

University Center at Binghamton

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Judaic Studies Program
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JUDAIC STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friends

We are beginning our second semester with the same vigor that marked the first term. One of our new course offerings on "Judaism: A Religious History" has close to one hundred students. The first of our guest lecture programs has already been scheduled (see below) and others are being lined up.

News of Faculty & Student Activity During Intersession

During the Winter recess, a number of Judaic Studies faculty and students attended conferences or conducted research both in this country and abroad. Professor Samuel Morell attended the annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in Boston, where he delivered a paper on the sixteenth-century Sephardi scholar Joseph Ibn Lev. Milton Kessler, our poet laureate, left for a semester as exchange scholar at the University of Antwerp. Yedida Stillman attended the second International Congress on the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage in Jerusalem, where she spoke on the panel dedicated to Folklore Research Studies. Judaic Studies major David Becker and Judaic Alumna Mara Kass (now an Intern for Peace in Israel) both attended the Congress as well. Norman Stillman carried out research on modern Middle Eastern Jewry at the Archives of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in Paris. Aliza Strenger, Judaic Studies Certificate Student, attended the National Winter Convention of Ha-Magshimim, the College Arm of Young Judaea. Ten SUNY students (9 from our campus) left for the SUNY Semester in Haifa Program. They went first to Kibbutz Rosh Hanikra for Ulpan and a combined course of work and study and will then go to the University of Haifa later in the Spring. Dr. Ilse Schuster of the Haifa faculty will be the SUNY field coordinator during their stay in Israel.

Prof. Vasilew Returns From Haifa, Professor Horwitz to Go

Professor Gene Vasilew has returned from his Fall Semester as Exchange Scholar in Haifa. Like others who have participated in the program he seems to have enjoyed the experience. Some of you may have read his interesting article in the local papers. While there, Professor Vasilew helped to crystalize our exchange agreement with Haifa. We wish him a hearty welcome back.

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Professor Bert Horwitz will be going to Haifa this semester as the newest exchange scholar.

There will be a get-together to welcome back Gene Vasilew and to say goodbye to Bert and Herta Horwitz at the home of visiting Haifa professor Marsha Bensoussan on Sunday, February 10th at 3:00 p.m. The reception is being sponsored by Judaic Studies and the English Department. The address is 3710 Rath Avenue, Endwell.

Our Next Guest Speaker

We are particularly fortunate to have as our next visiting lecturer, Professor Mordechai Friedman of Tel-Aviv University, one of the foremost experts in the world on marriage in medieval and ancient Judaism. Professor Friedman will give one lecture on campus on the subject of "Polygamy and Monogamy in Jewish Traditions" in Lecture Hall 3 at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, February 4th. On Tuesday, February 5th, at 8:00 p.m. he will give a second talk at the Jewish Community Center on "The Status of Women in Jewish Law and Traditions." The lectures are sponsored jointly by Judaic Studies, Classics, Religious Studies, the Jewish Federation of Broome County, and the Jewish Student Union.

Professor Friedman did his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania with Professor S.D. Goitein. He also did graduate study and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He is the author of many articles and a two-volume book on Jewish Marriage in Palestine. For the last twelve years he has been living in Israel. He is presently the Chairman of the Department of Talmudic Studies at Tel-Aviv University.

Other News

I have to share with you two interesting inquiries. One came from Barbara Wolfson whose husband is the Dean of SUNY's medical school. Apparently a great great grandfather of hers who lived in Russia was a philosopher and a poet. The Wolfson's have 5 volumes of his poetry in Hebrew! There is additional biographical material on the man and his work. The Wolfson's are prepared to offer a fellowship to a student to translate and research the material. We think a graduate student combining Jewish History and Hebrew can use it for an M.A. or Ph.D. We are looking into the matter.

Christine Kaplan from the Medieval Center here came up with a book to be donated to our Judaica Collection written by a Holocaust survivor entitled From Death Row To Freedom. Apparently the author, David Wainapel, also draws and is interested in sharing his depictions of that period. We could organize an exhibition to coincide with the memorial week April 14-21. If you are interested to work on this, call our Judaic Studies Major Matthew Cutler, c/o Jackie Jacobs at the Jewish Community Center.

Well, never a dull moment at Judaic Studies. In our next letter we will tell you about great plans for the future, that will involve the program and the community at large. Till then stay well.

Shalom

Yedida K. Stillman

Acting Director, Judaic Studies Program

IMPOR.TANT REMINDER:

The film on Moroccan Jews will be shown at JCC Thurs., Feb. 7th at 7:30 p.m.