

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM @ UD

From the Director

It is an honor to assume directorship of the Jewish Studies Program following the retirement of Jay Halio. The program has benefited tremendously from Jay's leadership over the past four years. At the same time, there is still enormous potential for Jewish Studies to grow at Delaware. In the past year alone, the number of students pursuing the Jewish Studies Minor has more than doubled. The planned addition of new courses, faculty and programs promises to attract even greater interest, and will ensure that Jewish Studies continues to play an integral and innovative role in the intellectual life of our university.

Although our program curriculum is strong in the area of modern Jewish culture, it can be enhanced by emerging areas of study, including gender and women's history, food studies, material culture, and museum studies. Our goal is to continue making new connections across departments on campus, in order to strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the program, as well as attract a broader

range of students, both to the courses and the minor.

The Jewish Studies Program has and will continue to run programs that highlight the global and transnational nature of contemporary Jewish life. In December, we hosted Ukrainian scholar Sofia Grachova, who lectured on the memory of the Holocaust in post-Soviet Ukraine to students in Comparative Genocide (HIST 250/JWST 250). In addition, students in the course on American Jewish History (HIST 327/JWST

327) listened to a lecture by Seth Katzen, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Delaware, who spoke about the current landscape of American Jewish philanthropy and civic life right here in Delaware. In September, we presented the work of American-Palestinian photographer Kholood Eid. Kholood's photographs, shown on this newsletter's inside pages, tell the stories of Israeli and Arab women in Haifa, Israel. Her remarkable images of Jewish and Arab mothers and daughters were displayed in the ISE Lab

during the month of October. The ability of the Jewish Studies program to bring outside guests to the university is vital to enriching the students' understanding and broadening their perspectives.

I am very excited to lead Jewish Studies as we work to expand the program and enrollment. Please read on to learn more about these and other events sponsored by Jewish Studies this past semester, as well as our program's faculty, students, and upcoming courses for Spring 2016.

—Polly Zavadviker

Jewish Studies Program: Past and Future

For more than two decades, Jewish Studies at the University of Delaware has had an important role to play on campus. Besides enlisting outstanding faculty from numerous departments, including English, History, Political Science, Philosophy, and Psychology, it has brought distinguished speakers to the university. Throughout the years, guests have included the author Philip Roth, who read from his then recent book *Patrimony*,

noted scholar Lawrence Langer, who spoke about Yale's archive of interviews of Holocaust survivors, and Abraham Foxman, then the Executive Director of the Anti-Defamation League, who addressed anti-Semitism in the modern world. While these speakers enrich the curriculum, the heart of the Jewish Studies program was and remains the courses offered every semester.

From the outset, Jewish Stud-

ies was conceived as a secular program devoted to providing studies on the history and culture of Judaism through the ages. We are a vital part of the University's efforts to promote diversity of all kinds on campus. To this end, we continue to cooperate with similar programs and departments, such as Islamic Studies and African-American Studies. Our courses are designed to appeal to students regardless of their religious affiliations, if any. To this end, we have

introduced several new courses while continuing to maintain most of the courses that have proved successful from the beginning, such as the Introduction to Jewish Philosophy, Modern Jewish and American Literature, and Arab-Israeli politics. Our popular courses on the Holocaust, taught jointly with the History Department, have expanded so that we have been able to introduce Women and the Holocaust, and Comparative Genocide, for example.

We will continue to expand our outreach beyond the campus borders, not only by bringing in speakers for our spring lecture series, but also by sending our growing faculty out into the community. This will heighten our recognition both on and off campus, and help to increase student engagement with our program. Our minors in Jewish Studies, now with the option to focus on the Hebrew language, are poised to attract more students and faculty.

My firm belief is that Jewish Studies at Delaware will and must continue to grow, particularly at a time when anti-Semitism is spreading among those who have distorted or little knowledge of Judaism. The same is true about studies involving Israeli history and culture, which seem to have a growing interest among today's undergraduates. For better or worse, articles on Israel hit the pages of our newspapers almost daily and must be seen in proper perspective. Eventually, the Jewish Studies program should evolve into a regular department, through outreach to the community and students, as Women's Studies and African-American Studies have done. We are making good progress, thanks to support from the dean of Arts and Sciences, our new leadership, and growing numbers of interested faculty.

—Jay I. Halio

Eid Photography Exhibit Opens

On September 21, 2015, an exhibit by Kholood Eid opened in the ISE Lab on campus. Titled *Intersecting Parallels: The Identities of Arab and Jewish Women in Haifa, Israel*, the exhibition featured descriptions and photos of 6 women, 3 mothers and their daughters, going about their everyday lives in modern Israel during the summer of 2014. The collection of photographs emphasizes the complex ways women construct identities, with the artist noting the following factors as most important in shaping individual identities: nationality, gender, culture, sexuality, religion and pro-



fession. While these factors vary for each woman, it is the common threads throughout the photo series that shed light on the lives of modern women in Israel. This exhibit was sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program, as well as the Women and Gender Studies Department, UD Hillel, and Center for Global and Area Studies. To view Kholood's photos and learn more about the artist, please visit kholoodeid.com.



Lewis Recounts Holocaust Experiences to Class

On May 13, 2015, the students of Dr. Zavadivker's Holocaust class, HIST/JWST 254, were privileged to meet and hear the stories of Holocaust survivor Herbert Lewis, the grandfather of University of Delaware student Jake Horowitz. Mr. Lewis shared his firsthand experiences, beginning with a description of the day in 1941 when he was taken from



his family home in Poland by Nazis at the age of 14. On that day, while being marched through his hometown with the other prisoners, he briefly saw his mother and heard her

voice from a truck. That was the last time he saw her or any other family member. Mr. Lewis went on to detail life in the work camps, describing hunger as a very, very painful thing and noting that his childhood came to an abrupt end at the hands of the Nazis. He also described being forced on a death march from Buchenwald to Flossenbürg and the emotions he expe-

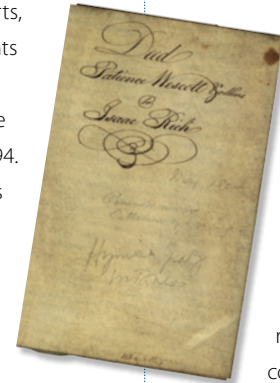
rienced upon liberation by the American army in April of 1945. Mr. Lewis emphasized that his purpose in sharing his experiences is to remind students to never forget what happened, to encourage them to tell their children and grandchildren his story, so that the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany are never lost to history.

Jewish Studies at UD Special Collections

The Alfred Gratz family papers, part of the Special Collections at the University of Delaware Library, document two generations of a successful Jewish family of Philadelphia through evidence of the family's business and political affairs during the nineteenth century. This small collection includes correspondence, contracts, reports, and financial documents relating to five family members spanning the years 1802 through 1894. The collection includes papers pertaining to three brothers—Hyman (1776 - 1857), Simon (1773-1839), and Joseph (1785-1857), relative Henry S. Gratz (1859-1922), and Simon's grandson Alfred Gratz (1835-1938), the namesake of the collection.

The documents, available for view at Morris Library and presented

in chronological order, portray a driven and successful Jewish family able to thrive in the tumultuous early years of the United States and through the nineteenth century. Members of the Gratz family were active in the Mikveh Israel Synagogue, the oldest congregation in America, fought during the War of 1812, and became vital philanthropists and leaders in Philadelphia. Their legacy is still evident today, as Gratz College, founded posthumously by Hyman as a "college for the education of Jews residing in the city and county of Philadelphia," still bears their family name. The Alfred Gratz family papers, when looked at individually and as a whole, illustrate the important roles fulfilled by Jews throughout the history of Philadelphia and America.



Student Spotlight: Nicole Golomb

Nicole Golomb, also known as Nikki, is a University of Delaware Honors student and a member of the class of 2017. She is an International Relations major with minors in both Jewish Studies and Public Policy. She devotes her time to numerous endeavors, including blogging as an intern for UD Hillel, representing the UD organization Bird's Eye View as Co-President, acting as the Public Relations Chair for HOPE (Human Oppression Prevention Effort), and assisting the student organization Koach as the Tzedek, or Community Service, Chair. Below, Nikki

shares her perspective on being a Jewish Studies minor, how the minor has helped shape her college experience and her goals for the future.

Nikki Golomb's Statement

The Jewish Studies with Language Minor has given me many opportunities which I otherwise would not have had. Being able to take several Hebrew courses, as well as many other interesting classes, has been very valuable for me. It also provided me with the opportunity to study abroad in Tel Aviv where

I had some of the greatest experiences of my life.

With my Jewish Studies Minor, I hope to work for a Jewish nonprofit after college. Interning at Hillel International this past summer and therefore being exposed to the Jewish professional community has reinforced this. The Jewish Studies Program has given me the ability to expand my Jewish knowledge both personally and academically, therefore helping me professionally. Jewish values have always been a big part of my life and played a role



in shaping who I am, and the Jewish Studies Minor helped to reinforce these values. I hope to use what I've learned through the Jewish Studies Program to help me professionally by giving me opportunities beyond college to work both with and for the Jewish community in the nonprofit sphere.

Faculty Research Spotlight: Rebecca Davis

Rebecca Davis is an Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the History Department. She is also a member of the Jewish Studies Executive Committee. Her work focuses on gender, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Below, she discusses her latest work, a book examining religious conversions of public figures during the 20th century.

Davis on Her Research

Sammy Davis, Jr. was arguably one of the greatest entertainers of the twentieth century. He was also a Jewish convert. Over the past few years I've been studying Davis's conversion—and particularly, the American public's responses to his conversion—as part of a larger book project about religion,

race, gender, and “authenticity” in modern America. Davis faced accusations that he was, on the one hand, “too black” to be really Jewish, and, on the other hand, “too Jewish” to be authentically black. Americans' ideas about ethnicity and race are complicated and frankly strange; when we throw religion into the mix, the results are a fascinating mess of contradiction. Some of Davis's pals—and several historians—accused him of opportunism; they say that he converted to curry favor with powerful Jews in the American entertainment industry, or suggest that he converted on a whim. My work challenges both of those uncharitable and historically unfounded claims. Davis studied Judaism for years before he converted, and he gained little from

it in terms of his career opportunities. Instead, what I find fascinating is how the responses to his conversion reveal deeply felt—and rarely articulated—mid-twentieth century ideas about the possibilities for racial, ethnic, and religious self-transformation.

A forthcoming article in *American Jewish History* considers this episode. My book will consider Davis alongside other mid-twentieth century converts, including the congresswoman and playwright Clare Booth Luce (Protestantism to Catholicism), boxer Muhammad Ali (Protestantism to Islam), and singer/songwriter Bob Dylan (Judaism to evangelical Christianity). This comparative approach allows me to consider what's unique in the public response to different kinds of religious conversion, and



how questions of authenticity shift depending on the religious, racial, and gendered identities of the individuals involved.

Spring 2016 Highlights

Featured Course

Jewish Studies 201: Issues and Ideas (1 credit, Wednesdays, 12:20-1:10pm). This semester's theme will be Jewish Communities in Global Perspective. Join us for a different speaker each week to learn about Jewish communities around the world from ancient times to the present. Learn about the Jews of:

- Biblical Israel
- Medieval Spain
- Colonial Jamaica
- Weimar Berlin
- Odessa, Ukraine
- Postwar Detroit
- and more!

Dr. Ruth Lecture

Join us on Wednesday, April 13th for a lecture by Dr. Ruth Westheimer! Dr. Ruth, the pioneering sex therapist, is also known as a refugee from Nazi Germany and a freedom fighter in the Israeli War of Independence.

Experiential Learning

On December 6, 2015, Dr. Zavadviker's American Jewish History class, HIST/JWST 327, traveled to Philadelphia to visit the Mikveh Israel Synagogue and the National Museum of Jewish History. Congregation Mikveh Israel, commonly referred to as the “Synagogue of the American Revolution,” dates back to the 1700s and holds the esteemed titles of oldest congregation and oldest continuous synagogue in America. This extensive history

was explained to the students as they toured the synagogue and observed the various artifacts, including a Tebah, or reading platform, from the mid-1800s, an American chandelier in the style of the chandeliers of Spanish-Portuguese synagogues in Europe, and a Hehal, or Ark, containing 20 Torahs, two of which boast silver finials produced by eminent colonial silversmith Myer Myers of New York. A short distance from the synagogue is the National



Museum of American Jewish History, which was founded in 1976, where students had the opportunity to view exhibits highlighting all aspects of Jewish life in America, from art to immigration to religion to family life. With over 30,000 artifacts in their permanent collection and 100,000 square feet of exhibit space, the museum offers significant insight into the long history of Jews in America. This trip, funded by a Delaware Difference Development Initiative grant through the College of Arts and Sciences, allowed students to see firsthand how deeply Jews are rooted in American history.



Spring 2016 Courses

Religion and Philosophy

JWST 101: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

TR 9:30-10:45am

Instructor: Micah Becker Klein, rabbimicah@tbede.org

(Satisfies breadth requirement B)

This course will introduce students to some of the different ways Judaism can be explored and appreciated: through its political history, the intellectual history of its values and thinkers, the way it is lived as a modern religious faith tradition with ancient biblical roots, and through the prism of different cultural arts.

JWST 367: INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH MYSTICISM

T 5:15-7:45pm

Instructor: Eli Gurevitz, rabieli@udel.edu

This course begins with an overview of medieval era origins of Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) and its foundational text, the Zohar. The course will focus on the growth of Kabbalah during the eighteenth century in the context of the Hasidic movement. Explore a number of critical areas of kabbalistic thought, including tzimtzum, the sefirot, the Jewish Sabbath, God and the celestial spheres.

History and Politics

JWST 201: ISSUES AND IDEAS: JEWISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

W 12:20-1:10pm

Instructor: Hillary Neben, hneben@udel.edu

(Satisfies College of Arts and Sciences Multicultural and Group B requirement)

In this one-credit course explore the culture and history of global Jewish communities from ancient times to the present. Features a different guest speaker each week. Topics include the Jews of biblical Israel, medieval Spain, colonial

Jamaica, and postwar New York and Detroit.

HIST 363/JWST 363: MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

MW 3:35-4:50pm

Instructor: Julia Oestreich, joestrei@udel.edu

(Satisfies the College of Arts and Sciences multicultural and Group B requirements)

This course provides an introduction to the study of global Jewish history from the 16th Century to the present. Topics include the Spanish Inquisition, the French Revolution, Jewish life in Western and Eastern Europe, North America, and Israel.

HIST 254/JWST 254: THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST: 1933-1945

TR 2:00pm-3:15pm

Instructor: James Brophy, jbrophy@udel.edu

(Satisfies College of Arts and Sciences group B requirement)

An introduction to the systematic destruction of European Jewry during World War II. Topics will include the implementation of the "Final Solution," European anti-Semitism, National Socialist ideology and racial laws, camp and ghetto life, resistance, perpetrators, victims and bystanders.

POSC 482/JWST 482: AMERICA IN THE MIDDLE EAST

MWF 2:30pm-3:20pm

Instructor: Dan Green, dgreen@udel.edu

This course examines the history of America's engagement with the Middle East, going back to the WWII era, but with an emphasis on issues since 1979.

Hebrew Language

HEBR 105/JWST 105: HEBREW I – ELEMENTARY

MW 1:25-2:15pm & TR 2:00-2:50pm

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Introduction to the Hebrew alphabet and language, and development of basic speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

HEBR 106/ JWST 106: HEBREW II – ELEMENTARY/ INTERMEDIATE

MW 2:30-3:20pm & TR 3:30-4:20pm

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Strengthening grammar skills, continued practice in speaking, listening, writing and reading through conversation, texts and songs.

Literature and Culture

ENG 202/JWST 202: BIBLICAL AND CLASSICAL LITERATURE

MWF 2:30-3:20pm

Instructor: Miranda Wilson, wilsonm@udel.edu

(Satisfies College of Arts and Sciences Group A requirement and the multicultural requirement)

Selected readings from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, Greek and Roman writers. The course examines the cultural, historical, intellectual, and literary contexts out of which these texts emerge. We will study the genres found in the Hebrew Bible, the concepts of covenant, law, history, and prophecy.

FLLT 333/JWST 333: ISRAELI FILM

TR 11:00-12:15pm

Instructor: Eynat Gutman, eynat@udel.edu

Explore Israeli society through film, literature, music and historical works. Topics include the history of Zionism, the concept of the Israeli sabra, the effects of the Holocaust, ethnic groups and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM @ UD

FALL 2015

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