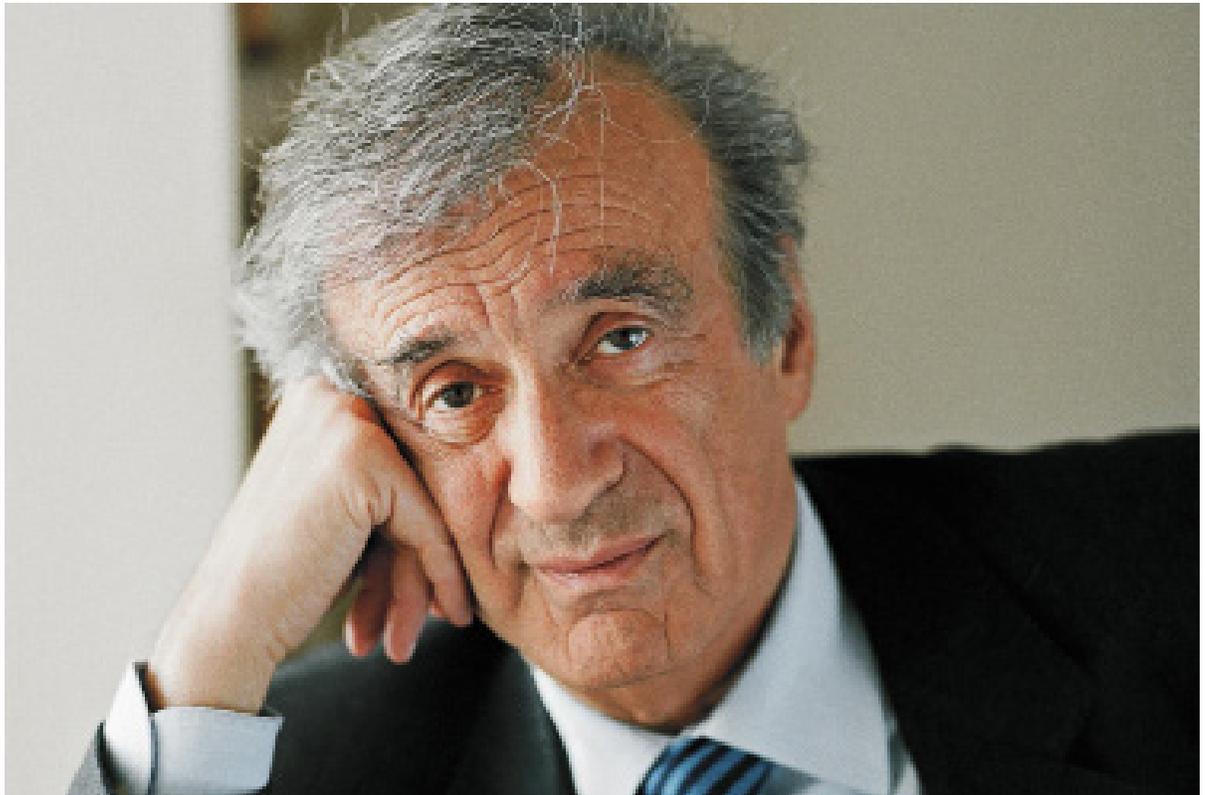


# ELIE WIESEL

מרכז אלי ויזל ללימודי יהדות

**CENTER FOR  
JEWISH STUDIES**



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2015-2016**

**BOSTON  
UNIVERSITY**

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# About the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies

The Elie Wiesel Center is an academic program unit of the College of Arts and Sciences and BU's hub for advanced research and public events related to Jewish history, religion, and culture.

Our fifteen core and eighteen affiliated faculty from different schools and departments offer a content-rich and interdisciplinary variety of courses in Jewish studies and related fields. We support faculty and students with research and travel grants, scholarships, fellowships, and awards. Our academic and public lectures and events provide the campus community and the Boston-area public with opportunities to learn, exchange ideas, and encounter contemporary forms of Jewish intellectual life and artistic creativity.

Named for Elie Wiesel, the 1986 Nobel Laureate for Peace and a member of the BU faculty for nearly forty years, we maintain a legacy of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public engagement.



The Elie Wiesel Center is housed at 147 Bay State Road, in one of BU's most elegant historical buildings. Constructed in 1899, the former Weld family mansion is now *Bet Shlomo v' Sarah Wiesel*, named in honor of Elie Wiesel's parents. The patrician building houses classrooms and faculty offices and doubles as a space for seminars, conferences, and cultural events. The Elie Wiesel Center at Boston University was established by the generous support of Ira and Ingeborg Rennert.

## Director's Message

I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 2015/2016. What stood out to me this year was growth in the range and number of people engaged in the activities of the Center. Last September, sixty alumni attended four workshops that were led by distinguished faculty; attendance at the Yitzhak Rabin memorial lecture and panel doubled from the year before; in May, when Palestinian-Israeli author Sayed Kashua returned to BU this February, our library was filled to capacity, with standing room only; even our highly specialized academic BUJS Forum sessions were particularly well attended this year.

I attribute much of this success to the diligent and professional work of our communications consultant Laurie Covens and her team of graduate and undergraduate assistants who were involved in every aspect of planning and running the Center's lectures and events. (Thank you Laurie, Lauren, and Stella!) An important part of this year's work was made possible by faculty, administration, students, staff, alumni and friends, who gave of their time, their imagination, and their enthusiasm for Jewish studies and Jewish life at BU and beyond. I am deeply grateful for all of their engagement, friendship, and support.

This year we also saw the launch of two new faculty-led initiatives, the Maccabees Project directed by Prof. Andrea Berlin (Archaeology) and a series of lectures presenting new research on Jewish and Muslim minorities in modern Mediterranean societies, directed by Prof. Kimberly Arkin (Anthropology). Both are scheduled to continue next year.

Faculty offered new courses and opportunities for undergraduate students to get a sense of what Jewish studies are all about. Professor Klepper (Religion and History) pioneered a freshman course on Jewish ethics; post-doctoral fellow Alexandra Herzog offered courses in American Jewish literature and Women, Gender and Sexuality studies ("Sex in the Shtetl"); and together with Prof. Kecia Ali (Religion) I offered a seminar on "Moses and Muhammad" for freshman in the Kilachand Honors College.

For next year, we are looking forward to the launch of the new minor in Holocaust and Genocide studies. To boost our course offerings in Holocaust and Israel studies, we were able to secure a grant from the Israel Institute in D.C. that allowed us to invite Professor Leora Bilsky (Tel Aviv University School of Law) to offer two new courses next year, on the Holocaust and transitional justice, offered in the BU School of Law, and on Israel through the lens of its major political trials, offered by the Political Science department.

As I look forward to the overdue sabbatical leave I am about to begin, I know that our Center will be in the good hands of interim director Abigail Gillman, Associate Professor of Hebrew and German in the Department of World Languages and Literatures. I hope you will stop by our office and say hello!

With best wishes for the coming year,  
Sincerely,  
Michael Zank

## Elie Wiesel (1928 - 2016)

On the second day of the month of Sivan in the year 5776 (July 2, 2016), on a Sabbath, Elie Wiesel passed away in his Manhattan home. He was 87 years old. He is survived by his wife Marion, his son Elisha, a step-daughter, and two grandchildren. As colleagues and students of Elie Wiesel who taught at Boston University from 1976 until 2013, we are deeply saddened by his passing. We are also humbled by these many years of his regular presence on campus, his teaching and his friendship. This is a great loss for Boston University and the greater Boston area, where many felt they had a special connection to the author, speaker, and “witness to humanity” that he was.

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The fact of his passing was transported around the world almost instantaneously, and one can read about his life and work in the many obituaries that have begun to appear. The world remembers him as a Holocaust survivor who felt compelled to bear witness and did so in exemplary ways. As Joseph Berger writes in the *New York Times*, Elie Wiesel filled a void; his memoir *Night*, appeared at a time when trauma and survivor’s guilt plagued the victims and denial silenced the perpetrators. As Michael Berenbaum notes in the *Forward*, Elie’s literary voice helped to transform victims into witnesses and allowed the children of perpetrators to confront the past.

With international recognition came visibility and greater responsibility. As a Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel spoke out for Soviet Jewry and used his visibility to draw public attention to atrocities and human rights violations on every continent.

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Elie Wiesel joined BU in 1976 where he served as the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy and Religion. He retired from this position in 2013, a year after the death of BU President John Silber who had brought him to BU. Elie gave his last public annual lectures in the fall of 2012, shortly after Silber’s death. During his time at BU, Elie Wiesel taught two courses every fall on Literature and Memory. Only once in thirty five years of teaching did he teach a course on the Holocaust and he disliked it so much, he never tried again. Elie’s long-time assistant Martha Hauptman was the one who fielded student applications and vetted the teaching assistants. Taking a course with Elie Wiesel was the highlight of many students’ experience at Boston University. Students described their experience in his classroom in essays that were published in 2014 by the Elie Wiesel Center under the title *Take a Teacher, Make a Friend: Students Write for Elie Wiesel*. The contributors to this volume include a German Catholic theologian, a computer engineer and his daughter, a rabbi and a classics professor, a poet and a cantor, a professor of medicine and a speech pathologist, a professor of Italian literature and another rabbi, a theater director and a medievalist, a professor of constitutional law and a singer, a physicist/science editor and a thanatologist, a self-declared groupie and a scholar of Hasidism, two doctoral students (one from China) and another historian. This range speaks for itself.

At Boston University, Professor Wiesel held faculty positions in Religion and Philosophy and he lectured to the CAS Core Curriculum. But it is the title of Professor in the Humanities that indicates what his teaching was about. When the late John Silber brought Elie Wiesel to BU, he brought not just a prolific author but an eminently humane voice to Boston, to teach us and the wider community something about the humanities that required the special qualifications that he saw in Elie Wiesel.

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Part of this legacy at BU is the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies. The fact that it exists is a testament to the friendship between Elie Wiesel and John Silber, who had been Boston University's president for only five years when he persuaded Elie to join. Their friendship not only brought Wiesel to Boston, but kept him here for all these years, and it finally persuaded him to link his name indelibly with the University. Our task now is to live up to Elie's legacy and follow his example of an existential commitment of the teacher to bearing witness, to bring to life the joy of Jewish text and tradition, and to make sure we remember the Holocaust, to speak for victims everywhere and not allow ourselves to be silenced. We are proud and humbled to have known Elie Wiesel as a colleague and friend. May his memory be for a blessing!

Michael Zank  
Director, The Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies



# People

## Our Students

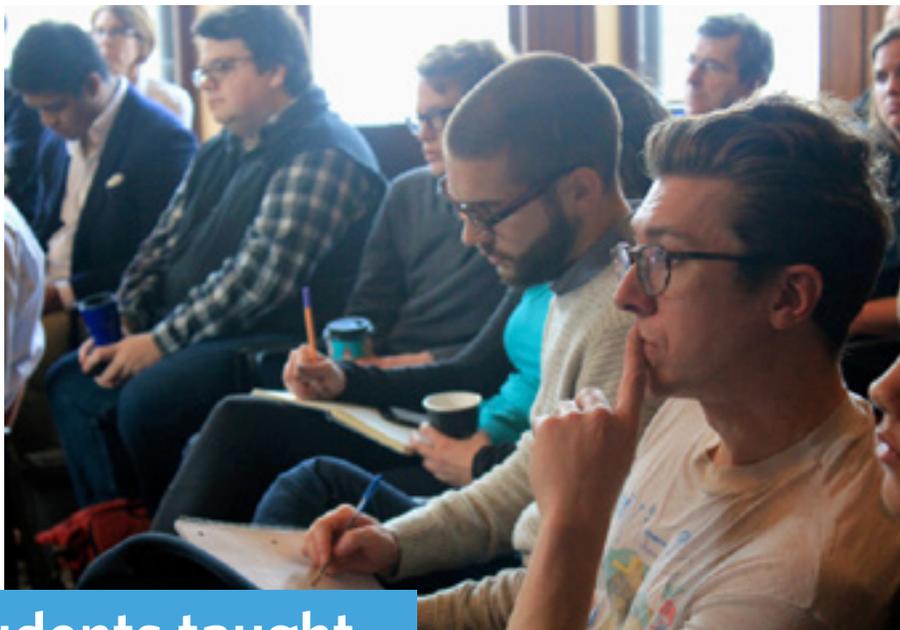
### *Student Support 2015-2016*

The EWCJS supports undergraduate and graduate students with stipends and scholarships, as well as academic enhancement grants. This year, these included GDRS Ph.D. student [Chaim Elly Moseson](#), who was awarded an Einhorn book award, and undergraduate [Sophie Ashkinaze-Collender](#) who was awarded a David Karney Fund grant in support of her travel to Israel for a summer internship with the Jerusalem Post.

[Samantha Pickette](#), an American Studies Ph.D. student specializing in 20th century Jewish-American life, was awarded a summer research stipend from the Brooks Family Endowment Fund to recognize her outstanding academic achievement in Jewish Studies, and also to support her travel to Tel Aviv this summer to study Yiddish at the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program.

The Henry J. and Carole Pinkney award was divided between GDRS Ph.D. student [Jonathan Kelly](#) and psychology major [Erin Miller](#), in support of their work with Dr. Michael Grodin on the Project on Ethics and the Holocaust.

[Nadia Cross](#) (COM, Television and Film), the first student enrolled in the new Holocaust and Genocide Studies minor received an award from the Levine, Martin Family Scholarship Fund.



**704 students taught**

## **Danielle Liberman (CAS '16)**

Winner of the EWCJS's Brooks Family and Levine Family Scholarships, **Danielle Liberman** has been an active student in EWCJS events and courses. Danielle graduated from Boston University's College of Arts and Sciences with a Middle East and North Africa Studies Major and minors in Jewish Studies and Hebrew. She plans to pursue a degree in International Law at Georgetown University Law Center beginning in Fall 2016.



Danielle Liberman (CAS '16)

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*"I have loved being involved in both the Jewish Studies and Hebrew Program, and believe they are two close-knit and great communities where students and professors across departments not only know your name, but get to know you as a student. " - Danielle Liberman (CAS '16)*

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## **Samantha Pickette (Cand. PhD, Department of English)**

*In the spring of 2016, I was lucky enough to study Jewish-American literature with Professor Alexandra Herzog at the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies. As a scholar of twentieth-century Jewish-American culture, being able to study Jewish literature one-on-one with an expert in the field was an invaluable and rewarding experience. Under Professor Herzog's tutelage, I studied the works of authors such as Chaim Potok, Philip Roth, and Saul Bellow, analyzing not only the literary themes but also the social, political, and religious contexts of each text we explored. Professor Herzog also introduced me to the world of Yiddish literature with novels by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Abraham Cahan, and Anzia Yezierska, opening my eyes to a facet of Jewish literature that up until then I had not seriously examined.*

*Now, with the encouragement of Professor Herzog and Professor Michael Zank and with generous funding from EWCJS through the Brooks Family Endowment, I am going to Tel Aviv University for a month during the summer of 2016 to participate in the Naomi Praver Kadar International Yiddish Summer Program. There, I will study Yiddish language, literature, and culture with world-renowned professors and come home better able to engage with seminal texts from the most influential and important Yiddish writers. When the fall semester starts, I will continue my study of Yiddish language as well as of Yiddish literature and Jewish-American literature with Professor Herzog as I begin to prepare for my Oral Qualifying Exams and to further define the topic of my dissertation.*

## Leo Baeck Essay Prize

This spring we held our second international essay prize competition for undergraduate students writing on German-Jewish History and Culture. The prize money was gifted by Bernard Bloom, former president of the Leo Baeck Institute, and awarded by the Elie Wiesel Center in conjunction with the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

To compete, students were asked to submit an essay of between 4,500 and 7,500 words on any topic related to the history and culture of German-speaking Jews, along with faculty letters of commendation. This year's winner was [Jesse Gamoran](#), a student at Oberlin College who researched "The Munich Visiting Program, 1960-1972." A much deserved honorable mention went to [Madelyn Stone](#) of Northeastern University for an essay titled "Reality is the Satire: The Will to Hope in the Writings of Jura Soyfer." The prize will be posted again next year.

## Faculty Highlights

### Featured Faculty Publication

We congratulate Ingrid Anderson (GDRS PhD '13), a full-time instructor in the CAS Writing Program, on the publication of her first book! [\*Ethics and Suffering since the Holocaust: Making Ethics "First Philosophy" in Levinas, Wiesel and Rubinstein\*](#) was published in 2016 in the Routledge "Jewish Studies Series," edited by Oliver Leaman.

*Ethics and Suffering since the Holocaust* explores selected works of Levinas, Wiesel, and Rubenstein for practical applications of their ethics, analyzing the role of suffering and examining the use each thinker makes of Jewish sources and the advantages and disadvantages of this use. Finally, it suggests how the work of Jewish thinkers living in the wake of the Holocaust can be of unique value to those interested in the problem of ethics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



## ***Prof. Alexandra Herzog on her experience at EWCJS***

This has been a productive year working for the Elie Wiesel Center and the CAS Core Curriculum at BU. I had an enriching experience teaching CC201 on the Renaissance for Core and designing two new classes for the Elie Wiesel Center. In the fall semester, I taught a class entitled “Modern Jewish Writers of the 20th Century” for the departments of English and Religion and, in the spring, I taught an introduction to Yiddish literature through the lens of gender in a class called “Sex in the Shtetl,” which was cross-listed in MLCL and WGS. I also directed two independent studies in the spring: one with a PhD student on “American Jewish Identity through Film and Fiction” and one with an undergraduate senior on “Stereotypes of Jews on Screen.” I have tremendously enjoyed teaching these classes, and have found the environment at BU to be stimulating and engaging.

## ***Saying Goodbye to Abigail Jacobson***

After three years of teaching our Israeli-Palestinian Conflict course (HI393), Abigail Jacobson is moving back to Jerusalem where she took a position at the Van Leer Institute. Her course offered students of all stripes the opportunity to learn about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to analyze conflicting narratives through primary sources and film. Students presented their own reflections on the conflict and debated possibilities of resolution. Many students appreciated Prof. Jacobson’s way of looking at both sides of the conflict through documentaries and readings that helped students to empathize with different points of view. Abigail’s engagement in the classroom was profiled in [BU Today](#), and recognized by many students who praised her for providing balance while also promoting healthy discussions in class. One student wrote:

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*“She [Prof. Jacobson] does a great job of explaining very complicated concepts and issues in a fair and balanced society, but also does not shy away from discussing controversial topics. Her perspective is three-dimensional, multifaceted, and reveals the complex nature of the conflict. She has fostered an open learning environment.”*

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We will miss Abigail’s presence on campus but are pleased that Prof. Karlinsky (BGU) agreed to offer HI393 in Fall 2016.

## *Professor Hillel Levine Retires*

We are saying farewell to [Professor Hillel Levine](#) who is retiring from Boston University where he had served as the first director of Jewish Studies. A professor of religion and historian of American Judaism and the Holocaust, Professor Levine engaged students with a unique, Talmudic teaching style that emphasized personal narrative and family history. His scholarship was not simply a platform for ideas and historical objectivity, but rather helped to open students' eyes to possibilities and as Levine says, "not just in the course, but in their lives - that's what a teacher-student relationship is all about." Professor Levine continues to serve as the president of the International Center for Conciliation, an NGO dedicated to conflict resolution and prevention.

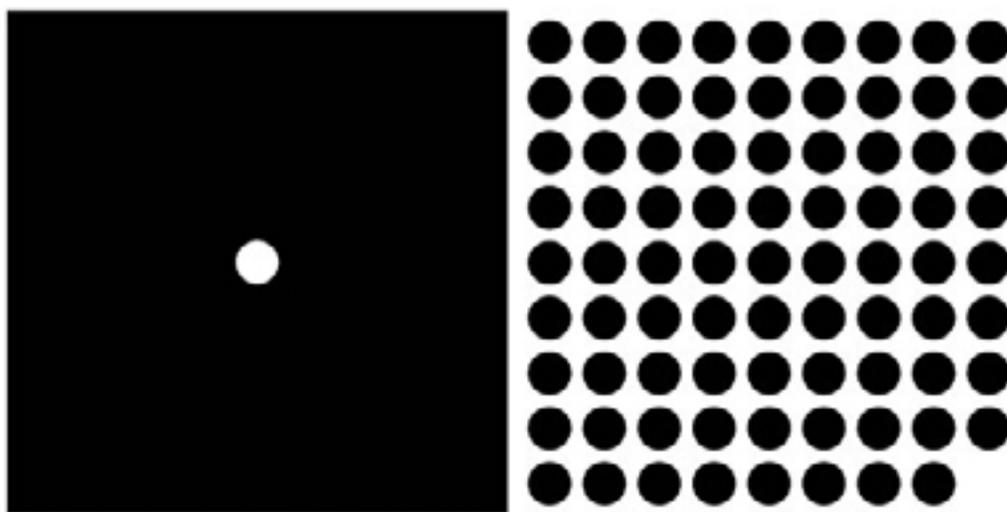


## Academic Programs

*The Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies offers interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs in Jewish studies. Here are a few highlights from this year.*

### **New Holocaust and Genocide Studies Minor**

This spring, the College of Arts and Sciences recommended and Provost Morrison approved a new minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies that will be housed in the Elie Wiesel Center. Students will have the opportunity to acquire basic academic tools of description and analysis of the various factors that contribute to the emergence of ultra-nationalist regimes and their genocidal policies. This minor enables the student to develop an awareness of the values of pluralism and diversity, as well as to explore the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic and indifferent to the vilification and oppression of others.



*For more information on the new minor, which will be launched this fall, see:*

<http://www.bu.edu/jewishstudies/undergraduate/holocaust-genocide-studies-minor/>

## New Courses in Jewish Studies

With topics ranging from the Kabbalah to Women and Gender Studies, from Culture in Medieval Spain to various levels of Hebrew language courses, and from Jewish Bioethics to Jerusalem in Time, Space, and Imagination, our courses attracted a wide array of students interested in exploring the multifaceted fields of Jewish Studies.



28 Courses offered

### *Exploring Jewish Ethics in a Contemporary Context*

Professor Deanna Klepper taught a section of the one-credit FY103 course offered in Spring 2016. The course is designed for smaller groups, to enhance new students' experiences at Boston University by focusing on specific areas of interest. Prof. Klepper facilitated conversation on "Jewish Ethics and Moral Choices," where students were able to discuss ways people navigate between established religious traditions and evolving contemporary moral dilemmas like euthanasia, the environment, abortion, and the observance of *kashrut*.

## ***Honors Seminar on “Moses and Muhammad as Prophets”***

Professor Michael Zank of Jewish Studies and Professor Kecia Ali, a scholar of Islam, joined forces to teach a freshman seminar in the Kilachand Honors College that delved into the lives and interpretations of Moses and Muhammad. As prophets, lawgivers, and Abrahamic philosopher-kings, Moses and Muhammad inspired faith and practice, art and politics. The course examined both classical and modern interpretations, which provided important and contested models for leaders, scholars, and reformers through the ages. In this course, the instructors pursued their own interests and utilized the focus on each respective central individual in different ways.

## ***Modern Jewish Writers of the 20th Century: From Sholem Aleichem to Philip Roth***

This course, taught by Prof. Alexandra Herzog, examined modern Jewish fiction with an emphasis on the historical and cultural trends that contributed to its formation. It presented the richness of Jewish literary life through a historical overview that starts in Eastern Europe in the beginning of the 20th Century and that ends in the contemporary United States. Through a variety of short stories and novels, students explored topics such as the tensions between Jewish traditions and secular America, the processes of acculturation and assimilation, the Holocaust survivors' guilt, and the transformations in individual and family values.

Both undergraduate and Evergreen students were enthusiastic about this course.

*“ I found her approach to writing particularly valuable for undergraduates. She didn't just assign papers but worked with students to develop their ideas.”*



Prof. Alexandra Herzog

*“For many of the students in this large, diverse class, Dr. Herzog's course on Modern Jewish Writers turned out to be an introduction to Judaism and Jewish culture. I can't think of a better one. In my opinion, she's a first rate teacher.”*

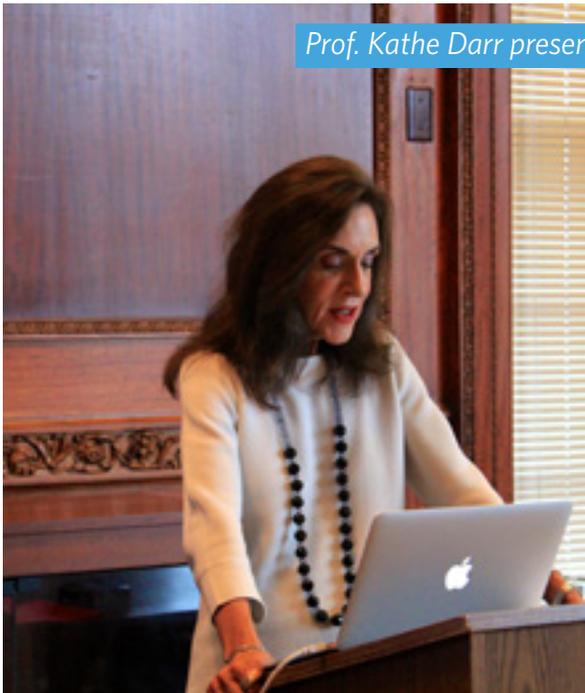
# Advanced Studies and Academic Colloquia

## BUJS-Forum: A platform for faculty and graduate student research exchanges

The purpose of the Boston University Jewish Studies Research Forum (BUJS) is to facilitate advanced research in the field of Jewish studies. Invited speakers include visiting and resident faculty, graduate students, and recent graduates from a wide range of disciplines. The Forum is multi-disciplinary and provides resident and visiting faculty, graduate students, and post-graduates with the opportunity to present work in progress and receive feedback.

This year, the program featured some Boston University faculty, including Professor of Theology Katheryn P. Darr; Assistant Professor of the History of Art and Architecture Rebecca Martin; and Postdoctoral Fellow Alexandra Herzog. Visiting presenters included Professor Adele Reinhartz (University of Ottawa) for a lecture on the “parting of the ways” between Judaism and Christianity as reflected in the Gospel of John.

*Prof. Kathe Darr presenting on Book of Kings.*



*Adele Reinhartz speaks on the Gospel of John.*

## International Forum of Young Scholars on East European Jewry

The Seventh International Forum of Young Scholars on East European Jewry convened at the Elie Wiesel Center in late June of 2015 under the leadership of Simon Rabinovitch, Assistant Professor of History and Jewish Studies. Launched in 2003 to promote the research and career progress of promising young scholars, the biennial forum offers a select group of doctoral candidates and newly-minted PhDs the opportunity to discuss their work – and the professional challenges they face – with one another and a group of esteemed senior scholars led by Israel Bartal (Hebrew University), David Engel (New York University), and Zvi Gitelman (University of Michigan). Practical workshops on publication strategies, job searches, and teaching skills, plus individualized feedback on research projects, complemented talk of scholarly concerns.

The forum was organized by The Elie Wiesel Center and BU's History Department, and co-sponsored by Hebrew University's Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry and Leipzig University's Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, with additional support from the BU Center for the Humanities, the BU Jewish Cultural Endowment, and the Mike Grossman Seminar Fund.

## Maccabees Project

This year saw the program launch of the Maccabees Project, a series of scholarly conversations and public dialogues devoted to the history and legacy of the biblical Maccabees. The project is jointly directed by Andrea Berlin, James R. Wiseman Chair in Classical Archaeology and Professor of Jewish Studies, and Boston College Associate Professor of Theology Yonder Gillihan.

The story of the Maccabees is one of the most enduring and electrifying biblical accounts. The recounting of the defiant stand of Mattathias, the valor of Judah Maccabee, and the rise of the Hasmonean dynasty inspired a new sense of national identity that resonated far beyond the small region of Judea and echoed through their ages. The ancient authors of 1 and 2 Maccabees present their versions as history, narrations of actual events. But a growing body of research casts significant doubt on numerous aspects of these accounts. With this project, the program directors aim to bring together scholars of several disciplines in an effort to get at the realities behind the stories, and to study their effects from antiquity until the present day.

Over the course of the year, scholars convened several times, both virtually and actually, to discuss topics from different vantage points, with the aim of learning from colleagues in other disciplines. Dialogues, video conferences, and research presentations offered opportunities for engagement with different types of audiences from all corners of the world. Events included: a scholarly seminar; a public discussion at a local synagogue; and a more informal lunchtime conversation with students. In December 2015, Katell Bertholot and Yonder Gillihan debated ["The Maccabees and the Idea of](#)

[the Promised Land](#)”, and in April 2016, Daniel Schwartz, Robert Doran, and Jonathan Klawans debated notions of [Judean piety and politics in 1 and 2 Maccabees](#). Over the course of the year, the Maccabees Project attracted new international members from the US, Germany, France, and Israel. The public dialogue events also found an echo in Boston-area media, including the [Boston Globe](#) and [public access television](#). The Elie Wiesel Center celebrated the launch of this project with a reception at the Association for Jewish Studies meeting in Boston in December 2015.



*Archaeology Professor Andrea Berlin (BU), Professor Sharon Herbert (UMich), and their graduate students studying artifacts on-site in Israel.*

## **New Series on Jews and Muslims in Modern Mediterranean Societies**

Supported by the Kaufthal Lecture Fund and grants from the Boston University Center for the Humanities and the Jewish Cultural Endowment, we commenced a new series of academic workshops on “Jews, Muslims, and the Struggle for Religious ‘Identity’ in Modern Mediterranean Societies,” conceived and directed by Kimberly Arkin, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Jewish Studies. The series explores the variety of Judaisms and Islams in colonial and post-colonial spaces in North Africa and Europe. It raises comparative questions about religious resurgence and national belonging that scholars have only recently begun asking. The series showcases work in progress by scholars from around the world, and faculty affiliated with several BU research centers, including the Center for the Study of Europe, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations, and the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs.

The [Modern Mediterranean Societies](#) series, which will continue in 2016-2017, was launched by a talk from Harvard University Research Associate Dr. Rachel Eva Schley, who presented a paper on “The Abandoned Muslim Consistory: Religion, Rule, and Legal Identity in French Algeria.” Responding to Dr. Schley was Prof. Elizabeth Foster from the Department of History at Tufts University.

# Public Lectures and Events

## Annual Lecture Series



## *Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture*

Boston University commemorated the twentieth anniversary of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination with a lecture by the Director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies and Visiting Professor of Israel Studies Efram Inbar (Political Science) that looked at the legacy of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from the perspective of a security "realist." The lecture was followed by an exclusive video message by President Bill Clinton and a panel discussion on the prospects for Middle East peace moderated by NPR/WBUR On Point host Tom Ashbrook. The event - which drew a standing-room only audience at the George Sherman Union Conference Auditorium - was introduced by Israeli Consul General to New England Yehuda Yaakov.

The panel was comprised of Professor Andrew Bacevich, Chair Emeritus of BU's Department of International Relations; Professor David Ellenson, Director of Brandeis University's Schusterman Center for Israel Studies; Professor Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College; and Boston Globe Op-Ed Columnist Jeff Jacoby. (For a documentation of the event, please see our [website](#).) The Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture at Boston University is generously supported by Mr. Jonathan Krivine (CAS '72).

## *Leo Trepp Lecture 2016: David Ellenson on the German origin of modern Judaism*

Generously supported by Ms. Gunda Trepp, the Leo Trepp Lecture Series honors the memory of Rabbi Leo Trepp, who was trained as an Orthodox Rabbi in 1930's Germany, emigrated to Massachusetts via England, and went on to a distinguished career as a writer and teacher in California. Now in its third year, the series continued with Rabbi David Ellenson of Brandeis University who spoke on "*How Germany Produced Modern Judaism -- Lessons for Today.*" The event, which included an official reception in honor of the dedication of Leo Trepp's Torah scroll, drew an audience of nearly a hundred guests. The lecturer was introduced by BU Provost Jean Morrison.

The Trepp Torah Scroll was generously donated by Mrs. Gunda Trepp, and is to be permanently housed at the Elie Wiesel Center. Rabbi Kevin Hale, who restored the Torah, commented on the provenance of the scroll. Boston-based artist John Powell created a special cabinet for our library where the Torah is to be kept when not in use. The evening included the performance of "Nigune Magenza," melodies from the orthodox Mainz synagogue that Rabbi Trepp remembered from his childhood and recorded for posterity. The melodies were performed by Clara Sandler (mezzo-soprano) and Lauren Andrea-Lucia Hobler (violin).



## Quill of the Soul

In Spring 2015 we bid farewell to our first ever composer-in-residence, Dr. Matti Kovler. Under the auspices of the Center, he produced *Floating Tower*, a series of artistic events involving students in performances alongside professional artists. The closing event of Dr. Kovler's residence in the Center, *Quill of the Soul*, was held on November 21 at Boston University's Tsai Performance Center. It was produced with the help of the Boston Jewish Music Festival, and brought in an audience of over 100 people.

The performance opened up with a traditional Hasidic chant inspired by Elie Wiesel's "Melodies from My Childhood" (2010), a recording of chants Wiesel learned at the court of the Vizhnitz Rebbe. The musical journey led from the Hasidic niggun to chants native to Hindu, Jewish, and Persian traditions.

## Sayed Kashua Returns to EWCJS

Palestinian-Israeli novelist and Haaretz columnist Sayed Kashua was greeted by a standing-room only crowd on February 18 2016. Kashua is best known for *Arab Labor*, his wildly popular Israeli TV sit-com. He spoke with students, faculty, and community members about his new projects and current career path.

In conversation, Kashua spoke about what it means to straddle Israel's Arab-Jewish divide. He shared some of the backstory behind his TV projects, including his new work on *The Screenwriter*. A father of three, he spoke about raising his children in one of Jerusalem's Jewish neighborhoods, and about starting life over in America's Midwest as Professor of Jewish culture and society at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Kashua's visit was co-hosted by EWCJS and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations.



## Collaborations and Co-Sponsorships

The Center collaborated with several University departments and Boston-area organizations to bring engaging and relevant events to campus and the community. The Center co-sponsored events with the BU Pardee School of Global Studies' Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies & Civilizations, the BU Center for the Humanities, the BU Institute for Philosophy and Religion (IPR), the Boston Jewish Music Festival, the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House, and the Boston Jewish Film Festival, among others.



Overall lecture and event attendance in 2015/16: 1,405

## Outreach

The Center has increased its presence by use of both traditional and modern media of communication. Event attendance was abundant: 300 community members attended the Rabin Lecture, about 120 students, faculty, and community members attended the conversation with Sayed Kashua, and the Trepp lecture was enjoyed by almost 100 guests. BUJS forums also were well attended, with a range of 12 to 35 people per forum.

Our communications team worked on increasing the Center's visibility through both traditional and social media. Facebook "likes" increased from 486-640 and our posts reached an average of over 2,000 people per month. Also, our twitter followers increased from 601 to 783.

Radio news station WBUR recorded several of our BUJS Forum talks, as well as our annual Rabin and Trepp Lecture, and recorded them for their *BU World of Ideas* program.

The [Boston Globe](#) reported on the Maccabees Project, and the Jewish Advocate reported on both the Rabin Memorial Lecture and the Trepp Torah Scroll dedication.

As for online publications, Brandeis University's *The Justice* reported on the Yitzhak Rabin Lecture and Boston University's *Arts & Sciences* magazine ran a piece on the Rabin [event](#), written by Communications Specialist Laurie Covens, and featuring one of our JS Minor students, [Erin Miller](#).

# Acknowledgments

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