

FROM THE DIRECTORS

American University's Jewish Studies Program and Center for Israel Studies engage, inside the classroom and out, in some of the great issues and ideas of our time. You will read in these pages of our activities advancing scholarship, teaching students, and bringing to the AU and D.C. communities a unique spotlight on Israeli culture and society. Although we bid farewell to our colleagues Yoram Peri, Dollye and Wolford Berman Visiting Professor of Israel Studies, and Tatjana Lichtenstein, Schusterman Teaching Fellow in Jewish Studies, who so enriched our community this past year, we have welcomed new faces to AU—historian of French Jewry associate professor Lisa Leff; Maurice Roumani, Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Visiting Professor in Israel Studies; and Nina Spiegel, Schusterman Teaching Fellow in Jewish Studies. We invite you to meet them and to join in the many opportunities we will offer this year to explore complex and engaging issues in both Jewish and Israel studies.

Our activities would not be possible without your continued generosity. Please consider gifts to the Center for Israel Studies, Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Endowment, and Jewish Studies Program to support these vital efforts. ■



Pamela Nadell,
Director, Jewish
Studies Program



Russell Stone,
Director, Center for
Israel Studies

CIS Hosts Successful Conference: "Israel at a Crossroads"

In May, the Center for Israel Studies (CIS) hosted the conference "Israel at a Crossroads." Open to the public, it featured visiting professors of Israel studies who had taught at campuses across the United States, with support from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (AICE). The presenters addressed current issues in Israeli society on three

"The Center for
Israel Studies
is becoming a
star at American
University.
Bravo!"

panels: The Cultural Crossroad, The Political Crossroad, and Which Road to Peace? Response from the capacity crowd was so positive that American University was selected to host the next conference of visiting professors of Israel studies in May, 2010. One attendee's written survey comment was: "The Center for Israel Studies is becoming a star at American University. Bravo!" ■



WELCOME NEW COLLEAGUES

Lisa Moses Leff



Lisa Moses Leff joins the faculty as associate professor of history. She received her BA from Oberlin College and her MA and PhD in European history from the University of Chicago. Her work focuses on the history of Jews in modern France. Stanford University Press published her first book, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (2006). Currently, she is writing a book about the history of Jewish archives in the twentieth century. ■

Maurice Roumani

The Center for Israel Studies welcomes Maurice Roumani as the Seymour and Lillian Abensohn Visiting Professor. Roumani was associate professor of political science and Middle East studies, as well as the founder



and director of the J. R. Elyachar Center for the Study of Sephardi Heritage at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, Israel. He holds degrees from Brandeis University, the University of Chicago, and the University of

London. Roumani is the author or editor of numerous books, including *From Immigrant to Citizen: The Contribution of the Army to National Integration in Israel*; *The Jews from Arab Countries: A Neglected Issue*; *Ethnicity, Integration, and the Military*; and *The Jews of Libya: Coexistence, Persecution, Resettlement*. As a visiting professor, he will teach Israeli Society; Israeli Politics; and Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa. ■

Nina Spiegel



Nina Spiegel holds AU's Schusterman Teaching Fellowship in Jewish Studies, thanks to an ongoing grant from the Foundation for Jewish Culture's Jewish Studies Expansion Program. She earned a PhD in Jewish history at Stanford University, has taught at both Stanford and the University of Maryland, and worked as a curator at the National Museum of American Jewish History. She is currently completing a book manuscript, "The Creation of Israeli Culture: Hebrew Dance, Sports, and Beauty in the British Mandate." ■

LECTURES AND PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES

- *A Concert of Great Romantic Masterpieces*, Israeli pianist, conductor, and composer Gil Shohat and opera singer Bavat Marom in concert, cosponsored by the America-Israel Cultural Foundation

- "Current Controversies in Israel: Religion, Politics, Migration, and Minorities," Calvin Goldscheider, scholar in residence at AU; professor emeritus, Brown University.

- "Experiences of an Israeli Arab Journalist," Khaled Abu Toameh, *Jerusalem Post* Palestinian affairs reporter

- "Holocaust Diaries," Amy Simon, PhD candidate, Indiana University; Leon Milman Memorial Fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



- "How Jews Read the Bible: Interpreting and Living a Sacred Text," Leila Berner, AU Department of Philosophy and Religion

- "Insights on Writing and the State of Israel," Israeli novelist David Grossman, cosponsored by the AU MFA Program in Creative Writing (see p. 6)

- "Jewish-Arab Identity on the Concert Stage: Orientalism in Israeli Music, 1948–2008," Ronit Seter, Jewish Music Research Centre, Hebrew University

- "Meet Idan Raichel," musical performance by and discussion with Israeli musicians Idan Raichel and Kabra Kasai of the Idan Raichel Project (see p. 6)

Welcome Laura Katz Cutler

The Center for Israel Studies welcomes Laura Katz Cutler as deputy director. A former commercial banker, Cutler is an active member of the Washington, D.C., Jewish community and has served on several national and local nonprofit boards, including the Jewish Federation and the United Jewish Endowment Fund. She holds a master's degree in international relations from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. "I am so impressed by the level of scholarship at AU and thrilled at the opportunity to expand this important center. My first priority will be to complete an endowment for a permanent faculty member in Israel studies," said Cutler, who may be reached at 202-885-3780. ■



A Good Read: Jewish Literature and the Bender Library

The successful Let's Talk about It: Jewish Literature series has a new name: Culture and Community. The AU Library has partnered with the Jewish Studies Program and the Center for Israel Studies to offer a new reading and discussion group this year on fiction about the Jewish experience in the twentieth century, again led by Lauren Strauss. To see the list of books or to sign up for this popular activity, visit www.library.american.edu/culture or call 202-885-3847. ■

Culture & Community
AU Library's Reading and Discussion Group

Fall 2009 Theme:
Cartographies of Upheaval: Fiction about World Jewry in the Twentieth Century
Lecturer/moderator: Dr. Lauren B. Strauss

	<i>Collected Stories</i> by Isaac Babel	September 21
	<i>Suite Française</i> by Irene Nemirovsky.	October 5
	<i>See Under: Love</i> by David Grossman.	October 19
	<i>Maus I</i> by Art Spiegelman	November 2
	<i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay</i> by Michael Chabon	November 16

Monday evenings, 7:00 to 9:00PM at the American University Library
 RSVP to AU Library at 202-885-3847 or libevents@american.edu
 For more information, visit www.library.american.edu/culture

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Jewish Studies Program

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

CENTER FOR ISRAEL STUDIES The mission of the center is to examine and interpret modern Israel's intellectual and creative contributions and achievements in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts. Located in Washington, D.C., at American University, a major institution of higher learning, the center is uniquely positioned to be a national and international hub for the dissemination of information about Israel and the discussion of Israeli developments, issues, and concerns. The center's challenge is to connect Israel to the next generation of leaders who are matriculating today in America's universities and colleges.

For further information, call 202-885-3780, e-mail rstone@american.edu or cutler@american.edu, or visit our Web site at www.american.edu/israelstudies.

JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM American University's commitment to the Jewish Studies Program dates back to the early 1970s. Since then, AU's Jewish Studies Program has included a major and a minor and offered courses across the curriculum, including in our General Education Program, for all AU students. The program takes great pride in being the first in the nation to offer a minor in Israel studies.

For further information, call 202-885-2425 or e-mail the director at pnadell@american.edu, or visit our Web site at www.american.edu/cas/js/.

AND THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

- "Midrash, Now and Then . . .," Vanessa Ochs, University of Virginia
- "The Obama Administration and the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict," panel organized and moderated by Boaz Atzili, AU's School of International Service (SIS), included, Amjad Atallah, director of the Middle East Task Force at the New America Foundation; Aaron David Miller, Woodrow Wilson Center; Yoram Peri, the Dollye and I. Wolford Berman Visiting Professor at the Center for Israel Studies
- "Polish Society and the Holocaust," Antony Polonsky, Brandeis University
- "Remembering the Holocaust in United Germany: The Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," Sibylle Quack, formerly executive director of the Berlin Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe
- "Telepopulism: Media and Politics in Israel and the U.S.," Yoram Peri, Dollye and Wolford Berman Visiting Professor of Israel Studies
- "Understanding Eichmann and Nazi Perpetrators," David Cesarani, Royal Holloway, University of London
- "The Yiddish King Arthur and Other Tales from Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Literature," Michael Wenthe, AU Department of Literature



Sibylle Quack, *between* AU history professors Richard Breitman and Pamela Nadell

SPECIAL APPEARANCES

Meet Idan Raichel

The Center for Israel Studies hosted Israeli singing sensations Idan Raichel and Kabra Kasai of the Idan Raichel Project in an intimate “unplugged” musical performance



Idan Raichel and Chelsea Lund, international studies '09

and discussion in March. Idan showed a clip from his new documentary film, *Black over White: On the Road to Ethiopia*. Raichel and Kasai took questions from the enthusiastic audience of 100 (at 8:30 a.m.!). Shayna Cohen, Israel studies minor, said, “This was a unique opportunity to discuss identity in Israel with Idan and his Ethiopian lead singer. Kabra talked about how she had been able to both maintain her Ethiopian roots, but assume a uniquely Israeli identity.” The event was cosponsored by AU Hillel, the Embassy of Israel, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Israel in DC, and TEEV Events. ■

Acclaimed Novelist David Grossman Visits AU

Adapted from article by Mike Unger in *AU Today*

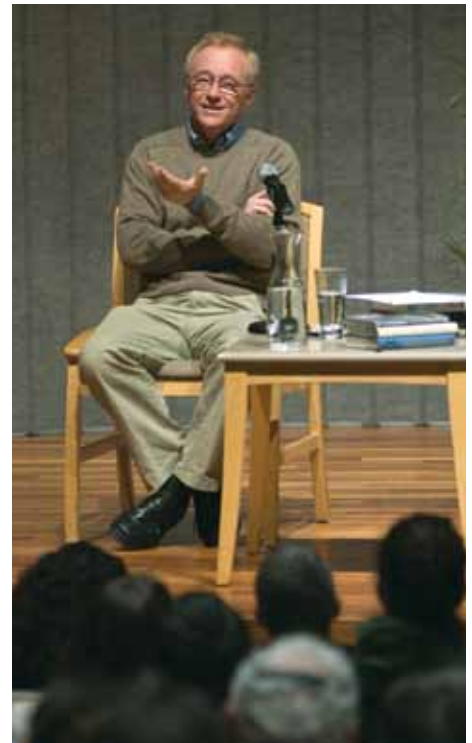
Israeli novelist David Grossman shared insights on writing and the state of Israel during a lecture Oct. 29 sponsored by American University’s Center for Israel Studies and the MFA Program in Creative Writing’s Visiting Writers Series.

Israeli novelist David Grossman shared insights on writing and the state of Israel during a lecture Oct. 29.

Speaking for about an hour to a standing-room-only crowd in the Katzen Arts Center’s Abramson Family Recital Hall, Grossman reflected on his six novels and several works of nonfiction, which have been translated into 25 different languages. He focused on writing as a way to understand others.

The event, also cosponsored by the Washington, D.C., JCC and Nextbook, began with comments from AU president Neil Kerwin. “It is truly an honor to have an internationally renowned author of David Grossman’s stature joining us for a lecture,” he said. “David Grossman’s presentation represents the caliber of cultural program-

ming that we’ve become used to thanks to our Center for Israel Studies and its collaboration with other departments, literature in this case.” ■



STUDENT AWARDS

Thanks to our generous donors, these Jewish studies majors and minors received scholarships this year.

- **Julie A Finkel**, Judaic Arts and Studies Scholarship
- **Carolyn Kunst**, Jerrold and Jane Goodman Scholarship
- **Stephanie Schey**, Everett and Marion Gordon Scholarship

AU student **Brian Banks** is the first recipient of the Center for Israel Studies award for the best paper or poem related to Israel, for his

perceptive essay “A Narrative Approach to Conflict: The Role of Dominant Narratives in the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict.” The annual award was established by professor emerita of literature Myra Sklarew in memory of her uncle and aunt Benjamin and Eva Wolpe Reinkel and in honor of her uncle Harry Rinkel. Students should email their entries for the current year to cutler@american.edu by December 15, 2009. The winner will receive \$180. ■



Myra Sklarew, Brian Banks, and Russell Stone, director, Center for Israel Studies

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES AT AU

AU Expands Study Abroad Options in Israel

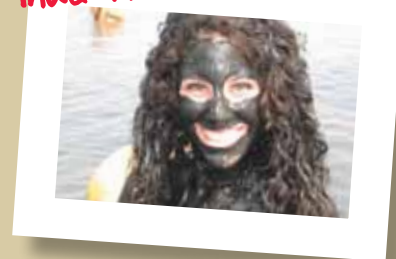
AU students rave about their Israel study abroad experiences: AU students who spent time at Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, and elsewhere in Israel this past year all agreed with Erica Goldfine, pictured right, immediate past president of AU Students for Israel, when she said: "My experience was hands-down *incredible*."

AU recently expanded study options in Israel from two to four universities, adding Tel Aviv University and the University of Haifa to the existing semester abroad options at Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, and Ben Gurion University of the Negev. "Jerusalem is a historical and religious hub, Tel Aviv is a cosmopolitan experience, Ben Gurion is in the desert and has excellent environmental studies options, and Haifa has great diversity and the addition of Arabic study options," explained Brita Doyle, AU study abroad advisor. Experiencing the rhythms of the Jewish state firsthand, encountering Jewish history on site, and speaking Hebrew with natives greatly enhances our Jewish studies and Israel studies students' academic experience. AU Abroad students also pursue Jewish studies in Prague and spend the summer in Israel with the School of International Service (SIS) Applied Workshop on Civil Society, Politics, and Conflict Resolution. ■

Record Number of Israeli Students at AU

AU's commitment to global education includes bringing international students to AU, creating a truly global campus where students from diverse cultures and societies interact in the nation's capital. This past year AU welcomed seven Israeli students—a record number, said international director of admissions Evelyn Levinson. ■

Lauren's Dead Sea mud treatment



Lauren Barr '11, an international relations major focusing on the Middle East, co-led a 2-week alternative break trip for 14 other students to Israel and Palestine, meeting with activists working for peace, those trying to undermine it, and many people with positions in between. Students' home stays in Israel and the West Bank made a definite impact. "You lived a day in their life. You can't really get that anywhere else," Barr said. The truth, Barr discovered, was complex: "The emotional connection is to the land. It's not a matter of what's the rational solution, it's how do you change hearts and minds to convince people that they're going to have to compromise?" Barr said.



Before I left for Israel, my understanding of the political controversies surrounding the country was somewhat clouded, and I felt conflicted about . . . the Arab-Israeli conflict. But living in the country, and getting the chance to talk to many civilians about it, gave me a clearer understanding of the situation from a native's perception. Israeli citizens are all over the spectrum in terms of politics, and the other American students in the program and I often discussed Israeli politics. It was enlightening.

Julie Finkel, Jewish studies major, Tel Aviv

Beginning to feel at home in Israel, a place that used to seem so foreign to me, is by far the best outcome . . . It has by far changed my life and my views of those in the Middle East. It has given me firsthand experience in the region that I want to study. It has also taught me to be much more self reliant and to grow as a person.

Liz Leibowitz, Israel studies minor, Tel Aviv

This past summer I put my graduate training into practice interning at Tel Aviv's Geneva Initiative, as part of SIS's Applied Workshop on Civil Society, Politics, and Conflict Resolution. My summer abroad began with a ten-day seminar on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Then I interned at the Geneva Initiative, an organization dedicated to finding a solution to end the conflict . . . where I met diplomats, policy makers, and citizens striving to improve the situation for Israelis and Palestinians. This fall I returned to the AU campus with a new perspective and renewed sense of purpose for my work in the future.

Catherine Koper, master in public policy candidate, School of Public Affairs

D.C. and Tel-Aviv have a lot in common—the diversity of people, the working atmosphere during the day, the relaxing atmosphere during the nights, and much more. I'm also delighted to meet people from all around the world and be exposed to different views about the world's issues in general, and the Israeli-Palestine conflict in specific.

Mor Manor, Israeli student, sophomore studying at AU



NEWS FROM THE FACULTY

Boaz Atzili, School of International Service (SIS), organized and moderated a panel at AU, "The Obama Administration and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict."

Richard Breitman, Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), served as lead editor for *Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1935–1945*.

Erran Carmel, Kogod School of Business, continues to do research with a colleague at IBM Haifa/Technion on the global software Follow the Sun.

Kenneth L. Cohen, rabbi and Hillel director, was made a fellow of Leo Baeck College, London.

Max Paul Friedman, Department of History (CAS), published "Memory and the Contest for Hegemony in Politics," in *The Merits of Memory: Concepts, Contexts, Debates*.

Calvin Goldscheider, faculty associate in the Center for Israel Studies and the Jewish Studies Program, continues his research on population and demography in Israel and elsewhere.

Gershon Greenberg, Department of Philosophy and Religion (CAS), delivered the Tenth Annual Myron M. Weinstein Memorial Lecture at the Library of Congress, "Breaking the Holocaust Silence: A Hidden Hasidic Text of 1947—and Elie Wiesel."

Alan M. Kraut, Department of History (CAS), was elected a fellow of the Society of American Historians. The book he coauthored with Deborah Kraut, *Covenant of Care: Newark Beth Israel and the Jewish Hospital in America*, received the Author's Award in nonfiction from the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance. And he



has been appointed University Professor, one of the highest recognitions AU awards faculty.

Pamela S. Nadell, Department of History and Jewish Studies Program (CAS), is consulting to the permanent exhibition of the new National Museum of American Jewish History on Independence Mall in Philadelphia.

Robert A. Pastor, SIS, participated in a panel at the Woodrow Wilson Center entitled "The U.S., Hamas, and the Pursuit of Israeli-Palestinian Peace" with Elliot Abrams of the Council on Foreign Relations and Aaron David Miller of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

Naima Prevots, professor emerita, Department of Performing Arts (CAS), offered a workshop at Orot Teachers Seminary in Israel, a teachers college for orthodox women.

Herman Schwartz, Washington College of Law, attended the 25th anniversary celebration of the Washington College of Law—New Israel Fund's Israel-U.S. Civil Liberties Law Program in Tel Aviv. He presented the first annual Herman Schwartz Human Rights award, created in his honor.

Myra Sklarew, professor emerita, Department of Literature (CAS), continues to publish poetry and essays on Jewish themes.

Russell A. Stone, Department of Sociology (CAS), completed his third year as director of the AU Center for Israel Studies and serves on the board of directors of the Association for Israel Studies.

Marcela Sulak, Department of Literature (CAS), poet and translator, recently published *Of All the Things That Don't Exist, I Love You Best*, a chapbook of poetry.

Howard M. Wachtel, professor emeritus, Department of Economics (CAS), is a member of the board of directors of the Association for Israel Studies and chairs its Task Force on Endowed Chairs and Centers for Israeli Studies.

Yael Warshel, SIS, received the 2008 Middle East Studies Association Graduate Student Paper Prize for her research on media viewing by Palestinian children. She presented "Growing-up Palestinian and Israeli: Dolls, Checkpoints, Computer Games, and Bomb Shelters," at the Israel in the Twenty-First Century Conference in San Diego.

Michael Wenthe, Department of Literature (CAS), chaired and responded to a panel on Yiddish prose at the 2008 annual meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies. ■

Yoram Peri's Year

Yoram Peri, Dolye and Wolford Berman Visiting Professor of Israel Studies, completed an active year of teaching, research, and public engagement. He shared remarks on Israeli politics, the media in Israel and Europe, and the current status of the peace process in more than 60 presentations to university audiences, think tanks, and research institutes in the Washington area and at conferences in Greece, Hungary, Canada, Germany, and England and was widely interviewed by media outlets in the United States and abroad. A charismatic teacher, Peri invariably taught filled-to-capacity classes. He enriched our community during his time at American University, and we wish him well in his new position as Kay Professor of Israel Studies at the University of Maryland. ■



Yoram Peri (right), AU visiting professor of Israel studies, and Tel Aviv University professor Roni Stauber at Israel at a Crossroads conference

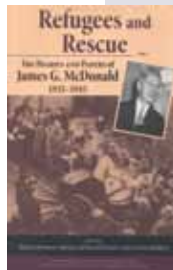
ADVANCING HOLOCAUST STUDIES

HOLOCAUST STUDIES AT AU

Breitman's New Book Reignites Debate

A distinguished AU historian's new book—*Refugees and Rescue: The Diaries and Papers of James G. McDonald, 1935-1945*—"will undoubtedly reignite the charged debate over whether Roosevelt could have done more to rescue millions of Jews . . . who died in Nazi death camps," reported the *New York Times* last April. And it was right.

In the papers of the diplomat who was the League of Nations high commissioner for refugees and the first U.S. ambassador to Israel, Richard Breitman found evidence that in 1938 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt hatched a scheme to rally the world's democracies to relocate millions of European Jews. ■



Theatre from Cruelty

Department of Performing Arts professor Gail Humphries Mardirosian spent her sabbatical as a Fulbright scholar in Prague.

There she directed *Smoke of Home*, a rediscovered original play from the Terezin (Theresienstadt) ghetto, written by Zdeněk Eliáš and Jiří Stein. About 140,000 Jews passed through this ghetto; the vast majority did not survive. Yet, while they lived, they celebrated the arts, staging operas, cabarets, and plays.

See excerpts from her journal at <http://www.american.edu/american/20090501gail-mardirosian-prague.cfm>.

American University co-produced *Smoke of Home* in an attic in the former ghetto. "The performance at Terezin was truly one of the most extraordinary experiences in my artistic life," recalled veteran director Humphries Mardirosian. (See excerpts from her journal at <http://www.american.edu/american/20090501gail-mardirosian-prague.cfm>.)

This spring she brings *Smoke of Home* to AU. Students in her Honors course, *Voices of Terezin*, will read it, and AU and Washington audiences may see performances March 19–21, 2010. ■

Nadell Joins Summer Holocaust Seminar

Supported by a Mellon Grant from the College of Arts and Sciences, I spent two weeks in June on the East European Seminar for Faculty, sponsored by the Holocaust Education Foundation. Our seminar took us across Poland and to Prague and Berlin, where we explored sites associated with the Holocaust and its memorialization. My thanato-tour included stops at Auschwitz and Majdanek; the ghettos of Warsaw, Lodz, and Terezin; the villa at Wannsee, where the Final Solution was plotted out; and numerous Jewish cemeteries. I returned with a rich storehouse of new knowledge to share with the next generations of AU students. ■

Pamela S. Nadell
Inaugural Patrick Clendenen Professor of History

Berlin Memorial



Gail Mardirosian (left), director, and Mirenka Cechova, co-director, *Smoke of Home*



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