20th Anniversary Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series

Since 1997 the Pozez families’ generosity has made the Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial Lecture Series one of the intellectual and social staples of the Tucson Jewish Community. Through the years, the series has gained a national and international reputation for its long history of distinguished lecturers covering many topics related to Jewish history, culture, religion, literature, and language. To mark this achievement, this year’s series is themed, “Israel: 20th Century Ideal to 21st Century Reality.”

The ideal of a restored homeland has been a strong force among Jews since the Roman expulsion of 70 CE. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 rekindled hope, and the declaration of statehood in 1948 was the final realization of the long-delayed dream. Struggling through threat of destruction in the early years, Israel became a successful modern state. It is a stable democracy that has absorbed Jewish immigrants from diverse communities around the world, built a strong military, made peace with some of its neighbors, and established itself as a global hub of information and technology development.

However, not all sectors of Israel’s society have benefited from its economic success. There remain deep social and political divides. Israel’s educational system and standards are uneven and beginning to wane, the demands of leadership in an era of new political and cultural factionalism and uncertainty have increased, questions persist as to whether or not Israel can remain both a democratic and Jewish state while continuing the occupation of the West Bank, and the conflict with the Palestinians in many ways appears no nearer a resolution than it did after independence in 1948.

In celebration of its twentieth season, the Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial Lecture Series will focus on the vexing issues facing Israel today, and what they may portend for tomorrow. Join us for a special series that will challenge, inform, and inspire you.

All events are Free and Open to the Public

Israel’s Education Crisis: The Start-up Nation’s Threat from Within
Mon., Nov. 13 • 7pm • Tucson JCC
Prof. Dan Ben David
Shoresh Institute, Tel Aviv University

The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers
Mon., Dec. 4 • 7pm • Tucson JCC
Prof. Yael Aronoff
Michigan State University

Pozex Fine Arts Symposium
Pianist Carolyn Enger,
The Mischlinge Exposé
Thurs.*, Jan. 18 • 7:30 p.m.
UA Crowder Hall
Title TBA
Mon., Jan. 29 • 7pm • Tucson JCC
Speaker TBA

A Year into the Trump Presidency:
The U.S. & the Middle East
Mon., Feb. 12 • 7pm • Tucson JCC
Prof. Shai Feldman
Brandeis University

Rabin’s Assassination: A Turning Point in Israel’s History
Tues.*, Mar. 13 • 7pm • Tucson JCC
Amb. Itamar Rabinovich
The Israel Institute
*Please note that these events will not be on Mondays.
Dearest Friends:

Fall semester is now well underway at the UofA. Our professors and students have returned from their summer activities across the country and around the globe, and the Center is again abuzz with activity for the new academic year.

Because 2017-18 marks one-hundred years since the Balfour Declaration, seventy years since the founding of Israel, and fifty years since the 1967 War, we have decided to focus our Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial Lecture Series on the theme “Israel: 20th Century Ideal to 21st Century Reality.” This year’s speakers constitute a Who’s Who of internationally-acclaimed leaders and academics who are especially well equipped to address this important Jewish and global theme.

This year the Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial Lecture Series will celebrate its twentieth anniversary. Since 1997 the Pozez families’ generosity has made this series one of the intellectual and social staples of the Tucson Jewish community. Sadly, Shaol passed away in 1999 and Evie in 2011. We lost Louis Pozez in 2008, but thankfully Ruthann is still with us. Their work on behalf of the local Jewish community, The University of Arizona, and the city of Tucson has created a distinguished legacy, and their children are continuing that legacy in many ways. The series has gained a national and international reputation for its long history of distinguished lecturers. We are very proud to focus this year’s series on a theme that has long been so dear to the Pozez families. You won’t want to miss any of these exceptional speakers.

After four years as our Stein Family Visiting Professor of Israel Studies, Prof. Asher Susser will no longer be spending fall semesters in Tucson due to his responsibilities in Tel Aviv. He and his wife Miriam enjoy Tucson very much, and they hope to return for brief stays from time to time. Through his erudite scholarship and teaching excellence, Asher transformed how Israel is discussed both on campus and in our community. He cannot be replaced, but we hope to appoint someone who can build on what Asher has accomplished. Please stay tuned for an announcement on what will take place next spring with the Center’s “Israel Initiative.”

Thank you again for your interest in and support of the Center. Your involvement has had a great impact on what we do for our students and our community. As you read this letter, please remember that all we do is only possible because of your generosity.

With my best wishes for the 2017-18 academic year,
By Victor Garcia

This article originally appeared in the March 23, 2017 edition of the Arizona Daily Wildcat under the headline Visiting professor discusses Middle East relations.

Unlike Donald Trump’s predecessors, the new administration has a commitment to Israel’s socio-political struggle and has a good chance in succeeding, according to Professor Shai Feldman from Brandeis University.

Feldman, who teaches at the Crown Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Brandeis University, spoke about Trump’s current take on U.S. involvement in the Middle East at the Jeffrey Plevan Memorial Lecture.

“There are some aspects of [Trump’s] particular character that paradoxically may actually be helpful,” Feldman said. “That’s my counterfactual talk.”

The University of Arizona’s Center for Judaic Studies hosted their fourth annual Jeffrey Plevan Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, March 21, focusing on President Donald Trump’s current and future policies in the Middle East. Professor Shai Feldman of Brandeis University was the speaker.

“We like to put events like this because it is a topic of interest for a lot of people,” said John Winchester, outreach coordinator for the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies. “Especially with all the stuff going on in the Middle East, here and locally, with two bomb threats at the Jewish Community Center and the Muslim Community Center also being vandalized.”

Winchester emphasized how the Center likes to bring academic scholars like Feldman, who is the “cream of the crop” according to Winchester, to speak about current issues, like relations between the Middle East and the United States.

According to Feldman, the attempts in the last 25 years to resolve the conflicts within the Middle East have all failed.

“Contrary to what you may have heard, U.S./Israeli defense and intelligence cooperation has never been as close as they’ve been in the eight years of the Obama administration,” Feldman said. “What Obama has miserably failed is to convey the emotional feeling of his commitment to Israel and his attachment.”

Feldman emphasized how President Trump called the Israeli and Palestine issue as the “bigger deal” and how he spoke to members of the American Jewish community about his emotional tie to their struggle and commitment to Israel. This is something that according to Feldman’s lecture, is something the Obama administration and others before him failed to do.

“Against all of the expert opinions, if you read articles of The Washington Post and The New York Times, especially the journals on foreign policy and international affairs, I actually think that President Trump has a chance,” Feldman said.

The lecture series is named after Jeffrey Plevan, a UA graduate with a degree in History and Minor in Judaic Studies. Although he had a learning disability, he overcame many obstacles thanks to the support of his professors and programs at the university. In 2013, Plevan died of a
heart attack at the age of 36.

Plevan’s parents, Ken and Betsy Plevan said, “He felt like he was part of the academic life here. As big as the school was, he found friends and organizations; he was active in his fraternity and this became a real home for him.”

Plevan was the president of the MetroCats, the New York chapter of the alumni association, at the time he died.

According to his parents, Plevan worked as a professional in the Jewish community, because it was “what he loved.”

“He was a real success story, this is in memory of such a wonderful UA alum,” said Deborah Kaye, one of Plevan’s professors. “His legacy is for peace and for understanding. His interests were for Judaism and its politics.”

Jeffrey would visit the UA once a year to show pride in his school, and as for his commitment to the Jewish community, once every two years he took a trip to Israel. Plevan’s parents said Jeffrey would be an outspoken individual against the current president.

“His parents underwrite this lecture and we try to contribute and donate to it anyway we can,” Kaye said. The purpose of this memorial lecture is to bring the most current topics since, according to Kaye, Jeffrey loved Judaic studies and was actively involved in the Jewish community.
Looking Back, Looking Forward: 100 Years of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Sun., Sept. 10
8:30am-3pm
Tucson JCC
Free & Open to the Public

Live video feed from the Schwartz Auditorium at Brandeis University

Join us for this exciting half-day public conference on the occasion of the 100 year anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. The conference will bring together top scholars and public figures to assess the past and discuss the future for both Israel and Palestine.

For more information, contact John Winchester at (520) 626-5758.

Three 90-Minute Live Video Sessions:

Zionism & its Regional Environment:
The First 100 Years
Prof. Jehuda Reinharz
Former Brandeis University President
Dr. Abdel Monem Said Aly
Regional Center for Strategic Studies in Cairo

Palestine:
The Paths Ahead
Dr. Ziad Asali
President of the American Task Force for Palestine
Prof. George Bisharat
UC Hastings College of Law

Israel:
Alternative Futures
Prof. Asher Susser
Tel Aviv University, The University of Arizona
Prof. Martin Kramer
Founding President, Shalem College, Jerusalem

judaic.arizona.edu
Fifty Years since the Six Day War: How the Middle East has Changed
Tuesday*, Sept. 5 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. Asher Susser
Tel Aviv University and The University of Arizona

The Six day War of June 1967 was a watershed event in Middle Eastern history. The traumatic defeat of the Arabs by Israel ushered in the end of pan-Arabism and the first real readiness of some key Arab states to make their peace with Israel. Israel has not fought an Arab state since 1973, that is, for over forty years, and the Palestinians have been left to fend for themselves in their ongoing conflict with the Israelis. In the meantime, the decline of the Arabs has been met with the rising regional influence of the non-Arab states of Iran and Turkey, creating an entirely new regional strategic architecture.

Dr. Asher Susser served as The Stein Family Visiting Professor at the UofA for four years. He is Professor of History in the Department of Middle Eastern History at Tel Aviv University (TAU) and a Senior Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies at TAU. He was the Director of the Center for twelve years and has taught for over thirty years in TAU’s Department of Middle Eastern History. His most recent book is Israel, Jordan and Palestine; The Two-State Imperative. He also wrote the Political Biography of Jordan’s Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tall and is the author or editor of nine other books.

(Cis)gendering Religion: Rabbinic Literature, Anti-Trans Bills, and Trans Jewish Cosmology
Monday, Oct. 9 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. Max Strassfeld
University of Arizona

This talk weaves together three distinct moments: the recent spate of anti-transgender bills within the U.S. (which seek to regulate trans access to public facilities), Late Antique rabbinic texts about androgynies and eunuchs, and contemporary trans Jewish readings of Genesis. The thread that connects all three is a struggle over the legibility of trans bodies in both religion and law. Strassfeld will argue that contemporary characterizations of religion as essentially hostile to trans subjects obscures the effort involved in rendering trans/religion incoherent, and colludes in the cisgendering of religion.

Dr. Max Strassfeld (Ph.D., Stanford University) specializes in Rabbinic Literature, History of Sexuality, and Religious Studies Theory and Method. Dr. Strassfeld is an affiliate of the UA Institute for LGBT Studies, with his research and teaching expertise in LGBTQI issues in religion and transgender studies. Dr. Strassfeld, Assistant Professor in Religious Studies & Classics, is an affiliate faculty in the Center for Judaic Studies. Dr. Strassfeld teaches a wide range of courses, including Introduction to Judaism; Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire; Sex and the Body in Medieval Religion; Gender, Women, and Religion; and LGBTQI Issues in Religion.

Water, Wastewater and Energy Solutions for Off-grid Bedouin, Palestinian, and Jordanian Communities
Monday, Oct. 2 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Dr. Clive Lipchin
Arava Institute

Co-Sponsored by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies and The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC)

The response to increasing strains on water resources from population growth, globalization, economic growth, urbanization, inequalities of and conflicts over shared transboundary resources, has led to an analysis of the Food-Energy-Water (FEW) Nexus and its role in development approaches for communities. The FEW Nexus concept developed because these life-sustaining sources - food, energy, and water, are inextricably linked and constitute essential human rights. Using this as a framework, a more systematic analysis of interactions between human activities and their environment can be determined, with the purpose of working towards coordinated management on local, national and international levels. Addressing the FEW Nexus in an integrated approach is crucial in conflict zones with shared environmental resources.

Lipchin serves as director of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies’ Center for Transboundary Water Management where he oversees research and development projects, workshops and conferences that focus on transboundary water and environmental problems facing Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.
Events

Sally & Ralph Duchin Campus Lecture Series (continued)

The Holocaust in Bosnia-Herzegovina:
Muslim-Christian-Jewish Relations in the Worst of Times
Monday, Oct. 23 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Dr. Eli Tauber
University of Sarajevo

The story of the Holocaust in Bosnia-Herzegovina is little known in the West. It’s a complicated situation – but one with continuing repercussions on post-war history. As Bosnia became part of the “Independent State of Croatia” following the fall of Yugoslavia in 1941, the region’s Jews struggled to survive in the midst of the Holocaust, a simultaneous three-sided ethnic conflict between Bosnian Croats (Catholics), Serbs (Orthodox), and Muslims, and a civil war pitting Serbian royalist Chetniks against Communist-led pro-republican Partisans. Despite the convergence of these various conflicts, many of the area’s Jews survived, mostly with the assistance of Muslim and Christian neighbors.

No one is better able to tell this story then Dr. Elijas (Eli) Tauber, journalist, historian, and member of Sarajevo’s Jewish community, whose mother was a Holocaust survivor and who is himself a survivor of the 1990s war. Tauber (Ph.D. in History from The University of Sarajevo) is the author of several books on the history of the Bosnian Jews, Sephardic Jewish language/culture, and the Holocaust. His particular areas of interest are Bosnian Holocaust rescuers (Muslim and Christian “Righteous among the Nations”) and Jewish-Muslim cooperation in Bosnia.

Kabbalah in a Surprising Place: Joseph Smith’s Engagement with Jewish Mysticism

Thursday*, Nov. 9 • 4 pm
UA Hillel • Free

Dr. Hartley Lachter
University of Chicago Oriental Institute

A surprising feature of the Jewish mystical tradition known as Kabbalah is the degree to which it came to influence 19th century religious thinkers in Europe and North America. This talk will describe one important example of this phenomenon - the impact of Kabbalah on Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Dr. Hartley Lachter is an Associate Professor at Lehigh University, where he is the chair of the Religion Studies Department and director of the Berman Center for Jewish Studies. His research focuses on the relationship between medieval Kabbalah, Jewish historical experience, and Jewish-Christian relations. He also works on the role of medieval Kabbalah in some modern and contemporary religious thinkers. He is the author of, Kabbalistic Revolution: Reimagining Judaism in Medieval Spain, published by Rutgers University Press.

How Jewish was Turn-of-the-Century Vienna?

Monday, Nov. 20 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. Tom Kovach
University of Arizona

Since the path-breaking work of the cultural historian Carl Schorske in 1979, much attention has been given to the culture of Vienna around 1900, and how it was one of the main sources of modernism in all the arts and culture. Though Schorske did discuss the rise of antisemitism and the founding of the modern Zionist movement by the Viennese Theodor Herzl, he viewed the culture as one shaped by the political and social upheavals of the time, rather than by religion or ethnicity.

In the years since, several historians, notably Steven Beller, have given greater emphasis to the Jewish element, some even claiming that the culture was fundamentally Jewish. This lecture will examine various aspects of the culture and discuss the issue of “Jewishness” and how it is defined in the light of this culture.

Dr. Tom Kovach is Professor of German Studies, and an affiliated faculty in the Center for Judaic Studies. A main focus of his teaching at The University of Arizona has been in German-Jewish Studies – both the writings of German Jews, and the ways in which Jews and Judaism have been portrayed in German texts from 1500 to the present. His research interests range widely over German and Comparative Literature from the mid-eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries.

*Please note: Sally & Ralph Duchin Campus Lecture Series events are typically held on Monday afternoons. The (Tuesday) 9/5/17 and (Thursday) 11/9/17 lectures are exceptions to this rule and are denoted with an asterisk.
Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series

Israel’s Education Crisis: The Start-up Nation’s Threat from Within
Monday, November 13 • 7pm
Tucson JCC • Free

Prof. Dan Ben David
Shoresh Institute, Tel Aviv University

While Israel’s leading universities are excellent and its hi-tech sector flourishing, the country has one of the lowest productivity levels and the highest poverty rates in the developed world. With roughly half of its children receiving a Third World education, future economic sustainability is not a foregone conclusion. The knowledge needed to raise Israel to viable economic trajectories exists within its borders. But an extremely inadequate education system is unable to channel this knowledge effectively to the primary and secondary schools, which in turn limits the ability to enter quality institutions of higher learning. Professor Ben David will highlight aspects of education’s economic impact and focus on a number of misconceptions about the state of education in Israel. He will provide an assessment of the failings, achievements, future prospects, and critical importance of Israel’s educational system.

Professor Dan Ben-David is the president and founder of the Shoresh Institute and a senior faculty member of the Department of Public Policy at Tel-Aviv University. He is the former executive director of the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies.

The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers
Monday, December 4 • 7pm
Tucson JCC • Free

Prof. Yael Aronoff
Michigan State University

Do leaders matter? How does the personality and worldview of leaders shape the course of war and peace? Prof. Aronoff will examine the psychology and decision-making processes of key Israeli Prime Ministers of the last 30 years, to show how and why their views and decisions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict shifted and developed over time, leading some to persist in their positions, while others opted to make dramatic changes. Aronoff will explain how these examples relate to the recent policies of and decisions by Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Prof. Yael S. Aronoff is the Michael and Elaine Serling and Friends Chair of Israel Studies at Michigan State University, the Director of Jewish Studies at MSU, and an Associate Professor of International Relations in The James Madison College at MSU. She is on the Board of Directors of the Association for Israel Studies. Aronoff’s book, *The Political Psychology of Israeli Prime Ministers: When Hard-Liners Opt for Peace*, was published by Cambridge University Press.

About The Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series

The Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series is made possible by the generous support of the Pozez Families & The Pozez Family Fund at the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona.

Since 1997 the Pozez families’ generosity has made this series one of the intellectual and social staples of the Tucson Jewish community.

Sadly, Shaol passed away in 1999 and Evie in 2011. We lost Louis Pozez in 2008, but thankfully Ruthann is still with us. Their work on behalf of the local Jewish community, The University of Arizona, and the city of Tucson has created a distinguished legacy, and their children are continuing that legacy in many ways. The series has gained a national and international reputation for its long history of distinguished lecturers.

The Shaol and Louis Pozez Memorial series began as The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies’ Distinguished Lecture Series, and was later renamed in honor of Shaol, and later Shaol & Louis. May their memories be for a blessing!
Thank You for Supporting Judaic Studies!

Your donations support engaging programs, academic excellence and community involvement!

$10,000+
Anonymous
Alice & Paul Baker
Sara & Tom Borin
Joan* & Donald Diamond
Sally & Ralph Duchin
Marilyn Einstein & Steve Sim
Deanna Evenchik
Larry Gellman
Tandy & Gary Kippur
Deborah Oseran & Bobby Present
Betsy & Ken Plevan
Pozez Family Fund
Robin & Mitch Pozez
Shelley Jo Pozez
Ruthann & Norman Pozez
Evie* & Shaol* Pozez
Stein Family Fund
Linda & Ken Robin
The Israel Institute, Washington D.C.

$1,000-$5,000
Anonymous
Rowene Aguirre-Medina & Roy Medina
Deborah Baker
Kenneth Brandis
Ruth & Stephen Dickstein
Margaret Houghton
Michael Kasser
Helen & John Schaefer
Trudy & Howard Schwartz
Irving Silverman
Lee & Arthur Herbst

$1-$1,000
Anonymous
Barry Baker
Kent Barrabbee
Suzanne & Nathaniel Bloomfield
Ronald Breiger & Linda Waugh
Betty & Douglas Brenner
Judith Brown
Martin Cohen
Jeanne Davenport
Aaron Finkelstein
Edyth & Bruce Gissinger
Maralyn Goldstein
Bob Greenstein
Lisa & Gary Israel
Deborah Kaye
Billie & Boris Kozolchyk
Sheila & Cy Lehrer
Pat & Peter Likins
Sidney Lissner
Bailey London
Judy & Richard Myers
Asher Nierman
Margaret Nogales
Rachel & Hal Ossman
Kathleen & Burke Rosenzweig
Lowell Rothschild
Bernadette & Joaquin Ruiz
Sarah & Leonard Schultz
Joe Seger
Janet & Stephen Seltzer
Esther Sherberg
Evelyn Sigafus
Thomas Warne
Marcia & Irving Winick
*(of blessed memory)
Emily Marks was awarded the Jack and Irene Sarver Scholarship. Emily grew up mostly in Tucson, but lived in Israel for three and a half years while serving in the Israeli Air Force. Emily was a filing clerk at an office on a base in Rechovot and studied in Hebrew Ulpan while living in Haifa during the Second Lebanon War. These life experiences influenced her desire to major in Judaic Studies. “This grant/scholarship will help me graduate and figure out how to make my goals a reality. I know some Hebrew, and this program will help me become fluent so I can pursue my future goals.” Emily would like to develop Hebrew language programs and curricula to help students in Jewish schools in Tucson better learn the language. She would like to implement correspondence between Israeli and Tucson schools to help with language acquisition, similar to her Ulpan experience. This program could be adapted for adult learning as well. Emily sees Hebrew language learning as a way to help the Tucson Jewish community continue to thrive for generations.

Kamilia Rahmouni (School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies) is a Tunisian-born doctoral student whose research expertise is in Tunisian Jewry. She came to the United States as a Fulbright exchange scholar in 2012 and obtained her Masters of Arts in May 2014. Her research interests lie in the areas of minority studies and linguistic anthropology. She is interested in the way language is used by minority populations in the Middle East in order to shape and construct their identity with a specific focus on the interactions and mutual influence between language, power, culture, and politics. Kamilia was awarded the Ron and Diane Weintraub Israel Study Award for her research, and spent the 2017 summer in Paris where she conducted archival research at the library of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. The AIU library has the archives that Professors Lucette Valensi and Abraham Udovitch deposited there, and they contain valuable information on the history and culture of Tunisian Jews and specifically those living on the island of Djerba.

Her Ph.D. dissertation explores Judeo-Arabic (Judeo-Tunisian Arabic more specifically) and how it shapes and is shaped by identity, reporting that the Jewish communities in Tunisia have had a very rich collection of publications in Judeo-Arabic.
Eta Beta Rho
The National Scholastic Honor Society for Students of Hebrew Language and Culture

Eta Beta Rho exists to recognize outstanding attainments in study of Hebrew language and literature, to stimulate study and research in this field, and to promote an understanding and appreciation of the culture of Israel.

To join the society, undergraduates must have completed at least 12 credits of Hebrew with an 3.0 average.

This year’s Eta Beta Rho inductees were: Amanda Bauer, Jessica Bloom, Marisa Hoffman, Kati Juhlin, Zach Makler, Alex Ohana, Jake Rice, Michele Rizzo and Leah Smith.

The Irving I. Silverman Prize for Excellence

The Irving I. Silverman Prize was created in 2007 by Irving I. Silverman. Applicants are nominated by Judaic Studies faculty members and selected by a review committee. The Silverman Prize is a one time award ranging from $500-$1,000.

The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is fortunate to be able to count Irving Silverman as a friend and supporter of our students.

This year’s Silverman Prize winners were: Amanda Bauer, Jessica Bloom and Kati Juhlin.

Amanda Bauer (pictured at right with Prof. Bill Dever) used her Silverman Prize toward the cost of her summer trip to work on a dig site in Eilat.

Bake Sale Raised $800 to Help Syrian Children

In February, students from our Modern Hebrew Program hosted a Bake Sale of home-baked goods prepared by the students for the benefit of Syrian children impacted by the ongoing civil war.

Hebrew Program Coordinator Uri Maimon said that he was inspired by a video he had seen of two Israelis that raised over 400,000 Shekels in just one event to support those children directly impacted by the Syrian civil war, “I thought, if they can do something, why can’t we?” Center Director Ed Wright said, “I am proud that our students are taking up this kind of initiative. These precious children’s world has been torn apart, and everything we can do to put it back together is a just and noble cause.”

The students raised $800 for the Syrian American Medical Society Foundation’s efforts to help Syrian children.
Textbook Release Marks Judaic Studies Director Ed Wright’s 6th Book
Co-Edited with Two of His Former Students, The Old Testament in Archaeology and History Hits Shelves

J. Edward Wright, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism at The University of Arizona recently completed his 6th book.

What is really interesting about this book is that two of the co-editors were Dr. Wright’s Ph.D. students: Jennie Ebeling is Associate Professor of Archaeology at The University of Evansville, Mark Elliott is Adjunct Professor of Judaic Studies at The University of Arizona. The other co-editor is Prof. Paul V. M. Flesher, Professor of Religious Studies at The University of Wyoming.

The Old Testament in Archaeology and History integrates discoveries from archaeological findings with those from modern historical and literary analysis of the Bible to recount the history of ancient Israel and its neighboring nations and empires. One hundred and fifty years of sustained archaeological investigation has yielded a more complete picture of the ancient Near East.

Eighteen international authorities contribute chapters to this introductory volume. After exploring the history of modern archaeological research in the Near East and the evolution of “biblical archaeology” as a discipline, this textbook follows the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament’s general chronological order, covering such key aspects as the Exodus from Egypt, Israel’s settlement in Canaan, the rise of the monarchy under David and Solomon, the period of the two kingdoms and their encounters with Assyrian power, the kingdoms’ ultimate demise, the exile of Judahites to Babylonia, and the Judahites’ return to Jerusalem under the Persians along with the advent of “Jewish” identity. Each chapter is tailored for an audience new to the history of ancient Israel in its biblical and ancient Near Eastern setting.

The end result is an introduction to ancient Israel combined with and illuminated by more than a century of archaeological research. The volume brings together the results of modern research into the biblical text and narrative with archaeological and historical analysis to create an understanding of ancient Israel as a political and religious entity based on the broadest foundation of evidence. This combination of literary and archaeological data provides new insights into the complex reality experienced by the peoples reflected in the biblical narratives.

“This useful volume, written by experts in accessible, straightforward prose, is up-to-date, thorough, easy to follow, and beautifully illustrated. It demonstrates that evidence from both archaeology and the ancient texts is needed to bring the world of the biblical writers to life.”

Andrea M. Berlin, James R. Wiseman Chair in Classical Archaeology, Boston University
One of the missions of The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is to transmit expert knowledge of Judaica to the community beyond The University of Arizona. We strive to be an authoritative resource for all. We do this in multiple ways beginning with the dozens of public lectures that we host during the school year, public conferences and symposia in specialized areas such as Modern Israel, publishing a biannual newsletter, hosting *The Bible and Interpretation* Website (bibleinterp.com) and more recently uploading lectures to our YouTube channel.

Social media has revolutionized the way universities and policy organizations disseminate information, increasing that ability exponentially.

Social media is a new effort for the Center and it has extended the influence of our content far beyond our Tucson community.

We are at the forefront of this revolution. In less than three years we have created an amazing collection of videos with beautifully illustrated cover slides, watched by several hundred daily viewers in dozens of countries. This global audience is looking for expertise regarding the Middle East, and The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies provides the kind of in-depth analysis that people want.

Our YouTube channel (youtube.com/UAJudaicStudies) has had over 140,000 views in the last year, and more than 1,000 subscribers. These videos feature speakers in Ancient Israel, Modern Israel, Modern Judaism, and Medieval Jewish history.

Renowned Israeli scholar of the Modern Middle East and Israel Prof., Asher Sussuer’s video *Iran and the Arabs*, is our most popular video. Since President Trump’s visit to Israel and Saudi Arabia, as well as the intrigue among the Gulf States and Qatar, our channel has seen 130% increase in channel views, primarily among videos focusing on Israel and the Modern Middle East.

News agencies can tell you what is happening in the region, but our experts can tell you what these events mean.

If you have not seen our channel, go to youtube.com/UAJudaicStudies or click the link at Judaic.arizona.edu. Check it out, and share with a friend. Let us know what you think. Stay in touch. Stay informed. Join the conversation.

With 140K+ views on YouTube, UA Judaic Studies is Educating People Around the World!
Come Celebrate with Us!
The 20th Anniversary Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series Begins November 13!
Details inside front cover