, around the so-called sorry state of "feminized" American Jewish supplemental learning in Sunday schools, and the schools were taken over by men within one generation of their creation. It is commonly assumed that the critiques were accurate and that the early Jewish Sunday school was feminized, saccharine, and overly dependent on Christian paradigms. Tracing the development of these schools from their inception through the first decade of the twentieth century, this book shows this was not the reality. *Jewish Sunday Schools* argues that the work of the women who shepherded Jewish education in the early Jewish Sunday school had ramifications far outside the classroom. Indeed, we cannot understand the nineteenth-century American Jewish experience, and how American Judaism sought to sustain itself in an overwhelmingly Protestant context, without looking closely at the development of Jewish Sunday school education.

Dr. Yares is an Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies and Religious Studies at Michigan State University.



ISRAELI VISITING SCHOLARS



Dr. Vered Weiss

Dr. Vered Weiss will continue with us as the Serling Israeli Visiting Scholar and The Israel Institute Teaching Fellow, and faculty member in the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities, for the next couple of years. She will be offering her "Israel and Jerusalem" and "Israeli Cinema and Television" courses, as well as "Monsters in Film and Literature" course. At the recent Association of Israel Studies Annual Conference held in New York, Weiss presented a paper titled "Science, Science Fiction, and Archives in Infinity and Science is a Beacon." The paper considered how *Infinity*, the 2022 Young Adult television series, and *Science is a Beacon*, Yael Katzir's recent documentary, use archival materials – whether real or fictional – to explore and construct narratives of exuberant unique creativity. Weiss was elected this year to the Advisory Board of the Association of Israel Studies. Weiss 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 (Lexington, 2023). 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 book about Israeli speculative fiction (Liverpool University Press).

Dr. Alon Tal

Professor Alon Tal will be returning to teach at James Madison College in MSU for the 7th time, as a Serling Israeli Visiting Scholar, during the Fall 2023 semester. He will teach MC 335: Israeli Politics, Cultures, and Society (4 credits) and MC 450: International Environmental Policy (3 credits).

Alon Tal's career has been a balance between academia and public interest advocacy. He is presently a professor at Tel Aviv University where he previously served as chair of the Department of Public Policy. Between 2021 and 2022, he was member of the Knesset, Israel's parliament and served as chair of the subcommittee for *Environmental and Climate Impacts on Health*. Tal has held faculty appointments at Stanford, Ben Gurion, Hebrew, Michigan State, Otago and Harvard Universities. He has founded several environmental organizations including the Israel Union for Environmental Defense the Arava Institute and Zafuf, the Israel Forum for Population, Environment and Society. Between 2010 and 2013 Tal served as chair of Israel's green party - "the Green Movement". His most recent book: *Making Climate Tech Work: Policies that Drive Innovation* is due out with Island Press in 2024.



ISRAELI VISITING SCHOLARS



Studio Mela, an Event Research Institute, creates events that combine movement, design, and taste. An all-inclusive form of art that stimulates all senses. Their work has been presented in exhibitions and events around the world.

Sponsored by the Serling Institute Visiting Scholars Endowment, the MSU Theater department and Bamah, (“BAMAH”), a Washington, DC non-profit corporation.

Carmel Beer is an artist, performer, and chef. Graduate, of SVT, MASPA- Gaaton Kibbutz and Scuola CONIA-Cesena (Italy). She teaches sculpting tools and techniques at the SVT in Jerusalem. Carmel creates events on the border between performance, fine art, and culinary pleasure – redefining the “Event” as another art form, stimulating all the senses. Carmel’s projects have

been presented in Cesena and Santarcangelo (Italy), Prague (Czechia), London (GB), Jerusalem, Tel Aviv.

Michal Evyatar is a multi-disciplinary designer focusing on culinary performance. She has a Master in Experimental Design from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. Michal creates food experiences that challenge familiarity by combining design, stage, and food practices. Michal worked as a pastry chef in Kunming, China. She specializes in Israeli cuisine, has been a chef in a few restaurants in Israel, and led innovation processes for the food industry at Feincook culinary lab.

IAH (Integrative Studies Arts & Hum) 209: Art, the Visual, and Culture (D) with the focus of: Multi-Sensory Performance.

This course explores the components of food and eating experience and channels it through the five senses. During the semester we will unpack personal and communal experiences through food and eating and their environments, thereby invoking both past and present. By creating immersive experiences the students will deconstruct the mechanism of eating and to expose the cultural and personal norms involved. From the dawn of civilization, cultural customs evolved around food, its production and consumption. Many rituals in diverse parts of the globe were created to gather people around the table. We will explore the various rituals of the Jewish tradition, deconstructing the ritual into its unique objects, set up and special recipes. The course will culminate with a communal event, wherein the students will present their research outcomes and insights as installations or live performance. The students will practice creating multi-sensory performance through the prism of the five senses: Sight- Food representation in visual arts focusing on Israeli food art. Taste - Our tongue as a cultural detector. Israeli cuisine as a sociopolitical reflector. Hearing - What are the surrounding/ supporting elements for a work of art. How does sound affect our bodies and perception? Touch - The choreography of eating and preparing food. Smell- How to evoke personal and communal memories through aroma molecules? The role of smell in secular religious ceremonies.

NEW AFFILIATED FACULTY



Dr. Morgan Shipley
Morgan Shipley is the Inaugural Foglio Endowed Chair of Spirituality and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Michigan State University. His research focuses on 1) the place and experience of new religious movements in American history; 2) the connections between religion, spirituality, and social justice; and 3) the emergence and implications of secular spirituality. These foci regularly engage with the Jewish experience in America, specifically as it relates to new religious orientations and the pursuit of a more just and equal society. He has published on Jewish mysticism and connections between Judaism, Jewish movements, and identity (“Kabbalah (Women and)” and “Hasidism (Women/Feminine in),” both in *Encyclopedia of Women in World Religions: Faith and Culture Across History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2018).

At Michigan State University, he has taught three courses that directly engage with Judaism: Religious Studies 412: Jewish Mysticism (Fall 2023, Fall 2017, Fall 2016), Religious Studies 310: Judaism (Spring 2018, Spring 2017), and HST 317: American Jewish History (Spring 2022). He has worked with colleagues from Jewish Studies on two initiatives designed to advance MSU’s commitment to DEI: along with Professors Kirsten Fermaglich and Amy Simon, he developed a 9-week series on combatting antisemitism and Islamophobia as part of the MSU Dialogue Series and a new four-session live “conversation” model, which was co-convened along with Professors Yael Aronoff, Mohammad Khalil, Kirsten Fermaglich, Amy Simon, and Ariana Mentzel.



Dr. Tasha Warren
I am honored to be joining the Serling Institute as an affiliate faculty. In my research as a musician, teacher, and historian, I am motivated by a deeply rooted fascination with the connection between origin, roots, and culture throughout the Jewish diaspora. I and Professor Guy Yehuda have recently formed a quartet with violinist Meg Okura, and cellist Dave Eggar. Through the commission of new original works for our ensemble (all members are of Jewish heritage) we seek to explore the creation and communication of music that explores the variety of musical language within this vast diaspora. My duo with Dave Eggar has been nominated for two Grammys and has thus connected with a number of highly acclaimed composers eager to write for us as a duo, as well as this newly formed ensemble. In addition, I led the Chamber Music Study Abroad program to Israel (July 24-August 4 2023), in which I and Guy Yehuda mentored chamber music students from the College of Music through a “concert tour” of Israel, exploring many facets of Jewish and Israeli Culture through the celebration of music. Examples of musical experiences include an all-day Klezmer workshop in Tel Aviv, a concert exploring Arab-Jewish musical culture at Beit Ha’Gefen in Haifa, a concert in a Kibbutz outside Jerusalem, a concert overlooking Masada at Masada National Park, and a day visiting with Bedouins in the Negev. We also explored Jerusalem and toured Jaffo, Akko, and the Dead Sea. Students created memories that will last a lifetime, and that will inspire many more study abroad trips to Israel for our music students.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Kirsten Fermaglich
In 2022, I was one of seven senior scholars invited to serve as a National Archives Distinguished Scholar to research systemic racism in the federal government. The 18-month scholarship, from January 2022 through June 2023, allowed me to take a leave from teaching at Michigan State University, and to travel to Washington, D.C., where I worked for a summer with a graduate student and a postdoctoral fellow to research antisemitism in the National Archives records. Our team was one of seven teams, each one studying the impact of systemic racism in the United States on a different group: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinx Americans, Indigenous Americans, Middle East and North African (MENA) Americans, and poor and working-class white Americans. My experience doing this research was gratifying. In part, this was because it was collaborative. It was intellectually exciting to find connections among the histories of different marginalized groups. The research was also gratifying because, sadly, the material had so much relevance for today. We found copies of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (the notorious antisemitic forgery that purports to record a Jewish conspiracy for world domination) in three different federal collections: the Military, Congress, and the State Department. The records of the Federal Housing Administration included explicit descriptions of Jews as an “undesirable” group “invading” suburban neighborhoods. Congressional petitions supporting restrictive immigration legislation in the 1920s included the vilest racist and antisemitic claims—and sounded like posts you might find today on the internet. And officials at the State Department exhibited antisemitism long before the Holocaust; between 1919 and 1920, the Department released reports describing Jews as “filthy” and “unassimilable” to build public support to stop immigration to the United States. I will present research on this last subject at the AJS conference in December 2023. In 2023-2024, I will serve as Associate Director of the Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel.

Dr. Benjamin Lorch
Benjamin Lorch was recently promoted to Associate Professor, fixed term. Ben has worked at James Madison College since 2015, where he teaches in the college’s first year program and Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy field, and he has been affiliated with the Serling Institute since 2016. A focus of his research is the relation between philosophy and religion, and he has published articles about Greek philosophy and Jewish thought, including on Maimonides and, most recently, Emil Fackenheim. He taught a seminar last year about good and evil in Plato and the Book of Job. As an affiliated faculty member of the Serling Institute, he has taught the core Jewish Studies course “Jews and Antisemitism,” along with independent studies on topics in Jewish thought such as Zionism, Judaism and modernity, and Maimonides. He has also presented his research in Serling Institute events, recruited for the 2020 study abroad in Israel (canceled due to the pandemic), and served as acting Associate Director in 2019-2020.



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



Dr. Amy Simon
Amy Simon published a monograph, *Emotions in Yiddish Ghetto Diaries: Encountering Persecutors and Questioning Humanity* (Routledge) in June. This book uses an empathic reading of Yiddish diarists’ feelings, evaluations, and assessments about persecutors in the Warsaw, Lodz, and Vilna ghettos to present an emotional history of persecution in the Nazi ghettos. She also attended the workshop, “Emotions in Holocaust Studies,” at Goethe University (Frankfurt) in June. On October 14-15, she will speak at the joint Serling Institute/College of Music event on the documentary film, *The Rhapsody*. In December, Dr. Simon will attend the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in San Francisco, participating in a roundtable on addressing antisemitism on college campuses and another on emotions in Holocaust studies.

Dr. Laura Yares
Dr. Laura Yares celebrated the publication of her first book, Jewish Sunday schools, this summer. For the fall of 2023, she was awarded a HARP (Humanities and Arts Research Program) grant by the MSU Office of Research and Innovation to support the writing of her second book, tentatively titled *Artful Education: What Jews and NonJews Learn about Judaism through Jewish Cultural Arts*. Research for this project has been supported by a grant from the Mandel Center for Studies in Jewish Education at Brandeis University. The book explores what audiences learn about Jews and Judaism by watching television shows, web broadcasts, and theatre productions featuring Jewish themes and characters; by listening to Jewish music; and by visiting Jewish museums. She has given many public talks related to this research, most recently, in June 2023, a talk at Boston’s Vilna Shul about Broadway Jewish theatre. Her research on Jewish theatre was also highlighted in a recent article she published with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, which was syndicated by other local media outlets.



PAST EVENTS SPRING 2023



Screening of *One More Story*, with special guest **Omer Barak**
03-19-2023



Live Performance by the Yemen Blues Quartet
03-19-2023



JS minors **Julia Diskin** and **Noa Ostroff**



Screening of *Give it Back!* with **Professor Vered Weiss**
and discussion with director **Ruchama Ehrenhalt**
03-21-2023



**Annual Rabin/Brill Lecture: Paper Love: an exploration
into family identity, myth, and memory
by Sarah Wildman**
04-18-2023

Celebrating the Seventh Annual Serling Institute Undergraduate Research Conference April 14, 2023 with keynote by Josh Kanter: Inspiring the Jewish Future by Looking to the Past?

During this annual conference undergraduate students presented their research papers written for Jewish Studies courses.

This was the program of the conference:
Recognition of Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel Student Achievement Awards

Presentation by Joshua Kanter '09, James Madison College, Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, Jewish Studies, Peace and Justice Studies.

Inspiring the Jewish Future by Looking to the Past?
How will the learning that you are doing today influence the work you will do tomorrow? Josh Kanter will speak about how his experience as an undergrad, and his time in Israel, shaped his identity and ultimately led to a career in the innovative Jewish education space. Hear insights on the changing landscape of Jewish community, education and activism.

- Panel 1: Public and Private Responses to the Holocaust**
Discussant Professor Amy Simon
- Ellie Baden: “The Best Villains”: An Examination of Marvel’s Depiction and Distortion of Nazism.
 - Eleanor Nagel-Bennett: “I Love You Suey, No Matter What: The Intersection of Holocaust Survival and Parenthood of Queer Children”
 - Alex Walters: “The Michigan Daily’s Coverage of the Holocaust”

- Panel 2: Israeli Society, Politics, and Foreign Policy**
Discussant: Professor Yael Aronoff
- Jacob Banas: “Israeli perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations and a Peace Proposal”
 - Lela Weintraub: “Israeli Attitudes Towards the Official Language Policy”
 - Daniel Zivian: “A Tourist in Israel Thinking About Being a Tourist”
 - Pelli Mechnikov: “Reflections on My Internship with the Aliza Center for Adults with Special Needs in Israel”



JS minor **Lela Weintraub**



JS minor **Jacob Banas**



JS minor **Pelli Mechnikov**



JS minor **Daniel Zivian**

THE SERLING INSTITUTE SUMMER PROGRAM AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY

By Yore Kedem



In July 2023, a period of political and social challenges in Israel, the Serling Institute Summer Program took place on the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A diverse group of sixteen students from a variety of colleges at MSU participated in this program, taking two courses.

Prof. David Mendelsson, who has been part of this program for more than a decade, taught his class on the Emergence of the State of Israel. On the first Sunday of the program, Prof. Mendelsson took the group to Tel Aviv to see some of the locations where the state was created, and the streets named for the people who established Israel. To discuss Israel's secular national identity, students went to Mount Herzl, a military cemetery where some of the nation's historic figures are buried. As always, students appreciated the deep historical context of Prof.

Mendelsson's class and his humorous style. Yore Kedem, Assistant Professor of Hebrew at MSU, taught his course on Cultural Diversity and Immigration in Israel. When the program began, students went to Central Jerusalem to conduct observations and talk to locals. These interactions were shared with fellow students and served to discuss cultural diversity and immigration issues. Also in Jerusalem, students took a walking trip, which concentrated on communities and the boundaries between them. The group went from West Jerusalem through the New Gate to the Old City. We continued to walk through the Muslim Quarter and the Christian Quarter, and ended up in Mea She'arim, a Jewish ultraorthodox neighborhood. Students observed the visible boundaries such as the wall built by the Ottomans around the old city or roads that separate neighborhoods, and discussed the partitions that are invisible to outsiders. In a subsequent trip we went to Yad Vashem, Israel's premier Holocaust museum and research center. Another trip in Jerusalem went to the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall. Students conducted their



Western Wall in Jerusalem



With Dr. Saabni - Computer Science Researcher at Triangle R&D Center in Kafr Qara

second observation assignment there, and interviewed Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Old City.

On the second week of class, we went to Kafr Qara to visit the Triangle R&D center. We learned about the development of solar panels for greenhouses, and the research into digitization of ancient books and documents in the Muslim world. With Dr. Saabni, a computer scientist, students discussed the impact of AI on research and text recognition. Later that 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.

A new highlight in this year's class was a guided tour of Rahat, Israel's largest Bedouin city. Elham Alkamlat, an Afro-Bedouin guide from the area, took the group to visit a traditional home in an unrecognized Bedouin village outside of Rahat. From our host there, students learned about the nomadic lifestyle of Bedouins and Bedouin law. The tour continued to a mosque and a community center in Rahat. Ms. Alkamalat's genuine and honest discussion of the complexity of living in Bedouin society as a female member of a minority group within a minority was fascinating. Students were captivated by how she negotiates Bedouin law, Islamic law, and living in a modern democracy. Jacob Banas (Sophomore, International Relations and French and minor in Jewish Studies) discussed his impressions from this trip:

Elham uses the freedom and education she's gained through her Israeli citizenship to help the women in her community. She uses her education in law and state logistics to defend the rights of women. ...She made sure to stress that her freedom as an Israeli has enhanced her ability to be kind, loving, and a Muslim. And, "once a Bedouin, always a Bedouin."

The last group tour took students to Tel Aviv. Students walked through the Carmel Market area, observed and interviewed people. After this trip, some participants decided to spend the weekend in the city. Noa Ostoff (Sophomore, Human Biology and minor in Jewish Studies) reflected: *"One of the interesting experiences that I had while in Tel Aviv for the weekend was the protests. While on the way to dinner at Sarona Market, we unknowingly joined the walk of protesters to Kaplan Street. Once we got there it was a great experience to see children running around, as well as people from the older generation."*

Finally, Leora Kaye (Sophomore, Zoology) described how connected she felt to the country and its people: *"When I came to Israel this summer, I didn't really know what to expect. I knew I would be learning and going on fun, informational field trips, but I didn't realize the new love and connection I would develop for Israel during my time there".*

THE CHAMBER MUSIC IN ISRAEL STUDY ABROAD

By Tasha Warren



Our first Chamber Music in Israel Study Abroad was a great success!

Filled with so many “once in a lifetime” experiences, we traversed throughout Israel, discovering as many layers of Israeli culture and history as we could in 11 days, anchored

by chamber music experiences in each location that served as the catalyst for each region’s visit.

Beginning our journey in Tel Aviv, we explored Dizengoff street, the famous beaches promenade, old Jaffa, and the Tel Aviv museum before an all day Klezmer workshop led by specialist Gilad Harel. Here we learned about Klezmer history and performance practice, just skimming the surface of this rich musical tradition and learning modes for tunes and improvisation. We then carried this experience forward, including it in each of our performances to follow.

From Tel Aviv we went to Haifa, first stopping to explore the ancient Roman ruins and ancient port city of Caesarea.

In Haifa, we dined in the German colony, toured the spectacular wonders of the Ba’hai Garden and ate “the best bourekas in the world” before meeting the wonderful people at Beit Ha’Gefen Arab-Jewish Cultural center and performing a concert there.

From Haifa we got back into our “chamber music mini-bus” and drove toward Jerusalem, stopping



Ba’hai gardens, Haifa

for a performance at Ma’ale Hachamisha Kiibbutz. This performance was PACKED with so many warm and smiling faces of all ages, and we were treated to a history of kibbutz culture as well as this very special kibbutz itself. This was definitely a highlight.

In Jerusalem, we stayed at the landmark YMCA Three Arches hotel, visited the Israel Museum, (including the Museum of the Dead Sea Scrolls), the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Via Dolorosa, markets, the Kotel and the mind blowing tour of the excavation of the Temple and Wall.

Our next adventure was to drive to the Negev region, where we swam in the Dead Sea, and toured and performed at the majestic and haunting site of Masada, and then rode camels and enjoyed the hospitality of a Bedouin tea and meal.

After just a bit more floating in the Dead Sea, we returned to Tel Aviv for some free time and relaxation, and great food (!) before concluding our densely packed program.



Masada, Judean Desert

HIGHLIGHTS OF JEWISH STUDIES ALUMNI

David A. Criss '16 (Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, JMC)

Since graduating with minor in Jewish Studies. David has received an M.A. in economics from Wayne State University and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in economics and urban sustainability at Wayne State University. His interest in teaching and research began and was fostered most during his study abroad experiences as a James Madison College student at Michigan State University. While studying abroad in Israel, where he and his classmates studied Jewish history and politics at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, David also conducted an independent research assignment with Professor Yael Aronoff, analyzing the economic and social obstacles faced by Ethiopian-Israeli citizens. Upon his return to the United States, he helped establish a student-led organization to help raise and send back donations for the Ethiopian National Project in Israel. The Ethiopian National Project is an institution that uses funds to help provide Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers with the social and educational tools to realize their academic and career potential. David’s exploits in Israel strengthened his teamwork and leadership skills. The experiences he gained in the honest and inclusive learning atmosphere of the Jewish Studies program helped him tremendously throughout his postgraduate career.



witness the diverse facets of Israeli life, and I had the privilege of meeting many fascinating Israelis along the way. Pursuing a minor in Jewish Studies has been a deeply meaningful endeavor, as it enables me to delve into the rich tapestry of Jewish history, tradition, and identity. I am thankful for being a recipient of the Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Drasner Levy Endowed Fund Scholarship for Study in Israel, through the Serling Institute, that enabled me to spend my spring semester studying at Tel Aviv University.

Alex Opalikhin '23 (International Relations and Comparative Cultures & Politics, JMC)

I first enrolled as a Jewish Studies minor last semester while attending a course for trauma and memory about the Holocaust. While that class taught me valuable information on the Holocaust and the persevering effects of this event, my study abroad program has been the highlight of my time as a Jewish Studies minor by far. The trip would not have been possible without the Julie and Ed. Levy Jr. Study in Israel and Mr. Albert and Mrs. Sharie Gladner Study in Israel scholarships, providing me with the financial support needed to take part in the program. The opportunity of visiting the one-of-a-kind country of Israel was incredible. During my time in Israel, I visited many different places including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Akko, Ashdod, Be’er Sheva, Rahat, and more. With these visits, I learned more and more about the cultural diversity within the country and all the different experiences that people in Israel lived.



Additionally, learning about the history of Israel allowed me to contextualize the things I saw in the modern day, and provided a new historical perspective I was not able to learn about in the United States. The most memorable experiences were visiting Yad Vashem and finding my relatives within their database that died in the Holocaust, visiting the Western Wall and connecting with my spiritual side, and learning about Bedouin culture from an Afro-Bedouin woman advocating for feminism within the community. In the future, I want to return to Israel and see even more sights I could not on my first trip. Additionally, I wrote my final project on the varied integration of former immigrants from the Soviet Union to Israel, and I would love the opportunity to continue studying that community and learning more about their role within Israel’s society. Overall, this study abroad experience was one I will never forget.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Jacob Starner '23 (Economics, CSS)

During my time at Tel Aviv University, I focused on studying Hebrew, the history of the Middle East, and the Israeli economy, expanding my knowledge in these areas and gaining a deeper understanding of their significance. I embarked on an incredible adventure hiking the Israel National Trail, immersing myself in the breathtaking landscapes and connecting with the country’s history and culture. As a result, I not only deepened my understanding of Israel but also became proficient in Hebrew, a language that holds great significance to me and my Jewish heritage. Exploring the vibrant cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem allowed me to



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Eli Zumberg '23 (Global Studies, CSS)

Being a Jewish Studies minor has allowed me to connect to my Jewish roots in a way the traditional Sunday school system failed to. I was never a particularly religious child, so I struggled to communicate our mythic history as told in the Torah and through our holidays. Through my studies in the social science track, where I was given a method to connect to our more recent histories and see how our national myths inform our survival, I could understand myself as a Jew in the modern world. Through the classes I have taken, I have also gotten the chance to see Hebrew as a vibrant living language of the modern world. My Hebrew is still rough, two semesters does not make me fluent, but I can hold more basic conversations and occasionally understand what I was told while studying abroad. It was a fantastic chance to see Mount Herzl and discuss Israel's civil religion. Followed by going to Yad Vashem, we came face-to-face with the uncomfortable truth of how vulnerable Jews have been in the Diaspora. While there, we also got to see places in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem that let us see how deeply divided Israel is; it is not the utopia for Jews I was told of as a child, nor is it the bloodthirsty monster I have seen portrayed online. In Rahat, I saw how the country had created many issues for its non-Jewish residents, but it also gave them paths forward. I am also close to the end of my Bachelor's degree, and this was an opportunity to check out a potential place to do my post-graduate studies. I am grateful to have been a recipient of the David Hersh Scholarship in Jewish Studies and the Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Drasner Levy Endowment Fund Scholarship for Study in Israel, which made studying in Israel possible.



Ian Donahue '23 (Comparative Cultures & Politics, JMC)

My minor through the Serling Institute has given me a multitude of opportunities. For one, it allowed me to study abroad at the Hebrew University, which was a fantastic experience and led me to meet wonderful people who remain friends today. Attending events put on by the institute allowed me to meet figures like Justice Bernstein, who spoke on his involvement with the monumental step for peace, the Abraham accords. Most recently, the institute helped me secure an internship in Jerusalem. This internship allowed me to live in the city while working for the Jerusalem Green Fund, an organization which champions economic,



social, and environmental sustainability through various initiatives. I was able to lead in brainstorming how to create a regional partnership between different municipalities, organizations, levels of government, and across borders, with the goal of coming together to craft solutions to shared challenges. This experience was a privilege and would not have been possible without the scholarships provided by Ed and Dot Slade Study Abroad Israel in 2021, Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy Study Abroad Israel 2021, Kaplowitz Green Israel in 2023, and Serling Modern Israel in 2023. The Serling Institute made my internship possible and allowed me to garner life-impacting experiences while working towards causes I cared about. A very special thank you is owed to Serling Israeli visiting scholar Alon Tal. Before more recently serving in the Israeli Knesset, Prof. Tal was one of my most impactful educators. It was he who first encouraged me to study abroad in Israel and to pursue a Jewish Studies minor. He also made my internship possible by connecting me with the esteemed Naomi Tsur and the Jerusalem Green Fund with whom I worked. He has my deep gratitude for the distinct impact he has had on my path. I remain exceptionally grateful for the college-defining opportunities, friendships, and experiences that have come through the Serling Institute. I believe these will prove fundamental as I pursue a masters degree in diplomacy, and a career in public service.

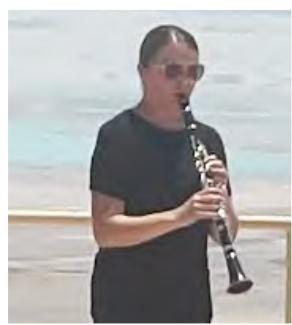
Andrew Schulman '23 (Political Theory & Constitutional Democracy, JMC)

As a rising senior, I have been very fortunate to benefit from many of the amazing opportunities the Serling Institute offered throughout my college career. After completing Hebrew 101 and 102, I was able to take an independent Hebrew study curated around my interest in Israeli film. These have been some of my favorite classes at MSU, and the credits were completely paid for by the Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy Study Abroad Israel. I attended the incredible Summer Study Abroad at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with another Levy scholarship and returned home with a new perspective, memorable stories, and ahead on credits. The institute supported me with a scholarship for an internship in Israel the following summer and more recently, gifted me with an opportunity to assist in research at the Holocaust Museum of Budapest, Hungary. After completing my semester abroad at the Corvinus University of Budapest this past Spring, I applied for the Abramson Scholarship for Holocaust Studies. This allowed me to extend my stay in the city and assist the museum in preparing for an upcoming exhibit. The generosity and support of the institute and its donors have enriched my studies with immersive experiences in Jewish culture and religion worldwide.



Audrey Rancourt '23 (College of Music: Clarinet Performance, Minor in Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Honors College)

While the Chamber Music in Israel program was only 11 days long, we were able to experience so much and learn a lot about Israel. Pictured above is one of our performances in Masada where we improvised music based on what we learned at a Klezmer workshop from earlier in the trip. We also had the opportunity to ride camels, float in the Dead Sea, explore the markets of Jerusalem, try new food, and more. Being able to perform in different settings and adjust our program based on the space was really fun and helped me learn a lot about performance planning. I also really enjoyed getting to see the different architecture that each city in Israel has and learn about the meaning behind these choices. I am really grateful to have gotten to go on this trip and to have learned so much about Israeli culture. I hope to continue to explore Klezmer music and learn more about improvisation in the near future. I also plan to perform in a greater variety of venues in the U.S. to continue to examine the impacts of venues, music, and context on a performance.



Maya Weisberger '26 (Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering)

This summer, I had the privilege of interning at the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology and studying at the Hebrew University in Israel. During my internship, I was exposed to new cultures, high-tech equipment, and some of the brightest minds in the field of engineering from all over the world. I had the distinct pleasure of working in the Biomedical Engineering lab where I assisted in research focusing on the effects of chemotherapy on patients with preexisting cardiovascular diseases. This research has immediate, real-life applications that can help countless people. It was incredible to see how engineering can redefine the world firsthand. At the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I took two classes, each of which provided me insights into how Israel was formed and now currently functions as a Jewish nation. I now have a deeper understanding of the tapestry of different cultures' contributions to defining modern Israel. As a woman in engineering, having this minor in Jewish Studies is very important to my career aspirations. Israel is a young nation, but has already established itself as a world leader in technology, giving Israel its moniker, "the startup nation." To be able to spend my summer immersed in this rich environment has jumpstarted my career



and given me access to international connections and knowledge unique to this experience. I am thankful to have been a recipient of the Modern Israel Scholarship established by Michael and Elaine Serling, which enabled me to take advantage of this internship opportunity. I was a recipient of the Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Drasner Levy Endowed Fund Scholarship for Study in Israel that enabled me to participate in the Education Abroad program at the Hebrew University before the internship.

Luke Haight '23 (Music Performance and Minor in Arts & Cultural Management, College of Music, CAL)

This summer I completed the Chamber Music in Israel education abroad program where I spent 11 days traveling through cities such as Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Masada, and the Dead Sea region. The Ed Levy Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy Scholarship awarded to me through the Serling Institute, enabled me to take advantage of this unforgettable experiential learning opportunity. This trip has meant the absolute world to me. While in Tel Aviv, I had the opportunity to attend an unforgettable Klezmer workshop where I learned all about Klezmer music and its significance to Israeli culture. In this workshop, I developed my improvisation, and aural/listening skills, while pushing myself outside my comfort zone. I was able to develop these skills by working with a professional Klezmer musician native to the area. In addition to the workshop, we had three planned performances spread out throughout the country (Haifa, Kibbutz, and Masada). The Kibbutz performance stood out to me because of the incredible people I met during it. The Kibbutz lifestyle and camaraderie is so much different than in the United States by voluntarily living and working together on a noncompetitive basis sharing acts of service for the overall advancement of their community. Observing these differences made the audience connection that much deeper, enriching the performance experience. The last performance in Masada was unforgettable for its scenic outlook and historical significance, almost 1,500 feet above the Dead Sea and the Desert. In this final performance, each student performed Klezmer improvisation while overlooking the historical sites. Having the opportunity to perform authentic Klezmer music in such an important location will stick with me forever. As an Orthodox Christian, it has been very important for me to deepen my relationship with God. To have had the opportunity to visit religious sites that are so key to my faith was an experience I will never let go of. Combining music and experiential learning together has shifted my desired career path, and opened my mind up to the possibilities of chamber music.





The Michael and Elaine Serling Institute
for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

619 Red Cedar Rd., Wells Hall C-730
East Lansing, MI 48824
1 (517) 432-3493
www.jsp.msu.edu
jewishst@msu.edu

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