JEWISH STUDIES Program Continues to Strengthen

The Jewish Studies Program at Tulane has been characterized by rapid growth since its inception, with interest spiking recently. There are now more Jewish Studies majors and minors than ever before. Just last year, there were about 25 declared majors and 15 declared minors. As of the 2010-2011 academic year, there are approximately 30 students majoring in Jewish Studies and 60 students minoring. A lot of the students enrolled in Jewish Studies courses are majors or minors, but there are also many students who choose to take the courses as electives due to interest. The most popular courses fill up almost as soon as course registration opens for each semester, and very few classes have empty seats. Because of this, additional sections and courses have been added and the Jewish Studies program has grown in every dimension. Professor David Goldstein said that in the early years of the program, he would have about seven students enrolled in each course. Now, the courses are “bursting at the seams.”

COURSES, FALL 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intro to Jewish Civilization</th>
<th>Zionism &amp; Peace in Israeli Cinema</th>
<th>Rabbinic Judaism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro to the Hebrew Bible</td>
<td>Anthropology of Jews &amp; Judaism</td>
<td>American Jewish Movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews of Germany, 1744-1933</td>
<td>Medieval Jewish Thought</td>
<td>Jews of Central Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender &amp; Nation in Israeli Cinema</td>
<td>Second Temple Judaisms</td>
<td>Hebrew 101, 203, 310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jewish Studies Maintains Successful “Sushi Series”

The Jewish Studies Sushi Film Series is now entering its third year, and continues to garner national attention. This year’s series featured three award-winning films: Ajami, Crime After Crime: The Battle to Free Debbie Peagler, and Orthodox Stance. Ajami, an Academy Award-nominated film, follows the lives of Jews, Muslims, and Christians living in Ajami in Jaffa, Israel.

Crime After Crime is a documentary that tells the story of two young lawyers, one of whom is an Orthodox Jew, as they fight to free Debbie Peagler, a wrongfully imprisoned victim of domestic abuse. Crime After Crime is an official selection of the 2011 Sundance Film Festival. Producer & Director Yoav Potash introduced the film, and led a Q&A session following the film. Debbie Peagler’s daughter was also in attendance and engaged in a discussion with students.

Orthodox Stance tells the story of Dmitriy Salita, a 25 year-old Russian immigrant, who is making history as a top professional boxer and a rigorously observant Jew. Salita led a Q&A session with students following the film. Each screening is followed by a free sushi reception, and is presented in partnership with the Foundation for Jewish Culture, and co-sponsored by the Jewish Endowment Foundation.

This newsletter would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts of Melanie Melasky and David Gordon. Also essential in its production were Haley Ade, Chris Gagne, and Derek Zwyer.
I graduated from Tulane last May with a double major in Jewish Studies and Psychology. I knew that I wanted to study psychology when I began my studies at Tulane, but I was unsure where psychology would take me. Prior to attending Tulane, my knowledge of Judaism came from synagogue, temple, and Jewish education. When I was 12, I had my first experience with Jewish studies at Young Judea and even though I didn’t see the connection with psychology, it sparked an interest that would eventually become my passion.

Later on in college, it came time for me to really start thinking about what I wanted to do with my life. Throughout high school, I thought that I would work in the field of psychology, but I always had an idea in the back of my mind of becoming a rabbi. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that a combination of Jewish Studies and psychology seemed to be the perfect path to lead me into the rabbinate. I always have been very passionate about working with the Jewish community, and I love working with people on an individual level. I am currently in my second year of a five-year rabbinical school program at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion; the rabbinical school of the Reform movement. I am living in Jerusalem as a part of the school’s Year in Israel Program, and I will be returning to New York for my last four years of study. I am taking courses ranging from Hebrew to Jewish texts. I couldn’t love my study experiences more.

When I think about my current path, I can say with confidence that the Tulane Jewish Studies program played a huge role in preparing me for graduate school, allowing me to look at Judaism in an academic setting, and helping me fall in love with learning about Jewish history and peoplehood throughout time.

I graduated from college in three years, but in that time, I saw the program grow exponentially. They hired great new professors, the classes grew, and the Jewish Studies program continued to have a bigger presence on campus.

One thing that I found great about Jewish Studies was that I was able to create wonderful relationships with my professors, the rabbinical school of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Jewish Studies program. I decided to try out a Jewish Studies class at Tulane especially when topics I was interested in happened to be covered in the course.

The student-run organization for students majoring and minoring in Jewish Studies, the Jewish Studies Student Organization (JSSO), is becoming a recognizable face throughout the Jewish Studies program and on campus.

The student-run organization in place independent of the Jewish Studies program to bring events such as the “Sushi Series,” a film series that highlights Jewish themes relevant to Jewish life, to the student population. The organization has also planned events such as the program on a survey for students majoring and minoring in Jewish Studies, as well as those students enrolled in a Jewish Studies course who were not declared majors or minors, in an effort to help expand the program.

JSSO has also coordinated other events, such as their Hanukkah party, which served as a chance for students to gain awareness about the Jewish Studies major and minor programs, meet professors from the department, and declare a major or minor. T-shirts were also printed for the organization, giving the JSSO a face that students can identify with.

Melanie Melasky, a junior Jewish Studies major and a leader of the JSSO, hopes to continue to collaborate with other campus organizations. “Our hope is to show people that Jewish studies is not just history, but an ongoing process that is still highly relevant today. We want to encourage the process of Jewish Studies by hosting events and programs that allow students to identify with Jewish Studies,” said Melasky.

During this time he considered attending business school and applied to Wharton but was rejected based on his lack of work experience. He frequently contemplated dropping out of rabbinical school to join the workforce to gain the necessary experience for business school but ultimately decided to continue on the rabbinical track.

He chose to go to Japan where he spent three very worthwhile years that solidified his decision to become a congregational rabbi. He was the associate rabbi of Baltimore Hebrew congregation in 1968-70 and their senior rabbi from 1970-1978. As the war in Vietnam heated up, Hebrew Union College, Jewish Theological Seminary, and Yeshiva University entered into an agreement with the JWB to each provide ten graduating students every year as military chaplains. The students were subject to a lottery regarding their placement in which branch of the military they would serve. Those who volunteered were given more choices. Rabbi Goldstein volunteered as a Navy chaplain due to superior overseas location and his father’s endorsement towards the Navy.

When he began his tenure as a pulpita rabbi in New Orleans, Goldstein also began to simultaneously teach courses at Tulane University, where he has now taught for 32 years. The lost hurricane semester represents one of only two semesters missed in 32 years of teaching Jewish Studies courses at Tulane.

Rabbi David Goldstein was born in Princeton, New Jersey to a traditional Jewish family. His family kept kosher although this was discouraged by the number of Jews in his town. When Rabbi Goldstein was bar mitzvahed in 1950 he became the first bar mitzvah at his synagogue in 15 years.

After graduating from a high school that was less than one percent Jewish, Goldstein went on to study at Miami University of Ohio, where he was a member of the Jewish Fraternity, ZBT. During his senior year of college he applied to Hebrew Union College (HUC) and was admitted into the five-year rabbinical program. After his third year at HUC, he studied at the Greenberg Institute in Israel where he met his future wife, Shannie, who was also a student at the Machon.

Meet Rabbi Emeritus, Touro Synagogue
Former Chairman, Jewish Welfare Board’s Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy
Former US Navy Chaplain, Japan

Rabbi David Goldstein was born in Princeton, New Jersey to a traditional Jewish family. His family kept kosher although this was discouraged by the number of Jews in his town. When Rabbi Goldstein was bar mitzvahed in 1950 he became the first bar mitzvah at his synagogue in 15 years.

After graduating from a high school that was less than one percent Jewish, Goldstein went on to study at Miami University of Ohio, where he was a member of the Jewish Fraternity, ZBT. During his senior year of college he applied to Hebrew Union College (HUC) and was admitted into the five-year rabbinical program. After his third year at HUC, he studied at the Greenberg Institute in Israel where he met his future wife, Shannie, who was also a student at the Machon.

During this time he considered attending business school and applied to Wharton but was rejected based on his lack of work experience. He frequently contemplated dropping out of rabbinical school to join the workforce to gain the necessary experience for business school but ultimately decided to continue on the rabbinical track.

He was ordained as a rabbi and became the chairman of the Jewish Welfare Board’s (JWB) Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy in the 1990s. He held that position for four years. As the war in Vietnam heated up, Hebrew Union College, Jewish Theological Seminary, and Yeshiva University entered into an agreement with the JWB to each provide ten graduating students every year as military chaplains. The students were subject to a lottery regarding their placement in which branch of the military they would serve. Those who volunteered were given more choices. Rabbi Goldstein volunteered as a Navy chaplain due to superior overseas location and his father’s endorsement towards the Navy.

He chose to go to Japan where he spent three very worthwhile years that solidified his decision to become a congregational rabbi. He was the associate rabbi of Baltimore Hebrew congregation in 1968-70 and their senior rabbi from 1970-1978. While in Baltimore, he got his Ph.D. at St. Mary’s Seminary and Baltimore Hebrew College in Talmud and Maimonides. He left his Baltimore congregation to become a rabbi at Touro Synagogue in New Orleans in 1978 until his retirement in 2005 shortly before Hurricane Katrina.

When he began his tenure as a pulpita rabbi in New Orleans, Goldstein also began to simultaneously teach courses at Tulane University, where he has now taught for 32 years. The lost hurricane semester represents one of only two semesters missed in 32 years of teaching Jewish Studies courses at Tulane.
bloodletting that has accompanied nationalism at least until today? Different and unique, retain their culture without the violence and how is nationalism and humanism related and how can peoples be impulses and ideas and the biggest question of all was posed to me: I realize how much early Zionism was related to Central European and militarism joined together – Bismark and Beethoven – made Jabotinsky became clearer to me. The ideals of culture as humanism in Russia. In particular, I was reading about Vladimir “Zeev” Jabotinsky (“Zeev” means wolf in Hebrew). Jabotinsky piqued my interest because in his day in the 1920s and 30s, he was one of the most hated Jews in the world. A militarist, he left the Zionist Congress and organized his own Revisionist “Betar” Zionist Party. In response to rising anti-Semitism worldwide, Jabotinsky encouraged Jews to get a gun and learn to shoot it. Self-defense was provocative, but in light of what happened in Europe during the Second World War, can you blame him? When most labor Zionists spoke of peace and cooperation, Jabotinsky warned clearly that the dream of any self-respecting Zionist was a Jewish majority on both sides of the Jordan River and that it was impossible to lie to everyone, to Arabs, the British, and Jews around the world that Zionists were going to be able to gorge a state out of Palestine with the consent of the local Arab population.

Once settled in, I started work on my project on Jewish nationalism in Russia. In particular, I was reading about Vladimir “Zeev” Jabotinsky (“Zeev” means wolf in Hebrew). Jabotinsky piqued my interest because in his day in the 1920s and 30s, he was one of the most hated Jews in the world. A militarist, he left the Zionist Congress and organized his own Revisionist “Betar” Zionist Party. In response to rising anti-Semitism worldwide, Jabotinsky encouraged Jews to get a gun and learn to shoot it. Self-defense was provocative, but in light of what happened in Europe during the Second World War, can you blame him? When most labor Zionists spoke of peace and cooperation, Jabotinsky warned clearly that the dream of any self-respecting Zionist was a Jewish majority on both sides of the Jordan River and that it was impossible to lie to everyone, to Arabs, the British, and Jews around the world that Zionists were going to be able to gorge a state out of Palestine with the consent of the local Arab population.

At the same time this same Jabotinsky was indisputably a great writer, a leading talent as a Russian novelist and translator, and a fiery speaker and journalist in some ten languages. Somehow in this country of dictators and German humanism, the paradoxes of Jabotinsky became clearer to me. The ideals of culture as humanism and militarism joined together – Bismark and Beethoven – made me realize how much early Zionism was related to Central European impulses and ideas and the biggest question of all was posed to me: how is nationalism and humanism related and how can peoples be different and unique, retain their culture without the violence and bloodletting that has accompanied nationalism at least until today?

Brian Horowitz is the recent recipient of the prestigious Frankel Center Fellowship at the University of Michigan for the academic year 2011-2012.
Please join our mailing list and help to support Jewish Studies!

jewishstudies@tulane.edu  http://tulane.edu/liberal-arts/jewish-studies