The reach of scholars affiliated with The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is now worldwide. Those scholars are experts in a host of academic disciplines, and they work in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Mexico. This year the Louis and Shaol Pozez Memorial Lecture Series will explore the experiences of several Jewish communities around the world. We will learn about the pressing issues they face and how we might support them. Many of these communities face economic turmoil, regional conflicts, political instability, xenophobia, and anti-semitism. Join us as we learn from and are challenged by internationally-recognized experts on the Jewish communities of North Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Your mind will be challenged, your heart touched, and your view of the Jewish world vastly expanded.
From the Director

Judaic Studies’ Impact Around the World

Dearest Friends:

Another new year is upon us at The University of Arizona. The university residences are again full of students, the Student Union is buzzing with activity, classes are in session, and we are in the second year under the visionary leadership of President Robbins. I love the beginning of the fall semester since it brings with it the expectation of new things.

This year we are looking outward, and by “we” I mean the Center’s faculty, staff, and students. As you will read in this edition of our newsletter, we are engaging with our campus, local, and worldwide communities in a wide variety of ways.

The theme for this year’s Louis and Shaol Pozez Memorial Lecture Series is “The Diverse Jewish World.” We will host speakers who will discuss the pressing issues faced by Iraqi, Moroccan, Hispanic, Latin American, and European Jewish communities. This fall, in conjunction with the UofA Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the Series will host a viewing of Farewell Baghdad followed by a discussion led by our own Dr. Gil Ribak. Also, Prof. Aomar Boum of UCLA will lead us in an exploration of the Jews of Morocco, focusing on their lives in an Islamic country that has maintained generally positive relations with Israel.

Our students are also engaging with the world. This past summer Profs. David Graizbord and Leonard Hammer led the first cohort of our new Study Abroad program “Arizona In Israel.” Here you will read of their adventures and how what they saw and learned has impacted their learning and transformed their lives.

Judaic Studies also supports various archaeological endeavors in Israel. We support the digs at Tel Abel Beth Maacah in northern Israel, as well as the dig at Jezreel co-directed by our former doctoral student Prof. Jennie Ebeling of the University of Evansville. Moreover, Prof. Beth Alpert Nakhai and I have long been involved as members and trustees of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the learned society for Middle Eastern archaeologists and text scholars. In the spring we will host Prof. Susan Ackerman, the president of ASOR as our Raphael Patai Memorial Lecturer. Prof. Ackerman, a professor at Dartmouth College and a former UofA faculty member, will discuss ASOR’s efforts to document, preserve, and now restore the cultural heritage destroyed by ISIS during their brief and brutal reign. If you enjoyed the film Monuments Men, you will not want to miss Prof. Ackerman’s lecture.

The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is focused on the world beyond the classroom. All of our people are engaged with and having an impact on the world, each in their own unique way. Your involvement with and support of our efforts is making a difference, and we see it every day in the lives of our students and our community. Thank you for your support, and please enjoy this edition of our fall newsletter.

Ed Wright, Director
Arizona In Israel Students Return after “Life-Changing Adventure”

As students return from the Arizona In Israel Summer Program, their descriptions of their adventure include “hyper-stimulating,” “life-changing,” and “action-packed.”

The students took two courses: one in Jewish History, and the other on Human Rights in Israel. Both courses turned the classroom inside-out. They are based on extensive field-trips and fieldwork, mostly in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, but also in the Israeli North—Nazareth, Safed, Haifa, Acre, and Caesarea.

First and foremost, students immersed themselves in a living, breathing multi-ethnic and multi-religious civilization, and were able to interact with experts and ordinary citizens in discussing the various dilemmas that face a thriving nation-state that is firmly rooted both in modernity and in multi-millennial cultures. From trips to the Israeli parliament and the country’s Supreme Court, to historical museums, to navigating serpentine alleyways in old markets and holy sites, to interning in a dynamic cultural start-up in Tel Aviv, the students gained something that no vacation or heritage tour can offer: an in-depth encounter with the people of Israel.

2018 Arizona in Israel program Scholarships

Kyle Burns
$1,505 Jack & Irene Sarver Memorial Scholarship

Austin Crittenden
$2,500 Jack & Irene Sarver Memorial Scholarship

Gabrielle Fisher
$2,500 Florence Kaiserman Memorial Scholarship

Emily Stanich
$2,500 Weintraub Israel Study Award

Thank you to the Sarver, Weintraub and Kaiserman families and to the Weintraub Israel Center for your generous support.

From Top Left: UofA students at the Israeli Knesset, where they learned about the tensions inherent in the national-democratic nature of Israeli Basic Law and chief institutions.

Rabbi Daniel Bouskila explaining Sephardi Culture to students at the Beit Midrash (House of Study) of a 200+ year-Old Sephardi Yeshiva (rabbinic seminary) in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Students on a special tour of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, learning about inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations from Arab and Jewish tour guides.

Professor Hammer teaching outside the Old City walls.

Professor Gerald Steinberg of NGO Monitor, explaining how his organization in keeping NGOs that focus on human rights in the Middle East transparent and accountable for their work.
In April Center Director Prof. Ed Wright led a handful of men in the Next Gen group from the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona on a trip to Israel and Palestine. The goal of these “Next Gen” trips is to inspire and challenge the next generation to assume community leadership and to connect with the Jewish community. To facilitate this end, each trip has a strong Jewish-informed itinerary.

This trip was meant to help the Next Gen group understand the big picture and the vexing issues facing Israelis and Palestinians. That is why the trip coordinators, Bobby Present and Gary Kippur, recruited Prof. Wright to develop the concept of a political mission of understanding.

The group explored ancient Israel and Jerusalem in two private tours. Dr. Adolfo Roitman, curator of the Israel Museum’s “Shrine of the Book,” introduced them to the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. Matt Adams, director of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, led them on a tour of the City of David and of the Albright Institute itself, the most prestigious American overseas research institute in the Middle East.

The group met with Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah, who explained the wide range of Palestinian attitudes on the peace process. Dr. Anwar Abu Eisheh, the former Palestinian Minister of Culture, led the group on a tour of Hebron where they saw first-hand the tensions between Palestinians and Israeli settlers.

The tour drew to a close with a morning-long meeting with two leaders who are now well known in Tucson thanks to their many visits to our city and campus: former Israeli ambassador to the United States Itamar Rabinovich, and former Stein Visiting Professor at the UofA Prof. Asher Susser.

This trip accomplishes the Center’s mission by promoting advanced scholarship, and providing world-class educational experiences for members of the community. The unique opportunity to spend time on the ground with both Palestinian and Israeli leaders provided the ideal access point for in-depth learning. The group returned with the understanding that Israel-Palestine issues are far more complicated than they thought and that without daring and skilled leadership by Israeli and Palestinian leaders, the prospects for peace will remain elusive.

Alumni Digs at Tel Dan
Judaic Studies alum Amanda Bauer spent the summer excavating at Tel Dan, an archaeological site in northern Israel famous for the stele found referencing the “House of David.” This dig was looking to develop a better dating of the transition from Late Bronze Age to early Iron Age.

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Impact Abroad
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M’Ever Layam - “Lone Soldiers”
Connecting to Community Back Home

Drew Alyeshmerni Leach is the President and CEO of M’Ever Layam ( Bless Sinai ). She started the program while working at the Hillel at the University of California at Irvine because she felt there was not a strong enough experience for those students who were interested in knowing more about Israel. She also noted a gap in the realities she saw as a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the information she saw discussed in the U.S. She felt that by creating people-to-people connections, the name of the organization means “across the sea,” she could overcome the breach in information and experience. Drew’s program connects Lone Soldiers, (soldiers who make Aliyah and join the IDF) with young people from their home communities. There are currently 80 soldiers in the program connected to 50 communities in 10 states.

Nonprofit advocacy work, was not the original plan for Drew. When she started at the University of Arizona, majoring in Judaic Studies, she was intending on becoming a cantor. Indeed, throughout her college career she was the acting cantor at Handmaker Jewish Services For Aging, an adult care facility in Tucson. However, in several capacities including in the Civil Administration in Ramallah where she assisted Ed Wright, the Center’s director, in obtaining a worker’s permit for a friend, a Palestinian who worked at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem. Later, Drew would obtain her Master’s in Public Policy from Tel Aviv University and return to the U.S. where she worked in various nonprofits, including Hillel.

Drew is now taking her experiences and knowledge and working to mentor a new generation of high school and college aged young people, inspiring passion for and knowledge of Israel.

Upon graduation in 2006, Drew decided to join the IDF, a Lone Soldier, for two years. Several of her friends went to the Peace Corps or Teach for America during their gap year(s). Drew decided to go to Israel. While in the military, Drew served in several capacities including in the Civil Administration in Ramallah where she assisted Ed Wright, the Center’s director, in obtaining a worker’s permit for a friend, a Palestinian who worked at the Albright Institute in Jerusalem. Later, Drew would obtain her Master’s in Public Policy from Tel Aviv University and return to the U.S. where she worked in various nonprofits, including Hillel.

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When Adam Bellos left America for Israel seven years ago, he knew he was starting on an adventure that would change his life. Born in Chicago and raised in Cincinnati, Bellos got into Zionism after studying abroad at Tel Aviv University and then from a class he took with Professor Shlomo Aronson at the University of Arizona, and to the writings of David Hazony which he discovered through his professor and mentor, David Graizbord. He ended up moving to Tel Aviv and spent years trying to make an impact through established pro-Israel organizations. But he found them too sluggish and ego-driven, and they didn’t speak to his generation. He realized he’d need to start something himself. Something big.

A year ago, he launched The Israel Innovation Fund (TIIF), hiring Hazony as its Executive Director. TIIF is a different kind of nonprofit. On the one hand, almost everyone there is under 35, and they’ve found a way to connect with a generation that is tired of all the noise and bad vibes of the political struggles surrounding Israel. At the same time, they work nimble and lean and don’t want to drag down their time and money with a big fundraising operation: Instead, their projects all work like small businesses, looking to raise revenue through the value Israeli culture adds to our lives.

Their flagship project, Wine on the Vine, headed by Tatiana Hasson, a young new immigrant from Boston lets you plant your own vine for $18 at a top winery in Israel, and channel a portion towards one of a dozen innovative Israeli charities of your choice. Their art project promotes the work of Israel’s leading street artist, Solomon Souza; and their film studio, What If? Studios, headed by award-winning student filmmaker Daria Turetski offers everything from viral videos to feature length films.

These all come together in their often-sold-out parties, where great wine flows, Souza paints live on a canvas, and live music or top DJs create a Tel-Aviv-at-night atmosphere than they can bring to communities around the world.

All of this, Bellos believes, is the start of a new kind of Zionism, reminiscent of the Cultural Zionism of Ahad Ha’am, that emphasizes bringing Israeli creativity around the world. “Israel is cool and sexy and holy and fun. It’s the creative state,” Bellos told the Los Angeles Jewish Journal. “It’s not your bubbe’s Zionism. It’s about Fauda, it’s about Gal Gadot. We are Wonder Woman Zionism.”
Our Impact Abroad - Partner Reports

The Jezreel Expedition
Jennie Ebeling and Norma Franklin

With the generous support of the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, the Jezreel Expedition completed its sixth excavation season in late June 2018. Co-directed by Dr. Jennie Ebeling of the University of Evansville and Dr. Norma Franklin of the University of Haifa, the primary goal of the project is to understand the history of ‘greater Jezreel’ from the late Neolithic period to the 20th century. Located in the Lower Galilee, Jezreel sits at a strategic location midway between Megiddo and Bet Shean in the fertile Jezreel Valley. Jezreel features prominently in the biblical narrative as the site of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21) and Queen Jezebel’s gruesome death (2 Kings 9).

In addition to students and archaeologists from the University of Evansville and the University of Haifa, members of our eight consortium schools in the USA – including the University of Arizona – have participated in the Jezreel project.

Abel Bet Maacah Report

Earlier this summer, the Times of Israel reported the find of a rare sculpted head from the Iron Age II, nearly 3,000 years ago. The bearded figure, wearing a golden crown, is a rare example of figurative art from the 9th century BCE, the era of the biblical kings. Figurative art of the Iron Age is rather poor making this head a fantastic and significant find.

The head is thought to represent an important figure in the Iron Age—a dignitary, elite person, or even a king. Experts on site concluded that the expertly-crafted figurine portrays a specific human rather than a deity. The figurine was found on the floor of a massive building that may be a citadel similar to one at nearby Hazor. Hence, the head likely depicts a dignitary or royalty. The historical figures at that time include Israelites Ahab and Jehu from the northern kingdom, Aramean Hadadezer and Hazael, and Ithobaal of the Phoenicians.

The site of Abel Beth Maacah in northern Israel sits at the ancient crossroads where Israel, Phoenicia, and Syria met. The Israelite kingdom and the kingdom of Aram-Damascus vied for control of this city, and there is an ongoing debate as to the city’s political affiliation.

Excavations conducted at Abel Beth Maacah, led by Prof. Robert Mullins, are a joint partnership between Azusa Pacific University and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and have revealed exciting finds since the project’s first season in 2013. The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies has been a participant and sponsor of the dig over the years. Archaeology and studies of the ancient Near East have been, and continue to be, a major area of focus for the Center, and our national and international partnerships allow us to accomplish our mission by creating current research and new scholarship.

Ebeling, who earned the PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Arizona in 2001, was particularly grateful for a visit from her mentor, U of A Professor Emeritus Bill Dever, in summer 2017. Dever was touring digs with Susan Ackerman, President of the American Schools of Oriental Research and also a former faculty member at the U of A. Like other Arizona alumni who studied under Dever, Ebeling is proud to train the next generation of Near Eastern archaeologists working in Israel, Jordan, and elsewhere in the Mediterranean world.

We sincerely thank the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies, especially Professors Ed Wright and Beth Alpert Nakhai, for their support. To learn more about the Jezreel Expedition, please visit the website: www.jezreel-expedition.com

Co-director Jennie Ebeling, U of A Professor Emeritus William Dever, ASOR President Susan Ackerman, and co-director Norma Franklin at Jezreel.

Macey Wright of Indiana Wesleyan University holds a Phoenician-style figurine head [inset] found in one of the silos seen on the left. Photograph by Robert Mullins.
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Marcia & Irving Winick
*(of blessed memory)

In Memory of Joan Kaye Cauthorn

The board, faculty, and staff of The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Joan Kaye Cauthorn. Joan passed away in early September after a mercifully-short illness. Joan’s impact on our campus and in our community was broad and immeasurable—in many diverse and exciting ways she changed lives. Her devotion to community service was unrelenting, her advice always timely and sage, her humor at times stunningly saucy, and her commitment to her family and friends sincere and always reliable. Joan began her earnest support of Judaic Studies in the mid-1990s during the tenure of her dear friend Prof. Leonard Dinnerstein as Director.

Ed Wright recalls, “Leonard introduced me to Joan when I became director, and at the outset of our first conversation she looked at me straight in the eye and declared in no uncertain terms ‘you need to make sure the momentum Leonard started continues! And you must engage Judaic Studies with the community! I can help with that.’ At the end of every conversation she would say ‘I love you,’ and I immediately replied ‘I love you too Joan.’ I am comforted by knowing that those were my last words with Joan. Her memory will remain a blessing to all who knew her.”
Sally & Ralph Duchin Campus Lecture Series

Discovering Babylon
Monday, Oct. 15 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. Rannfrid Thelle
Wichita State University

After lying buried in the ground for over 2,000 years, the remains of Babylon were dug up by archaeologists over one hundred years ago. Yet the city remains enveloped in a web of myth, which occupies a unique place in our culture in spite of its origin in the ancient past.

Known in its time for its impressive walls and luxurious gardens, its learning and temples, this ancient metropolis was buried and forgotten shortly after its last flowering. Instead, Babylon’s reputation as a city of excesses and evil took over, shaped largely by the stories of the Bible and concepts such as the Tower of Babel, the “confusion of tongues,” and the “Babylonian captivity.” Through hundreds of years of Western culture, Babylon lived on as image, myth and symbol, spinning a story of its own.

Prof. Rannfrid Thelle teaches biblical studies at Wichita State University in Kansas. She works with the Hebrew Bible in particular, and has traveled extensively in the Middle East.

Co-Sponsored by Marriott Tucson University Park, Archaeological Institute of America, University of Arizona School of Middle Eastern & North African Studies, Department of History, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Department of Religious Studies & Classics, College of Letters, Arts & Science, and School of Anthropology.

Hasidism: Space and Spirit
Monday, Oct. 22 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. Marcin Wodzinski
University of Wroclaw

Is it true that Hasidism dominated most of East European Jewry already by the end of the eighteenth century? What were the borders of Hasidic influence? When, how and why did they change? Which Hasidic dynasties were strongest and why? How strong is Hasidism today? These and other questions inform the lecture about the geography of this most important socio-religious movement in Judaism.

Prof. Marcin Wodzinski is Professor of Jewish history and literature at the University of Wroclaw, Poland. His special fields of interest are Jewish material culture and the social history of Jews in Eastern Europe, especially history of Hasidism and Haskalah. His books include: Hebrew Inscriptions in Silesia 13th-18th c. (1996), Bibliography on the History of Silesian Jewry II (2004), Haskalah and Hasidism in the Kingdom of Poland: A History of Conflict (2005), Hasidism and Politics: The Kingdom of Poland, 1815-1864 (2013), Historical Atlas of Hasidism (2018), and Hasidism: Key Questions (2018).

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Co-Sponsored by Arizona State University Jewish Studies.

Israel’s Role in Shaping Jewish Identity
Monday, Nov. 26 • 4pm
UA Hillel • Free

Prof. David Graizbord
The University of Arizona

The rise of the State of Israel has seen a transformation in the way that many Jews in the Diaspora regard their identity as Jews and as citizens of their respective countries. Yet the content of Jewish identity, and the opinions and behaviors that follow from that content, have varied, sometimes dramatically, according to context.

Graizbord will identify and explain some key differences in Jewish (self-)perception and behavior relating to Israel in the United States, versus the same phenomena in other places in the Jewish Diaspora. Specifically, the talk will examine how American Jews tend to relate to Israel and how that informs their self-concepts. The talk will then draw a comparison and contrast with the ways in which Jews in Latin America and Europe regard themselves in relation to the Jewish nation-state. Then, the talk will show how the key to explaining the contrasts lies in history.

Prof. David Graizbord is the Associate Director of the Arizona Center for Judaic Studies. A historian of early modern and modern Jews, recently he has recently begun to research Jewish ethnic identity and Zionism among American Jews. Graizbord serves as Program Leader of the UofA’s faculty-led Summer Study Abroad Program, “Arizona in Israel.”

Your gifts support programs like these.
Events

Shaol & Louis Pozez Memorial Lectureship Series Fall Schedule: The Diverse Jewish World

The reach of scholars affiliated with The Arizona Center for Judaic Studies is now worldwide. Those scholars are experts in a host of academic disciplines, and they work in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Mexico. This year the Louis and Shaol Pozez Memorial Lecture Series will explore the experiences of several Jewish communities around the world. We will learn about the pressing issues they face and how we might support them. Many of these communities face economic turmoil, regional conflicts, political instability, xenophobia, and anti-semitism. Join us as we learn from and are challenged by internationally-recognized experts on the Jewish communities of North Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Your mind will be challenged, your heart touched, and your view of the Jewish world vastly expanded.

The Diverse Jewish World: Baghdad, Iraq
Mon., Oct. 29 • 6:30pm • Tucson JCC

Film: Farewell Baghdad

Farewell Baghdad describes the last days of the Jewish community of Baghdad, during the early 1950s, before virtually all of it was airlifted to the young State of Israel. The movie vividly shows the conditions of life and internal political divisions among members of oldest Jewish Diaspora community, as well as their relationship with their Muslim neighbors and the royal Hashemite regime.

The movie is also the first ever to feature the Judeo-Arabic language that was spoken by Jews in Baghdad.

Introduction by Prof. Gil Ribak before the film with a moderated discussion afterward.

Co-Sponsored The University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

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

judaic.arizona.edu

Prof. Ribak wins New Fellowship in Jewish Studies

Center Professor Gil Ribak received the Fordham-NYPL Research Fellowship in Jewish Studies, a partnership between Fordham University and the New York Public Library, and will take part of the inaugural class of this new join pilot fellowship program. The fellowship program is open to scholars in all fields of Jewish Studies from outside the New York City metropolitan area and provides support for their on-site research at The New York Public Library, especially the Dorot Jewish Division. Dr. Ribak used this fellowship to work on his next book, which focus on the representation of Blacks in Yiddish Culture. Prof. Ribak will also give a lecture in New York titled “A Feeling of Self-Disgust Attacks Me: The Attitudes of Eastern European Jewish Immigrants toward African Americans in a Transnational Perspective.”