LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure once again to share the latest news from the Jewish Studies Program at Rollins College.

We have had another year filled with successful educational and cultural activities. Jewish Studies courses continue to attract students from all backgrounds and disciplines, and our program supports both Arts and Science as well as Holt students. In the fall of 2011, we welcomed Rabbi Joshua Neely to our faculty to teach one of our core courses, the Hebrew Bible. The class was well received and we look forward to Rabbi Neely’s continued contributions to our program.

In spring 2012, we resumed the study of second year Hebrew under the excellent guidance of Ms. Limor Gabbai. The Gabbai’s recently made the decision to return to Israel sadly for us but happily for her family, and we at Rollins will miss them greatly.

The Jewish Student Union had a busy year sponsoring events and holiday celebrations to which all members of the Rollins community are invited. We welcomed freshmen during their orientation in August, and their parents during our fall Family Weekend for Sabbath dinners. In spring, the Jewish Studies Program and JSU co-sponsored an Interfaith Passover Seder. This event, which was co-led by Rabbi Lipskier of Chabad of Central Florida and students from the Jewish Life and Thought class, brought together approximately 90 students, faculty, and staff.

The Jewish Studies lecture series this past spring semester included a guest lecture by Dr. Daniel Asia who presented a program entitled “Breath in A Ram’s Horn: The Jewish Spirit In Classical Music.” The program was attended by students, faculty, and members of the Orlando community and was entertaining as well as enlightening.

Our students’ commitment to academic excellence and global citizenship is greatly rewarding. One of our graduating seniors, Aislinn Betancourt was selected as one of six 2012 Centennial Interns for the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis University. As a research assistant, she had the opportunity to work with HBI affiliated scholars on the topic of Jewish feminism and develop her own individual project based on the evolution of women’s reproductive choice throughout Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist Judaism. Aislinn is also the recipient of a Fulbright teaching grant in Malaysia during 2013-2014 school -year.

We are delighted to welcome to campus Dr. Ena Heller, the Bruce A. Beal director of the Cornell Fine Arts Museum. Dr. Heller, Founding Director of the Museum of Biblical Art in New York City recently won the prestigious Religion and the Arts Award by the American Academy of Religion. Our first co-sponsored event will be a lecture by Dr. Heller on Art and the Bible, to be held at the museum on November 8th, 2012. We are looking forward to this presentation and to future collaborations with Dr. Heller and CFAM.

We are also pleased to welcome two new faculty members. Rabbi Anne Straus will be teaching the course “Religion in America” as well as helping our students as they plan for the High Holidays on campus this September. Ms. Idit Lotringer will be in charge of our Hebrew instruction.

As always, we appreciate the help and support of our friends, alums, and donors, and thank each and every one of you for your financial and moral support. Please stay connected, and when possible, visit and partake in our exciting programs.

Yudit Kornberg Greenberg

Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, Ph.D.,
George and Harriet Cornell Professor of Religion
Director, Jewish Studies Program at Rollins College
### 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

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### JEWISH STUDIES COURSES - FALL 2012

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### JEWISH STUDIES COURSES - SPRING 2013

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“Being Jewish, it has always been a priority of mine to eventually go to Israel. I became a Jewish Studies minor at Rollins to learn more about my own heritage and traditions, but I found myself equally enthralled with the classes that incorporated other religions. Though many people encouraged me to do Birthright, I knew visiting Israel through Rollins would be the perfect opportunity to discover not only my own roots, but the history of faiths such as Christianity and Islam, as well.

As we learned on our tour of Old Jerusalem, practically every stone one steps on in Israel has a powerful story behind it. From visiting the Western Wall, which is considered the holiest site in the Jewish tradition, to walking through the stations of the cross, I felt overwhelmingly lucky for this chance to see and truly understand the history that affects so many people across the globe. The well-rounded itinerary also enabled me to fully grasp some of the religious and political tension that is so often blurred by the American media.

I will never forget experiences like floating in the Dead Sea, indulging in what I’m certain is the best hummus on earth, and laughing and learning with some of the most interesting people I have ever met. I felt so blessed to be welcomed into the homes of two different individuals who taught me to appreciate both what I have, and what I don’t have. Israel is a beautiful country on so many levels, and my memories serve as a constant reminder to approach life with more gratitude.”

-Annie Goldman
As I entered the Yad Vashem museum in Jerusalem, I experienced darkness and coldness. The enormous tragedy of the Holocaust filled the rooms, and suffering was the only thing I could perceive. As I proceeded from one room to the next, Jewish agony continued to intensify. However, towards the end, the museum got brighter little by little, conveying the ability to move forward without forgetting Jewish sufferings. And as the exit approached, there was an intense light emanating from the outside, signaling the end of tragedy and the beginning of a prosperous future. This was one of the most significant moments that I experienced during the 2012 Jerusalem field study and one that taught me the greatest lesson. Jews have faced religious hostility from oppressive foreign powers since ancient times and have suffered a great deal yet remained committed to their faith.

The meaning of the state of Israel to Jews is often overshadowed by the dynamics of the conflict with the Palestinian people. The creation of Israel emanated from the necessity of the Jews to have a homeland where they could be free to express their religious identity. Given all of the challenges Jews have had as a persecuted minority, regaining their ancestral spiritual and physical homeland represents the culmination of a long held dream. As I walked down the streets of Jerusalem during Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day Holiday, I witnessed the degree of patriotism that Israelis have. Many Israelis carried the state flag and sang patriotic songs as they commemorated the 1967 six-day war victory which marks the reunification of Jerusalem. As I observed the celebrations of the day, I reflected on the ways that the Israeli people transformed this land into a magnificent and progressive state-- a fact I wish more people could acknowledge. Israel is often unpopular among people abroad primarily due to its portrayal by the media. Many people consider Israel to be segregating the Palestinians; however, that is not what I learned during my visit. The state of Israel has given greater allowances to Palestinians in order to ensure peace and their own security. I noticed a significant number of Palestinians working in Israel and earning a living that I believe would otherwise not be possible in their territories. From what I observed, Palestinians constitute a very large part of the labor force in Israel. In fact, our driver during the trip was Palestinian and so were many others with whom I interacted. Furthermore, in Haifa, one of the major cities of Israel I visited, Israelis and Arabs co-exist peacefully. The Hebrew University in Jerusalem promotes education by accepting many Palestinians into their programs. I believe the perception of Israel’s cruel actions towards the Palestinians is inaccurate. Quite the opposite, what most people don’t consider is the fact that Israel is a nation that lives under daily hostility and opposition. It is quite clear that the military presence shapes the daily life of Israelis. It is common to see young Israelis in soldier uniforms everywhere, including the most holy places. Protecting the nation is the number one priority in Israel. Half an hour before landing, passengers were not allowed to leave their seats. The fear of an attack is always present and is a daily routine for Israeli Jews, something that is mostly unknown to the general public abroad.

Now that I am back in the United States, I realize how powerful and inspirational my visit to Israel was. After learning the misfortunes as well as the achievements of the Jews, it became clear to me that having created the state of Israel was truly essential to the preservation and progress of its people. I learned that both protecting their ancestral homeland and the faith are characteristics of Jews and Israelis and that these tend to be overshadowed by the biased perceptions of the state and its role in the Palestinian conflict. In contrast to all the biases and misconceptions, Israel is a nation of light. The Jews have been able to move forward from the darkness of tragedy and religious persecution into the light of creativity and prosperity only possible because of Israel’s existence, something unquestionably conveyed by my experience of the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

Julie Beecy
I spent this past summer in Boston participating in the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute’s nationally recognized Summer Internship Program. I was given the special opportunity to work under the supreme mentorship of Dr. Joyce Antler, distinguished author and Samuel B. Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture and Women’s and Gender Studies at Brandeis University, assisting her with preliminary research for her new book on Jewish women and the radical feminist movement. In addition, I was commissioned to compose an original scholarly work of my own, which after eight weeks of research and preparation, culminated in a creative theatrical piece on the feminist and rabbinical discourse surrounding reproductive technologies in Judaism that I wrote, produced, and acted out on stage. Apart from the academic and professional rewards I reaped from the research component of the internship, I had the joy of living with and learning from the seven other interns—some of the most intelligent and incredible young women I’ve ever met. It was a summer of much thought, reflection, and success, and an opportunity I suggest that other students in the Jewish Studies department pursue with great enthusiasm.

-Aislinn Betancourt ’12
Spending four months living in Shanghai went by in the blink of an eye, and I long to go back. I was there to teach two courses to the group of American college students (mostly Rollins) at Jiao Tong University, the “MIT of China.” Shanghai is a vibrant and fascinating city, and the neighborhood around the university (which is where Yao Ming is now finishing his studies) ranges from quiet streets to lively 8-story shopping malls. One experience I’ll always treasure is attending High Holiday services at Ohel Rachel, Shanghai’s first synagogue, built in 1920. (The other synagogue, Ohel Moishe, is now the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum.) The Jewish community in Shanghai applies each year to the government for permission to use Ohel Rachel, an imposing ivy-covered building on the grounds of what is now the Shanghai Education Department. The synagogue was filled with 500 joyous worshippers, and the festive meals after services had even the hungriest teens feeling stuffed midway through! There’s an article about the services in a Shanghai on-line magazine Global Times: http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/678601/A-history-of-hospitality.aspx

I have had a wonderful year of teaching and travel, both here and abroad. I began this academic year as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Bucharest. The experience of living and teaching in an Eastern European culture was profound. I enjoyed my classes as well as the daily interactions with my graduate students and colleagues at the University. I found the Romanians extremely welcoming and eager to share their perspectives. Our travel during this period was linked to a number of lectures I delivered at universities throughout Romania, and deepened our appreciation for this culture and its people. I returned to Rollins energized by this adventure and further committed to the internationalization initiatives on campus. I am pleased to report that in May 2012, after completing another successful field study in Israel (see photos and student reflections inside), I stayed on and laid the groundwork for collaboration between Rollins College and Tel Aviv University. At present, pending final approval of this program, we will be able to send a group of our students to TAU as early as spring 2013.
Professor of Music Dan Crozier, Yudit Greenberg, Dan Asia & David Greenberg

Dr. Greenberg and guests enjoying Passover Dinner at Rollins

Yudit Greenberg & Caroline Blumberg
HOW TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

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