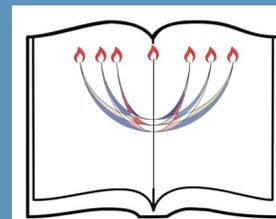


The ShMUz

SMU Jewish Studies Update



Spring 2015 v. 2

From the Director

What an exciting first year this has been! Over 500 students enrolled in this year's [22 classes](#), a number of which were brand new to the SMU curriculum. The newly-crafted Jewish Studies minor was approved by the administration and will be available to students this coming Fall. New initiatives for the SMU community and general public drew record audiences, raising the profile of Jewish Studies on campus and around the DFW metroplex.

SMUJS hosted the second celebration of Ladino language and culture, which was expanded to include a week-long exploration of Judeo-Spanish culture. The event was such a success that it captured the attention of the [Dallas Morning News](#). We also welcomed several esteemed visitors to campus in partnership with other campus institutions for the inaugural [lunch and lecture series](#) and the spring [Nate and Ann Levine Endowed Lecture Series](#). The [Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Research Cluster](#), funded by the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute, concluded its examination of Jewish self-representation with seminars led by Shira Lander and Ross S. Kraemer, who also delivered a public lecture.

This fall 2015, SMUJS will offer a one-day extravaganza of mini-courses in Jewish studies on the SMU campus. Our faculty will be teaching a wide variety of classes and we have a blockbuster keynote speaker, Prof. Mike Hammer, talking about his pioneering genetic research on Jews. Please register early for this event to get your first choice of classes.



Have a safe and rejuvenating summer!

Shira Lander, PhD
Director of Jewish Studies

Noted Scholars Speak @ SMU



In February, Dr. **Marcie Lenk**, a Shalom Hartman Institute research fellow and the institute's Director of Christian Leadership Programs and Co-Director of New Paths: Christians Engaging Israel,

addressed a combined audience of students from Perkins School of Theology and SMU on the question "Jerusalem: City of Strife or Peace?" Her answer: both, depending on local, national, and international conditions.

Over 150 people turned out in April for the 18th Nate and Ann Levine Endowed Lecture Series in Jewish Studies to hear Professor **Adele Reinhartz** lecture on "Holy Words in Hollywood: *The Ten Commandments* and American Identity." Reinhartz, Professor of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, Canada, explored the ways that Cecil B. DeMille's classic 1956 film *The Ten Commandments* and its portrayal of Moses as a Jesus-like redeemer who champions liberty and American-style democracy reflected mainstream mid-century American attitudes.

Professor **Ross S. Kraemer**, Professor Emerita of Religious Studies and Judaic Studies at Brown University, explored the treatment of Jews under the Christian Roman empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. This program, co-sponsored with SMU's Program in Classical Studies and the Department of History, brought together faculty and students of wide-ranging backgrounds. Kraemer put into context the legislation concerning Jews to demonstrate that the newly Christianized empire was less concerned with Jews than with Christians of differing theologies and practices as well as with the millions who continued to venerate their ancestral gods in temples and shrines of great antiquity.



ONE DAY JEWISH UNIVERSITY @ SMU

Register at www.smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/Programs/jewishstudies/events/onedayjewishuniv

Jewish Studies Research Cluster Concludes Study of Jewish Self-Representation

The Jewish Studies Research Cluster sponsored by the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute devoted the year to study how Jews use visual culture and written media to represent themselves and their socio-political objectives to a non-Jewish public. This semester Prof. **Shira Lander** surveyed recent archaeological discoveries to explore the reliability of identifying remains of ancient Jews from visual symbols like menorahs and words found in inscriptions, such as "synagogue." Prof. **Ross S. Kraemer** used a 5th century account of the conversion of the Jews of Minorca, Spain to demonstrate how Christians portrayed Jews in their writings and the challenges of reconstructing Jewish history from such portraits.



Judeo-Spanish Culture Week



International Ladino Day and SMU's week-long celebration of Judeo-Spanish culture attracted over two hundred with three lectures by Ladino experts Dina Eliezer and Rachel Amado Bortnick and Art History Department Professor and Chair, Dr. Pamela Patton, with a world premiere of the documentary film about Jewish Ladino-speaking Holocaust survivors in Sarajevo, *Saved by Language*, and with an annotated exhibition of Judeo-Spanish books and manuscripts at the Bridwell Library by its curator of special collections, Dr. Eric White (pictured above, center).

New Class on Antisemitism Visits Dallas Holocaust Museum/Center for Education and Tolerance

Professor Shira Lander taught a new course on the history of Antisemitism this Spring. As part of the course, students visited Dallas' Holocaust Museum. Some of their responses appear below (names withheld for privacy reasons). Find additional reflections on the SMUJS website home page, www.smu.edu/jewishstudies.

"I have been to the Dallas Holocaust Museum a few times since coming to SMU, but this time it was a lot different because of the [Embrey Human Rights Program] trip I took over winter break. Being at the museum made all of the feelings and emotions I experienced in Poland in January come rushing back. ...This class has been really powerful for me because after the trip to Poland I needed to understand the history of antisemitism better. I am completely horrified to realize how anti-Jewish tropes have persisted for so long. I have always looked at antisemitism in interwar Germany as its own isolated concept, almost frozen in time. Understanding the development of antisemitism throughout time and space helps put things in perspective and helps me understand how the Holocaust could have happened, while still recognizing that numerous other factors were at play." --Senior Human Rights and History Major

"As I continue to live and learn each day, my perspective of the world is changing. I've come to find that you can never appreciate alternative perspectives until you make a concerted effort to educate yourself. Before entering college at SMU, I wouldn't have thought of myself as someone who was interested in learning about cultures other than my own. I was rather unobservant of the world and I never attempted to understand people from other backgrounds and had no concept of how they lived their lives. ...This class has captivated my attention and inspired me from the first day. It has encouraged me to learn as much as possible about the history of the Jewish people and how anti-Semitism has developed in our society, and the suffering the Jewish people has endured and triumphed over throughout history. ...This course and my experiences by taking this class have changed my perspective of the world, and I have sincerely learned to appreciate other perspectives."--Junior Business Major

"Before taking this religion class, I used to think the Holocaust was just another excuse for the Jews to gain more attention. After going to the museum and actually learning detailed information about the Holocaust, I can say my way of thinking has absolutely taken a 180-degree turn." --Junior Biology Major



Jewish Studies
PO Box 750202
Dallas, TX 75275
214-768-2157
jewishstudies@smu.edu
www.smu.edu/jewishstudiesprogram

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