

Coordinator's Corner**Dr. Rebecca Lesses**

As I began my term as Jewish studies coordinator in summer 2007, I was looking forward and backward. Forward – to taking on new responsibilities: working together with colleagues, students, and alumni on creating a year of good teaching and learning about Jewish studies, and a year of dynamic programming that exposes the entire Ithaca community to the varieties of Jewish cultures. I was also looking backward – with great thanks to **Barbara Johnson** for her years of incredible energy put towards Jewish studies and hearty good wishes for an enjoyable and productive retirement. I know that many of the alumni reading this newsletter, like me, learned a great deal from **Barbara** in her anthropology and Jewish studies courses. I would like to assure you that Jewish studies is moving forward on the firm foundation established by her hard work.

The year in Jewish studies began with our very first Golberstein Jewish studies travel grant, awarded to **Adina Mindick '08**, for summer travel to the Greek islands of Rhodes and Crete to learn about their Jewish communities. Adina recently gave a presentation on her travel on her experiences to an appreciative audience at the Park School. If you would like to learn more about Adina's trip in her own words, check out her blog on the Jewish Studies website.

Two new courses this year, in addition to our regular schedule of 10 to 12 courses each semester, have given students the opportunity to learn more about the variety of Jewish cultures. In the fall, **Professor Sanford Gutman** (visiting professor in Jewish studies and history) taught a very well-received course on the history of Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is much student interest in this topic, and I hope we can continue to offer this course in the years to come. This spring, **Professor Annette Levine** (modern languages and literature) is teaching a course on Latin American Jewish authors, a topic which she has written on extensively. We're looking forward next fall to new courses on Jewish American women writers and world Jewish literature. We are pleased to report that nearly 250 students each semester participate in our course offerings.

As per our educational mission, we sponsored several lectures this year on key topics – the Holocaust and anti-semitism, the state of Israel, and Jews and human rights. In the fall, Dr. Deborah Lipstadt spoke on "Holocaust Denial: A New Form of Anti-Semitism" to a crowd of over 200 students, faculty, staff, and community members. She shared her experiences of being sued for libel by a British Holocaust denier – and winning against him, a victory for the cause of truth and against the rise of anti-semitism. Our second speaker, Dr. David Tal, discussed how Israel has come to identify itself as a "western" society even though it is situated in the Middle East. This spring, Dr. Marjorie Agosín will speak to two classes on her family's struggles to live as Jews in Chile, and she will also give a public talk on "The Weavings of Justice," discussing the fight for human rights in Chile.

And of course, we have not neglected the cultural side of Jewish studies. In December, **Professor Arno Selco** (theater arts) directed "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," a play dealing with the fraught situation of southern Jews before WWII. After the final performance, we sponsored a talkback with professor Selco, professor Kirsten Wasson (English), and the cast of the play, where we received new insights on the characters and the difficulties they had combining their southern and Jewish identities.

The IC Klezmerim, with the biggest ensemble thus far, 19 musicians, gave a rousing concert and dance party in February. This is the 10th year of the Klezmerim, an official School of Music chamber ensemble under the direction of **Dr. Peter Rothbart**. **Max Buckholtz MM '08** presented klezmer compositions that he had learned over the winter break while on a research trip to Romania. Campus and community joined together for energetic dancing and celebration on a chilly winter evening.

Jewish studies is going strong at Ithaca College, with the support of the College and our generous donors, and we are looking forward to another excellent year of learning and culture in 2008-09.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Lesses".

Ithaca College Alumni...This section is for you!!!

We want to hear from you!

We have dedicated an entire section on our website to alumni. <http://www.ithaca.edu/hs/minors/jewishstudies/alumni/>

Send an email to Rebecca Lesses at rlesses@ithaca.edu to let us know what you have been up to since you graduated.

Student and Faculty News

STUDENT NEWS

On May 18, 2008, we will be celebrating Ithaca College's 113th Commencement. The Jewish studies program is proud to announce that four students will be graduating with a minor in Jewish studies. In addition to their major area of focus, they each have pursued at least 18 credit hours of work in Jewish studies, including a basic language proficiency in Hebrew or another Jewish language.

David Cutler, with a major in history/social studies teaching, will be going to law school in the fall. **Adam Schoenbart**, an English (teaching) major, will be continuing his education by pursuing a masters in English education. **Sari Weinstein**, a major in television/radio and video production at the Park School, plans on moving to NYC and working in her field. **Adina Mindick** is a major in journalism at the Park School.

A graduating School of Music student, **Max Buckholtz**, has been active in the IC Klezmerim and received grant funding from Jewish studies to support his transcriptions of the klezmer compositions he collected on his recent visit to Romania. His senior recital in April will include klezmer repertoire as part of the performance.

FACULTY NEWS

In the last year, **Annette Levine** (modern languages, Spanish) has published and presented papers on Jewish women's lives and writing in South America. Her publications include, "A Mother's Mourning in the Aftermath of the AMIA Bombing: Sofía Kaplinsky Guterman's Vignettes," and "Jewish Women's Voices Soar Above the Crypt." "Aída Bortnik's Call to Narration / Aída Bortnik y su narración," was presented at the Latin American Jewish studies Associations research conference in Buenos Aires in July 2007.

Don Beachler (politics) presented a paper entitled "On Culture and Motive: The Discourse on the Ottoman Armenians in the United States" at the 2007 Conference of the Northeastern Political Science Association

Stephen Clancy (art history) has presented several papers in the past year: on Flemish manuscript paintings, the Northern Renaissance, and on "The Alhambra in Granada" to the IC Martin Luther King Scholars seminar in October 2007. Last summer he was the lecturer and study leader for a study tour entitled "Family Greece: An Odyssey to the Cradle of Western Civilization," sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History, a

trip he will be leading again this coming June.

In 2007, **Michael Richardson** (modern languages, German) published a book entitled *Revolutionary Theater and the Classical Heritage: Inheritance and Appropriation from Weimar to the GDR* (Peter Lang). In October 2007, he presented a paper at the Annual Conference of the German Studies Association on "Tragedy and Farce: Dani Levy's Mein Führer," which was part of a panel that focused on representations of Hitler in recent German films. His article, "Heil Myself! Impersonation and Identity in Comedic Representations of Hitler," will appear in June 2008, in a volume that he is co-editing entitled, *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, and Memory* (Camden House Press).

Rebecca Lesses has had two articles accepted for publication in edited volumes: "The Most Worthy of Women is a Mistress of Magic: Women as Witches and Ritual Practitioners in 1 Enoch and Rabbinic Sources," (in *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*) and "Image and Word: Performative Ritual and Material Culture in the Aramaic Incantation Bowls," (in *Visual Magic*).

COURSE OFFERINGS

Fall 2007

Hebrew Scriptures (Lesses) Cross listed with religious studies

Judaism in the Greco-Roman World (Lesses) Cross listed with religious studies

History of Modern Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Gutman) Cross listed with history

The Holocaust (Beachler) politics

Jewish-American Writers (Wasson) English

Elementary Hebrew (Grunes)

Biblical Hebrew (Faber)

Intermediate Hebrew I (Grunes)

Klezmer Chamber Ensemble (Rothbart) music

Spring 2008

Judaism (Lesses) Cross listed with religious studies

Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity (Lesses & Twomey) Cross listed with English

Latin American Jewish Authors (Levine) Cross listed with Spanish and English

Seminar: The Political Implications of the Holocaust (Beachler) Cross listed with politics

Elementary Hebrew II (Grunes)

Biblical Hebrew (Faber)

Intermediate Hebrew II (Grunes)

Klezmer Chamber Ensemble (Rothbart) music



Cultural Programming 2007-2008



Thank you! Your financial support has made these events possible.

October 2007

Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, an historian of the Holocaust, spoke on “*Holocaust Denial: A New Form of Anti-Semitism.*” Her fascinating talk focused on the suit for libel against her by a notorious British Holocaust denier. Over 200 students, faculty, and local community members crowded into the room to listen and ask questions. Special thanks to a small number of generous donors and B’nai B’rith Lecture Bureau for making Dr. Lipstadt’s visit possible.

November 2007

“*I am in the East But my Heart is in the West: Israel and Its Identity as a ‘Western’ Society.*” **Dr. David Tal**, a visiting professor of international relations at Syracuse University, spoke on Israel’s identity as a westernized nation situated in the Middle East.

December 2007

“*Last Night of Ballyhoo.*” Meet the Freitags, Southern and Jewish, as they decorate their Christmas tree. Playwright Alfred Uhry (*Driving Miss Daisy*) won the Tony Award for this play that explores Southern Jewish identity just before the second World War. The Ithaca College Department of Theater Arts presented a wonderful version of Uhry’s play and then immediately following **director Arno Selco, professors Rebecca Lesses and Kirsten Wasson** conducted a talkback with playgoers and the cast of the play.

February 2008

5th Annual Klezmer Gala held on IC’s campus, with a special dance workshop with Roey Mendel and outstanding performance by the largest ever **IC Klezmerim**. Ithaca’s very own klezmer ensemble, under the direction of Dr. Peter Rothbart, brought down the house with an evening of music and dance!

March 2008

“*The Weavings of Justice: The Arpillera Movement in Chile.*” **Marjorie Agosín**, professor of Spanish at Wellesley College, and author of *Scraps of Life: Chilean Arpilleras* and *A Cross and A Star: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl in Chile*, spoke with students in several Jewish studies classes on her family’s struggles to live as Jews in Chile and gave a public talk on the Chilean human rights movement.

April 2008

As part of **FLEFF**, the Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival, the Jewish studies program and the LGBT Center will present “**Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School,**” followed by a panel forum discussion. “Hineni” (Hebrew for “Here I am”) chronicles the story of one student’s courageous fight to establish a gay-straight alliance at a Jewish high school in the Boston area and the transformative impact of her campaign on her entire community.

For further information on Ithaca College’s Jewish Studies Program, please go to our website at www.ithaca.edu/hs/minors/jewishstudies or contact Dr. Rebecca Lesses at 607/274-3556 or rlesses@ithaca.edu.



Development News



We Did It! Ithaca College Campaign is a Success!

More than 37,000 alumni, parents, and friends made gifts to the Campaign for Ithaca College: Making a World of Difference. This generous group of IC enthusiasts helped us not only reach our \$115 million goal, but surpass it by raising an incredible \$145 million. Special thanks to those who have supported the Jewish studies program during this time. The program has been able to raise nearly \$80,000 for the Ithaca Fund.

We're already experiencing the benefits of the campaign. The new School of Business building, which opened for classes this semester, has been widely hailed as a leader in sustainable design, and we'll soon break ground on the field house and turf field for the new athletics and events center. We've added several new, innovative academic programs and created 144 new scholarships and endowed funds for students, as well as another 40 funds that benefit academic programs and athletics. We've also ensured that the Ithaca Fund continues providing the internships, research projects, and study abroad opportunities that make an IC education second to none.

To learn more about the Campaign for Ithaca College: Making a World of Difference, please visit www.ithaca.edu/campaign.

And to all of those who contributed to the campaign between 2001 and 2008, thank you. It's a stunning achievement, one that wouldn't have been possible without your participation.

Congratulations on this historic accomplishment!