The Jewish Studies Program has been chosen among a select group of universities across the US to host one of nine leading Israeli artists who are in residence for the 2015-16 academic year. The artists are here as part of the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artists Program, under the auspices of the Israel Institute, Washington, D.C.

The Program is honored to be hosting award-winning Israeli writer Assaf Gavron for the Spring 2016 semester. Of Gavron’s sixth novel, The Hilltop, published this year in English, Amos Oz wrote, the work “…shimmers with wisdom, truth, humor and melancholy.” The New York Times called it “structurally brilliant.”

Assaf Gavron has published five novels (Ice, Moving, Almost Dead, Hydromania and The Hilltop), a collection of short stories (Sex in the Cemetery), and a non-fiction collection of Jerusalem falafel-joint reviews (Eating Standing Up). His fiction has been translated into German, Russian, Italian, French, English, Dutch, Swedish, Greek and Bulgarian. His latest English translation, The Hilltop, was published in 2014 by Scribner in the US. Among the awards he has won are the Israeli Prime Minister’s Creative Award for Authors, the Israeli Bernstein Prize, the DAAD artists-in-Berlin fellowship in Germany, the Buch für die Stadt award in Germany, and the Prix Courrier International award in France. His fiction has been adapted for the stage, Habima – Israel’s national theater, and four of his novels were optioned for film or TV by Israeli and international film producers.

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When Abe Nasatir accepted a position at San Diego State Teachers College in 1928, the school’s faculty numbered fifty-six. Only ten of them held doctorates in their disciplines. Even fewer conducted scholarly research and published their findings. Nasatir, however, blazed the trail for the teacher-scholar paradigm that would characterize the future faculty of San Diego State University.

Born in 1904 to immigrant parents from Lithuania, young Abe recalled studying Torah and Talmud with his Orthodox Jewish father early every morning before public school classes began. He aspired to be a violinist or a physician, but those hopes ended when his left hand was mangled in an accident resulting in its amputation to the knuckles. Excelling in high-school, he skipped several grades and enrolled at UC Berkeley in 1919 before he turned fifteen. Abe completed his bachelor’s degree in a mere two years. Under the tutelage of Professor Herbert Bolton, Abe focused on the history of the Indian trade and diplomacy in Spanish Illinois Country, finishing his master’s thesis in one year and dissertation four years later. Before coming to San Diego, he taught at the University of Iowa.

Nasatir’s tenure spanned forty-six years during which San Diego State Teacher’s College evolved into a state college in 1935 and then a university in 1972. Despite a heavy teaching load, Abe became a prolific scholar. He authored fifteen books and co-authored a popular Latin American history textbook which went through three editions and was translated into German and Polish. His corpus of publications earned him the title “the Dean of Documents” from his academic peers.

Nasatir held prestigious offices in the profession and garnered many honors. He served as the president of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association and the vice-president and president of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society. A recipient of four Fulbright fellowships, he was named a Distinguished Professor of the California State University system. The University of Judaism in Los Angeles conferred an honorary doctorate upon him.

Abe left an impressive record of service. He helped found the chapter of Hillel at the university in 1948, organized an adult education Jewish Studies institute for the metropolitan area the next year, and lobbied for the establishment of the Jewish Studies minor in 1970. He served a term as the president of the United Jewish Federation of San Diego.

While he was perceived as an anomaly for being so deeply engaged in research and writing in the 1930s, excellence in both scholarship and teaching has become the norm for San Diego State faculty. The recently renovated Nasatir Hall stands as a tangible monument to his impact on campus. Unfortunately, the Nasatir Professorship endowment created in the 1980s no longer generates sufficient revenue to support a full-time position. Instead, it currently subsidizes the teaching of the modern Jewish history course on a regular basis. When Abe Nasatir died in 1991, his wife Ida requested that donations in his memory be made to the Jewish Studies Program. Since it is never too late to honor her wish, please consider honoring Abe’s remarkable life and achievements by making a contribution to the Nasatir Endowment.
Israel in the 21st Century: New Hopes, New Challenges: Four Master Lectures

The lectures are co-sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program and Hillel San Diego. They will be held at SDSU, College of Arts & Letters, AL-101, and are free to the public. Complimentary parking. For directions please go to: http://jewishstudies.sdsu.edu/docs/LectureSeriesParking.pdf

March 22nd, 7:00 pm
“Israel’s Soft Power: Public Diplomacy in Action”
Dr. Chanan Naveh, visiting Israeli Scholar

Dr. Chanan Naveh is the 2015/16 Visiting Israeli Scholar for the Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University and a Senior Lecturer in the School of Communications, Sapir College, (Israel). For 15 years he was a lecturer at the International Relations Department at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and at the Political Science Department at Tel Aviv University. From 1969-2004 he worked for Kol Israel’s (Israeli Radio) news division, in various positions including Editor-in-Chief and managing editor. Dr. Naveh specializes in research of the Internet and international relations, international media, media and foreign affairs, radio in Israel and covering these topics in international simulations. The University of Michigan Press published his latest book, World Politics Simulations in a Global Information Age, in 2015. Other recent publications include: “Crisis Press Coverage in the Arab-Israel & East-West Conflicts,” Media, War & Conflict (2013); ”Israeli Radio during the Six-Day War,” The Journal of Israeli History (2009); The Web as an Israeli Solidarity Environment during The Second Lebanon War (2008); and Pirate Radio in Israel (2007), awarded the distinguished grant of the Second Authority for Radio and Television (Israel).

April 6th, 7:00 pm
“Intersectionality Makes You Stupid: The Regressive Left, Israel and Third Worldism”
James Kirchick

James Kirchick is a journalist and foreign correspondent currently based in Washington. He is a correspondent for The Daily Beast and writes the "Continental Drift" column on Europe for Tablet Magazine. Kirchick’s writing has appeared in The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, Ha'aretz, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, Slate, The Weekly Standard, National Review and Commentary, among other publications. A former editor at The New Republic and writer-at-large for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty based in Prague, he is a recipient of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Journalist of the Year Award. Kirchick has been a Robert Bosch Foundation Fellow in Berlin, a Media Fellow at the Hoover Institution, and is a professional member of the PEN American Center and a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is a fellow with the Foreign Policy Initiative in Washington.

April 11th, 7:00 pm
Dr. Gerald Steinberg

Dr. Gerald Steinberg is professor of Political Studies at Bar Ilan University, Israel, and president of NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute. His research areas include Middle East diplomacy and security, the politics of human rights and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Israeli politics and arms control. Steinberg is a member of Israel Council of Foreign Affairs;

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Israel in the 21st Century
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contributes to the Institute for Counter-terrorism; the Mideast research group of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI); and adviser to Israeli governmental bodies and Knesset. Recent publications include “NGOs, Human Rights, and Political Warfare in the Arab-Israel Conflict;” “The UN, the ICI and the Separation Barrier: War by Other Means” (Israel Law Review); “Best Practices for Human Rights and Humanitarian NGO Fact-Finding” (co-author), Nijhoff, 2012; and “Filling in the Blanks: Documenting Missing Dimensions in the UN and NGO Investigations of the Gaza Conflict,” 2015. In 2013, Professor Steinberg and NGO Monitor were awarded the prestigious Menachem Begin Prize.

April 25, 7:00pm
An Intersectional Failure: Situating Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews in Contemporary Jewish Discourse

Analucía Lopezrevoredo and David Schraub

Analucía Lopezrevoredo serves as the Program Director for JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa, and works as an Adjunct Instructor at Portland State University’s School of Social Work. She holds Bachelor degrees in Political Science, Urban Studies, and Economics from Loyola Marymount University, a Master’s degree in Organizational Management and Leadership from the University of the Pacific, and is completing her Ph.D. in Social Work and Social Research at Portland State University.

David Schraub is the Darling Foundation Fellow in Public Law and a Senior Research Fellow at the California Constitution Center, both at the University of California, Berkeley Law School. His research interests are in constitutional law, contemporary issues of discrimination and inequality with particular focus on racism and anti-Semitism, and deliberative democracy. David’s scholarship has been published in, among other forums, the University of Chicago Law Review, the California Law Review, the Boston University Law Review, and Social Theory & Practice. David received a B.A. in political science from Carleton College, his J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School, and is currently a doctoral candidate in political science at the University of California, Berkeley.

City of the Future: Songs from the Golden Era of Yiddish Culture

City of the Future is a concert celebrating the release of SDSU Jewish Studies Program Artist-in-Residence Yale Strom’s latest CD, City of the Future: Yiddish Songs from the Former Soviet Union, released on November 13, 2015. The recording is a cultural record of music written in the 1930s by Shmuel Polonski. Most of the songs on City of the Future which were formerly only heard within Yiddish communities in the Soviet Union, are being introduced to the world for the first time.

In 1931, Yiddish culture was thriving in the former Soviet Union. There were Yiddish schools, theatres, choirs, literature and discussion groups. Shmuel Polonski was a 29-year-old composer who wanted to spread the joy of Yiddish and the Soviet way of life through his songs, which were to be sung by youth choruses. Polonski set his original compositions to poems by such renowned Yiddish poets as Perets Markish, Izi Kharik and Itzik Fefer.

Some of the best interpreters of Yiddish songs will be performing, including: Michael Alpert - Scotland, Judy Bressler - Boston, Anthony Russell - Oakland, and Elizabeth Schwartz - San Diego.

The concert also features musicians Norbert Stachel - reeds (NYC), Peter Stan - accordion (NYC), Jeff Pekarek - bass and guitar, John Martin - percussion, and Yale Strom - violin.
Students who’ve never met became allies early this month as participants in a virtual re-enactment of two political crises in the Middle East.

Chanan Naveh, the Lipinsky Leichtag Visiting Israeli Scholar for 2015-16, organized online simulations of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the current Syrian conflict with students playing the roles of various national figures involved in these events.

Fifty San Diego State University students from Naveh’s classes participated, together with 69 students from two different political science classes at California State University, San Marcos.

Assuming the personas of government ministers, diplomats, rebels and opposition leaders, the students announced strategic actions and policy decisions via Facebook posts. Each conflict played out during two fast-paced, 90-minute online sessions.

**Imagining different outcomes**

Naveh, a former journalist and faculty member at the Sapir College School of Communication in Israel, co-wrote a textbook guide to creating simulations through social networks. He has participated in web-based simulations with researchers from around the world, the first in 2010.

During the simulations, Naveh allows students to “change the course of history” by altering actual events. He said this “encourages students to imagine other outcomes of a political crisis and understand the importance of each actor.”

For example, in the Afghanistan simulation, students representing the United States opted for military intervention in the form of Special Forces, while the Soviet “actors” agreed to a partial troop withdrawal. Neither of these events took place during the actual Soviet invasion in 1979. The status of refugees was a priority during the discussions and negotiations surrounding both simulations, Naveh said.

Permanent collaborations

Scott Greenwood’s class at CSU San Marcos took part in the Syrian conflict simulation with Naveh’s history class, while Elizabeth Matthews’ class reenacted the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with Naveh’s political science class.

Jewish Studies Director Receives Alumni Association’s Monty Award

In the Spring 2015 semester, The San Diego State University Alumni Association announced the Awards for Outstanding Faculty Contributions to the University, more commonly known as the Montys. Each year, the group honors one outstanding faculty member from each of the University’s colleges.

At the All-University Convocation in August 2015, Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn, professor and Chair of Religious Studies, Classics and Humanities, and Director of the Jewish Studies Program was chosen as the Monty recipient from the College of Arts and Letters.

The Montys are a time-honored tradition at SDSU and the award is a symbol of achievement and success presented to distinguished professors. The award is given to those faculty members who have made significant contributions to the university, the San Diego community or California, nationally or internationally.
Jewish Studies major Peter Young is spending a semester at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel:

“Right now I am living a dream of mine in a way I never could have imagined. I have been in Israel for two months now, doing things I never thought I would do, eating things I would never eat, and learning things about myself and my heritage that I can only learn right here. I was chosen as one of 22 in an innovative Jewish leadership program called the Nachshon Project. I have met with Avraham Infeld (the president of Hillel International), Israeli author Etgar Keret, Tamir Goodman (a former professional basketball player), a number of innovative Rabbis, educators, and startup entrepreneurs. We are even scheduled to meet with former Prime Minister Shimon Peres. I have never been pushed to think in so many different ways and my love of learning is growing each and everyday. Even today, with a full load of classes from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm, I found myself attending a lunch and learn event between classes and staying on campus after my classes to study Talmud with Hillel. It has been an amazing experience, and just living here in Jerusalem is unlike anything else. There is nothing like seeing the Temple Mount and the Old City of Jerusalem every day when I walk to class. I grew up facing Jerusalem in synagogue, hearing and saying ‘next year in Jerusalem!’ and now I am just living the dream. This year in Jerusalem!!”

Devin Egber, a major in Interdisciplinary Studies created his own major by combining his three main academic interests: Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Jewish Studies. Egber feels that these interests have changed and grown deeper throughout his undergraduate studies. “Majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies has been amazing for me. The best part was the fact that I was able to create my own major by combining my three main academic interests, which are Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Jewish Studies.

As I am about to graduate, I am seeing myself pursuing a path of academic research regarding Jewish thought, specifically trying to answer the question of what it means to be Jewish in a predominantly non-Jewish society. German and French philosophy from the 19th and 20th centuries has really opened my mind and has forced me to wonder what, on an existential level, it means to be Jewish, particularly in the wake of the increasingly globalized world.”
Jewish Historical Society
by Laurel Schwartz

Historic treasures and abundant research opportunities await you in the Jewish Historical Society Archives at San Diego State University. The Archives, in partnership with the Jewish Studies Program, Love Library’s Special Collections and University Archives, maintains the papers and photographs of the Jewish Community of San Diego’s distant and more recent past. Collections we hold are both personal and communal. Families, such as the Smith Family, the Naiman Family, the Judd and Goldstein Families, all of whom came to San Diego in the first decade of the 20th century are represented here. Rabbi Morton Cohn’s 50 years in San Diego are at your fingertips. The many years of the Jewish Federation of San Diego County, B’nai B’rith, synagogues, the JCC and San Diego’s Jewish newspapers can all be perused in the archives.

Researchers from across the country and around the world have used material from our archives in films; created original performance pieces, and completed doctoral dissertations and master’s theses. Additionally, material from our archives has been published in international magazines and books.

A graduate student at Cal State San Marcos, Juliana Smart, completed her Master’s thesis C. Leon de Aryan: The Broom, Mazdaznan, and The Radical Right in San Diego, 1930-1945. This thesis was based in part on our collection of newspapers, called The Broom, a right wing anti-Semitic tome published in San Diego County.

Our extensive collection on women’s organizations attracted an historian who wrote a history of Jewish Family Service in San Diego for its 100th Anniversary. A screenwriter and filmmaker from New York used material from our archives for a screenplay about Barney Ross, the famous boxer and WWII hero who was stationed in San Diego.

Whether you’re new to San Diego or have a long lineage here, you and your family, organizations and groups are all part of San Diego’s Jewish past. Please contact us if you have historical materials or if you would like to do research. Find us at jewishstudies.sdsu.edu/archives.htm

Become involved in the Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University

The Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University is an interdisciplinary program serving the students of SDSU as well as the greater San Diego community. We are dedicated to teaching a broad range of topics related to Jewish history, religion and culture from the biblical through the modern period. The Jewish Studies Program depends upon community support for the enrichment of our programs. Opportunities exist for participation on our Community Advisory Board and for future programs and endowments. Donations may be made in many ways and include the opportunity to name a program, lecture series, or endowment.

Please contact us for more information on how you can help.

jewishstudiesprogram@mail.sdsu.edu
**Upcoming Events**

**Israel in the 21st Century: New Hopes, New Challenges**

Monday, April 25, 7:00 pm – College of Arts & Letters AL-101

**An Intersectional Failure: Situating Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews in Contemporary Jewish Discourse**

Analucía Lopezrevoredo, Program Director for JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa

David Schraub, Darling Foundation Fellow in Public Law and Senior Research Fellow at the California Constitution Center, UC Berkeley Law School

For information please contact: jewishstudiesprogram@sdsu.edu