



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT BINGHAMTON

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Judaic Studies Program
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JUDAIC STUDIES PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT 1975-76

INTRODUCTION

This year has been one of unprecedented growth and progress for the Judaic Studies Program on all fronts, despite the sudden and tragic illness of the new director, Mr. Gottlieb, at the beginning of the Fall 1975 semester. The administrative and academic supervision of the Program was entrusted by Dean Grebstein to the Judaic Studies Committee, chaired by Mr. Stillman. Mr. Gottlieb's courses were covered voluntarily by several faculty members, and the Administration generously and compassionately extended Mr. Gottlieb's sick leave with pay for the entire academic year. It was a fine team effort for which we may all be proud.

Judaic Studies enrollments have increased steadily this year (475 compared with 464 for 1974-75 and 449 for 1973-74). A new experimental course on anti-semitism drew 147 students. Five students have declared their candidacy for Judaic Studies certificates and there is one new Judaic Studies IPB major. This year's graduation saw our first crop of certificate recipients (5).

The highly favorable evaluation accorded the Program by the Harpur College Council Committee to Evaluate Undergraduate Programs (published April 9, 1976) was most gratifying. Likewise, some of our courses and faculty received very high ratings in the S.C.A.T.E. review. One course received the third highest rating of any course in the school.

The Program held a highly successful Distinguished Speakers Series which was very well attended by students, faculty, and community. Community relations improved greatly, and a Town-Gown Dinner was held to raise money for a Judaic Studies Library Fund. The Jewish Federation of Broome County has committed itself to extending financial support to the Program. Other fund raising projects are now under way.

The Program ameliorated and cemented the close working relations existing between the Program and some important related departments, particularly the History Department, whose chairman, Mr. Africa, has been most supportive.

Several members of the Program were guest speakers at Judaic Studies Conferences around the country and the world and helped to give the Program added visibility.

The Program stayed within the restrictions of its budget, and indeed, was able to pare down certain items in its 1976-77 budget request.

Below is a detailed breakdown of the 1975-76 record.

Judaic Studies Committee Members

The committee appointed for 1975-76 consisted of the following:

Dean Grebstein	Administration
Leon J. Goldstein	Faculty (Philosophy)
Samuel Morell	Faculty (Classics & Near Eastern Studies)
Helen Rivlin	Faculty (History) (Sabbatical Spring '76)
Norman Stillman	Faculty (History) (Chairman)
Edward Weisband	Faculty (Political Science) (appointed Spring '76)
Arieh Lebcowitz	Student
Karen Palley	Student
Lloyd Silberman	Student
(Ms. Palley and Mr. Silberman resigned during the fall '75 semester and were replaced by:	
Ron Edelstein	Student
Steven Levine	Student

COURSES AND ENROLLMENTS 1975-76

<u>Fall 1975</u>	<u>Instructor</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
JS 125 Jewish Civilization: Biblical Period	S. Levin	30
JS 182B Main Currents of Modern Jewish History	H. Rivlin	9
JS 199 Independent Study	L. Goldstein	1
Hebrew 101 Section 1 Elementary Hebrew	S. Morell	24
Section 2	S. Morell	22
Hebrew 103 Section 1 Intermediate Hebrew	Y. Stillman	17
Section 2	Y. Stillman	18
Hebrew 199 Independent Study	Y. Stillman	2
Hebrew 264 Modern Short Story	Y. Stillman	17
Hebrew 291A Journalistic Hebrew	S. Morell	7
History 153A Medieval Jewish History	N. Stillman	58
Yiddish 101 Elementary Yiddish	I. Friedland	16
	Total	221
<u>Spring 1976</u>		
JS 126 Jewish Civ.: Hellenistic- Rabbinic Period	S. Morell	2
JS 182C Antisemitism	N. Stillman	147
JS 199 Independent Study	N. Stillman	1
Hebrew 102 Section 1 Elementary Hebrew	S. Morell	6
Section 2	S. Morell	15
Hebrew 104 Readings in Hebrew Literature		
Section 1	Y. Stillman	13
Section 2	Y. Stillman	17
Hebrew 199 Independent Study	Staff	6
Hebrew 262 Rabbinic Literature	S. Morell	6
History 153B Modern Jewish History	C. Fink	25
Pol. Sci. 129 Politics of Israel	D. Peretz	7
Yiddish 102 Elementary Yiddish II	I. Friedland	7
Yiddish 199 Independent Study	I. Friedland	2
	Total	254

Hebrew language enrollments declined, despite the predictions of last year's coordinator (see 1974-75 Annual Report, p. 2). This is a matter of serious concern to the Program. This should not occur, especially since the Hebrew faculty is back to full strength. There is an enormous potential clientele here. Other schools with similar student and faculty ratios have even larger enrollments with less attrition. Ways should be sought to make the Hebrew program even more attractive, to make optimal use of existing personnel and resources and to stem the rising attrition rate. This is a matter that requires serious investigation since Hebrew is one of the underpinnings of the Program.

Enrollments in some of the Judaic Studies core courses have also been unacceptably low. We cannot use the excuse that this year was unusual due to the sudden absence of Mr. Gottlieb. There is no reason why there should be such discrepancy between enrollments in these four courses. One is not potentially more interesting than another. The unusually high enrollment in the new elective Antisemitism may be in part to blame, however, for low enrollments in Judaic Studies core courses this past spring. These observations on this past year's enrollments ought not to be taken as any lack of pride in our achievement. All in all, our registration was up, despite the fact that a number of popular courses were not given and despite the setback caused by Mr. Gottlieb's illness. Nonetheless, we ought not to rest upon our laurels when our potential is so much greater.

Certificate Recipients

The following students qualified for the Judaic Studies Certificate:

Anne Ehrlich (I.P.B. Major)
Ellen Kachalsky
Karen Palley
Mitchell Posner
Nancy Rose (also recipient of Jewish Federation of Broome County
annual award of \$100)

Library

The Program purchased additional books with the restored \$1,000 budget. Negotiations have been underway with Ms. Brownridge for a more active bibliographer for Judaic Studies, including student help and collection development.

The Jewish Federation of Broome County has presented the SUNY Foundation with a check for \$341.95 as the beginning of a Judaic Studies Program Library Fund (see Community Relation section below).

Distinguished Speakers Program

Through the generosity of the Office of the Vice President and the Office of the Dean, and through the cooperation of the Jewish Student Union and in one instance Hinman College, the Judaic Studies Program was able to present a number of distinguished speakers.

January 21, 1976 - Professor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi of Harvard University - "Spinoza on the Survival of the Jews."

February 23, 1976 - Professor Jacob Neusner of Brown University - "The New Setting for Jewish Learning: Towards a Theory of University Studies in Judaism."

March 4, 1976 - Professor Franklin H. Littell of Temple University - "A Christian Interpretation of the Holocaust."

March 18, 1976 - Isaac Bashevis Singer, noted Yiddish novelist and short story writer, "Folklore and Literature," jointly sponsored with Comparative Literature and English.

These were all highly publicized in the University and local media and well attended (Yerushalmi, Littell, and Singer - standing room only) by members of the University and the wider community.

Community Relations and the Search for Outside Funds

On March 3, 1976, Mr. Stillman appeared before the Board of the Jewish Federation of Broome County and presented a detailed proposal for financial assistance to the Program by the Federation. The presentation struck a responsive chord and assurances were given that the Allocations Committee of the Federation would come through with support when it met this summer.

On April 28, 1976, a Town-Gown Dinner was held under the aegis of the Federation. The dinner was the brainchild of Mrs. Helen Drozdow, and attracted over 100 members of the community at \$4.50 a plate. Many faculty members also attended as well as President Clark, Vice President Cantor, Dean Grebstein, and Mr. Weisband, Director of International Studies. The money raised will go toward the establishment of a Judaic Studies Program Library Fund with the SUNY Foundation.

Mr. Piaker of the School of Management and his brother, a local accountant, have generously established with an initial bequest of \$1,000, a fund with the SUNY Foundation for an annual prize for a deserving student for demonstrated excellence in Judaic Studies. The award will be designated the Jacob and Sarah Piaker Award for Excellence in Judaic Studies.

Plans are underway in the community for the establishment of a Friends of Judaic Studies Organization to aid and support the Program.

Negotiations are being carried out for the establishment of an endowed annual lectureship.

The Reporter, the local weekly paper of the Jewish community, has covered all of our events and publicized our course offerings. Many community people have attended our courses and lectures. Special thanks are due to Mr. Hal Smith, the editor, for his generous coverage of our Program and its activities.

Judaic Studies Faculty Contribution to the Judaics Field and to the Program's Visibility

Several faculty members published articles and delivered scholarly papers this year in the Judaic Studies field. More should. This also increases our visibility and gives us a stronger hand in seeking outside funds, not to mention the fact that it enhances our academic respectability. Only a few individuals have been really active here over the three years of the program's existence. Our faculty is of high quality and ought not to "hide its light under a bushel."

Budget

Our total 1975-76 allotment was \$1,170. The only allotment which ran a deficit was Classroom due to the needs of the Antisemitism course (films mainly). The administration has generously doubled our classroom allotment for next year. The money will be put to good use.

Looking Forward

Next year we are hoping to have Mr. Gottlieb back. All preparations are being made with the assumption that he will be returning to his duties, and there is every indication that he will. If he does not, however, contingency plans should be available. We have operated very successfully this year on an emergency, volunteer basis, drawing upon a large wellspring of good will. We ought not to depend upon such a method of operation for two years running, however.

A new course is being offered next fall jointly with the History Department, entitled, "The American Jewish Experience." It will be coordinated by Mr. Gottlieb and draw upon many History Department faculty members, as well as Dean Grebstein (English) and Mr. Boime (Art History), along the lines of this year's antisemitism symposium.

A letter welcoming incoming Freshmen and describing the Program and its offerings has been sent out.

Yiddish registration is up for next year, and was foolishly closed out by the program administering it. If Mr. Friedland had the help of a TA, there would be no need for closing the course. The high interest bodes well for the future.

Hebrew registrations are down (except for Conversation and Composition which is expecting a second section). This problem has been cited above and needs attention. It should be noted that Hebrew 101 usually picks up a large number of Freshmen during August registration, however.

Medieval Jewish History has its biggest pre-registration ever: 83, and may well top 100.

Dean Grebstein will be offering his popular course on the Jewish American Novel which in the past has had very high registration.

Mr. Liebman will be back from sabbatical and offering Sociology of the Jews, another popular course.

We hope to see more Judaic Studies faculty members active next year in several areas:

A) Jewish student life and activities. Only a small number of our program's faculty has shown any real interest in the activities of the Jewish Student Union. I would suggest, for a start, that faculty members from time to time have lunch at the Kosher Kitchen. It is a good way to meet students and encourage potential certificate majors. From my own experience, I can say that it is highly appreciated by the students.

B) Jewish community activities. A little more activity within the Jewish community would also go a very long way to improve "town-gown" relations. I think that was clear to anyone who attended the dinner held in April. One or two of our members have been guest speakers for various synagogue groups, Hadassah, Men's Clubs, etc. and there should be more of this.

C) Scholarly productivity in the Judaic area. Many of us in Judaic Studies courses are only secondarily or even peripherally in Judaic Studies. Nevertheless, it is important for our Program to maintain its academic credibility by having its members contribute to the field. I mention this because as I attend Judaic Studies conferences around the country and the world, I am continuously asked what are the most recent contributions by our faculty. Membership in such organizations as the Association for Jewish Studies, the Conference on Jewish Social Studies, American-Jewish Literature Section, NEMLA (Dean Grebstein happens to be Secretary-Chairman), etc. to name but a few, is important.

D) Increased dedication to make the Judaic Studies Program an even greater success. We are, of course, grateful to everyone who gives a Judaic Studies related course. Obviously under our present structure, we could not exist otherwise. But giving a course is only the first step. The Judaic Studies Committee would appreciate input from the faculty associated with the Program. You all receive our minutes and are invited to an annual meeting of all the associated faculty. Few ever respond. We realize that on this campus we are all torn in too many directions, but we hope that next year a bigger chunk might be pulled in our direction.

Respectfully submitted,



Norman A. Stillman
Chairman, Judaic Studies Committee