

JEWISH STUDIES STUDENT RESEARCH conference 2018



On Friday, April 21st, 2018, the Jewish Studies Program hosted its annual student research conference. Ten students from several different colleges and academic units at Michigan State University presented the research projects they had completed in their Jewish Studies courses to faculty, fellow students, and their families.

The conference consisted of a morning panel moderated by Dr. **Yore Kedem** entitled "Israel Studies: Causes for Mizrahis Arriving in Israel, Domestic Politics, and Foreign Policy." All three of these students had completed research projects supervised by Professor **Yael Aronoff**. **David Warshay**, a rising junior in James Madison College, presented his research on the push factors that led to the expulsion and migration of Jews from Syria, Iraq, and Iran. **Mackenzie Cater**, now graduated from James Madison College, analyzed the role of Twitter in asymmetric warfare. **Graham Wise**, a senior in the College of Social Science, and **Abby Laporte**, now graduated from James Madison College, presented research that they completed while studying in Israel in 2017. Graham discussed the evolution of the Labor Party in Israel, and Abby gave a poster presentation on the transformation of Israeli kibbutzim.

The second panel, entitled "Israel Studies: Research based on sources in Hebrew" was moderated by Dr. **Yael Aronoff**. All of the research projects presented in this panel were advised by Dr. **Yore Kedem** and

written in Hebrew using only Hebrew sources.

Alexis Spector, a junior in James Madison College, discussed the relationship between American Jewry and Israel, focusing on the case of the pluralistic prayer pavilion at the Western Wall. Next, **Kaila Waineo**, a senior in James Madison College, identified contradictions in the Jewish Home Party's efforts to advance the status of women in Israel. Finally, **Ari Chesternman**, a senior in the College of Social Science, analyzed the influence of the Azaria case on Israeli public conscience. Following this panel, students and attendees were joined for lunch by alumna **Laura Williams**, who discussed how her JS Minor influenced her desire to become a Curator at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills.

The final panel was moderated by Dr. **Kirsten Fermaglich** and Dr. **Amy Simon**, and students presented research that they had completed in their classes. **Olivia Rutherford** and **Anna Cumming**, students in the College of Social Science, presented work relating to the Holocaust as remembered, experienced and denied in the United States. Olivia presented a project in which she assessed Holocaust denial in the United States, and Anna presented her senior honor's thesis entitled "Jewish Liberators and Masculinity: How the Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps Shaped the Jewish Male Experience."

ISRAEL STUDY ABROAD REPORT: JEWISH STUDIES SUMMER PROGRAM AT HEBREW UNIVERSITY

During the month of July 2018, 14 students participated in the MSU Jewish Studies Program at Hebrew University. Students from James Madison College, the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities, Political Science, the College of Education and other departments took two classes at the Rothberg International School on the Mount Scopus campus. Students were eligible for and received generous funding from the Ed Levy, Jr. and Linda Dresner Levy Endowed Fund for Scholarships for Student Leaders Studying in Israel, which covered their program fees. A few students also received support from the Ed and Dot Slade Israel Study Scholarship and the Albert and Sharie Gladner Study in Israel Scholarship.

This program included two classes: The Emergence of the Modern State of Israel, taught by David Mendelsson (Lecturer, Rothberg International School, Hebrew University), and Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Israel, taught by Yore Kedem (Assistant Professor of Hebrew, Department of Linguistics and Languages, MSU). Students stayed at the Student Village at Hebrew University, and in addition to taking classes on campus, went on several field trips.

Professor Mendelsson's class included a trip to Tel Aviv, where students walked the streets where the Modern State of Israel came into being. They visited the area where the Declaration of Independence was made, and discussed the people who contributed to Israel's creation. Another field trip took the students to Mount Herzl, where students and professor discussed Israel's secular religion.

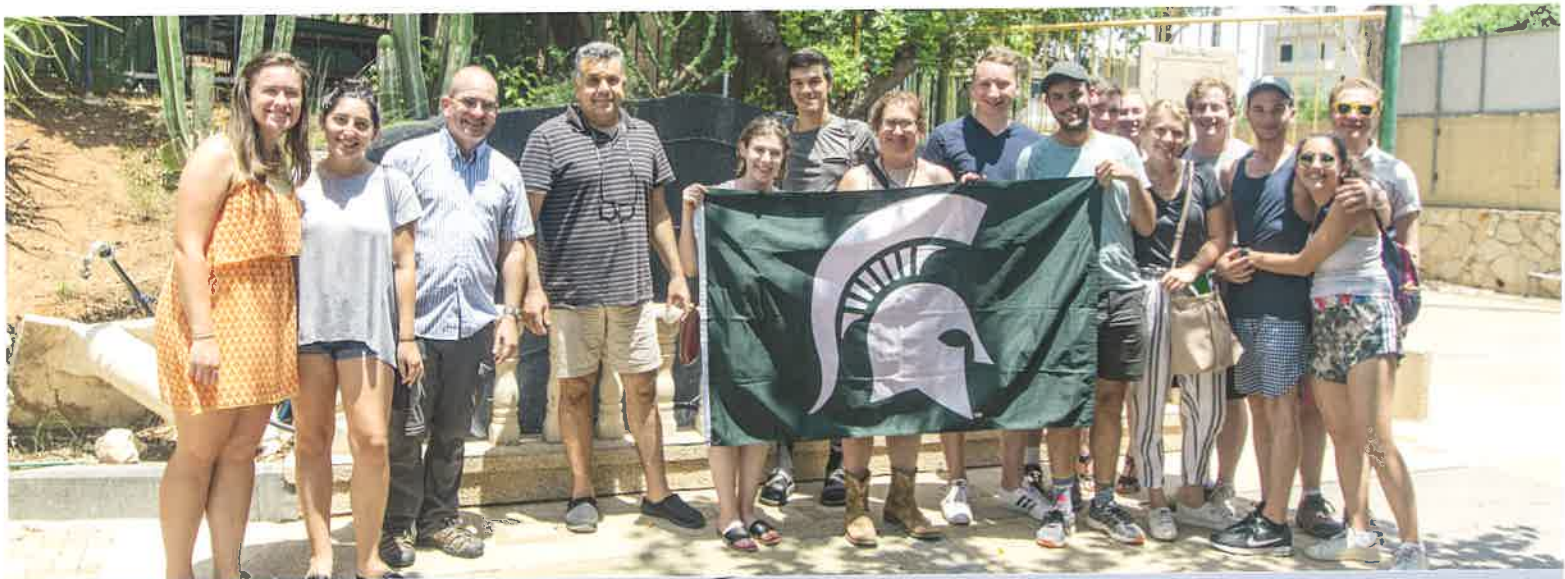
On the first day of Professor Kedem's class, students went for their first observation assignment in Central Jerusalem. They sat on Ben Yehuda Street, observed passers by, and talked to local people. During this exercise, the students began to think about their research project for this class. Subsequent observation exercises took place in the Old City of Jerusalem and on the Nahalat Binyamin Market in Tel Aviv. As students' engagement with locals increased, so did the depth of their observation and understanding on how cultural diversity and immigration play in Israeli society. In addition to these exercises, students went on a field trip to Yad Vashem, where they reflected on the Holocaust and its relationship to Modern Israel. Another trip was to the Wadi Ara area. On this trip, they observed the human geography of the area, thinking about the way Arabs and Jews lived and interacted there. At the Triangle Research and Development Center, they met a computer scientist from the Arab community who conducts research on machine learning and issues related to his community. Another field trip took them to Ashdod and the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, where they learned about a unique project designed to improve the lives of high school dropouts through science education. They were also privileged to host Siba Awad, the assistant to the Director of Summer Programs at Rothberg International School, who shared her experiences growing up as an Arab in East Jerusalem.

As this is an inquiry-based class, students designed projects to study the issues in its center by integrating their experiences and the readings into small scale qualitative research studies. These projects included topics such as immigration and education in Israel, the relationship between the secular Jews and the religious orthodox / ultra-orthodox Jews of Israel, religious identity expression and construction centered on linguistic manifestations in Modern Day Israel, diversity and education, and comparing Jewish identity in Israel and the

US. Through these projects students challenged their preconceptions of Israel and its society, grew in their understanding of their experiences in Israel, and were challenged to reflect and understand their personal religious and national identity. Students also reflected on how their understanding of cultural diversity and immigration changed both in Israel and in the United States.

For many students this experience changed their self understanding, and they felt encouraged to be involved in social issues in their future at MSU and beyond. As David Warshay wrote: "While I have been here before, I've never experienced Israel like this. It was definitely an eye opening experience and one that I will not soon forget."

- Dr. Yore Kedem, program leader



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Sunday, September 16, 2018—Lincoln Room, Kellogg,
8:15-8:40am registration

8:45-10:15 a.m. ORIGIN STORIES: A ROUNDTABLE ON
LITERATURE, CINEMA, AND PEDAGOGY

Moderator: Eric Aronoff, Michigan State University

- **Sayed Kashua**, Washington University - Reflections on His Work
- **Rachel Harris**, University of Illinois - Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema
- **Iana Blumberg**, Bar Ilan University - Literary Pedagogy for Teaching Diverse Students
- **Marc Bernstein**, Michigan State University - The Denial of Despair: Kletzkers in Israel

10:25-11:55 a.m. ROUNDTABLE: REFLECTIONS ON ISRAELI
SOCIETY, NATIONALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND SECURITY

Moderator: Myron Aronoff, Emeritus, Rutgers University

- **Donna Robinson Divine**, Smith College - #Hashtag Israel at 70: Blessing or Curse?
- **Naomi Chazan**, Hebrew University - Israel at 70: Gender, Society, and Democracy
- **Nadav Shelef**, University of Wisconsin - Israel at 70: Transformations in Israeli Nationalism
- **Yael Aronoff**, Michigan State University - Israel's Changing Security Environment

12:10-1:30 p.m. LUNCH IN BIG TEN C FOR THOSE WHO PRE-
REGISTERED FOR MEALS IN AUGUST

➔ **Keynote by Oded Shoseyov**, Nature's Gift: Materials for the Future

1:40-2:55 p.m. PANEL: U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Chair: Yael Aronoff, Michigan State University

- **Robert Freedman**, Johns Hopkins University - US-Israel Relations 1948-2018
- **Scott Lasensky**, INSS Tel Aviv University - The Peace Puzzle: Can America Still Be Effective at Arab-Israeli Peacemaking?
- **Tamara Cofman Wittes**, Brookings - Shared Values: Democratic Challenges and the US-Israel Relationship

3:05-4:20 p.m. PANEL: BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL CRITICISM

Chair: Benjamin Lorch, Michigan State University

- **Amy Elman**, Kalamazoo College - Pinkwashing Antisemitism
- **Ken Waltzer**, Michigan State University - When Anti-Zionism Becomes Antisemitism: Insights from American Campuses
- **Yore Kedem**, Michigan State University - Boundaries of Israel Criticism: Understanding Yeshayahu Leibovich

4:30-6:10 p.m. ROUNDTABLE: LESSONS AND PROSPECTS
FOR ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

Moderator: Gilead Sher, INSS Tel Aviv University

- **Saliba Sarsar**, Monmouth University - Uncommon Pairs: The Making of Unique Peacebuilding Leaders in Israel/Palestine
- **Alan Dowty**, Notre Dame University - Israelis and Palestinians: Has the Gap Narrowed?
- **Miriam Elman**, Syracuse University - Negotiating Jerusalem: Visions for Dividing & Sharing a Contested City
- **Ilan Peleg**, Lafayette College - Narratives of Victimization & Victimhood Among Israelis & Palestinians: A 70-Year Saga
- **Yuval Benziman**, Hebrew University - Normalization with Arab States and Israeli-Palestinian Peace

6:25-7:25 p.m. DINNER IN BIG TEN C FOR PARTICIPANTS
AND ATTENDEES WHO PRE-REGISTERED FOR MEALS IN
AUGUST

7:30 p.m. KEYNOTE LECTURE

➔ **Gilead Sher** - The Israeli-Palestinians Negotiations: Prospects for a Two-State Reality

Monday, September 17, 2018—Red Cedar Room, Kellogg,
8:15-8:50am registration

9:00-10:30 a.m. PANEL: ISRAELI ENVIRONMENTAL
INNOVATION AND ITS USE AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL

Chair: Michael Kaplowtiz, Michigan State University

- **Giora Rytwo**, Tel Hai College and MIGAL Research Institute - Coping with Water Crises: New Cleantech Water Technologies
- **Micah Guy**, Ben Gurion University - Agriculture at the Ramat Negev Country: Survival and the Introduction of New Crops
- **Itay Fishhendler**, Hebrew University - Natural Resources as Foreign Policy Tool: A Legitimate Israeli Policy?

10:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. ROUNDTABLE: ISRAELI
BIOTECHNOLOGY AND MEDICAL INNOVATION

Moderator: Erik Shapiro, Michigan State University

- **Assaf Gilad**, Michigan State University - Science in Israel: Evolution and Evaluation of Dynamic Patterns
- **Amnon Bar Shir**, Weizmann Institute - "Multicolor" Sensors: Beyond "Black & White" MRI
- **Galit Pelled**, Michigan State University - From Fish Navigation to Neuromodulation
- **Benny Hochner**, Hebrew University - Why Can Octopuses Help Us Build New Types of Robots?
- **Drorith Celnikier-Hochner**, Hadassah Mount Scopus Medical Center - Hadassah for Everyone, Everywhere

1:00-2:00 p.m. LUNCH IN BIG TEN C ROOM FOR
PARTICIPANTS AND ATTENDEES WHO PRE-REGISTERED
IN AUGUST

2:05-3:30 p.m. PANEL: ISRAEL'S REMARKABLE
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND
TOMORROW

- **Chair: Ronald Hendrick**, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Michigan State University
- **Alon Tal**, Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar, MSU and Tel Aviv University - Israeli Agricultural Policy and Yields: What a Long Strange Trip It's Been
- **Bill Slott**, Columnist, *Times of Israel* - Israel's Grand Socialist Agrarian Experiment: The Evolution of Israel's Kibbutzim
- **Dr. Shoshan Haran**, Founder, Fair Planet Seeds - How Israel's Agritech Innovations Are Affecting Africa

3:45-5:45 p.m. ROUNDTABLE: THE 70-YEAR-OLD STARTUP
THAT SETS THE GLOBAL DIRECTION IN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Moderator: Neil Kane, Michigan State University

- **Tsahy Shapsa**, Israeli entrepreneur, Co-Founder of Cloudlock, Inc.
- **Parag Amin**, Founder of Indian I-create
- **Gal Wainer**, Israeli entrepreneur, She-Codes
- **Doron York**, Chairman of City Side Ventures
- **Harry Yuklea**, Serling Visiting Israeli Scholar at MSU, Israel Innovation Authority

6:00-7:30 p.m. Closing Dinner for Conference Participants
Only