

JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM



SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

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Jewish Studies Program Welcomes Visiting Israeli Scholars and Artists

In 2019-2020 The Jewish Studies Program is welcoming five visiting scholars and artists from Israel. Their residency is supported by a grant from the Murray Galinson San Diego Israel Initiative, which seeks to strategically promote, support and catalyze knowledge discourse and interaction on the modern state of Israel through scholarship, engagement and collaboration. Artists and scholars will be teaching courses in various disciplines in the College of Arts and Letters. They include:

Dr. Eran Feitelson, an Israel Institute Grant Recipient and professor of geography at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem with expertise in environmental policy and planning. He is the founder and previous director of the Advanced School for Environmental Studies. Feitelson has published over 100 articles in refereed journals and edited volumes on water policy issues, transport policy, environmental policy and planning. In addition to his academic work, Feitelson has participated in several national and regional planning teams in Israel and has been a member of many national committees. Dr. Feitelson is teaching one course in the Geography Department this fall.

Dr. Luba Levin-Banchik, an Israel Institute Grant Recipient is a political scientist with expertise in international relations and security, terrorism, foreign policy crises, and active learning simulations. Levin-Banchik earned a Ph.D. from Bar-Ilan University, Israel. Her work focuses on the evolution of conflict and peace in contemporary international relations across the globe, with a special focus on the Middle East. Her expertise is in the field of global and regional security, international crisis escalation and recurrence, domestic and transnational terrorism, cooperation and political violence, as well as Israeli and Russian domestic and foreign policy. Levin-Banchik's current project focuses on what enemies

do when they are not fighting and how their respite hostility affects crisis escalation into severe violence and wars. This semester, Dr. Levin-Banchik is teaching courses in the History and Political Science Departments. Her residency is also supported by the Lipinsky Institute for Jewish Studies endowment.

“My students say that I teach differently. But for me, teaching is having a respectful, challenging, informed and thought-provoking conversation. We talk about historical and political issues that affect our lives, here in the United States, Israel, Middle East,

Russia, Europe, and other places across the globe. My task is to show students different perspectives and their transformation over time, to stimulate students' interest and thinking, encourage critical assessment, and realize how everything is interconnected in this global world. I just love being in class, this is what makes me who I am.”

Dr. Gilad Shtienberg (University of Haifa) studies long-term climate change in Israel and neighboring lands as a model for more general issues of global environmental

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SDII Murray Galinson
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YALE STROM CONTINUES ACHIEVEMENTS

Yale Strom, Artist-in-Residence in the Jewish Studies Program, has been productive this past year in film, literature, theatre and music. His 15th recording was released on the ARC Music UK/Naxos label-"Yale Strom's Broken Consort: Shimmering Lights," which features band members from Hot Pstromi, as well as guest musicians Sara Caswell, David Wallace, Amos Hoffman and Alex Greenbaum - performing Hanukkah music from around the world.

His documentary film, "American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene Victor Debs," screened in theatres across the United States and is now available via streaming and DVD from

www.firststrunfeatures.com.

Strom's newest documentary production, "Recordially Yours: The Lou Curtiss Story" is about the iconic American folklorist and audiophile Lou Curtiss, who profoundly influenced many musicians in San Diego and beyond.

Strom's new audio/radio drama about Eugene Victor Debs, co-written with Elizabeth Schwartz, will begin airing on public radio in the spring of 2020. This audio drama is about Debs' anti-WWI stance and how the U.S. government tried to silence him by putting him into prison for ten years.

Strom maintains an active performance schedule in San Diego, throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has

been invited to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in Prague in November. The Jewish Museum of Prague is mounting a solo exhibit of his photos of Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe (1981-2007) for two months before the exhibition moves to Brno. Strom will also screen his first film, "At the Crossroads: Jewish Life in Eastern Europe Today," which captured Jewish life in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary in the years 1987-89. His participation in the commemoration also includes a concert at the Maisel Synagogue, when he will be joined by Elizabeth Schwartz and two musicians from Prague.



Yale Strom

JEWISH STUDIES BOARD HOSTS VISITING ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS

On September 9, approximately 60 people gathered at Scripps Cottage at San Diego State University to meet the Visiting Israeli Artists and Scholars who are in residence for the 2019-2020 academic year. The attendees were welcomed by SDSU's President Adela de la Torre and Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Glen McClish. Guests were also recognized by Susan Lapidus, Director of the Murray Galinson Israel Initiative, which is sponsoring these visiting professors.

The program was hosted by the newly reorganized Community Advisory Board of the Jewish Studies Program, whose purpose is to promote and financially support this program.

The following people are presently serving on the Board: Chair Judy Gumbiner, Barbara Ostroff, Jesse Blank Birnbaum, Gerri Brech, Rabbi Josh Dorsch, Jean Gaylis, Rabbi Martin Lawson, Hilary Levison, Carolyn Morris, Rhoda Nevins, Laurel Schwartz, Stan Schwartz, Jackie Tolley, Eileen Wingard, Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn and Keely Bamberg, Senior Director of Development, College of Arts and Letters.



Judy Gumbiner,
Chair, Jewish Studies Board

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change. He specializes in understanding theoretical and practical aspects of the landscape changes that occur in the dynamic environments of the coastal zone of Israel. His recent projects focus on human settlement during the Biblical periods along Israel's northern Mediterranean coast. His course at SDSU will provide a general understanding of sea level changes in different spatial and temporal scales as well as their driving factors and possible consequential scenarios. Students are introduced to the general terminology used in this field, coastal/marine sea-level indicators and their uncertainty levels, as well as corresponding dating methods. "In my lessons I encourage the students to ask questions and take part in class discussions which I believe are the best way for gathering new

knowledge and understanding it." Dr. Shtienberg will be teaching in the Anthropology Department in Spring 2020.

Two of Israel's most highly regarded filmmakers are being hosted by the Jewish Studies program this fall to teach screenwriting.

Shuki Ben Naim is an Israeli television creator and screenwriter. He is a graduate of the Utniel Yeshiva and Sam Spiegel Film and Television School, where he majored in screenwriting. He is known for his hit Israeli television series "Nuyork," "Urim VeTumin," "Gloria's Wife," and "A Touch Away." His latest series "Our Boys" is currently airing on HBO. Ben Naim will be teaching a Screenwriting course in the English department.

Moshe Zonder was the head writer for *Fauda*,

the enormously successful television series broadcast in Israel. In 2016 *Fauda* became the first Israeli series to be released as a Netflix original. He has written many other screenplays most recently a documentary on the 1972 hijacking of a Sabena Airways flight bound for Israel. He began his career as a journalist working at Maariv, one of Israel's leading Hebrew-language daily newspapers.

During the course (in Screenwriting) the students will learn the fundamentals of writing a script for any purpose (i.e. an episode in a series, a short film, a feature film, etc.) and will acquire tools that will help them write a 'bible' -a document used for pitching a TV series. Through class discussions, writing assignments, screenings, and script analysis, students will learn how to script their own characters and stories.

Visiting Scholars and Artists



Eran Feitelson



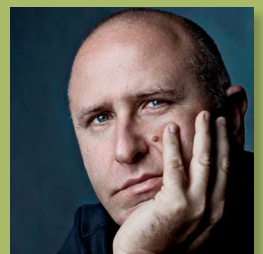
Gilad Shtienberg



Luba Levin-Banchik



Shuki Ben Naim



Moshe Zonder



Reception: l-r Moshe Zonder, Gilad Shtienberg, Luba Levin-Banchik, Susan Lapidus, SDSU President Adela de la Torre, Eran Feitelson, Risa Levitt Kohn

Student News: Sophie Parker

Since I was young, I have always maintained a deep appreciation for the history of the Jewish people and their tumultuous but incredibly rich 4,000 year journey. As the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, I feel a certain sense of responsibility to continue to educate and lift up the Jewish people. And as bigotry and anti-Semitism become increasingly prevalent in today's America, this sense of responsibility to my ancestors only grows.

I grew up just minutes from campus, attending Temple Emanu-El. Having that community growing up allowed me to better understand my Jewish identity and where I fit in with such a dynamic culture.

During my freshman year at SDSU, I joined Hillel and became more active in the Jewish community on and off campus. Those first months, I found myself digging deeper into my understanding of the Jewish people and would spend hours online and in classes trying to learn more. However, what truly invigorated me to pursue Jewish Studies was the increasing violence against American Jews. I felt that as a young Jewish individual, I had an important role to play; therefore, my path in life should be a contribution to the advancement and blossoming of the Jewish people. I hope to combat anti-Semitism everyday through education and my commitment to the Jewish community.

Student News: Francine Hardy



The first stirrings in my being that culminated in my decision to major in Modern Jewish Studies were from the extraordinary film *Exodus*. For the first time I saw Jewish people as a people before my eyes on the screen – I was enthralled by their pluck and courage, by their amazing strength and resilience despite their poignant plight – what a vision the world was given of these people who had survived the Holocaust. While cinema gave me vicarious visual involvement through such films as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hester Street*, *Defiance*, *The Pianist*, and *Schindler's List*, the tipping point, the pivot kindling my commitment to immersion in Jewish Studies was the quest to prove my husband Steve's Jewish ancestry coupled with discovering the Jewish Studies Program offered by SDSU.

Having concluded my career as an NICU registered nurse, and encouraging my three children across the finishing line

of their university degrees, it was now my turn to pursue my dream, a loved interest, not for money or necessarily a second career, but for the sheer pleasure of learning and engaging in all there is available at SDSU related to the Jewish people and Israel. Those aspirations were met abundantly by courses and professors as door after door was opened into the realm of Judaism and the Jewish people and culture – past, present, and future; here in the USA as well as in Israel and around the world. Thus was my dream of exploring the remarkable saga of my husband's ancestry intertwined with my pursuit of a bachelor's degree in Modern Jewish Studies.

I have been enthralled by the mystical nature of Jewish religion, but have been equally drawn to their very human history that seems to be a miracle.

Along the path of my journey in Jewish Studies, I have worked as a nurse with asylum

seekers under the auspices of Jewish Family Services; I have been honored with induction into Phi Beta Kappa, representing the Jewish Studies Program at SDSU; I have been generously encouraged in my further studies with a scholarship from Aaron and Jeanne Gold; and my husband has gone through his Bar Mitzvah on campus with a Chabad rabbi after which we went together to our first seder. I have fallen in love with the infectious exuberance and enjoyment of Jewish music, culture, dance, and song (especially in Hebrew) thanks to Professor Yale Strom, and found my favorite language in Hebrew writing and speaking thanks to Professor Alana Shuster. Visiting Israeli Professor Tamar Arieli opened the foundational history of the birth of Israel from ancient times to current dates in ways I had never considered nor realized. And Professor/Rabbi Scott Meltzer adroitly ushered me into the theological world of Judaism. In a world where the ebb, flow, and decline of civilizations is the norm, where colors pulsate and then fade away, the Jews, Israel and their story for me, are technicolor.

As I progress in the journey opened before me, I expect to impact my family, my colleagues, acquaintances, fellow students, and as many people as possible with what I have learned and will learn and realize about the Jewish people and the state of Israel - things I never would have known had I not been given such an opportunity, had I not believed and realized "a horizon is nothing but the limit of our sight..."

Reflections on my Monday class, April 19, 2019

by Ronit Weiss Berkowitz, a former visiting Israeli Scholar in the Jewish Studies Program, Spring 2019. Translated from Hebrew.

I am still emotionally overwhelmed by the powerful experience I had yesterday in class. I apologize for writing in Hebrew, it comes to me faster and I do not want those moments to slip away.

I planned to talk to the students briefly about the shooting attack at the Poway synagogue, to tell them what happened here two days ago, so close to home. To let them know and understand the implications of what happened there before we would move on to the planned class topic. I also mentioned that this week happens to include Holocaust Remembrance Day, which gives an additional shocking dimension to that so-called “act of hatred.” It was important to me to connect these two things.

And then it hit me all of a sudden, this is the first Holocaust day I’ve experienced without my mother (who passed last year)...

Most of the students have pretty vague knowledge of the Holocaust. I told them that my mother was 16 when she was taken to the Auschwitz extermination camp, and informed them about extermination camps and the Final Solution. I told them that I never had the joy of knowing or seeing a grandmother, grandfathers or uncles, and informed them about signs that read “Entry to dogs and Jews is forbidden.” And I began to cry.

I have been teaching for many years and I have never cried in front of a class. Even in the most intimate atmosphere, there is always some distance between lecturer and students, but the longing for my recently deceased mother and the juxtaposition of the shooting and Remembrance Day, and perhaps also the lecture by Rabbi Meltzer yesterday morning,

stripped me of all defenses.

I shared with the students the story of my parents’ lives. They lost everything - family, home, language, security, citizenship, mental and physical health - and the happiest day of their lives was not the liberation from the death camps, or the day they were married in the Displaced Persons camp, but rather it happened when the UN voted to approve the establishment of the State of Israel.

I told my students (with tears) what it is to grow up in a house that has no past - no picture or object from a previous life - a life that must rise like a phoenix from the sands. And how my mother always declared that she was still alive only in order to tell what she had witnessed. That was the only reason she could find to justify her survival...

I told the students how important it is to tell - to remember through story what made us who we are and where we came from. We tell stories to remember the stories of our parents, to be part of humanity, to choose which people we would like to be. I have been encouraging them since the beginning of the semester to write about their families, who come from a rich cultural diversity of worlds and languages. This diversity makes it so important for me to hear their stories.

I shared the fact that I, too, was a “first generation” university student like many of them (instead of attending college, my parents struggled to survive in the camps for another day, another hour) and my students’ pride in this achievement of making it to university is familiar to me and exciting.

I do not remember everything



from that class, it was very emotional and spontaneous. I do remember that I explained that although I am completely secular, do not attend synagogue, that as a Jew, this hatred in Poway was directed directly at me, wounding me and breaking my heart. Because I grew up in a house where Mother yelled at night in her sleep, and until her last day she had not forgotten the smell of the chimney smoke in Auschwitz. That is how far hatred can go.

I saw the students’ eyes gleaming with tears. They rose to embrace me. Jonathan said that his great-grandfather was one of the liberators of Auschwitz. Jesse said her family also had Holocaust survivors. An amazing conversation took place all of a sudden, in which students, including LGBTQ students, shared harsh experiences of racism and violence, especially if they were not “white.” Students discussed their immigrant parents and their desire to belong - to be human, not Jews or Mexicans or Muslims or people of color or lesbians or foreigners, but simply people. It was the most moving lesson I’ve ever experienced. No partitions or barriers.

At the end, the students came to hug me, commiserated with my sorrow and thanked me for sharing my story. I thanked them for their support, apologized for the tears and told them I loved them.

Tributes

The Jewish Studies Program is reinitiating an opportunity to financially support the program with a Tribute -a donation in honor, or in memory of, a loved one or friend and/or a beautiful expression of acknowledging an individual for an accomplishment or praiseworthy effort. Your gift supports all aspects of the program, including concerts, special events and student scholarships.

The minimum contribution for a tribute and an acknowledgement is \$18. Of course, any contribution is always welcome, is tax deductible, and very much appreciated by the program.

Please send your check made out to the Jewish Studies Program/ Campanile Foundation at San Diego State University with the honoree’s name and address and the donor’s name and address. Tributes received will be published in an upcoming Jewish Studies newsletter.



Five Levi Brothers. Photo courtesy of the Jewish Historical Society of San Diego.

Jewish Historical Society -Scholars and Community Members Delve into Collections

by Laurel Schwartz

An abundance of researchers explored the Jewish Historical Society of San Diego Archives Collections in the last year. Max Greenberg is a graduate student at UCLA, whose doctoral dissertation concerns the business, political, benevolent and religious networks established by 20th century Jewish migrants to the US-Mexico border region. Of particular interest is a JHSSD collection in Special Collections & University Archives. In 2014,

Elena Fishman de Saad donated research materials from her thesis, entitled *La Comunidad Israelita de Tijuana* (The Jewish Community of Tijuana) to JHSSD, including many hours of interview tapes. Greenberg and Mrs. Saad have become compadres in pursuing their mutual interest, as his search continues in JHSSD collections for evidence of benevolent and business cross-border relationships.

In the mid-20th century, North Park was the center

of Jewish life in San Diego. Several people, including members of The Second Generation, local children of Holocaust survivors, are exploring the nature of that Jewish community. North Park was home to many Holocaust survivors, their businesses, two congregations, kosher butchers and, a Jewish deli and bakery. There is much material to be discovered in synagogue and personal collections, and JHSSD's *Israel Today/Jewish Times* and *San Diego Jewish*

Press Heritage Collections.

Art Curator Mark Elliott Lugo is writing a book about celebrated La Jolla artist, Faiya Fredman. He was researching materials on the housing covenant which discriminated against Jews, African Americans, Mexicans and others in the mid-20th century and was delighted to discover some of what he needed in the collection of his former neighbor and family friend, historian Henry Schwartz.

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The Loraine and Jack Stern Collection documents Mrs. Stern's many years as the founder and manager of The Source gift shop at the East County JCC. During her time there, she conducted juried art shows, art lectures, auctions and a lecture series called Taboo Topics. Mr. Stern was president of Jewish Family Service and of the JCC, where he produced theater programs. The collection also contains material about the early days

of the San Diego Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, of which Mrs. Stern was president.

Another recent acquisition is Robert Levi's research, contained in a 14-volume collection of copies of original source material, dating from 1873-1991, relating to his family. The five Levi brothers came to San Diego in the late 1800's. Two of the brothers, in particular, Simon, and Rob's great grandfather, Adolph, spent their lives here. They

established businesses and became civic and synagogue leaders, who were very influential in the growth of San Diego County. The materials that Levi donated include ads, articles and photos from newspapers, city directories and family and synagogue archives.

Please contact the JHSSD 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.sdsu.edu

BLUEISH: Jews & the Blues

An all-star concert in celebration of the intersection of Jews and Blues was presented on November 7th in Smith Recital Hall. The concert featured music in English and Yiddish, drawing inspiration from Chess Records, the go-to blues label in Chicago.

In the great blues era, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw played alongside black musicians such as Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton. Chicago's Corky Siegel, harmonica, Harvey Mandel, guitar, and Michael Bloomfield, guitar, developed relationships with Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Junior Wells, and other black musicians and helped spread the Blues worldwide.

"Blueish: Jews and the Blues" looked at why Jews fell in love with African-American Blues.

Performers for the concert included Yale Strom and members of Hot Pstromi - Tripp Sprague, tenor saxophone, Duncan Moore,

percussion, Gunnar Biggs, bass, Fred Benedetti, guitar, Elizabeth Schwartz, vocals, and Yale Strom, violin.

Special guests were Tomcat Courtney, guitar, Sue Palmer, piano, and Robin Henkel, dobro guitar.





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