



Jewish Studies @ Rollins

Spring 2011 Newsletter

The Minor in Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies is the academic investigation of the religion, history and culture of the Jewish people and the study of the interaction of this culture with the civilizations of the world.

This program in Jewish Studies at Rollins College identifies and combines courses in the departments of Philosophy and Religion, Education, English, Foreign Languages, Art, Music, History and Anthropology.

Time periods and geographical areas covered range from ancient Israel to contemporary American society. The multidisciplinary approach of the program includes biblical studies, history of religions, intellectual history, European studies, art history, music, archaeology, literature, women's studies, and philosophy.



May 4, 2011

Letter from the Director:

The end of this academic year is upon us. I am pleased to report that the Jewish Studies Program is thriving as we continue to build upon our past achievements and new opportunities. Our Hebrew language program, headed by Ms. Limor Gabbai, has had a successful year and we are working diligently to ensure its sustainable role on campus. We are also pleased to welcome Rabbi Joshua Neely to our faculty and wish him success in teaching the Hebrew Bible course in the fall.

Our sponsored events this past spring included prominent scholars, performers, and speakers. In February the Jewish Studies Program co-sponsored, with the Winter Park Institute, the visit and lecture of Dr. Lenore Weitzman, a specialist in the area of women in the Holocaust. Her public lecture coincided with the production of Letters to Sala, performed by our students at the Annie Russell Theatre. We were also pleased to welcome to campus The Black-Jew Dialogues for an entertaining and enlightening performance and conversation. Composer Michael Isaacson graced us with his original compositions and lectures on his book and double-CD, Jewish Music as Midrash: What Makes Music Jewish? In March and April, Prof. Isaac Kfir of Syracuse University and Mr. Paul Hirschson from the Israeli Consulate in Miami addressed topics and issues related to democracy and the Middle East, in conjunction with the senior seminar on Jerusalem. Finally, we are thankful to Rabbi Chaim Lipskier of Chabad at UCF for providing our community with an educational experience of a mock Passover Seder, an event which drew together nearly 70 students, faculty, and staff to the French House patio.

My spring semester was very rewarding, due in large part to my students in Jewish Life and Thought and in the senior seminar Jerusalem: History, Religion, and Politics. The highlight of the term was our phenomenal field study experience in Israel during spring break. In addition to touring important historic sites, we had successful interactions and interfaith dialogues with a number of remarkable individuals and groups dedicated to the ideals of peace and co-existence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our supporters and donors. Your generosity and faith in the program are immensely appreciated, and help us continue our work and sustain our vision for a thriving Jewish life and academics at Rollins. We look forward to keeping in touch and seeing you at our events.

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Who in particular would benefit from this minor?

The Jewish Studies minor may be particularly beneficial for students interested in graduate studies in Religious Studies, International Politics, History, Comparative Literature, Foreign Languages, Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies. In addition, the Jewish Studies Minor serves students who pursue the fields of education, social work, communal service, public administration, law, foreign service, the ministry and/or the rabbinate.

Other benefits the program has to offer students:

Study abroad, service learning, and internships

Course Requirements:

- 6 courses consisting of:
- 2 core courses
 - 3 electives
 - A senior independent study research paper.

Jewish Studies Courses – Fall 2011

Instructor

Communication

COM 445	Death and Dying	W 1:00-3:30pm	(Newman)
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Modern Languages and Literature

HBR 101	Elementary Hebrew	TR 5:15-6:30pm	(Gabbai)
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GMN 392	German Cultural History	MW 2:00-3:15	(Decker)
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Philosophy/Religion

REL 125	Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)	TR 11:00-12:15pm	(Neely)
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REL 135	Religion in America	MW 9:30-10:45am	(Davis)
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Jewish Studies Courses – Spring 2012

Instructor

Communication

COM 445	Death and Dying	W 1:00-3:30pm	(Newman)
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English

ENG 231	The Bible as Literature	MWF 12:00-12:50pm	(O'Sullivan)
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Modern Languages and Literature

HBR 102	Elementary Hebrew	TR 5:15-6:30pm	(Gabbai)
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HBR 201	Intermediate Hebrew	TR 4:00-5:15	(Gabbai)
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GMN 221	Germany Today	TR 2:00-3:15pm	(Decker)
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Philosophy/Religion

REL 217	Jewish Life & Thought	TR 11:00-12:15pm	(Greenberg)
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REL 300	Religion & the Body	TR 2:00-3:15pm	(Greenberg)
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REL 170	The Search for Meaning	TR 9:30-10:45am	(Davis)
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REL 218	Christianity: Thought/Practice	MW 9:30-10:45	(Davis)
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REL 351	Topic: Biomedical Ethics	MW 12:30-1:45	(Davis)
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Jewish Studies Spring 2011 Events



On February 1, The Black-Jew Dialogues used comedy to give audience members new insight into the true nature of prejudice and how our inability to face these biases separates us in ways that we may not even think about.

Lenore Weitzman delivered two lectures during her visit to Rollins in February. During a master class, students were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss her book, *Women of the Holocaust*.



In February, Michael Isaacson discussed and played recordings of his *Cradle of Fire* choral suite and *Remembrance*, performed under his direction of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The event also featured the world premiere of Isaacson's latest choral piece, *Kohelet*, which was performed by members of the Department of Music.

In April, Mr. Paul Hirschson of the Israeli Embassy in Miami presented at a senior seminar on Jerusalem.



Jewish Studies Spring 2011 Events



Recipients of the Harriet Lake Outstanding Achievement Award by a Graduating Senior in Jewish Studies: Kaitlin Webster; Fatema Kermalli; and Aspen Fox



Dan Berlinger received the Sophomore Award for outstanding academic Achievement and commitment to campus Jewish Life



Dr. Greenberg's field study trip to Israel, Spring 2011

Dr. Greenberg and Dr. Isaac Kfir



Larry Jay Tish and Ron Jones, the very funny and talented performers behind the Black-Jew Dialogues, pose with Dr. Greenberg and students.

On April 14th, The Jewish Student Union hosted a Passover Seder dinner on the French House patio. The service was led by Rabbi Chaim Lipskier of UCF Chabad.



Faculty News

One of the most distinguished and long servicing professors at Rollins College, Dr. Marvin Newman, Professor of Legal Studies and Communication will retire at the end of the current academic year after having taught here since 1961. Professor Newman's expertise is in the field of thanatology (Death and Dying). He has coauthored four books on the subject and has published more than 67 peer reviewed law review and other publications. Dr. Newman has been invited to serve as a scholar in residence at Oxford University in January, 2012 and from there he will go on to Cambridge University to serve in the same capacity. During his retirement, Professor Newman plans to continue his work as a member of the Ethics Committee of MD Anderson Cancer Center and to work with terminally ill children and their families. His most current book, *The Ethics of Suicide* which traces how different civilizations and religions have viewed suicide over the centuries is expected to be published in August. The book examines suicide from Biblical times to the present.



During his years of teaching at Rollins College he has been the recipient of a number of distinguished awards including the Hugh and Jeanette McKean Award and Grant, considered the highest prize granted by the college. He is an internationally recognized scholar in thanatology having received numerous multinational awards in that field. Dr. Newman received The Outstanding Professor Award on eleven occasions from the Rollins College Crummer Graduate School of Business. He was elected to Omicron Delta Kappa, has received the Rollins College Decoration of Honor for his distinguished scholarship, teaching and service to higher education. Other awards include the Arthur Vining Davis Fellowship and the American Bar Association Award of Excellence. Professor Newman was recently honored by the Orange County Bar Association for having been the co-founder of its Legal Aid Society which is presently in its fiftieth year of service to the poor and disadvantaged Central Florida citizens facing eviction, and sometimes unjust, burdensome legal actions and for which they lack the funds for the assistance they need in the dire consequences they face.

After serving as an adjunct lecturer from 1961 to 1972 in the college's adult education program while also engaging in the practice of law, Dr. Newman became tenured in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1972 and has served as a full professor since that time. He has taught more than twelve different courses in that division of the college including first and second year Honors courses, the Master of Liberal Studies program, and four different courses in the Crummer Graduate School of Business and the Hamilton Holt school. His courses in bioethics and death and dying have been designated for credit for students in the Rollins College Jewish Studies program. During one of his sabbaticals he received a major research grant from Washington University Schools of Law and Medicine and taught courses at that institution.



Dr. Greenberg delivered two papers this past academic year. In November 2010, she presented on "The Hindjew in the Guru: Hybridity in Female Spiritual Leadership," at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting; In December 2010, she spoke on "The Binding and Unbinding of Isaac: Loving God by Loving Isaac," at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting.

This summer she will travel to Bhutan and as a participant in a conference co-sponsored by the International Association for the History of Religions to be held at the Royal University of Bhutan. There, she will present a paper on "Awe and the Divine: Mount Moriah and Mount Sinai in the Jewish Literary Tradition." In March 2011, Dr. Greenberg was named Fulbright Scholar for fall-winter 2011-12. She will be teaching advanced courses in Jewish Studies and Comparative Religion at the University of Bucharest.



Ms. Limor Gabbai returned to Rollins this year to teach Elementary Hebrew. The class was very successful and students are eager to continue gaining more advanced language skills in Hebrew next year. Given that several students will be studying overseas in the fall, Hebrew 201 will be taught by Ms. Gabbai in Spring 2012.

Reflections by Graduating Seniors



The Jewish Studies program has been such a great part of my Rollins Journey. One of the reasons I decided to attend Rollins was because they offered a Jewish Studies Program. I got to reconnect with the Jewish religion and learn about so many other religions at the same time, which was a great opportunity that this department gave me. I loved so many of classes and met so many amazing people with so many different perspectives. I cannot believe it has already been 4 years with this program but I will definitely use the knowledge I have gained and incorporate it into my life!

- Aspen Fox



My Jewish Studies minor has been a big part of my education at Rollins and has helped me to understand much about the world. I came into the minor looking to try and understand the Jewish background to and understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and I can definitely say that I found much of what I was looking for. Every class in the minor has been intriguing and has taught me much, from the similarities between Islam and Judaism, to the shared words and sounds in Hebrew and Arabic, to the shared desire of both the Palestinians and the Jewish people to have a homeland and be considered a distinct group of people. I am thankful for all that I have learned, and hope to be able to use it for the cause of a true and just peace going in the future.

- Fatema Kermalli



It was not my dream to become a Jewish Studies minor. I stumbled across the information table at the Major/Minor Fair and was excited to find that this minor encompassed the several others I had also been considering. I wanted history, I wanted philosophy, and I wanted literature, and I found all of those in Jewish Studies. Each of the six courses I have taken have broadened my mind and taught me much about people, spirituality, and culture. What stands out the most is the summer course I took at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Living in Israel for one month and taking one class, I learned the equivalent to what I would in two full semester classes in the States, at least. That experience is not only the climax of my Jewish Studies minor, but also one of the top three experiences I have had at Rollins.

- Cary Hall

Reflections by Graduating Seniors



I am most proud of my education in Jewish Studies because of the way it has connected me with my family heritage. To be a Jew in America today is a much more communal experience than it is religious, and I experienced that and more within the program here at Rollins. Dr. Greenberg has all of the classic lovable characteristics of a Jewish mother; on top of that, her wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm embodies the spirit of the program. Jewish Studies has strengthened my identity as a student and as a person; that my grandparents can brag to their synagogue friends is just a bonus. My education would have been incomplete without Dr. Greenberg and Jewish Studies.

- David Frantz



I've been a member of the Central Florida Jewish community my entire life. When I chose to go to Rollins, I knew I wanted to get involved in some way or another with the college's Jewish Studies Program. Now, as a graduating senior, I'm happy to say that the minor has given me more pride in being Jewish than I ever expected. From classes discussing contemporary Israel to progressing in upper level Hebrew, my cultural and linguistic knowledge has exponentially benefited from the program. Israelis are defending their country from attacks on all sides because of what their country stands for. It's not just about the politics-- within those country borders is a culture thousands of years old that is worth fighting for and worth the sacrifice. Israel and Judaism stand strong despite a turbulent history because they know it needs to survive. With that level of pride and education, I'm graduating knowing that the Jewish Studies program has made me a better global citizen and a steadfast member in the Jewish community.

- Lindsay Hansen



I think the most significant aspect of being a Jewish Studies Minor has been a greater participation in inter-faith dialogue. While the minor has a focus on the history and culture of Judaism, it has had a greater over-arching focus on Christianity and Islam. In particular, I have studied the connections the three faiths have at the crossroads of human interaction as believers in one God. The Jewish Studies Minor has introduced me to the other traditions and most importantly enforced the love and connection amongst the three faiths.

- Kaitlin Webster

How To Support the Program

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- Judaica Library Collection

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Contributions to the Jewish Studies Program at Rollins College are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Jewish Student Life

The Jewish Student Union at Rollins College is committed to offering students opportunities to explore and celebrate Jewish identity in a dynamic and comfortable environment. JSU connects Jewish students to one another and organizes cultural, social, and spiritual programs such as lunches and dinners to welcome new and returning students, bagel brunches, Sabbath and Holiday experiences, and volunteering in the local community.