



From the Director's Desk

Friends:

As another fall semester comes to a close, we here at the Institute for Israel and Jewish studies – Columbia's central location for the study, teaching, and discussion of Jewish life, history, and culture – are delighted to write and share some good news, introduce some new faces, and tell you about some upcoming events and opportunities. It's all part of an exciting season of growth for the Institute – one which affects undergraduates, graduate students, and the broader university community alike.

We've instituted a few new opportunities for undergraduates that we're quite proud of. A new program, supported generously by one of our board members, allows us to support internships for study or work in Israel over the course of the summer – and those students become Institute Fellows, participants in an invitation-only seminar to discuss issues surrounding Israeli culture, politics, and history with leading thinkers, a series curated by noted Israeli journalists Gershon Gorenberg and Yossi Klein Halevi. Members of our newly formed Undergraduate Advisory Council and Study Abroad Council are working on helping students plan study options here and in Israel – aided by our new,

part-time indefatigable undergraduate coordinator, Naomi Mayor. And – perhaps most importantly – for the first time, Columbia students can take a special concentration in Jewish studies, which was approved unanimously by Columbia's Committee on Instruction this semester. Having a special concentration allows students to think about Jewish history, literature, religion, and culture in a way they never have before -- and we're delighted that the Institute can help them in doing that.

This is done by completing various courses, and we've had an exciting roster of them. Courses ranging from Rebecca Kobrin's *Jews and the City* to Jonathan Schorsch's *Jewishness and Modernity* to my own course on classic Yiddish fiction are just a sampling of the classes taught by our core faculty; in addition, the Rabin Postdoctoral Fellow, Sandra Valabregue-Perry, has taught courses in Jewish mysticism – and in the spring semester we'll have visiting faculty teaching courses on Jewish immigration and Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages. Students' learning out of the class – their research and intellectual development – will be aided dramatically through the generous gift of the Alexander family to establish a library in Jewish studies; Michelle Chesner, the new Norman E. Alexander Librarian, is as wonderful a partner as we could wish for in making sure the world of Jewish books (and manuscripts, digital documents, and journals, and websites, and on, and on) is open to them.

We're also working to provide intellectual conversation for the broader community. Some of you may have seen – or attended – our second collaboration with the Library of America, Theater in America, with Tony Kushner and Tovah Feldshuh; others might have seen the event we co-sponsored with the Centro Primo Levi on that famous Italian Jewish author. Collaboration with other New York institutions – befitting Columbia's official title, Columbia University in the City of New York, are matched by our efforts to learn from the national and international community of scholars; this fall's conference on Counter-stories and Entangled Histories: Shared Heroes in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, cosponsored with Yale University, brought scholars from as far off as Germany, Israel, and Scotland to Morningside Heights. In addition, a national seminar on faculty member Dan Miron's new masterful work, *From Continuity to Contiguity*, drew Jewish literary scholars from around the country.

As you can see, we're very busy here -- but we'd love to do even more, and are looking forward to what lies ahead. We hope you'll join us in the effort, and look forward to hearing your suggestions, ideas, and insights!

Sincerely yours,

Jeremy Dauber

Atran Associate Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture
Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies

HIGHLIGHTS from Fall 2010

Lawrence

Rosenwald

*More than an Echo, or,
English in Yiddish
America*

Chris Claremont
and Paul Levitz

*Jewish Influences and
Themes in American
Comics*

Tony Kushner,
Tovah Feldshuh,
Gregory Mosher,
and Laurence
Senelick

Theater in America

Gur Alroey

*Jewish Immigration to
Palestine at the Beginning
of the 20th Century: A
Comparative Look*

Conference

*Counter-Stories and En-
tangled Histories: Shared
Heroes in Judaism,
Christianity, and Islam*

Adriana Jacobs

*With a Slight Accent:
Translating Israeli Lit-
erature in the 21st
Century*

Noteworthy News

We are pleased to announce the creation of a special concentration in Jewish Studies. The special concentration is open to undergraduate students at Columbia College and the School of General Studies. It is designed for students who wish to gain a broad-based knowledge of Jewish studies and enables undergraduates to acquire a background in the most important aspects of Jewish culture, civilization, and history in an interdisciplinary setting. More information about the special concentration and requirements can be found at: <http://ijs.columbia.edu/>

Columbia University Libraries announce newly established Norman E. Alexander Library for Jewish Studies.

The Columbia University Libraries have received a gift to establish the Norman E. Alexander Library for Jewish Studies which includes three new endowments: a Jewish Studies librarian, the General Jewish Studies Collection and the Special Collections in Judaica.

The Jewish Studies research collections at Columbia exceed 100,000 monograph volumes and 1,000 current and historical periodical titles. The collection comprises about 60,000 Hebrew and Yiddish titles in addition to its large holdings of Jewish scholarly works in Western and Slavic languages. Columbia also subscribes to many electronic titles, both ebooks and databases, which pertain to Jewish Studies, and is the only repository in New York City for the Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation.

We are delighted to welcome Michelle Chesner to Columbia University as the new Jewish Studies Librarian.

Michelle comes to Columbia from the University of Pennsylvania, where she worked as the Judaica Public Services Librarian. Michelle provided reference services and bibliographic instruction in Judaic Studies and oversaw day-to-day operations of the Library at the Katz Center. At Columbia, Michelle will be responsible for developing the current collection, supporting research in Judaic and Israel Studies from around the world and in all languages on the Morningside Campus. She is also available to help with any level of questions in research of Judaic or Israel studies. In addition, Michelle represents the library to students, and faculty, and has already had the opportunity to display parts of the collection in the Chang Octagon exhibition room in Butler Library.



We are happy to introduce the 2010-2011 Rabin Postdoctoral Fellow, Sandra Valabregue Perry.

Sandra is enjoying teaching the enthusiastic undergraduate students at Columbia University. A scholar and a painter, she has an MA in Philosophy from the Sorbonne in Paris, and a degree in art from the Beaux Arts de Paris. She received her PhD from the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has served as a visiting scholar and lecturer at UCLA, Yale University, and as the Dean Ernest Schwarc Visiting Eminent Professor in Jewish Philosophy at Queens College. She has recently published a book: *Concealed and Revealed: "Eyn Sof" (Infinity) in Theosophic Kabbalah*. Sandra has thus far found the experience of teaching rewarding and being part of the intellectual life at Columbia University exhilarating.



Noteworthy News

New Course Offerings from Visiting Scholars.

Students can explore a range of new topics, including Jewish Immigration 1881-1924, with visiting adjunct professor, Gur Alroey; and Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages, where students will have the opportunity to explore the legal and actual status of the Jews within the Islamic state with visiting adjunct professor, Mark Cohen.

Drama in the Theater with the Library of America.

Laurence Senelick, editor of the Library of America's new anthology, *The American Stage: Writing on Theater from Washington Irving to Tony Kushner*, sat down with playwright Tony Kushner, actor Tovah Feldshuh, and director Gregory Mosher for an evening of anecdotes, reading, and discussion this October.

"Anything that happens twice in the theater becomes a tradition" Senelick said, throwing out questions about experiencing traditions, "the classics," the values of today's readers and viewers' and students' approaches to theater. "Is opinion the same as criticism?" was considered through the mention of twitter and the evolution of media and marketing of theater, one of several provocative and challenging questions asked and answered by the panel. The Institute is thankful to the Center for American Studies and the Library of America for co-sponsoring this fine event. The video is accessible on our website.

Special Undergraduate Events this past semester included the promotion of study abroad in Israel and at other universities where Jewish literature, languages and culture may be studied. Students who have already participated in studying abroad shared their experiences and insights with enthusiasm at events attended by rising sophomores and juniors.

Meanwhile, the IJJS Fellows program launched on campus after the return of seven students who participated in summer internships in Israel. Their varied experiences and insights have affected them as they returned to Columbia University life. According to Brandi Ripp, "The Shalem Center has given [me] the opportunity to hear several fascinating lectures from brilliant Israeli and American scholars and authors. Living in [Jerusalem] has given me a completely new perspective." A similar effect was felt by Sarah Sleeter, who "learned a lot about the Bio-Medical sector and cosmetics sector in Israel" through her internship for a brokerage firm called EDI in Jerusalem.

For Arielle Feit, who attended the Schlesinger Institute's Medical Ethics and Halacha program, "the people [we learned from were] the top physicians, rabbis, and educators in Israel (and even some from the states) on a variety of issues regarding medical ethics and *halacha* [Jewish law]."

As for all of the Fellows, who recently sat down with Yossi Klein Halevi here at IJJS, they "are really enjoying [them]selves and learning a lot, and we both challenge and help one another in learning, discussing, and struggling with the issues."

The undergraduate fellows program provides a forum for students to share their experiences, while gaining access to scholars in the field of Israel and Jewish Studies. If you would like an application to participate in this program, contact Sheridan Gayer at the Institute: SJG41@columbia.edu.

Fall 2010 Course Sampler

Jews and Judaism in Antiquity

Seth Schwartz

History of the State of Israel

Michael Stanislawski

Modern Jewish Literary Complex

Dan Miron

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

Jenny Labendz

Readings in Kabbalah

Sandra Valabregue Perry

Readings in Hasidism

Jonathan Schorsch

Readings in Yiddish Literature

Jeremy Dauber



Study Abroad in Israel! Adi Segal, GS '11 enthusiastically shares his experiences studying in two different Israeli Universities.

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Stay tuned to our website for our exciting Spring Events!



Eliyahu Stern and Micha Perry at Counter-Stories and Entangled Histories: Shared Heroes in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.



Gur Alroey, pictured at his lecture on Jewish Immigration to Palestine at the beginning of the 20th Century.



Alan Mintz listens as Uri Cohen presents his paper for Of Maps and Models: The Future of Jewish History, which celebrated the release Dan Miron's *Continuity and Contiguity*.



Gregory Mosher, Laurence Senelick Tovah Feldsuh, Jeremy Dauber, Tony Kushner gather for Theater in America.

We're on the Web! Visit us ...
www.iijs.columbia.edu/

Interested in helping to make these great events, programs and opportunities possible?

The Columbia Alumni Center is available to assist you. If you are interested in making a gift of any size to the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, you may do so online at <https://giving.columbia.edu>, or contact Leah Cohen, lc2685@columbia.edu for more information.