Friends:

On behalf of Columbia’s Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies - the university’s central location for the study, teaching, and discussion of Jewish life, history, and culture— I’m delighted to write once more and share details of the recent work we’ve been doing here with you.

Our greatest joy here, and the source of the most excitement, has been the renewed focus and energy on undergraduate students. Building on an around our newly approved Special Concentration on Jewish Studies, a first at Columbia, we’ve been adopting a number of exciting and innovative programs to bring students in and get them involved. One of the most successful programs is our undergraduate fellowship, which provides support for students to study or work in Israel over the summer and gives them the opportunity to attend special events with leading scholars and thinkers on Israel-related matters during the academic year. The program is now in its second year and is growing by leaps and bounds. In addition, a new program we began this fall, which brings in journalists and scholars to talk about Israel and the Middle East, has drawn dozens of students to the Institute’s seminar room. It’s exciting to see!

Students aren’t just learning outside the classroom. The Institute’s support of visiting faculty, ranging from professors of Jewish music to scholars of Kabbalah and Jewish-Muslim relations in the Middle Ages, has helped to supplement courses taught by our own stellar faculty. The work by both faculty and visitors are only a small cross-section of the intellectual activity that’s going on at Columbia. Our seminars, public lectures, conferences, and colloquia are all part of our effort to ensure that Columbia remains what it has been for decades—a leading voice in the field of Jewish studies.

We’re always thinking about how to build on what we’ve achieved so far, to create more activity and excitement for students, professors, and the community. We’d love to hear your suggestions, ideas, and insights about how to best accomplish that, and we hope you’ll join us in the effort.

Sincerely yours,

Jeremy Dauber
Atran Associate Professor of Yiddish Language, Literature, and Culture
Director, Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies
Celebrating our Students: Undergraduate Israel Fellows
The Institute’s undergraduate fellows program combines support for study, service, or internship work during the summer in Israel and an invitation-only educational opportunity during the academic year.

Researcher for Avinoam Rosenak, PhD at Hebrew University
“I gained exposure to the way academic research is conducted, translation and writing experience in Hebrew, and knowledge in areas relevant to my program of study.” I am interested in Philosophy, Religion and considering the special concentration in Jewish Studies.

Hebrew Language Immersion at Tel Aviv University
“I was able to gain a greater understanding of Israeli perspectives through conversations with many types of Israelis. As a jazz musician in New York City, I experienced the jazz scene in Israel, too. I am studying Political Science at Columbia, focusing on International Studies, and […] living in Israel this summer has given me more direct experience and hands-on knowledge to bring back to my classes at Columbia.

Courses at Hebrew University
Knesset Intern w/MK Anastassa Michaeli
“By interning in the Knesset, I learned a lot about politics in Israel. [As a Middle Eastern studies major, the internship] helped me gain a broader understanding of the political environment in the Middle East. The classes I took at Hebrew University also gave me a new perspective on Israel and its international counterparts. I learned a lot of valuable information, I am truly stunned by all the knowledge I gained.”

Jerusalem Municipality Intern
Course at Technion
The internship at the Environmental Department on Air Pollution involved the new light rail system. The course, “Engineering for Developing Communities included hands-on fieldwork in Bedouin communities and the construction of solar panel & wind turbine, which [went beyond the academic, it] demanded the physical skills to build an alternative energy source generator.”

Yiddish Summer Program at Tel Aviv University
As “an intended Yiddish major, the experience with Yiddish language and culture studies will help supplement my knowledge and enable me to be a better Yiddish student.”

Spring 2011 IIJS Faculty Course Sampler
Jewish Immigration 1881-1924
Gur Alroey
Emphasized the common denominator between those who came to Palestine in the Early 20th century to those who came to the Americas in the same period

Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages
Mark Cohen
The history of the Jews in the medieval Islamic world, focusing on historiographical issues

Israeli Art of War-Theory/Practice
Uri Cohen
Mapped and examined the figures, textual and visual, that form the Israeli cultural discourse of war.

Jews and the City
Rebecca Kobrin
Comparing Jewish life in six cities spanning from Eastern Europe to the United States during the 19th century.

Judaism, Jewishness, Modernity
Jonathan Schorsch
Explored some of the major statements of Jewish thought and identity from the 19th century into the 21st.

Ancient Jewish Texts
Seth Schwartz
Close reading in the original languages of ancient Jewish texts.

Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah
Sandra Valabregue-Perry
Studied the interactions between two major intellectual trends in Jewish History, the philosophical and the mystical.
Noteworthy News: Recent IIJS Faculty Publications

**Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe**
*Elisheva Carlebach* — This book looks into a previously unexamined dimension of Jewish life and culture: the calendar. Jews, like all minority cultures in Europe, had to realign their time-keeping to accord with the new Christian calendar. In calendars, we see one of the central paradoxes of Jewish existence: the need to encompass the culture of the other while retaining one’s own unique culture.

**In the Demon's Bedroom: Yiddish Literature and the Early Modern**
*Jeremy Dauber*—This important study is the first to offer a sustained look at a variety of early modern Yiddish masterworks—and their writers and readers—paying particular attention to their treatment of supernatural themes and beings.

**From Continuity to Contiguity: Toward a New Jewish Literary Thinking**
*Dan Miron* begins this study by surveying and critiquing previous attempts to define a common denominator unifying the various modern Jewish literatures. He argues that these prior efforts have all been trapped by the need to see these literatures as a continuum.

Visiting Faculty:

**Gur Alroey** *Professor, Land of Israel Studies, University of Haifa*

Course: Jewish Immigration 1881-1924

Dr. Alroey's research focuses on Jewish history and immigration, more specifically the early Zionist movement, the conflict and the Mandate period. He is the author of the book *Immigrants: The Jewish Immigration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century* (2004).

**Mark Cohen** *Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Princeton University*

Course: Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages

Professor Cohen is a well known historian of the Jews in Arab lands in the Middle Ages. In 2010 he was the first winner of the Goldziher Prize for scholarship promoting better understanding between Jews and Muslims, awarded by Merrimack College’s Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations.

**Sandra Valabregue-Perry** *Rabin Post-Doctorate Fellow, Institute for Israel & Jewish Studies*

Courses: Readings in Kabbalah and Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah

Sandra Valabregue-Perry is a scholar and a painter. She was a visiting scholar and lecturer at UCLA and Yale University, and the Dean Ernest Schwarc Visiting Eminent Professor in Jewish Philosophy at Queens College. She is the author of *Concealed and Revealed: "Eyn Sof" (Infinity) in Theosophic Kabbalah* (2010).
The institute provides a vibrant and stimulating environment for discussion on campus among students, faculty, alumni, and others. Lively intellectual discourse occurs not only within classroom settings, but in other venues as well. The institute interacts with other institutes and organizations on campus to engage as many individuals as possible on topics of importance to Israel and Jewish studies.

There’s a GREAT way to hear about our UPCOMING EVENTS!

Register on our website for regular announcements about events, news and other exciting IIJS opportunities. Visit us at www.iijs.columbia.edu

Interested in supporting IIJS? Contact Sheridan Gayer at sjg41@columbia.edu for more details.