Access to Visual History Archive Enhances Holocaust Workshop Program

By Zev Hurwitz, Jewish Studies Intern

The ending of the Oscar-winning 1993 film Schindler’s List was only the beginning.

Almost immediately after the credits first rolled in 1993, the film’s iconic director, Steven Spielberg, founded what became the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, seeking to record and digitize a vast number of first-person testimonies from Holocaust survivors.

The collection of stories, memories, and firsthand narratives of the atrocities of the Holocaust became the Visual History Archive, now housed at the University of Southern California. The tens of thousands of videotapes in twenty-six languages are the largest database of Holocaust testimony in the world.

In 2006, UC San Diego’s Audrey Geisel University Librarian Brian Schottlaender and Jewish studies professor Deborah Hertz coordinated a lease of the Visual History Archive, making the entire collection of videos available for free to UC San Diego affiliates.

As of 2015, the campus is one of only fifty-five organizations worldwide—and one of only two universities in California—to have access to the complete archive. The leasing of the archive by UC San Diego led to the creation of the Holocaust Living History Workshop program, a lecture series designed around the Visual History Archive in order to enhance UC San Diego affiliates’ utilization of the archive.

Project manager Susanne Hillman, who has run the program since 2010, said that the format of the workshops has changed since its inception. “In the first few years, the program invited Holocaust survivors on a monthly basis, and every year became like a rerun because there is a limited number of local Holocaust survivors who will agree to come and speak,” Hillman said. “Later, we decided to widen the scope and we began bringing

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On June 4, 2015, Professor Richard Elliott Friedman gave a lecture entitled “Coincidences of Biblical Proportions: a Lecture in Memory of Jerome and Miriam Katzin.” Friedman is the Ann & Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Georgia and the Jerome and Miriam Katzin Professor of Jewish Civilization emeritus at UC San Diego. The event, which attracted over 120 guests and filled the Faculty Club dining area, was organized to celebrate and commemorate the Katzins on the first anniversary of their passing.

After a welcome by Professor Tom Levy, President Richard C. Atkinson, former chancellor of UC San Diego and former president of the University of California, shared his memories of Jerry and Miriam Katzin, whom he first encountered in 1980 upon his arrival in San Diego. He recalled the meeting with the Katzins and other community leaders that led directly to the establishment and endowment of the UC San Diego Judaic Studies Program. Atkinson stressed that the Katzins were not merely philanthropists, they were emotionally and intellectually engaged in campus life, particularly Judaic studies.

Professor William Propp, who introduced the evening’s guest speaker, summarized Richard Friedman’s contributions to the field of biblical studies and to UC San Diego since Friedman’s arrival in 1976. Propp emphasized Friedman’s national role in integrating critical biblical studies into the field of Jewish studies.

Friedman opened his witty and personal presentation recounting a series of fortuitous events that led him to the field of biblical scholarship, to San Diego, and to his close relationship with the Katzins. The academic portion of Friedman’s lecture concerned the Exodus from Egypt, which Jews and Christians have accepted as fact for centuries, but which is denied historical status by most biblical scholars today. Friedman argued, however, that much evidence supports the basic claim that an important element of what would later become the Israelites and eventually the Jews migrated from Egypt to the Land of Canaan. Friedman nominated the tribe of Levi as this formative group, though he did not exclude the possibility that other subgroups had roots in Egypt.

Friedman enlisted diverse evidence to buttress his case: the presence of Semites in Egypt for centuries before the rise of Israel, the prevalence of Egyptian personal names—including “Moses”—among the Levites, the shared Israeliite and Egyptian custom of circumcision, the striking resemblance between the biblical Tabernacle and the royal Egyptian battle tent, the equally striking resemblance between the Ark of the Covenant and Egyptian portable shrines known as sacred barks (boats), and the fact that the tribe of Levi alone did not possess a specific territory but was scattered throughout Canaan, interspersed among the other tribes.

Next came a reconstruction of a historical accommodation whereby immigrant Levites, worshiping the deity Yahweh, agreed with already settled tribalists, worshiping El or Elohim (“God”), that their gods were one and the same. The Levites would receive no territory, for they had arrived too late, but would assume the role of priests and teachers and live off the tithes that supported their ritual activities.

Friedman also noted that the Torah repeats fifty-two times that Israelites must treat aliens fairly, “since you were slaves in the Land of Egypt.” This humanitarian ideal he associated both with the Levites’ former status as aliens in Egypt, and their new status as immigrants to Canaan.

The Exodus, Friedman concluded, is more than just a good story. The historical migration of the Levites from Egypt to the Promised Land marks the birth of both monotheism and the concept of equal rights under the law.
In Memory: Sir Martin Gilbert

The distinguished historian, popular author, and onetime visiting professor in Jewish studies at UC San Diego, Sir Martin Gilbert, passed away on February 23, 2015. Most famous for his eight-part biography on Winston Churchill, Gilbert also made significant contributions to scholarship on Holocaust-era Jewry and Zionism. Titles include *Final Journey: The Fate of the Jews of Nazi Europe; Auschwitz and the Allies; The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy; Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past,* and many others. In 2007, Gilbert combined his two main subjects of interest in *Churchill and the Jews.* He also wrote the screenplay for the film *Genocide,* which won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 1981.

In addition to research contributions as a Fellow of Merton College at Oxford, Gilbert served as the Herman Wouk Distinguished Visiting Professor in Jewish Studies at UC San Diego, in 2002. He taught a seminar on the Holocaust and gave a series of lectures while in La Jolla, including a well-attended talk entitled “The Righteous Non-Jews Who Helped Jews During the Second World War.”

Gilbert received knighthood in 1995 “for services to British history and international relations” after winning numerous prizes for his literary work, including the Wolfson Award, the Bradley Prize, and the Dan David Prize. Describing himself as a “pugnacious Zionist,” Gilbert remained committed to the continued prosperity of the Jewish state of Israel throughout his lifetime. Toward the end of his life, Gilbert maintained homes in London and Jerusalem.

Gilbert is survived by his wife, Esther, and three children from previous marriages.

Visual History Archive

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in people who have done research on family members, children of Holocaust survivors, and scholars on Holocaust studies.”

Each year, the Holocaust Living History Workshop Speaker Series adopts a theme for its yearlong speaker series. In 2014–15, Hillman says, the theme was “Forgotten Stories: A Legacy of Pain.” In 2015–16, it will be “Holocaust Journeys,” “What’s amazing about the study of the Holocaust is that no matter how much you study, there are always new angles that have been neglected or that haven’t even been brought to light.”

Lectures in 2014–15 featured a number of prominent speakers and witnesses, including Holocaust survivors Ruth Hohberg and Edith Eger as well as Claremont McKenna College professor Wendy Lower.

In October 2015, the Holocaust Living History Workshop will kick off its yearlong series with a public event featuring Roger Grunwald, an artist and playwright and the son of an Auschwitz survivor. *The Mitzvah Project* explores the dilemma of *Mischlinge* (“mixed race”) soldiers in Hitler’s army through performance, a history lesson, and interaction with the audience. Other speakers scheduled for 2015–16 include the noted historian and genocide expert Norman Naimark, the Italian refugee Elio Schaechter, who found a new home in Ecuador, and Goldie Morgenthaler, the daughter of the great Yiddish novelist and survivor Chava Rosenfarb. In June 2016, the noted Israeli journalist and historian Tom Segev will give a public lecture on the memorialization of the Holocaust in Israel. For exact dates and program details, visit [http://libraries.ucsd.edu/hhww/events.html](http://libraries.ucsd.edu/hhww/events.html).

While each of these events offers an account of a journey and provides important insight into the Holocaust in its own right, Hillman says that a long-term plan for the program is to boost high school education and understanding of the Holocaust through outreach to secondary school teachers. “We would like students and teachers throughout San Diego to know that we have this valuable resource on campus and introduce them to the Visual History Archive,” she said.

How to Attend Jewish Studies Program Courses

The Jewish Studies Program offers a wide selection of exciting courses each quarter. Perhaps you’ve received the “JSP Courses” e-mail and thought to yourself, “I’d really like to take that course, but…” You’re in luck! The Jewish Studies Program coordinator, Sally Hargate, has mapped out the steps below.

**STEP ONE: Choose a Course**

**Q:** What courses are offered this quarter?

**A:** The Jewish Studies Program lists course offerings in two places on our website:

1. The “Courses” page has a listing of the current courses or the courses that will be offered during the next quarter.

2. The “Year at a Glance” page has a listing of all the courses to be offered during the academic year.

3. You may also sign up to receive Jewish Studies Program e-mails ([http://bit.ly/1m6GDwD](http://bit.ly/1m6GDwD)) to stay abreast of our course offerings, events, and other Jewish Studies Program happenings.

**Q:** How do I find out when and where a course is being offered?

**A:** The best place to find up-to-date times and locations for courses is the Schedule of Classes. Links to the Schedule of Classes can be found on the Jewish Studies Program website’s “Courses” and “Year at a Glance” pages.

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Faculty News

Professor Deborah Hertz

On June 21, 2015, Professor Deborah Hertz, who holds the Herman Wouk Chair in Modern Jewish Studies, delivered the keynote address for a conference on the Jewish Berlin saloniere Henriette Herz at the palace in Potsdam. The title was “Henriette Herz’s Conversion Revisited: Conviction, Secrecy, Economy.” A link to the notice of the conference is https://www2.gender.hu-berlin.de/ztg-blog/2015/05/eroeffnungsvortrag-prof-dr-debrah-hertz-und-tagung-zu-henriette-herz-potsdamer-lin-21-6-22-23-6-2015/.

In addition, Hertz participated in two conferences this quarter, chairing sessions at a UC San Diego conference on Germans in the Pacific and at a conference at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, on “Jewish Studies through the Lens of Gender Studies.”

Hertz continues to codirect the Holocaust Living History Workshop, for which she chaired a roundtable discussion, “Growing Up in the Shadow of the Holocaust,” describing the experience of post-Holocaust-generation Germans. Video of the event can be found at http://www.ucsd.tv/search-details.aspx?showid=29486.


Professor Lisa Lampert-Weissig

In December, Professor Lisa Lampert-Weissig, Katzin Professor of Jewish Civilization, was in Germany conducting research for her book on the Wandering Jew, and beginning a new project on the forms of commemoration of Jewish history in Europe. She focused on a controversy over a Holocaust memorial, Stolpersteine or “Stumbling Stones,” in the Black Forest town of Villingen. The creation of artist Gunter Demnig, Stolpersteine are cobblestone-sized memorials designed to fit into the sidewalk near where the commemorated individual used to reside. The Stolpersteine project, begun in the early 1990s, has spread across Europe, with over forty thousand memorials in eighteen European countries, including thousands across Germany. The Villingen town council has twice rejected a proposal for the installation of these memorials to commemorate the eighteen murdered Jewish residents of Villingen.

Lampert-Weissig spoke with a group of Villingen residents who wanted to see these privately funded memorials installed in the town, and also investigated an innovative response to the town ban by two local high school students. These students have created virtual Stolpersteine, which use stickers printed with QR codes. These virtual memorials allow smartphone users to access a website that provides detailed histories of Villingen’s former Jewish residents. A magazine article on the Villingen controversy is forthcoming, and an academic piece on the controversy and the implications of digital forms of memorial is in progress. In April, Lampert-Weissig also spent two weeks in Nanjing, China, giving a series of lectures at Nanjing University and Nanjing University of Science and Technology on the history of anti-Semitism, medieval literature, and the representation of the Outsider in literature.

Program Welcomes Novelist Dara Horn

On Thursday, May 7, 2015, the Jewish Studies Program at UC San Diego hosted novelist Dara Horn for a special guest lecture entitled “The Presence of the Past in Modern Jewish Literature.” Horn grew up in Short Hills, New Jersey, and earned her PhD in comparative literature at Harvard University, where she still teaches as the Gerald Weinstock Visiting Professor in Jewish Studies. Horn has also taught at Sarah Lawrence College and the City University of New York. A published writer since 2003, Horn has authored A Guide for the Perplexed, In the Image, The World to Come, and All Other Nights, which have received numerous accolades, including a ranking on Granta magazine’s Best Young American Novelists, the Editor’s Choice in The New York Times Book Review, and the Reform Judaism Prize for Jewish Fiction.
Recent Alumna Amy Zroka Receives Prestigious Support

In 2015, Amy Zroka, a UC San Diego undergraduate alumna (class of 2006) defended her dissertation, “Serving the Volksgemeinschaft: German Red Cross Nurses in the Second World War,” and was awarded a PhD in modern European history from UC San Diego. Her adviser was Frank Biess.

Zroka’s dissertation investigated the actions of German Red Cross nurses who worked on the Eastern Front, with the goal of gaining deeper insight into how the Nazis waged war and perpetrated genocide and the Holocaust. German Red Cross nurses were the main providers of medical care for the German Army, and they assisted Heinrich Himmler in the ethnic German resettlement program. In the field hospitals, nurses provided soldiers with the physical and spiritual care and companionship that enabled them to continue to fight and kill. In addition, by helping relocate ethnic Germans, nurses collaborated with the SS in extremely violent population displacements.

Within both contexts, nurses helped to create a “people’s community” on the Eastern Front, which was defined both by National Socialist racist ideology and by nurses’ individual decisions to prioritize the care of German soldiers and ethnic Germans.

Amy received several prestigious grants, which assisted her with her research, including grants from the UC San Diego Jewish Studies Program and the dean of Arts and Humanities, a German Studies Research Grant from the German Academic Exchange Service, and an eleven-month fellowship with the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies. She also attended a tour of German archives and received training in paleography instruction with the assistance of the German Historical Institute. Before pursuing her doctorate, Amy assisted Professor Deborah Hertz in the development of the Holocaust Living History Workshop. She forged contacts with local Holocaust survivors, and, with the help of her grandmother Shirley Gilbert, arranged monthly events during which survivors could share their stories at UC San Diego.

Alumnus Sam Spector Shares His Passion for Judaism

By Zev Hurwitz, Jewish Studies Intern

To say that Sam Spector knows a thing or two about global Jewry is to say that it rains sometimes in his hometown of Seattle, Washington.

Spector, who graduated from UC San Diego with a Jewish studies major, has been nothing but busy since walking for commencement in 2010. Having studied Jewish communities and their origins in over twenty countries in Asia, Europe, and North Africa, Spector has experienced the scope of Jewish history not only in the classroom, but firsthand as well.

Spector was accepted to the rabbinical program at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Los Angeles directly out of undergraduate school and spent a year in Israel following graduation. During his time at HUC, Spector spent at least one weekend per month in the fledgling Jewish community in Merced, California, as part of a school program that pairs rabbinic candidates with regions that lack full-time clergy.

“It was really rewarding to be a part of the community,” Spector said, adding that he would lead prayer services, teach classes, and officiate at b’nai mitzvah celebrations.

The drive from Los Angeles to Merced monthly for the three years he was involved with the community did get to him at some points. “It’s five hours through cow country,” Spector says, laughing.

Throughout rabbinical school, according to Spector, much of the material for his classes was already very familiar to him.

“I found a lot the course work in rabbinical school included scholarly articles from UC San Diego Jewish Studies Program professors,” Spector said. “I was really impressed that in order to become a rabbi, HUC had us study the work of the gifted faculty at UCSD.”

Spector credits his all-around passion for Judaism and the Jewish people in part to experiences with the UC San Diego community. On campus in La Jolla, Spector was involved in all the corners of Jewish life. In addition to being a brother in the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, Spector cofounded the Tritons for Israel student organization, headed an AIPAC-affiliated group, was active with Hillel, and spent a summer at an ulpan in Israel studying Hebrew language.

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In addition to his duties at HUC, the Merced community, and now his newly appointed position as assistant rabbi at Temple Judea in Los Angeles, Spector has also achieved the rank of lieutenant junior grade in the US Navy, where he serves as a chaplain to on-duty service members. “Joining the navy as a chaplain was a great way for me to serve my country as well as the Jewish people,” Spector said. “It can be scary for a lot of people to serve in the military, and I’m glad I’m able to assist people who are going through a lot.”

Spector still credits much of his postgraduate success to the Jewish Studies Program at UC San Diego. “I look back at UCSD and JSP with only the fondest of memories,” he says. “UCSD completely changed me. I’m incredibly proud of being Jewish and being a part of the leadership of the Jewish people.”

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Risa Levitt Kohn
Lectures at Her Alma Mater

On May 21, 2015, Professor Risa Levitt Kohn presented a lecture entitled “Jewish and Christian Origins as Revealed by the Dead Sea Scrolls.” Levitt Kohn is director of the Jewish Studies Program, chair of the Religious Studies Department, and chair of Classics and Humanities at San Diego State University. She is also the 2015–16 recipient of the SDSU Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Faculty Contribution to the University.

Levitt Kohn received her undergraduate degree from York University, her MA from the University of Toronto, and her PhD from UC San Diego, where she was the first person to complete the then-new degree in Ancient History and Hebrew Bible in 1997, under the supervision of Jewish studies faculty William Propp, Richard Friedman, David Noel Freedman, and David Goodblatt.

Levitt Kohn’s lecture challenged the conventional view of Christianity as a “daughter religion” of Judaism. Instead, Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity evolved side-by-side as twin responses to the catastrophe of the year 70 CE, when the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed and ritual sacrifice could no longer serve as the heart of Jewish worship. Formerly, said Levitt Kohn, the most obvious answer to the question, “Where may God be found on earth?” would have been “In the Temple.” After 70 CE, new answers emerged: God was in the Qumran community (Dead Sea Scrolls), in Christ (Gospel of John), in the Church (Pauline epistles), or wherever Jews study Torah (Rabbinic Judaism). Priesthood and sacrifice were similarly reinterpreted and broadened, so that the ancient religion of Israel became “portable,” accompanying Jews in their Diaspora and carried by Christians throughout the Roman world.

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Alumnus Kyle Knabb Inspired by Archaeology

Kyle Knabb, BA ’05, PhD ’15, successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in the UC San Diego Department of Anthropology in January 2015. Knabb’s dissertation adviser was Tom Levy (Anthropology, Jewish Studies Program); other committee members were David Goodblatt (History, Jewish Studies), Guillermo Algaze (Anthropology), Paul Goldstein (Anthropology), and Jürgen Schulze (Computer Science).

Knabb’s project, entitled “Long-term Socioeconomic Strategies in Ancient Jordan: Rural Perspectives from the Iron Age through the Roman Period,” chronicled his fieldwork in archaeological surveys of the Faynan region of Jordan. Knabb used settlement pattern analysis rather than excavation to understand aspects of economic trends and the environmental impacts of human activity from around 1200 BCE to 400 CE.

“Everyone loves to learn about the past,” Knabb says. “If I can add to that to enrich people’s lives, it’s a great thing I can do.”

Knabb, a San Diego native, recalls first having been inspired to go into archaeology after participating in a field school program in Jordan with Jewish Studies Program professor Tom Levy. Levy inspired Knabb to pursue anthropological archaeology not only as his undergraduate degree—which he completed in 2005—but also to continue his studies in a graduate program.

As part of his dissertation, Knabb travelled to Jerusalem in the summer of 2013 and worked with a geochemist to measure pollution levels in historical areas. The Jewish Studies Program awarded Knabb a travel grant that allowed him to finance, in part, the Israel study trip.

Nearly ten years after receiving his bachelor’s degree, Knabb is ready to return to the Middle East to build on his dissertation with a J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. Knabb learned he had been awarded the scholarship only hours before his final examination as a graduate student.

His doctoral adviser, Professor Tom Levy, had this to say about his newly minted PhD student: “When Kyle started working with me as an undergraduate, in addition to his academic excellence, it was clear he had determination, physical stamina, and a love for the desert. When it came time to choose a topic for his doctoral research, we came up with the idea of Kyle concentrating on carrying out archaeological field surveys that could be used to test models related to anthropological and ancient historical issues. The results of Kyle’s work are exciting and no doubt helped him win the Fulbright Scholarship to Israel.”

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Old Globe Collaboration a Success

UC San Diego was pleased to collaborate with the Old Globe Theatre on a wonderful opportunity this winter. The theatre, under the direction of Barry Edelstein, produced Nathan Englander’s play, *The Twenty-Seventh Man*.

The play is a fictionalized retelling of the August 12, 1952, “Night of the Murdered Poets,” on which thirteen Soviet Jewish cultural figures including writers, musicians, artists, scientists, and translators were executed on trumped-up charges of treason. Among these were five of the best-known Yiddish writers of their generation. In tandem with the production, Professor of Jewish Studies Amelia Glaser taught a freshman seminar at UC San Diego on Englander’s fiction, which culminated in a trip to the Old Globe to see the play. In addition, both Barry Edelstein and Nathan Engleander visited campus during the winter, and spoke to a large group of students about the play and their work. Professor Glaser appeared on a post-performance “Subject Matters” panel at the Old Globe, together with Professor Marci Shore of Yale University. Her lecture concentrated on the role of Jews in the Soviet Union, and the fate of Yiddish literature under Stalin.

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Recommended Reading

**Professor Glaser Suggests… The Hilltop**

In his newest novel to be translated into English, *The Hilltop* (2014), Israeli novelist Assaf Gavron addresses the complex life of settlers in the West Bank, their relations with their Palestinian neighbors, the Israeli government, and one another. At the heart of this beautifully written book is the story of two brothers, raised by adoptive parents on a kibbutz and separated by utterly different life paths. One has turned to religion as an adult, while the other has gone into international business on the eve of the 2008 stock market crash. Their lives may be utterly different, but they are as inextricable as the varied communities living in modern-day Israel and Palestine. (Assaf Gavron will be speaking at UCSD during the 2015–16 academic year.)

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Amelia Glaser is an associate professor of literature at UC San Diego, where her research interests include Russian literature and film, transnational Jewish literature, the literatures of Ukraine, the literature of immigration to the U.S., the Russian critical tradition, and translation theory and practice.
How to Attend Courses
(Continued from page 3)

STEP TWO: E-mail the Instructor for Permission to Audit the Course

Q: Where do I find professors’ e-mail addresses?

A: Instructors’ e-mail addresses can be found by clicking their name within the table on the “Courses” page of the Jewish Studies Program website. E-mail addresses may also be found on the “Faculty” and “Affiliated Faculty and Lecturers” pages of the website.

Q: What does it mean to audit a course?

A: As an auditor you are entitled to attend class and participate in class discussions at the discretion of the instructor. You are not entitled to any materials handed out in class (although many materials may be available for download, or the instructor may be willing to e-mail digital copies) and are not expected or required to complete course assignments or tests. In short, an auditor’s presence should not add to the workload of the instructor or disrupt the learning of enrolled students.

STEP THREE: Attend the Class

Q: What should I do to make the most of this experience?

A: Below is a short list of recommendations:

1. Check the Schedule of Classes a day or two before instruction begins for location or time changes, and to ensure the course hasn’t been canceled.

2. When e-mailing the professor for permission to attend class, also tell him or her why you are interested in the course. Ask about course materials, additional reading recommendations, and what level of participation would be appropriate.