

Jewish Studies Program

◆ FALL 2008 NEWSLETTER ◆

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UIC Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO Program
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

Letter from the Director

By Dagmar C.G. Lorenz

Fall Semester 2008, overshadowed by the general economic crisis and the excitement about the election, proved to be productive and stimulating for Jewish Studies faculty and students thanks to the continued commitment to our program by the university, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the larger community, especially the Jewish Federation of Metro Chicago. In the months to come good will and support on and off campus will be indispensable to maintain our current activities and continue building our program.

This Fall was particularly rich in activities. The Jewish Studies committee invited Kevin Schultz (History) to join the Jewish Studies faculty. I am pleased to congratulate our colleague Matthew Lippman (Criminology, Law and Justice), a long-time member of Jewish Studies, who received the LAS Master Teacher award. In the near future he will begin offering a course on genocide to Jewish Studies students on a regular basis.

Jewish Studies continued its ongoing initiatives, the Israel Studies program and the Jewish Muslim Initiative, this Fall with an emphasis on university-wide programming and teaching. We benefited greatly from the presence of Visiting Israel Scholar Nadav Davidovitch (Ben Gurion University), sponsored by the Jewish Federation and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Dr. Davidovitch taught a course in the Jewish Studies Program, team-taught another course in the School of Public Health, and presented thought-provoking lectures on both sides of campus and at the Levine Hillel Center including lectures on the topics of "Health and Immigration in Israel: From Melting Pot to Multi-culturalism," "Toward a National Environmental Health Action Plan: The Israeli Experience," "Public Health, Culture, & Colonial Medicine: Smallpox & Variolation in Palestine during the British Mandate," "Recalling the Survivors: Between Memory and Forgetfulness of Hospitalized Holocaust Survivors." He also took part in this year's Jewish medical ethics symposium organized at the College of Medicine. To UIC students this outstanding scholar, whose research combines Humanities and medical perspectives, provided leadership and inspiration.

Additional events enriching our program this past semester included the lecture by Visiting Max Kade Professor Primus Heinz Kucher (University of Klagenfurth, Austria), titled " ' I Will Never See I Will Never See It Again, But It Remains Fixed in My Memory' (Manes Sperber): Visions and Memories of the Shtetl in German-Jewish Literature" held at the Sukkah at the Levine Hillel Center and a Brown Bag presentation by Michal Alberstein,

(continued on page 4...)

Jewish Studies Says Goodbye to Visiting Israel Scholar, Nadav Davidovitch, M.D.



L-R: Bernd Neuburger, Nadja Seelich, Nadav Davidovitch, Dagmar Lorenz, Primus Kucher, and Elizabeth Loentz discussing Central and Eastern European issues at lunch, October 28, 2008.

By Nadav Davidovitch, M.D.:

Time has flown by and Fall Semester is over and with it my stay here at UIC. This short letter can not convey of course my deep gratitude for the wonderful time I spent here. It can not describe all the interaction with students and faculty and the warmth and generosity poured over me. My stay here on this particular time had different meaning and layers. I was teaching a course on Israel as a multicultural society, at a time when Israeli society is facing many tensions and difficulties. I tried to do my best to convey a nuanced picture of the complexities, the historical, social and political context of everyday Israeli life. Through other different venues I had the chance to interact with undergraduate students, medical and public health students—Jewish, Muslim or Christian. I would like especially to mention the Hillel Center and Executive Director Marla Baker, that gave me the opportunity to meet with students in an informal way, including the organization of a Jewish medical ethics meeting that I could take part in.

On another level, being here during the last historic elections was an amazing experience, especially being at Grant Park on Election Day, feeling the diverse crowd and new energies. This is not my first time living in the U.S. My other experiences were in Boston and New York and I must say that living here in Chicago was an exciting experience that I will never forget.

I had a long list of people to thank for making my stay here so wonderful: Michael Kotzin, from the Jewish

Federation, for establishing the Visiting Israel Studies Scholar program, I am sure that we will continue to cooperate when I am back in Israel. Robert Johnston, from the History Department, an old close friend who actually let me know about the existence of this program and urged me to apply. From picking me up from the airport to my rented apartment, sharing with me his office and hosting me and the family on various occasions during holidays and just regular days, he was my guardian angel. Sandy Sufian, another old close friend, a historian of medicine and public health like myself, literally took care of me and my family. Paul Brandt-Rauf, the dean of the school of public health, who I know already from his days in New York, opened for me both his school and home. And of course you can not be in a new place without making new friends: Rachel Havrelock, a bible scholar who introduced me not only to academic life here but also to her community at KAM—just across the street of Obama's house... And finally many thanks to Dagmar Lorentz, the chair of the Jewish Studies Program and Nancy Gebhardt, the assistant director, who gave me all the necessary warmth and support.

Leaving now back to Israel I can assure you how I am deeply connected to so many people that I can feel already part of the Jewish Studies Program. I hope that during my stay I passed on to you the complex and fascinating realities and challenges that Israeli society is facing right now. Good bye to all of you and thanks again for everything!

Events and Programs

Dr. Nadav Davidovitch, M.D.
Ben Gurion University



**"Health and Immigration in Israel:
From Melting Pot to Multi-culturalism"**
Tuesday, September 23, 2008

**"Toward a National Environmental
Health Action Plan: The
Israeli Experience"**
Wednesday, October 8, 2008

**"Public Health, Culture, & Colonial
Medicine: Smallpox & Variolation in
Palestine during the British Mandate"**
Tuesday, October 14, 2008

**"Recalling the Survivors: Between Memory
and Forgetfulness of Hospitalized
Holocaust Survivors"**
Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Jewish Medical Ethics Symposium
Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Primus Heinz Kucher
University of Klagenfurt

**" 'I Will Never See It Again, But It Remains
Fixed in My Memory' (Manes Sperber): Vi-
sions and Memories of the Shtetl in German
-Jewish Literature"**
Thursday, October 16, 2008

The Germanic Studies Program hosted Professor Kucher from the University of Klagenfurt in Austria as their Max Kade Scholar for the Fall 2008 semester. Kucher presented a talk for the Jewish Studies Program in the Sucah at Levine Hillel Center during the Succot holiday. He discussed his research concerning the mixed feelings of loss and escape from the *shtetls* of 19th century Europe.

Michal Alberstein
Bar Ilan University

**"Multicultural Israel: From Pragmatism
to Legal Battles, Toward Identity Conversation"**
Thursday, October 23, 2008

At this brown-bag luncheon, Professor Alberstein presented her research on the social conflicts between the ultra-Orthodox Haredi communities in Israel and the secular Jewish communities where politics often collide in heated battles in the Knesset and in local elections. As the wife of Visiting Israel Scholar Nadav Davidovitch, the Jewish Studies Program was lucky to find Professor Alberstein willing to share her work with us while visiting from Israel for the Jewish holidays.

Michael Berkowitz
University College London

**"Jews and the Evolution of Photojournalism:
From 'Beneath Contempt' to Elegance"**
Monday, November 3, 2008

Professor Michael Berkowitz (PhD at the University of Wisconsin, Madison) had begun his career at Ohio State University and after years of teaching in London, England was happy to be back in the Midwest to discuss his work on the many aspects of photojournalism in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries. Professor Berkowitz gave a lively talk about the many contributions that Jewish photographers made to its becoming a respected profession.

**Nadja Seelich &
Bernd Neuburger**

**"Diaspora, Exile, Genocide: Aspects of the European
Jewish Experience in Literature and Film", a
discussion following the screening of their film,
*Theresienstadt Looked Like a Spa***
Thursday, October 30, 2008

Filmmakers Neuburger and Seelich joined Professor Dagmar C. G. Lorenz's Thursday morning class, JST 125 "Diaspora, Exile, Genocide: Aspects of the European Jewish Experience in Literature and Film" to discuss the screening of the film they wrote and produced together about the years that Seelich's grandmother spent in the concentration camp that was created by the Nazis out of the medieval walled city of Theresienstadt, near Prague.

Edna Erez published an article with Anat Berko, "Palestinian Women in Terrorism: Protectors or Protected?" in the *Journal of National Defense Studies*, 6: 83-110 (2008). Professor Erez also collaborated with Berko on "Martyrs or Murderers? Victimizers or Victims? The Voices of Would be Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers," Chapter 8 in *Cindy Ness, In the Name of the Cause: Female Militancy and Terrorism in Context*. (Francis and Taylor 2008).

Richard Levy wrote a chapter titled "The Migration of Discredited Myths: The Wandering Protocols" in Michael Berenbaum (ed.), *Not Your Father's Antisemitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2008), 169-81.

Matthew Lippman will speak at the Peace Palace in the Hague, The Netherlands at the '60 Years Genocide Convention' on December 7th-8th.

Dagmar C. G. Lorenz published several articles on Jewish post-Shoah writers "Entschleierte Erotik. Sexualbeziehungen als Machtverhältnisse bei Albert Drach und Elfriede Jelinek" in the Austrian journal *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* [Austria in History and Literature], "Elias and Veza Canetti's Exile Experience. A Text-Based Exploration." *ISSEI* Vol. 1/3 (2008). and "The Milburns and the Too-goods: Elias and Veza Canetti's Experience of Exile" in *The Worlds of Elias Canetti: Centenary Essays*, ed. William Collins Donahue and Julian Preece. She wrote the introduction to the collection of essays "Introduction." *Rebirth of a Culture. Jewish Identity and Jewish Writing in Germany and Austria Today*, and the German-language essay "Kafka und gender" for the *Kafka-Handbuch*, ed. Bettina von Jagow and Oliver Jahraus. With the Modern Language Association of American she published "Teaching *The Tin Drum* from the Perspective of Jewish Cultural Studies and Holocaust Studies" in: *Approaches to Teaching Grass's The Tin Drum*, ed. Monika Shafi, and contributed to Matthias P. Konzett and Margarete Lamb-Faffelberger's Elfriede Jelinek volume "Ideology and Criticism in the Novel and the Film *Die Ausgesperrten* [Wonderful, Wonderful Times]." She contributed for *The Literary Encyclopedia* on line the entry on Kafka's *Letter to His Father* (<http://litencyc.com/>). She reviewed seven books in the field of Jewish Cultural Studies for *Modern Austrian Literature*, *German Quarterly*, and *Germanic Studies Review*. She lectured widely in the UK and the US on Jewish writers and topics.



L-R C. Chiswick, N. Davidovitch, S. Sufian, E. Erez, P. Kuchner, D. Lorenz, and R. Johnston at welcome luncheon for Davidovitch., September 3, 2008.

First Jewish Muslim Initiative Post-Doctoral Fellowship

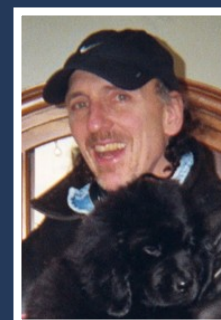
Rachel Havrelock has brought Eli Shai Shibi, a prominent Israeli scholar, specialist in the works of A. B. Yehoshua, for the Spring 2009 semester. Shibi will teach JST 225, Topics in Muslim-Jewish Relations as well as present lectures and interact with Jewish Studies Program faculty and students. Shibi's class will be "The journey of the two merchants and the secret love story of the mystics; Jewish-Muslim fruitful co-operation in commerce and spirituality as reflected in literature and religious texts." His first talk will be a brown bag luncheon on Wednesday, February 18, at 12:30 PM in University Hall, Room 650.

Congratulations to **Matthew Lippman!**

The Jewish Studies Program is proud to announce that committee member, Matthew Lippman, Professor of Criminology, Law, and Justice, and leading legal expert on the Nazi holocaust has been recognized with the LAS Master Teacher Designation as well as the 2008 Silver Circle Award. Professor Lippman will begin offering a course on genocide in the Jewish Studies program on a regular basis.

The primary goal of The Master Teacher Initiative is to recognize and provide incentives for excellence in teaching in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The designation of Master Teacher carries a monetary award of \$10,000 but is also a commitment to teach two extra courses and agreeing to become a teaching mentor in one's own unit as well as in other disciplines. When asked what this award means to him, Matthew said, "My only comment is to thank all my colleagues for creating that rare research environment in which teaching and students continue to come first. I want to extend my special gratitude to Dagmar [Lorenz] for her support and encouragement."

Winners of the Silver Circle award are chosen by the graduating seniors, making this a unique honor that Matthew has received again and again. In an interview with the *UIC Flame* campus newspaper, Lippman had this to say about his teaching methodology: "I tend to be nauseatingly organized... I'm a strong believer in the innate capacity of students to tackle complicated issues."



Faculty Profile

Robert D. Johnson, Associate Professor in History

By Nancy S. Gebhardt

In this issue we want to introduce Robert D. Johnston, Jewish Studies Program Committee member. Professor Johnston is Associate Professor and Director of the Teaching of History Program. He teaches courses in modern U.S. history and general historiography as well on the teaching of history. His book, [The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon](#) (Princeton University Press, 2003) received the President's Book Award from the Social Science History Association. He has edited or co-edited volumes on the history of twentieth-century alternative medicine, rural politics, and the middle class.



How long have you been at UIC?

Since 2003, when I became the director of the history department's Teaching of History program.

How did you become interested in your field? What or who inspired you?

Back as an undergraduate, I was exposed to the wonderful world of social history through great professors as well as the classic work of E.P. Thompson, [The Making of the English Working Class](#).

What do you feel is your greatest professional accomplishment so far?

Two: my book, [The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon](#) (Princeton, 2003), and my being academic director of three million-dollar Teaching American History grants.

Can you discuss the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago's (JUF) support of the Visiting Israel Scholar Program at UIC and your own role in the program?

In 2004, three members of the Jewish Studies faculty—Sam Fleischer, Robert Gordon, and I—went on a JUF faculty trip to Israel.

Out of that grew the JUF's impressive commitment to bringing Israeli scholars to Illinois campuses in order to teach Israel studies. The Federation has been very generous, and I've taken the lead in recruiting professors for and overseeing the program.

What is your vision for the Jewish Studies Program in the future?

To keep doing important and visible work in the university, and to support the programs and faculty that we have.

What else would you like to share with the Jewish Studies Program Community?

I'm working on a book about controversies over vaccination in American history, to be published by Oxford. The book will go back to the early eighteenth century but will focus on the last thirty years. I'm not a primary practitioner of Jewish Studies, but one of my main characters is a "medical heretic" named Robert Mendelsohn who went from being a prominent establishment pediatrician to the most visible opponent of vaccination in the country. He was an observant Conservative Jew, and his religious views definitely influenced his medical ideas. I'm having fun trying to figure out just how.

Letter from the Director (continued from page 1)

Bar Ilan University, on "Multicultural Israel: From Pragmatism to Legal Battles, Toward Identity Conversation." The Jewish Studies Program furthermore had the opportunity to present Michael Berkowitz (University College, London) with a lecture on "Jews and the Evolution of Photojournalism: From 'Beneath Contempt' to Elegance" unexpected pleasure to host Czech-Austrian-Jewish filmmaker Nadja Seelich, a daughter of Holocaust survivors, and her Austrian partner Bernd Neuburger for a discussion of their documentary film *Theresienstadt Looked Like a Spa* screened in my course on "Diaspora, Exile, Genocide: Aspects of the European Jewish Experience in Literature and Film."

This coming Spring semester we will again welcome a guest from Israel, the Jerusalem-based scholar Eli Shai Shibi, whose research is in the field of Jewish mysticism, the Shabbatean movement, and Ottoman culture. He will teach a course on Muslim-Jewish Relations under the auspices of the ongoing Jewish-Muslim Initiative, directed this year by Rachel Havrelock. For Women's Awareness Month the Jewish Studies Program together with the Levine Hillel Center is organizing a one-day symposium to be held March 19 on the topic of "Jewish Women and Family Life." Featured out-of-town guests include acclaimed writer Farideh Goldin (*Wedding Song: Memoirs of an Iranian Jewish Woman*), Sylvia Barack Fishman (Brandeis University), Marion Kaplan (NYU), and the Chicago-based clinical psychologist Jessica Lippman. UIC Jewish Studies faculty members Carmel Chiswick and Elizabeth Loentz will examine the topic of from their respective fields of expertise, Economics and Germanic Studies. We are also looking forward to hosting a presentation by Jewish Studies professor and feminist poet Alicia Ostriker (New England College) on "Psalms and Poetry" and a lecture by Barry Wimplheimer (Northwestern University) on "Rabbinic Heroes." Distinguished UIC alumna Hasia Diner (NYU) will join us toward the end of Spring Semester for an outreach event where she will speak about the mission of Jewish Studies in UIC's diverse urban setting.

Dagmar C. G. Lorenz

Dear Friends of Jewish Studies,

We arrive at the end of another semester and another year, 2008, with satisfaction in the advancement of our program in the past year and hope for even more growth in the future. We have successfully developed our Visiting Israel Scholar Program with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and deepened our ties with the Levine Hillel Center. In the summer of 2008, I began my first year as faculty liaison to the Levine Hillel Center by representing UIC Jewish Studies at the Greater Chicago Jewish Festival with Paul Bennett, the new governing board president. We spent the morning talking to UIC alumni and potential students and their parents about Jewish community and Jewish Studies at UIC. A special Israel night Shabat dinner was held at Hillel on Friday, November 21, which attracted many Jewish students and visitors from the Jewish Federation, including the speaker, former Jerusalem Post editor, Carl Schrag. I am excited about the potential growth that I see coming in the numbers of students taking an interest in the Jewish Studies Program. Mr. Schrag is also presenting a seven week Israel Seminar at Hillel in the spring of 2009.



Paul Bennett, President of the Levine Hillel Center Governing Board, and Nancy Gebhardt, increasing community awareness of UIC Jewish Programs at the annual Greater Chicago Jewish Festival in June, 2008.

In August, Brandeis University provided funding for me to attend the Brandeis in the Berkshires Conference, "Israel at Sixty" in Lenox, Massachusetts. Speakers included Colette Avital, M.K. and deputy speaker of the Knesset, Michael Doran from the U.S. Department of Defense, and Irwin Cotler, MP and former minister of justice of Canada. The speakers discussed Israel's many accomplishments as well as the serious challenges that lay ahead. JSt alumna, Liat Shetret ('07), and her fellow Columbia University graduate student, Salim Ahmed Al-Jahwari presented the "People Building Peace" Workshop here at UIC, under the auspices of the Davis Projects for Peace, International House New York and the UIC Honors College.

Jewish Studies offered two new classes in Israel Studies and Israeli Film Studies which were both very successful this year. The Jewish Studies program is also actively involved in creating an independent study offering to Jewish Studies students that will be another way to accommodate students who want to pursue a minor, but have difficulty fitting in our classes. The UIC Study Abroad Program is developing an exchange program with Hebrew University in Jerusalem and invited their representative, Bethany Strauss to campus to encourage Jewish students to participate. Irina Krymova arranged for Bethany to do a presentation on the program at the Levine Hillel Center where a number of students expressed interest. Inside this edition you'll see greetings from and updates about many JSt alumni. Our student aide, Roshina Khan has been elected to the Student Senate and Haley O'Leary, our webmaster and desktop publishing specialist, has turned this newsletter into a very professional looking publication. We're very thankful to have a technician of her skill preparing all of our beautiful publicity materials. Nick Stephens is now sending out regular e-mail announcements of Jewish Studies events in an effort to boost program attendance. We hope to see all of our supporters and some new ones at the exciting list of events that our Director Dagmar Lorenz and faculty member Rachel Havrelock have lined up for the spring semester. Thank you all for your support and happy Hannukah!

Nancy S. Gebhardt, Associate Director of the Jewish Studies Program

Alumni News

Julia Geynisman (2007) is mentoring a foster care child while attending medical school at the University of Michigan.

Jumana Kawar (2008) extended her internship at the Jordanian Embassy in Washington DC into a full time position as assistant to the Ambassador, HRH Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

Khushnaz Ogra (2008), a former student aide, has obtained a full time appointment as a Research Data Analyst in the Psychiatry Department here at UIC.

Liat Shetret (2007) continues her graduate studies at Columbia University in New York. She and her fellow Columbia grad student, Salim Ahmed Al-Jahwari presented their Davis work here at International House.

A View From Jerusalem

By Eugene Liebenson

Every morning on my way to class I am still a bit surprised by the majestic view. The golden onion of the Dome of the Rock on top of the ancient Temple Mount reflects the sun of a new morning in Jerusalem. I'm surprised by the city prized by so many empires come and gone. I'm also surprised that I am here for a semester, despite the fact that it is my last semester in college and that Israel is on the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Warning List. I owe this opportunity to the enormous support I found from the Jewish Studies Program, the Deans and advisors of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Study Abroad Program. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) on Mt. Scopus was opened 23 years before the founding of the modern state of Israel on April 1, 1925. The first Board of Governors consisted of Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Martin Buber and Haim Weitzman (the first President of Israel). The campus is complete with a botanic garden, a British World War I cemetery, many beautiful courtyards and even very decent cafes.



I came to Israel only in need of electives, which left me open to take classes simply because they sounded enjoyable. All of my classes are in English, except for Ulpan (intensive Hebrew) at the international school of HU, Rothberg. My professors are all *olim* (immigrants) from English speaking countries. My professor of International Law, Robbie Sabel, is former Israeli Ambassador to the UN and former legal advisor to the Israeli Secretary of State. The class focuses largely on Israeli foreign policy in the scope of international law. In another class on the Jewish communities of Medieval Europe, we examine original texts dating to that period.

Jerusalem is an amazing city for every aspect of student life. The Old City is a living history book with some of the holiest sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all five minutes away from each other. The streets, built by the Ottomans, are bustling with tourists and the faithful of these three great religions. Original pavement, dating to the time of King Herod, is visible in places. For nightlife, students hit the famous Ben Yehuda Street, in the Jerusalem party district. The most breathtaking parts of Israel are all accessible by intra-city buses. Also a student can take advantage of the proximity to Jordan and Egypt, both countries with peace agreements with Israel. After almost a full semester, I am still discovering Israel and Jerusalem.

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
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The University of Illinois at Chicago
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Eugene Liebenson rappelling down a mountain in Qumran, 2008

