



ELIE WIESEL

מרכז אלי ויזל ללימודי יהדות
**CENTER FOR
JEWISH STUDIES**



**ANNUAL REPORT
2016-2017**



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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 Boston University'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 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 the university'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 with the generous support of Ira and Ingeborg Rennert.

Find us online at:



<http://www.facebook.com/EWCJS>



<http://www.twitter.com/BUjewishstudies>



<http://www.instagram.com/EWCJS>



<http://www.bu.edu/jewishstudies>

Faculty & Courses

Core Faculty

- **Kimberly Arkin**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology
- **Andrea Berlin**, Professor of Archaeology
- **Alejandro Botta**, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible
- **Katheryn Darr**, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Harrell F. Beck Scholar of Hebrew Scripture
- **David Frankfurter**, Professor of Religion and Aurelio Chair for the Appreciation of Scripture; Chair, Religion Department
- **Abigail Gillman**, Associate Professor of German and Hebrew
- **Michael Grodin**, Professor of Health Law, Bioethics & Human Rights and Professor of Family Medicine and Psychiatry
- **Nancy Harrowitz**, Associate Professor of Italian
- **Steven Katz**, Professor of Religion; Alvin J. Slater and Shirley Slater Chair in Jewish Holocaust Studies
- **Jonathan Klawans**, Professor of Religion
- **Deeana Klepper**, Associate Professor of Religion and History
- **Pnina Lahav**, Professor of Law
- **Diana Lobel**, Associate Professor of Religion
- **Simon Rabinovitch**, Peter T. Paul Assistant Professor of History
- **Michael Zank**, Professor of Religion

Affiliate Faculty

- **Ingrid Anderson**, Lecturer, Arts and Sciences Writing Program
- **Miriam Angrist**, Lecturer in Hebrew, Head of Hebrew Language Program
- **John Bernstein**, Professor of Film
- **Alicia Borinsky**, Professor of Latin American and Comparative Literature
- **Charles Dellheim**, Professor of History
- **Aaron Garrett**, Associate Professor of Philosophy
- **Alexandra Tali Herzog**, Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies and Lecturer in the CORE Curriculum
- **Nahum Karlinsky**, Visiting Professor (Ben-Gurion University)
- **Irit Kleiman**, Associate Professor of Romance Studies
- **Jennifer Knust**, Associate Professor of Religion, New Testament and Christian Origins
- **Margaret Litvin**, Associate Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature
- **Jeffrey Mehlman**, Professor of French
- **Michael Prince**, Associate Professor of English

- **Adam Seligman**, Professor of Religion; Research Associate in the Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs
- **Jeremy Yudkin**, Professor of Music
- **Michael Zell**, Associate Professor, History of Art & Architecture

Emeritus Faculty

- **Paula Fredriksen**, Professor of Religion and William Goodwin Aurelio Chair Emerita of the Appreciation of Scripture
- **Thomas Glick**, Professor of History
- **Hillel Levine**, Professor of Religion



506 students taught

Courses

- CAS EN 125, 20th Century American Jewish Literature
- CAS HI 384, History of Genocide
- CAS HI 393, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
- CAS LH 111, Fundamentals of Modern Hebrew 1
- CAS LH 139, Intensive First Year Hebrew
- CAS LH 211, Intermediate Modern Hebrew 1
- CAS LH 212, Intermediate Modern Hebrew 2
- CAS LH 250, Masterpieces of Modern Hebrew Literature
- CAS LH 312, Sixth-Semester Hebrew
- CAS LH 340, Israeli Culture Through Media
- CAS LH 453/LH 283/CI 270, Israeli Culture Through Film
- CAS PO 580, Israel Through the Lens of its Political Trials
- CAS RN 104, Religions of the World: Western
- CAS RN 106, The Bible
- CAS RN 206, Scriptures in World Religions
- CAS RN 216, Judaism
- CAS RN 328, Judaism in the Modern Period
- CAS RN 329/629, Modern Jewish Thought
- CAS RN 338/PH 408/RN 368/STH TT 811, Mysticism and Philosophy: Jewish and Islamic Perspectives
- CAS RN 384, The Holocaust
- CAS RN 439, Jewish Bioethics
- CAS RN 459/XL 459/LI 459, Primo Levi Within Holocaust Studies
- CAS RN 460, Seminar on the Holocaust
- CAS WR 100 K8, Beyond Night: The Work of Elie Wiesel
- CAS WR 100 L9/CAS WR 150, Global Judaisms
- CAS WR 100 M9/CAS WR 150, After Auschwitz: The Search for Ethics in Post-Holocaust
- CAS WR 150, American Conversations: Jews and Blacks
- CAS XL 223, Intro to Middle Eastern Literatures
- CAS XL 281/RN 385/RN 685/CI 269/STH TX 899, Representations of the Holocaust in Literature and Film
- CAS XL 560, Topics in Religion and Literature
- STH TO 704, Hebrew Bible 1
- STH TO 723, Biblical Hebrew 1
- STH TO 814, The Cultural Background of the Hebrew Bible

Message from the Interim Director



Two themes link together many of the programs at the Wiesel Center during the past year.

The first is film: a vital medium of history and memory, and, increasingly, of education. Films were the literal centerpieces of two major fall events: the program inaugurating a new CAS minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies (see page [17](#)); and the annual Rabin Memorial Lecture (see page [23](#)). In the spring, we organized our first Wiesel Center film series (see page [29](#)), transforming the Director's office—a stately room once occupied by Elie Wiesel, and before that, by the President of Boston University—into a theater, where we welcomed between 30 and 50 students and other guests. The films transported us out of Bay State Road to places such as Iran, Southern Italy, Cairo during the Arab Spring, and Palestine.

Those films also point to our second theme: "Jewish Studies in the Middle East and Beyond." First and foremost, our community was enriched by many speakers from Israel: filmmaker Erez Laufer; legal scholar Leora Bilsky; playwright Joshua Sobol; writer and educator Ruth Calderon; and Boston University alumna and filmmaker Yael Katzir. Like the colorful, Hebrew-Arabic artwork that graced our Center's publications throughout the year (see page [28](#)), many programs taught us about the interconnections of Jewish Studies with the study of other religious and ethnic communities. In our fall Forums, for example, anthropologists from the US, Israel and Europe investigated modern religious identity in various communities in the Mediterranean Basin—Jewish, Muslim, and Christian (see page [20](#)). A new course on "Food and Religion" (see page [19](#)) introduced students to ritual, ethical, and environmental issues surrounding food in a range of religious communities. And in a similar vein, students enrolled in our new minor concentration in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, exploring topics such as the Armenian Genocide, the "History of Genocide," (see page [18](#)) and "The Prevention of Genocide." (see page [18](#))

I invite you to read our annual report, and to explore the many ways that our teaching and scholarship engage with a variety of media, and with diverse cultures, religions and geographical regions. And there is much more to be found in these pages. For those of you who wish to follow up, [our website](#) contains detailed reports of all of our events.

Finally: together with the office of President Brown, we have planned a day-long event to honor the life and work of Professor Elie Wiesel, who passed away on July 2, 2016—just one day after I began my term as Interim Director. You have likely seen our publicity, and also perused some of the powerful quotations from Professor Wiesel’s books that the Center has been posting during the summer months. Let me personally invite you to join us, along with many friends, family, and former students of Professor Wiesel, for our “[Day of Learning and Celebration](#)” on September 17, 2017.

With best wishes for the coming year,
l’shalom,
Abigail Gillman

In Memory of Elie Wiesel: A Day of Learning and Celebration

Professor Elie Wiesel, who taught at Boston University for over thirty years, passed away on July 2, 2016 (26 Sivan in the Hebrew calendar). In his honor, Boston University’s Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies and President Robert A. Brown are planning a daylong tribute for Sunday, September 17, 2017. Events will take place between 9:30 am and 4:00 pm.

Though timed to coincide with this year’s alumni weekend, the events are open to the public. Please note that [advance registration is required](#), as seating will be limited.

People

Faculty Highlights

Jewish Studies Faculty Receive Prestigious Awards

We are proud to congratulate [Professor Pnina Lahav](#) for receiving the Association for Israel Studies-Israel Institute Lifetime Achievement Award for a lifetime of exceptional scholarship and academic achievement in the field of Israel Studies. Professor Lahav was honored at the AIS Award Ceremony at Brandeis University on June 12. Nominations for the award—this year solicited from the fields of law and social sciences—are considered by a committee of international intellectuals, who select scholars “whose lasting and path-breaking contributions have significantly shaped the field.” Professor Lahav is the first legal scholar to receive the award. Her scholarship encompasses Israeli legal history, women’s rights, and freedom of expression. She has authored more than 50 journal articles and three books, published in English, Hebrew, and Russian.

We also congratulate [Professor Kimberly Arkin](#) on winning the 2016 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in the category of Social Science, Anthropology and Folklore for her book, [Rhinestones, Religion, and the Republic: Fashioning Jewishness in France](#) (Stanford University Press). Professor Arkin was honored at a ceremony at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference in December.

[Professor Simon Rabinovitch](#) was awarded the Luce/ACLS Fellowship in Religion, Journalism and International Affairs for Academic Year 2017-2018. The Luce/ACLS Program in Religion, Journalism & International Affairs (RJIA) is an initiative designed to foster new connections between scholars and journalists covering international affairs. Professor Rabinovitch will be a resident fellow at the Northeastern University Humanities Center where he will work on his project Jewish Collective Rights: An International Comparison.



Professor Lahav accepts her award.

Professor Leora Bilsky's Year at the Elie Wiesel Center

In September, the Center welcomed Professor Leora Bilsky (Professor of Law and Director of the Minerva Center for Human Rights, Tel Aviv University) as a Visiting Professor for the 2016-2017 academic year, funded by a grant from the Israel Institute. Professor Bilsky was appointed as the William and Patricia Kleh Visiting Professor in International Law at the Boston University School of Law, with a concurrent appointment as a Visiting Professor in the Political Science department of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the fall she taught a course on **The Holocaust and Transitional Justice** (JD 727) in the School of Law, and in the spring she taught an upper-level Political Science course, **Israel Through the Lens of its Political Trials** (PO 580). Professor Bilsky also delivered two talks during the academic year. The first, in October, was the Kleh International Law Lecture, on the topic "Victims' Right to Truth: The Changing Faces of International Criminal Law." The second, in March, was a Boston University Jewish Studies Forum held at the Elie Wiesel Center, entitled "Jewish Restitution and Cultural Genocide." Professor Bilsky served as an integral part of the Jewish Studies community this year, and we are grateful for the many ways in which she shared her groundbreaking work with our students and faculty.

Visiting Scholars Share their Expertise

This year our students benefitted from the expertise of two visiting scholars: [Michael Geheran](#) (PhD, Clark University) in the Fall, and [Rachel Gordan](#) (PhD, Harvard University) in the Spring. Dr. Geheran taught **The Holocaust** (RN 384) in the Fall, offering students a historical approach. Dr. Gordan taught two courses in the Spring: **20th Century American Jewish Literature** (EN 125) and **Religions of the World: Western** (RN 104). We wish the best to these two very talented teachers and researchers as they move on to new career opportunities.

As he has for several years prior, [Professor Nahum Karlinsky](#) (Ben-Gurion University) offered his highly successful course, **Israeli-Palestinian Conflict** (HI 393) this fall. We look forward to welcoming him back in Fall 2017!



Dr. Rachel Gordan

Alexandra Herzog on Her Experience as a Postdoctoral Fellow

This has been another productive year working for the Elie Wiesel Center and the CAS Core Curriculum at BU. In the Fall, I had an enriching experience teaching CC201 on the Renaissance for Core. In January, I gave a public lecture on Rousseau, Voltaire and the Enlightenment at BU as part of the Core Lecture Series. I offered a directed study for a PhD student on ‘American Jewish Identity through Film and Fiction,’ which was very enriching and stimulating both for me and for the student. I also supervised this student as a primary advisor in preparation for her Comprehensive Exams that took place in April, and I will continue to advise her as she prepares her dissertation proposal next year. In the Spring, I had the opportunity to focus on my own research and writing. In addition to preparing my book manuscript for submission, I wrote a number of articles. I currently have one article ready to be submitted on gender and trauma in the graphic novel, another one under review at Studies in American Jewish Literature on Isaac Bashevis Singer and immigration; and a book chapter on Transgender Identity in Isaac Bashevis Singer’s Short Stories for Gender in Yiddish Literature.

Last August, I presented a paper at a conference on Yiddish literature at Oxford University. In November, I led a post-screening discussion for the Boston Jewish Film Festival, and in December, I presented a paper titled “Come on, Can’t we talk about something more pleasant? Gender and Humor in the Graphic Novel” at the Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies in San Diego. I look forward to another productive year of teaching and scholarship at Boston University.

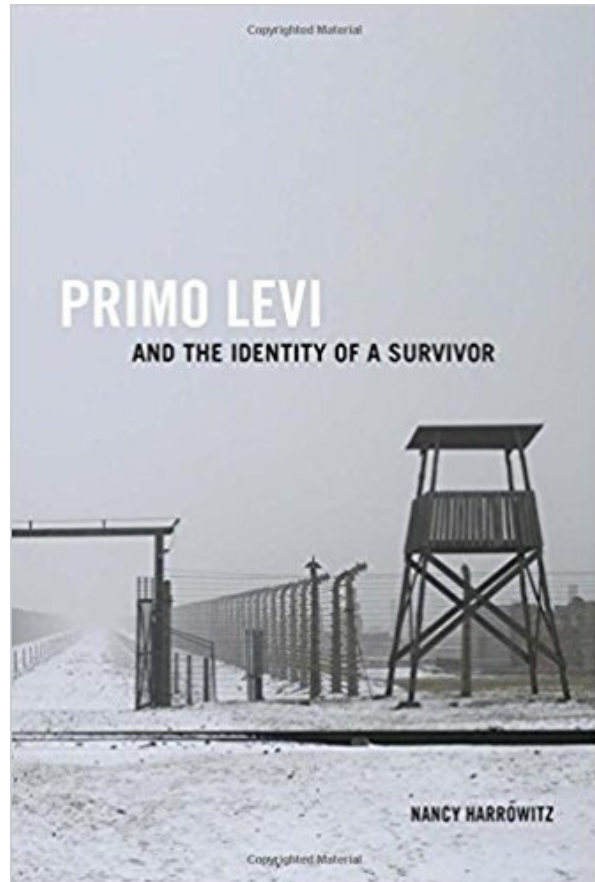


Alexandra Herzog

Featured Faculty Publications

We congratulate [Professor Nancy Harrowitz](#) on the publication of her book, [Primo Levi and the Identity of a Survivor](#), which was published in 2016 in the Italian Studies series of University of Toronto Press.

In [Primo Levi and the Identity of a Survivor](#), Nancy Harrowitz examines the complex role that Levi's Jewish identity played in his choices of how to portray his survival, as well as in his exposition of topics such as bystander complicity. Her analysis uncovers a survivor's shame that deeply influenced the personas he created to recount his experiences. Exploring a range of Levi's works, including [Survival at Auschwitz](#) and lesser-known works of fiction and poetry, she illustrates key issues within his development as a writer. At the heart of Levi's discourse, Harrowitz argues, lies a complex interplay of narrative modes that reveals his brilliance as a theorist of testimony.

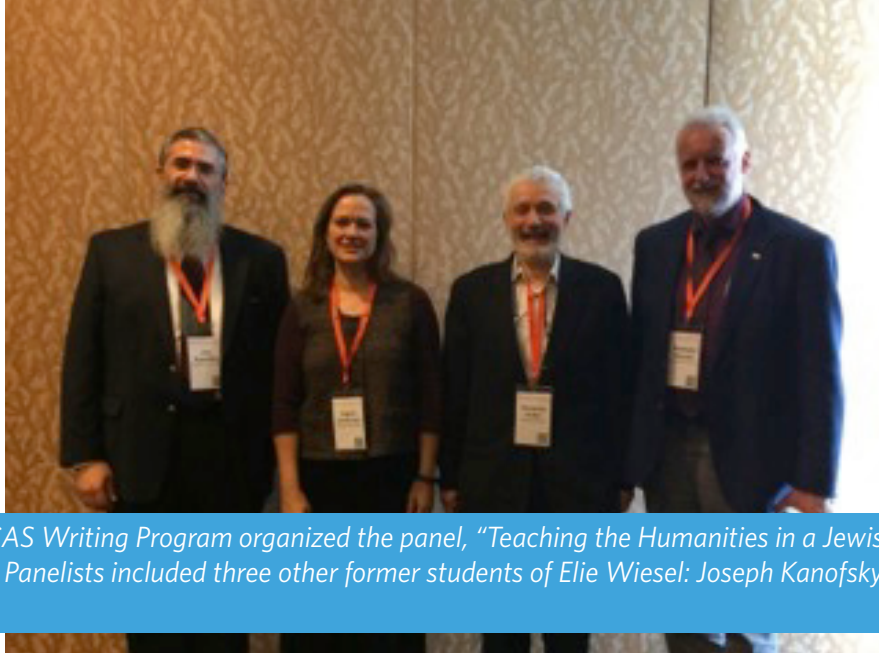


[Professor Michael Zank](#)'s book, [Jüdische Religionsphilosophie als Apologie des Mosaismus](#), was also published in 2016. This work is part of the series on Religion in Philosophy and Theology published by Mohr Siebeck.

In twenty lectures and essays, many of which are published here for the first time, Michael Zank looks at modern Jewish philosophy of religion as an “apologetics of the Mosaic faith”. He approaches the subject from thematic as well as historical angles and shows how Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Leo Strauss and others wrestled with the Christian and philosophical legacies of Europe. He also offers reflections on what we can learn from these philosophical efforts for today, aiming to introduce the reader to the field of modern Jewish philosophy. The author first developed the idea for this book when he taught in Frankfurt as Martin Buber Professor of Jewish Philosophy of Religion at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University.

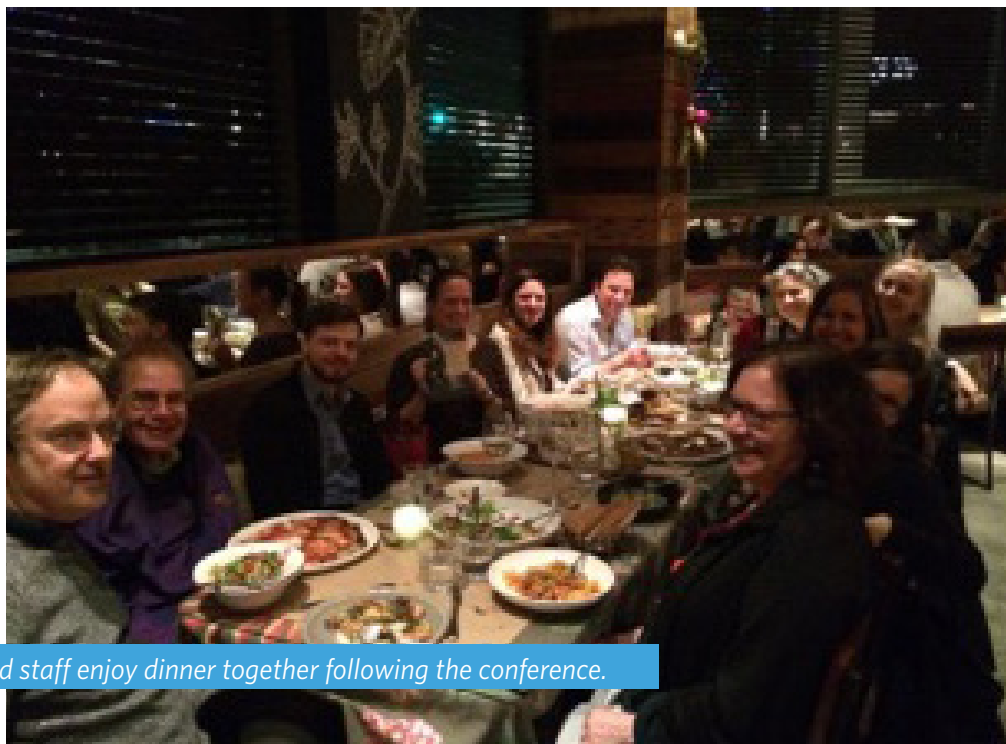
Faculty Attend AJS

Boston University faculty [Ingrid Anderson](#), Abigail Gillman, [Alexandra Herzog](#), Nancy Harrowitz, and [Simon Rabinovitch](#) presented at the AJS Conference, as did graduate students [Chaim Elly Moseson](#) and [Samantha Pickette](#).



Ingrid Anderson of the CAS Writing Program organized the panel, "Teaching the Humanities in a Jewish Key: The Pedagogical Legacies of Elie Wiesel." Panelists included three other former students of Elie Wiesel: Joseph Kanofsky, Nehemia Polen, and Reinhold Boschke.

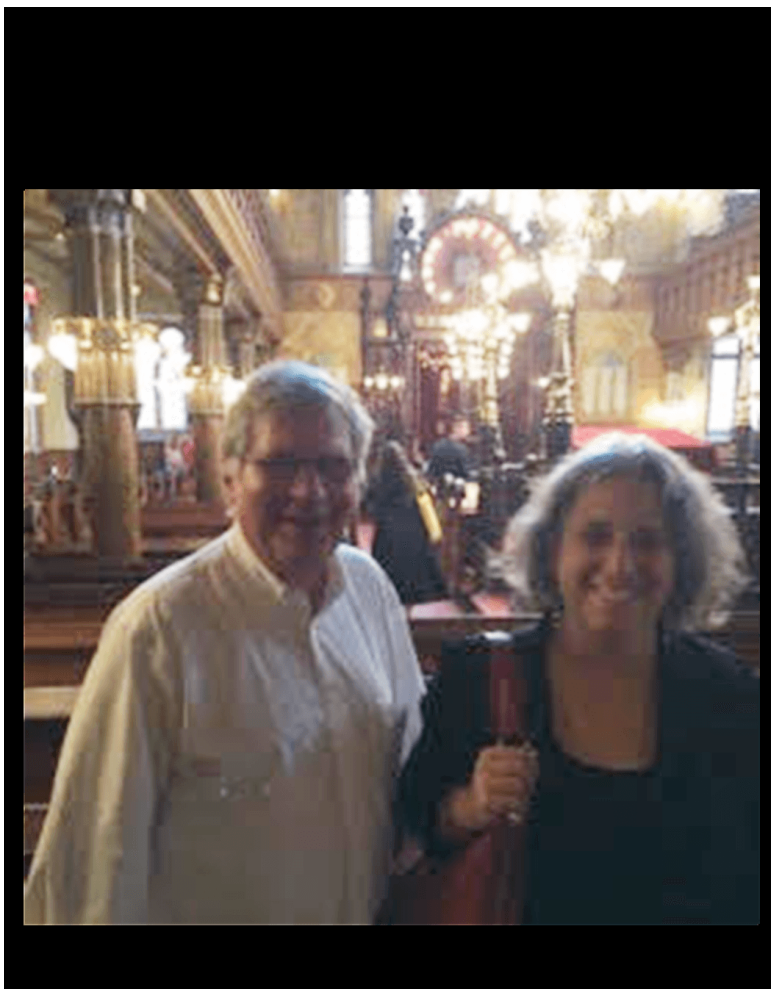
Jewish studies faculty and staff affiliated with the Elie Wiesel Center enjoyed dinner during the annual conference of the Association for Jewish Studies in San Diego.



The faculty and staff enjoy dinner together following the conference.

Alumni Spotlight: Jonathan Krivine

[Mr. Jonathan Krivine](#) (CAS '72) has been a great champion of the Elie Wiesel Center and its programs. He supports the [Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture series](#), which was inaugurated in 2005 with a lecture by Ambassador Dennis Ross. It has since featured speakers such as Admiral Ami Ayalon and Ethan Bronner. See page [23](#) for a description of this year's event. Mr. Krivine, who works in real estate in New York City, has helped to connect the Center with Mark Podwal, a New York based doctor and artist who illustrated many of Elie Wiesel's books and was a close friend of Professor Wiesel, as well as Senator George Mitchell, who will give the 2018 Rabin lecture. We thank him for his dedication to Jewish Studies at Boston University, and look forward to many more years of collaboration.



In September Abigail Gillman joined Jonathan Krivine in NYC for the opening of Mark Podwal's exhibition "Kaddish for Dabrowa Bialostocka" at the newly restored Eldrige Street Synagogue.

Our Students

Student Support

The EWCJS supports undergraduate and graduate students with stipends and scholarships, as well as academic enhancement grants. This summer, [Ellie Ash](#), a first year Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate Division of Religious Studies concentrating in Jewish Studies and focusing on contemporary Judaism and American Religion, was awarded the Brooks Family Scholarship to support her travel to the University of Haifa to study Hebrew.

[Arielle Kaim](#), a rising junior in the College of Arts and Sciences, was also awarded a travel stipend from the Brooks Family Scholarship fund to support her summer travel to Israel to conduct research at Soreq Laboratory at Hebrew University in Givat Ram.

[Mia Miller](#), a rising junior in the College of Communication studying Public Relations and Art History, was awarded the Levine Martin Family Scholarship to fund her summer internship in Israel in the area of Communications, Social Action, and Environment.



Chaim Elly Moseson, recently awarded a Ph.D. in the Graduate Division of Religious Studies concentrating in Jewish Studies and focusing on Hasidism, was awarded the Henry J. and Carole Pinkney Scholarship to support his travel to Israel to present his paper, "'A Number of Writings by a Number of Writers:' The Manuscript Evidence for the Origins and Development of Hasidic Literature" at the World Congress of Jewish Studies this summer. He was also awarded the Einhorn Book Award to support the purchase of books for his dissertation research.

Johnathan Kelly, a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate Division of Religious Studies, was awarded a grant from the Books Family Endowment Fund and the Levine-Martin Family Fund to support his research over the summer.

Jesslyn Katherine (CAS '18) and **Lexi Lang** (CAS '18) were recognized at the 2017 EWCJS award ceremony for their excellence in the study of Hebrew language and culture. Israeli Consul General Matar Zamir joined us to award the prizes that are funded each year by the Israeli Consulate.

Undergraduate Student Spotlight

Jamie Field (CAS '17)

An active member of the EWCJS community throughout her entire Boston University career, **Jamie Field** graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences with a major in Religion and a double minor in Jewish Studies and Hebrew. She plans to become a Rabbi in the Reform Movement focusing on Judaism and civil rights.



Jamie Field (CAS '17)

"Next year I'll be working as a religious educator at Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington DC! I'm excited to use this opportunity to get real life experience before going back to school as part of HUC-JIR's Rabbinical Ordination program. I'm so thankful to the Elie Wiesel Center for becoming my second home for the past 4 years. I've gained so much both in and out of the classroom, and I know that I have the tools I need to succeed and inspire the next generation of Jewish leadership."

- Jamie Field (CAS '17)

Graduate Student Spotlight

Chaim Elly Moseson (Ph.D., Graduate Division of Religious Studies)

As I prepare to defend my dissertation this summer and begin a post-doctoral position at the University of Hamburg as part of the Emmy Noether Research Group on Jewish Moralistic Writings in the Early Modern Period, I look back at my years at Boston University and I am filled with gratitude toward the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies. From my very first visit to the BU campus as a prospective student, the faculty, staff and fellow students affiliated with the Center have been a constant source of friendship, support and guidance. From the very beginning, I was offered both the financial and moral support to pursue my studies and research both in and outside of Boston University. My dissertation project, a comprehensive and critical assessment of the earliest traditions recording the teachings of the founder of the Hasidic movement, Israel Baal Shem Tov, was immeasurably enriched by the opportunities I received to conduct research, attend workshops and present at conferences at various locations in the United States, Europe and Israel.

I had the privilege of studying closely with Profs. Katz, Zank and Lobel and also with other affiliated faculty members, including Profs. Frankfurter, Rabinovitch, Seligman and Gillman, and I benefited from their superb scholarship and sagacious advice. They all supported me in the development of my project and graciously offered their time to discuss various aspects related to it as well as my wider academic interests. Finally, the rich intellectual and cultural programming offered by the Center has provided a real sense of community and friendship. My years at Boston University were immensely fulfilling both personally and intellectually, and I thank the Elie Wiesel Center for much of it.



Chaim 'Elly' Moseson

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.

The Hebrew Program in WLL

The Hebrew Program in WLL offers a rigorous and up-to-date curriculum in literature, language, and culture. In our language courses, students can achieve intermediate to advanced levels of fluency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. All of our courses incorporate cultural materials, technology, and internet resources. Courses in Hebrew and in English translation provide access to Israeli literature and film; news media, popular music, and food cultures of Israel and the Middle East.



Students of Intermediate Modern Hebrew 2 (LH212) celebrate the end of the semester.

New Holocaust and Genocide Studies Minor

The Holocaust and Genocide Studies Minor was first introduced to the campus community in the fall semester of 2016, under the auspices of the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies. To launch the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Minor, [Professor Nancy Harrowitz](#), co-director of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Minor, organized the screening of the movie *Denial* and a public talk by [Professor Deborah Lipstadt](#) for the Boston community. Both events took place on October 19. You can read more about the screening of *Denial* on page [25](#).



The new minor offers academically rigorous classes on the ethical questions around genocide and its causes. Here is a sample of our Holocaust and Genocide Studies courses, these offered by co-director of the minor [Professor Simon Payaslian](#):

The course on the **Prevention of Genocide** (HI 543/IR 437) was offered for the first time in the fall semester of 2016. This course briefly surveys the history of genocides since the early twentieth century and the development of international norms and standards under the leadership of the United Nations. Students then examine the existing institutional mechanisms for early warning and prevention of genocide. Finally, the students explore the available unilateral and multilateral policy options at the UN and regional levels for military intervention to stop an unfolding genocide.

The course on the **Armenian Genocide** (HI 380/HI 780), examines the causes and consequences of the Armenian Genocide. Students examine the historical evolution of the Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the Armenian Question as a national and international issue. They examine the social, political, economic, and military conditions in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century, and Turkish-Armenian relations under the Young Turk leadership. The course then examines in the various factors that led to the genocide, the chronology and processes of the genocide, followed by the survivors' responses to the experience and their memory of the genocide, and the responses by the international community.

The course on the **History of Genocide** (HI 384) covers the major genocides during the twentieth century, including such cases as the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, and Rwanda. Students analyze various definitions of genocide, particularly the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), and then examine in detail several case studies, their causes and consequences, while applying pertinent theoretical perspectives. The course concludes with an evaluation of efforts in genocide prevention under the United Nations and multilateral arrangements. This course was particularly successful in attracting students, as enrollment was 46.

For more information on the new minor, please see:

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

33 Courses Offered

Jewish Studies Course Highlights

With topics ranging from American Jewish Literature to Israeli Political Trials, from Jewish Bioethics to the Hebrew Bible, and from “Jews and Blacks” to the literary works of Elie Wiesel, our courses attracted a wide array of students interested in exploring the multifaceted fields of Jewish Studies.

Students in [Professor Deena Klepper](#)’s new **Food and Religion** course (RN 248) read several books and articles dealing with Jewish topics across time and space, including works by Mary Douglas, David Freidenreich, Elizabeth Ehrlich, and Susan Sered. As part of their study of kashrut, they read not only about biblical and historical contexts and contemporary practice, but also about recent efforts to add new layers of ethical awareness emphasizing environmental sustainability and animal rights. One of our three experiential cooking sessions (held outside of class time) featured responsibly raised kosher chicken from [Grow and Behold Kosher Pastured Meats](#); a vegetarian version of Moroccan Shabbat couscous and salads; and Sephardic challah. Students really appreciated the opportunity to bring their reading to life!



In [Professor Abigail Gillman](#)’s **Masterpieces of Modern Hebrew Literature (in English translation)** (LH 250) taught last spring, students returned to the origins of modern Hebrew prose in Eastern Europe, with a focus on S.Y. Agnon, and Dvora Baron-- the first female writer to describe the Shtetl from a woman’s perspective. Other highlights of the course were Meir Shalev’s magical novel, *The Blue Mountain*; Aharon Appelfeld’s postwar picaresque novel, *Iron Tracks*; and the contemporary dystopian novel of Israeli motherhood, *Dolly City*. In addition to writing formal essays, students enjoyed writing creative imitations of these literary masterworks.

One of the program’s most advanced courses was offered in the spring. [Mira Angrist](#)’s **Israeli Media and Culture** (LH 340), conducted entirely in Hebrew, introduced students to the most important media sources in Israel, including television, printed and electronic newspapers, radio and the internet, and in this way, to Israeli culture and its development. Students also studied the history of the Israeli media from 1948 on, and in turn, they compared how major events in Israel’s history were covered by different sources. Students also had opportunities to meet with an Israeli journalist; to view and discuss documentary films; and to engage in online and interactive discussions through the use of a course Wiki site.

Advanced Studies and Academic Colloquia

BUJS Forum

The purpose of the Boston University Jewish Studies Research Forum (BUJS) is to facilitate advanced research in the field of Jewish studies. 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.

In the Fall, four of our forum lectures were offered by scholars from our series on **Religious Identity 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, this series, which began in Spring 2016, was conceived and is directed by **Professor Kimberly Arkin**. Its purpose is to explore the of Jewish and Islamic practices in colonial and post-colonial spaces in

North Africa and Europe. In the fall, we welcomed **Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar** (University of Nevada at Reno), with respondent **Janet McIntosh** (Brandeis University); **Béatrice de Gasquet** (Université Paris Diderot), with respondent **Susannah Heschel** (Dartmouth College); and **Charles McDonald** (The New School for Social Research) with respondent **Marcy Brink-Danan** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).



Dr. Mikaela Rogozen-Soltar leads our first BUJS forum of the year.

Other presenters included:

- **Professor Jeffrey Bernstein** (College of the Holy Cross), September 27, 2016
“Beyond Sartre and Adorno: Jean Améry’s Radical Questioning of Jewish Identity and Philosophy in the wake of the Shoah”
- **Professor Leora Bilsky** (Visiting Professor, Boston University), March 15, 2017
“Jewish Restitution and Cultural Genocide”
- **Dr. Rachel Gordan** (Visiting Professor, Boston University), April 27, 2017
“How Judaism Became a World Religion”
- **Professor Kathryn Hellerstein** (University of Pennsylvania), January 30, 2017
“Jewish Poets/Jewish Prayers: Women Changing the Siddur”
- **Professor Jeffrey Shoulson** (University of Connecticut), February 13, 2017
“Mapping and Unmapping Jewish History in Early Modern Bibles”
- **Dr. Benedikt Eckhardt** (University of Bremen) and **Professor Steven Weitzman** (University of Pennsylvania) April 6, 2017
“Imagining the Maccabees,” part of the Maccabees Project



Professor Jeffrey Shoulson discusses Reformation-era maps in his BUJS lecture.

Maccabees Project

On December 1-2, Boston College partnered with Boston University and hosted the Maccabees Project Fall 2016 Dialogue Series featuring scholars [Dr. John Collins](#) of Yale University and [Dr. Paul Kosmin](#) of Harvard University. This semester's theme, "[Imperial Time vs. Jewish Time in the Period of the Maccabees](#)," explored how the Seleucid Empire projected its authority through its dating system, and how this establishment of "Seleucid time" may have elicited responses from the Jewish populations under Seleucid rule.

The Spring Dialogue series turned to the theme of "[Maccabean Fictions](#)." Ancient texts and archaeological remains rarely provide a neat and tidy picture for historians to analyze. Sometimes the texts reference events not attested in the archaeological record, and at other times, material evidence seems to contradict what is described in ancient narratives. This dilemma came into sharp focus during the Maccabees Project's Spring Dialogue Series on April 5th, 2017: "[Debating 1 Maccabees: Archaeology vs. Literature vs. History](#)." This was a dialogue among three scholars of the Maccabean period: Boston University's [Dr. Andrea Berlin](#), [Dr. Steven Weitzman](#) (University of Pennsylvania) and [Dr. Bendikt Eckhardt](#) (University of Bremen). The aim was to evaluate the implications of new archaeological evidence from northern Israel alongside our historical understanding of the events described in 1 Maccabees 9-11. On April 6, the conversation continued with a BUJS Forum session on the topic "Imagining the Maccabees," in which the speakers considered the role of modern literary approaches to ancient texts.



Dr. Paul Kosmin introduces his work on the Seleucid Empire and the conception of time at the Maccabees Project Fall 2016 Dialogue Series at Boston College.

Public Lectures and Events

Endowed Lectures



Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture

The fourth Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Lecture took place on October 26 at Boston University's Metcalf Hall with a screening of director [Erez Laufer](#)'s documentary *Rabin in His Own Words* (2015). [Matan Zamir](#), Deputy Consul General of Israel to New England, began the evening by greeting the crowd and telling the story of when he met Laufer, who was in India producing his documentary film *Rafting to Bombay*, while working at the Israeli Consulate of Mumbai. Visiting Professor [Nahum Karlinsky](#) (Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism) provided a brief introduction to the film.

The film, a deftly edited combination of archival footage, letters, personal interviews, speeches and photographs, contrasts the private life of Rabin with his life as a political figure, giving a nuanced picture of the man and the politician. Laufer's film, as the title indicates, relies on the Rabin's own voice to narrate. The audience enjoyed an intimate and thought-provoking portrayal of a complex individual.

The evening concluded with a thirty-minute question and answer session moderated by [Professor Abigail Gillman](#), Interim Director. Laufer addressed questions from the audience about Rabin's private life; his own choices regarding what to leave out of the film; and the effect of Rabin's policies on Israel. Attendees actively engaged with the issues raised by the documentary and entered into vigorous discussion of Rabin's legacy.

Leon and Alice F. Newton Lecture

The Elie Wiesel Center held the 2017 Leon and Alice F. Newton Lecture in Jewish Studies at the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House on April 3. [Dr. Ruth Calderon](#) (former Yesh Atid representative in Israel's Knesset, Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute) gave this year's lecture on "The Need for Religious Pluralism in Israel."

The evening began with an introduction by the [Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Ann Cudd](#). She gave a brief history of the lecture series, emphasizing that it was created in order to honor an alumnus, Leon Newton. [Professor](#)

“The work that I do is to take the classic text and reclaim it.”

[Abigail Gillman](#) then thanked Dr. Calderon for traveling from Tel Aviv to speak. Professor Gillman joked that "it's the first academic lecture I organized where I found the speaker through a YouTube video," referring to her discovery of Dr. Calderon's work by watching her [remarkable inaugural Knesset speech](#). Dr. Calderon, who is a leading figure in reviving Hebrew culture and a pluralistic Jewish-Israeli identity, has experience that extends beyond her service in the Knesset. She also co-founded Israel's first secular, pluralistic Beit



Midrash in Jerusalem, hosted a television show about Jewish texts, founded ALMA: A Home for Hebrew Culture in Tel Aviv, and authored two volumes of creative interpretations of Talmudic tales.

Dr. Calderon's talk was concerned with the personal and political dimensions of "Jewish pluralism, freedom of religion, and the identity of the state." Because Jewishness comprises both state religion as well as national identity, Israel faces particular and complicated

challenges with regard to freedom and pluralism. She described Zionist goals for a revival of Jewish culture in which Israel would act as a cultural center that would inspire young people to embrace Jewishness "because there are so many meaningful ideals, values, traditions, and rituals." She explained, "The work that I do is to take the classic text and reclaim it."

For a full write-up of the lecture, please go to <http://www.bu.edu/jewishstudies/2017/07/06/leon-and-alice-s-newton-family-lecture-in-jewish-studies-2017/>.

Inaugurating Our Minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Denial Film Screening and an Evening with Deborah Lipstadt

[Dr. Deborah Lipstadt](#) (Religion, Emory University) joined us on October 19 for a two-part event to celebrate Boston University's [new minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies](#).

The afternoon began with a screening of the film *Denial* (2016) at the Coolidge Corner Theater. Based on Lipstadt's book *History on Trial: My Day in Court With A Holocaust Denier*, the film depicts her five-year legal battle against David Irving, who accused her of libel for claiming that he was Holocaust denier and right-wing extremist. Because England's legal system puts the burden of proof on the defendant, she found herself in the position of being required to prove that the Holocaust occurred. The theater was filled to capacity with students, faculty, staff and community members who were impressed with the production of the film and fascinated by the story of Lipstadt's struggle against falsehood.

Later in the evening, Lipstadt offered a lecture in the George Sherman Union Auditorium to further share her experience

and personal insights, including details about the trial, the book, and the production of the film. In her talk, she described the motivations behind the legal approaches used during the trial, such as the controversial decision of her legal team to rely upon expert witnesses rather than allow victims to testify. She emphasized that, due to the gravity of the case, her priority was to win, because to lose would risk setting a troubling legal and historical precedent. Lipstadt's lecture was followed by a lively question and answer session and a discussion that continued at the reception afterwards. The day's events served as the perfect way to welcome the new minor to Boston University by challenging participants to reflect on the quest for justice in the wake of genocide.



Cantor Jeff Klepper and Abigail Gillman speak with Dr. Deborah Lipstadt.

Keene State's Jim Waller Speaks on "Becoming Evil"

The Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies held the second lecture inaugurating our new minor in Genocide and Holocaust Studies on March 21. The powerful presentation drew a diverse crowd of students, faculty, staff, community members, and religious leaders. Our speaker, [Professor Jim Waller](#) (Cohen Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Keene State College) gave a talk entitled "Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing."

"I would have preferred them to be monsters."

In her opening remarks, [Professor Nancy Harrowitz](#) commented on the significance of the new minor and invited all in attendance to reflect on "how we think about legacies of intolerance and hatred—and, perhaps, what we can do about them." Professor Waller then began



his lecture by talking about the importance of providing avenues of study for the Holocaust and genocide. He relayed an anecdote of one of his students who, upon being asked what one accomplishes by studying in her field, answered that one "becomes more fully human." He expanded on her moving answer, explaining that studying these events allows students to understand the depth of human potential for both good and evil.

His talk focused on the role of perpetrators of genocide, asking the question, "Who are these people and how are they enlisted to perpetrate such extraordinary evil?" He studied many profiles, such as those of Nazi war criminals and perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, trying to pinpoint the "origin of extraordinary human evil."

For a full write-up of the lecture, please go to <http://www.bu.edu/jewishstudies/becoming-evil-how-ordinary-people-commit-genocide-and-mass-killing/>.

Legacies of the Nuremberg Doctors Trial

On March 23, the Project on Ethics and the Holocaust, the Elie Wiesel Center and the Hillel Foundation held the Legacies of the Nuremberg Doctors Trial symposium at the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House to mark the 70th anniversary of the infamous trial's judgment. The symposium, which was supported by the Jewish Cultural Endowment, brought together the insight of physicians, lawyers, theologians, and students to examine the lasting impact of this international criminal trial and its contemporary implications for law, bioethics, and human rights.

Introductory remarks were made by [Dean Ann Cudd](#), followed by the first talk of the evening, given by [Dr. Michael Grodin](#), on "Medical Ethics in the Shadow of the Holocaust." The remainder of the evening included the following speakers and topics: [Rabbi Joseph Polak](#) on "The Helplessness of the Helpers," [Dr. Sondra Crosby](#) (School of Public Health) on "Nuremberg and Torture," student [Erin Miller](#) (School of Public Health) on "Eugenics and Euthanasia: Past and Present," [Professor Steven Katz](#) on "Misusing the Holocaust Paradigm," and [Professor George Annas](#) (School of Public Health, Law, and Medicine) on "The Legacy of the Doctors Trial."

Joshua Sobol and "Theatre as a Form of Resistance"

How can theatre be used as a tool of resistance against oppression and genocide? On March 29, the Elie Wiesel Center welcomed [Joshua Sobol](#), who was in residence at [Israeli Stage](#), to the Metcalf Trustee Center to help us find an answer to this question. Sobol is a preeminent Israeli playwright—an author of 75 plays, who has directed theatre productions in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Israel, and the United States. He spoke to a large and diverse audience of students, faculty, staff, community members, and theatre enthusiasts.



Sobol began the lecture by discussing his personal history and inspirations. Notably, he wrote a triptych of related plays about a Jewish ghetto in World War II that he found brought him closer to understanding the Holocaust and the role that theatre plays in a time of genocide. The plays are based on his research into the Jewish theater in the ghetto of Vilnius, Lithuania during the Holocaust.

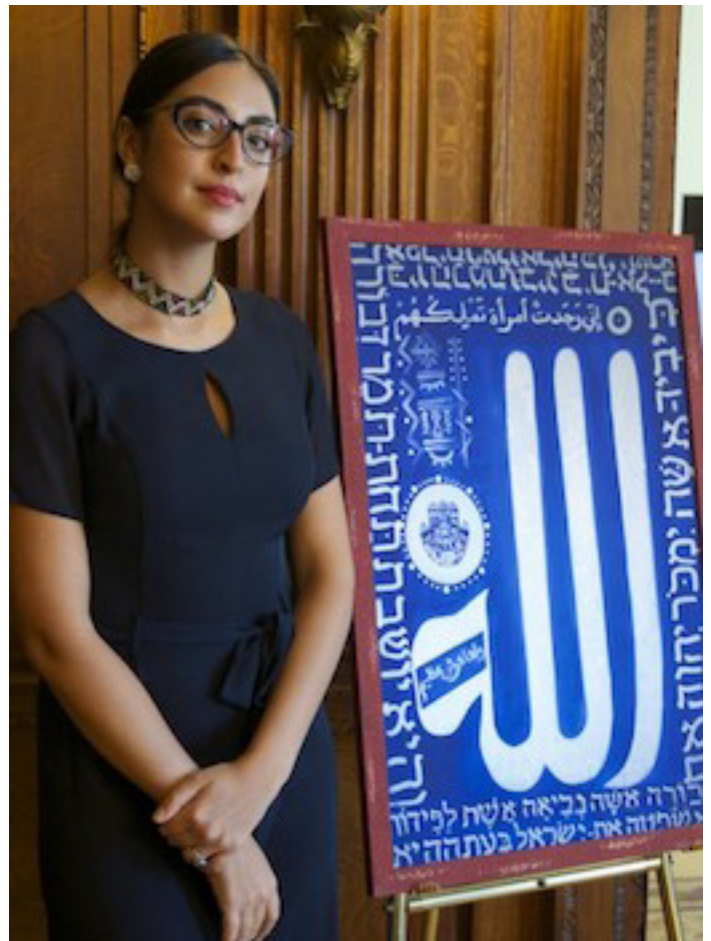
Sobol interviewed survivors from Vilna and found that the theatre was successful, not in spite of the circumstances but because of them. One interviewee said, “When one is humiliated and debased every day, working forced labor, and living in over-populated quarters, the best thing to do was to put on our best clothing and go to the theater.” An evening at the theater restored “the feeling of being human” and a sense of community.

For a full write-up of the lecture, please go to: <http://www.bu.edu/jewishstudies/2017/07/06/theatre-as-resistance/>.

Exploring the Arts

Collaboration with Visual Artist, Chama Mechtaly

[Chama Mechtaly](#) is a Moroccan artist living between Boston, Casablanca and Dubai. Her works express the textures of Muslim, Jewish, and Amazigh cultures woven into the fabric of Moroccan and Mediterranean culture. Using painting and photography as her media, she explores North Africa’s ethnic and religious diversity and reinvents the orientalist paintings of Maghreban women. The Elie Wiesel Center commissioned her to design a piece of work, seen below, that was used as a design theme in all of our media materials during the year. Ms. Mechtaly also presented a number of her paintings and a video installation at an exhibition and artist talk at the Center on September 15.



Middle Eastern Film Series



Professor Sassan Tabatabai introduces *Children of Heaven* (1997).

In partnership with Pardee's Middle East and North Africa Studies, the Elie Wiesel Center introduced a Middle Eastern Film Series, consisting of four screenings during Spring Semester with a diverse range of genres, themes, cultures, and languages. Documentaries and dramas were shown from Israel, Iran, and Egypt in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and even Italian. Film topics ranged from the difficulties of gendered violence in Egypt's Arab Spring to the complexities of assimilating in unfamiliar cultures. For each screening, a professor or the director of the film was present to provide information on its background or development and answer questions regarding identity, representation, and current or historical events raised by each film. We were especially proud to have director and alumna [Yael Katzir](#) (Ms.C. Broadcasting and Film, COM) join us from Israel for the screening of her documentary, *Shores of Light: Salento 1945-1947* (2015). The other films shown in the series were:

- *Trials of Spring* (2015, dir. Gini Reticker)
- *Children of Heaven* (1997, dir. Majid Majidi)
- *A Borrowed Identity* (2014, dir. Eran Riklis)

End of the Year Musical Festivities with Kol Arev

On May 4, the Center hosted **Kol Arev**, the Chamber Choir of Hebrew College, for a concert program of Hebrew and Yiddish songs titled Jewish Art Music: From St. Petersburg to Palestine and Beyond. The concert featured solos and ensemble pieces, as well as cello and piano pieces and a brief lecture by [Samuel Zarin](#) (New York University) on the history of Jewish Art Music. The second floor library was filled to capacity with students, faculty and friends who were charmed by the beautiful music, which ranged from the playful Minhag Chadash (Joel Engel 1868-1927) to the lyrical Hodu: Psalm 136 (Joseph Ness). The composer and cantor Joseph Ness was present to introduce his composition. Both [Lynn Torgove](#), the founder and artistic director of Kol Arev, and [Amy Lieberman](#), Musical Director, were also in attendance.

Collaborations and Co-Sponsorships

The Center collaborated with several University departments and other organizations to bring engaging and relevant events to campus and the community. We co-sponsored events with the following units within Boston University:

- the Pardee School of Global Studies' Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations
- the Center for the Humanities
- the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House
- the Center for European Studies
- the Arts Initiative
- the Scripture and the Arts Program
- Middle East and North Africa Studies
- Conversations on Race
- the World Languages and Literature Department

We also partnered with organizations in the greater Boston Jewish community and beyond to bring events to our campus: the Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry, the Boston Jewish Film Festival, the Israel Institute, the Shalom Hartman Institute, Israeli Stage, and Hebrew College, among others.



Overall lecture and event attendance in 2016-2017: 1277 attendees

Outreach and Media

The Elie Wiesel Center is thrilled to report that our audiences, both digital and in-person visitors, have increased in the past year.

According to our records, approximately 1277 people attended our events, including students, staff, faculty, religious leaders, and community members.

Our online communities were also enthusiastic participants in Center projects and events. In addition to our [website](#), which is updated on an ongoing basis throughout the year, EWCJS is actively engaging with our audience on social media: our [Facebook](#) page increased from 640 “likes” to 974, with posts reaching up to 3,900 people; our followers on [Twitter](#) increased from 783 to 1,319, with up to 2,311 impressions per day. We are happy to announce as of July 2017 that EWCJS is now on [Instagram](#).

EWCJS appeared in many articles in the press through the year. A large number mentioned the Elie Wiesel center in relation to Elie Wiesel’s passing in July 2016, such as this piece by Evan Allen and Alexandra Koktsidis in the Boston Globe: “[Fond Memories of Elie Wiesel in Boston](#).” Our new Holocaust and Genocide minor received much notice, including Haley Fritz’s feature “[BU launches Holocaust and Genocide Studies minor](#)” in The Daily Free Press and Susan Seligson’s “[CAS Launches New Minor in Holocaust and Genocide Studies](#)” in BU Today. Articles describing our individual lectures also appeared. In The Daily Free Press, Amanda Kaufman wrote “[Professor presents research on genocide and mass killings](#)” about the lecture with Professor Jim Waller, and Jordan Kimmel wrote “[BU Hillel hosts conference, reflects on impact of Holocaust](#)” about the Nuremberg Doctors Trial symposium. Additionally, Judy Bolton-Fasman, culture reporter for JewishBoston.com, covered Ruth Calderon’s Newton Lecture: “[Ruth Calderon’s Vision of Religious Pluralism in Israel](#).”

Acknowledgments

We thank our alumni and community members who supported us this year and helped us to sustain and expand the activities of the Center. We extend a special thank you to Jonathan N. Krivine. We are grateful to these friends of the Center for their generous donations in the past year:

The Aitz Hayim Center for Jewish Living

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This year's photography for the Center was done by:

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