The Brandeis University
Summer Institute for Israel Studies

An Evaluation

Annette Koren, Ph.D.
September 27, 2004
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**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary .......................................................... 3
Background ........................................................................... 6
The Institute ........................................................................... 7
  Personnel and Organization .............................................. 8
  Subject Matter .................................................................... 13
Challenges ............................................................................ 17
Outcomes ............................................................................... 24
Conclusion ............................................................................ 27
Appendices
  Appendix A: Presenters .................................................... 29
  Appendix B: Participants .................................................... 30
  Appendix C: Schedule for One Day .................................... 32
  Appendix D: Syllabi Developed at the Seminar .................. 33
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brandeis University Summer Institute for Israel Studies (SIIS) was established in 2004 to redress the lack of knowledgeable and balanced teaching about Israel, its history, culture, and society. The long-term goal of the seminar is to foster Israel studies in universities and colleges - providing serious academic understanding of Israel as a civilization and as part of the larger history of the Jewish people.

The first step in realizing that vision was an intensive two-week seminar taught by leading Israel studies scholars. The seminar’s short-term objectives were to:

- Prepare faculty members to introduce new courses or to enhance the courses they currently teach.
- Equip participants with the knowledge and confidence to teach Israel courses.
- Provide participants with access to resources and consultation to develop syllabi.
- Build a multidisciplinary community of scholars committed to and capable of promoting Israel studies on campuses around the world.

The Institute’s seminar aimed to train faculty members for an academic mission rather than for advocacy or the promotion of Jewish identity. The premise was that Israel is a nation and a civilization worthy of study within a university’s academic framework. The Institute’s organizers believe that Israel “matters” in America in the same way that Russian studies or Jewish studies matter.

Participants

Seventeen participants were recruited for the inaugural seminar in the summer of 2004 from institutions of higher education across the United States, Canada, England, Brazil, and Turkey. Candidates applied by describing their motivation for attending the seminar and the courses they hoped to teach. Candidates were also required to have letters from department chairs or deans committing their institutions to offer courses in Israel studies.

Evaluation Findings

An independent evaluation was conducted to determine the extent to which the Institute’s goals were successfully met and to help shape its future directions. The evaluation involved observation of a sample of the seminar’s sessions, interviews with participants before and after the seminar, and interviews with presenters. The evaluation explored the short-term goals of the seminar: reaching its target audience, conveying useful information about Israel and new ideas about pedagogy, and creating a cohort of university and college faculty who would be able to introduce new courses and improve existing courses at their schools. The results of the evaluation indicate that the short-term goals were met:
The Institute successfully recruited a diverse group of participants from various academic disciplines and institutions.

- Presenters both conveyed information and modeled a variety of teaching styles and approaches to their material. They provided primary and secondary sources that spanned widely divergent academic and political points of view.
- Presenters established collegial relationships with participants, became highly engaged with them during the seminar, and offered to continue to provide ongoing support.
- Participants developed a strong sense of camaraderie with one another as well as with presenters. They will call on this network in the future and expect to participate in follow-up efforts to further their expertise about Israel and their repertoire of teaching skills.
- All participants, even those who were knowledgeable about Israel at the start, learned new content and new approaches.
- Participants with no previous experience teaching about Israel on campus felt confident that they could now teach and discuss Israel—with students as well as colleagues and in informal as well as formal settings—with a sense of comfort that was new to them.
- All participants submitted syllabi for courses they plan to teach about Israel. If all these courses are taught and enrollments are as expected, more than 500 students will be affected by this first summer of the Institute.

The 2004 seminar was a pilot project—an attempt to test ideas about how to communicate content, raise the level of pedagogy, and stimulate academic work in the nascent field of Israel studies. Evaluation findings point to several issues that should be addressed as the program is offered to additional cohorts:

- Some participants may not be in the position to introduce a course about Israel in the immediate future. Some already teach successful courses about Israel, but their institutions may be reluctant to expand their offerings.
- Some, but not all, participants felt the pace of the seminar was too intense and would have appreciated more time for discussion, learning from each other, and relaxation. Participants, however, were unable to identify areas of study they thought should be given less time.
- Although some presenters discussed pedagogical issues—how to teach undergraduates more effectively—others focused almost entirely on content. Some participants wanted more help to be able to discuss controversial issues with their students.
- Some participants and presenters felt the balance of lecture and discussion was "just right," but others—both participants and presenters—felt there was too much lecturing. A particular problem was that some participants had not been able to read assignments in advance.
- Issues of importance to some participants were not addressed or addressed only in passing: Israeli identities, extremism, education, anthropological/sociological approaches. Presenters as well as participants suggested additional subject areas that, in their opinions, should have been covered.
- A few participants expressed concern that the presentations did not reflect a full range of critical views about Israel. The readings did include many of these views, but participants would have liked these views to have been represented more fully in discussions.
Recommendations

This report assesses only the short-term outcomes of the seminar. It will not be possible to evaluate long-term impact until a follow up can be conducted with participants to determine whether the courses they designed were conducted and their impact. Those questions will be answered in the second phase of the evaluation.

Analyses of interview data and the syllabi produced by participants suggest a number of recommendations for future seminars. These are offered as means of helping the Institute enhance participants’ abilities to create more and better courses.

- To insure diversity of participants, start recruitment by October. While continuing to seek diversity by geography, academic discipline and career stage, consider placing greater emphasis on professional stature and capacity to introduce Israel studies courses.
- Target specific types of institutions that have the capacity and potential desire to build Israel studies programs.
- Consider extending the Institute in order to address participants’ concerns about pace.
- Provide participants with readings and other materials far enough in advance to insure that all have the time to study the materials prior to each session.
- Gather presenters either in person or for an extended conference call during the winter. Review the schedule and expectations at that time, and make certain that all presenters understand the importance of discussing pedagogy as well as modeling it.
- Encourage presenters to view the sessions as seminars rather than as lectures. Let them know that participants’ advance preparation is a requirement of the Institute and that they can expect the participants to have done the reading.
- Consider expanding the content of the seminar to include more on Israeli identities (e.g., gender, mizrachim). If more time is available, consider adding other areas suggested by participants and presenters.
- The Institute’s goal, to present a comprehensive picture of Israel as a culture and society, lessens the time that can be spent on discussing the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, participants should be given adequate exposure to sources and scholarship concerning the conflict to enable them to discuss it knowledgeably and confidently.
- The Institute should follow through on its plans to maintain contact with participants through its listserv, website, conference gatherings, and personal communications.

The responses of both participants and presenters made clear that the inaugural seminar was highly successful. It provided participants with exposure to an extraordinary group of scholars. They gained information and ideas while building a community of scholars committed to Israel studies. There is substantial evidence that participation changed them as individuals. But the success of the Institute will be measurable only over the next few years if change is observed in their institutions. How many additional courses on Israel are added to curricula? How many students are affected by the participants as faculty members and in what ways? How many graduate students are motivated to concentrate in the area of Israel studies? The question, perhaps, is not ‘how well did the seminar prepare these faculty to teach about Israel?’ but ‘what was the impact of training a cohort of diverse faculty?’ and ‘how has that changed academic life in regard to understanding Israel?’
BACKGROUND

Israel studies is a small but growing field related to Jewish studies and Middle Eastern studies. Like Jewish studies and Middle Eastern studies, Israel studies is interdisciplinary. It draws on history, language, literature, art, political science, sociology, and anthropology. Like Jewish studies, it is of specific interest to Jews but can attract a wide range of non-Jewish students as well.

Unfortunately, Israel studies is part of the curriculum of very few colleges or universities in the U.S. or internationally. In some cases, Israel is simply ignored as part of Middle East Studies. There are few faculty members who have the training to teach Israel studies and few graduate students prepare for careers in the field. Natan Sharansky was perhaps exaggerating when he wrote about the lack of knowledge among students and faculty about Israel. "There are no experts," he said, "no writers. The field has been abandoned."¹ Mitchell Bard² in his 2004 book, *Tenured or Tenuous*, also describes a "relative dearth of Israel scholars," with only five "centers" and eight endowed chairs of Israel studies in North America.³ The chairs, he says, have been hard to fill. Although no systematic inventory of Israel scholarship or study opportunities in American colleges and universities has been undertaken, Bard’s work suggests that few courses on Israel are offered.

That is not to say that there is no teaching about Israel on campuses. Israel’s literature may be taught in the Hebrew language program, which may be housed in Near East Studies, Religion, Jewish Studies, Modern Languages, or even Continuing Education. If Hebrew language is part of the religion department, it may be taught only for purposes of text study. If contemporary Israeli literature is offered in the Hebrew language program, it is likely to be cross-listed in Jewish studies. It is also likely to be cross-listed in Middle Eastern studies where such a department or program exists. Zionism and the formation of the state of Israel may be taught in the History department (and likewise, cross-listed) but usually such courses are taught in the framework of 19th and early 20th century European rather than Israeli history. To the extent that other departments teach about Israel, content is usually limited to the Arab-Israeli conflict and presented by departments of history, political science, sociology, Middle Eastern Studies, or Peace or Conflict Studies.⁴

A recently completed study of 20 American colleges and universities with significant Jewish undergraduate populations found that fewer than half offer courses which deal with Israel in a

² Bard, Mitchell G. (2004). *Tenured or Tenuous: Defining the Role of Faculty in Supporting Israel on Campus.* Israel on Campus Coalition and the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise.
³ According to Bard, Israeli studies centers exist at: American University, Emory, NYU, Brandeis (where it is not, in fact, a center), and the University of Denver. Endowed chairs of Israel studies have been established at Brandeis, Emory, Georgetown, NYU, University of Calgary, and the University of Toronto. A chair at Indiana University has not been filled. Berkeley’s Chair is being serviced by scholars in visiting positions. Recently there is talk of such a position at Columbia.
⁴ A catalogue of courses offered by North American college campuses on Israel—politics, society, culture, etc., would be a useful tool for SIIS.
historical, political, or sociological context that goes beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict. The schools were a broad range of public and private institutions, large and small, residential and commuter, located in different regions of the country.

As seen in Table 1, most of the 17 schools whose faculty attended the seminar offer courses related in some way to Israel. Titles of courses on the history, culture or society of Israel include Political Cultural Representations of Israel, Contemporary Israeli Life and Culture, State and Society in Israel, Modern Israel, Jerusalem through the Ages (Art), and The Israel Experience: Land, Society and Culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Topic</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zionism</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab-Israeli conflict</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew literature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, culture, or society of Israel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No courses offered</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colleges and universities are offering courses about Israel, but only a handful offer the interdisciplinary approach envisioned by the Institute’s organizers. Nonetheless, “the study of Israel is increasingly valued as a distinct subject that is at once associated with Jewish Studies and with long-established interests in the social sciences. These twin locations suggest a creative synergy through multi-disciplinary approaches that will shape how scholarship on Israel may develop.”

**THE INSTITUTE**

"We hoped that there would be at least 17 new and different courses in as many universities that would be enriched by the kind of extensive and intensive exposure we planned."

- Organizer -

To foster the development of Israel studies courses, the Goodman Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel at Brandeis University created the Brandeis University Summer Institute for Israel Studies. The Institute’s first seminar was held on the Brandeis campus from June 18 to July 2, 2004. It was designed as an inter-disciplinary, two-week intensive program of study and included 17 participants and 9 presenters from a variety of fields, backgrounds, and teaching environments. Its objectives were to ground participants in Israeli history and culture, expose them to a wide array of source materials and bibliographies, share with them ideas for effective

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5 Sales, A.L. et al. (2004) *Jewish Life on the American College Campus: Realities and Opportunities*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (unpublished manuscript). These data on course offerings were gathered from website course bulletins.

6 Two of the six are Jewish schools: Yeshiva University and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

pedagogy in teaching about Israel, and aid them in designing their own courses to bring back to their schools. Finally, the Institute sought to create a cadre of faculty who would stimulate interest in all aspects of Israel, who would be comfortable discussing Israel in informal settings as well as in the classroom, and who would be able to encourage students to pursue further studies about Israel thereby contributing to the creation of tomorrow’s scholars in the field.

The evaluation of the seminar was conducted independently. Data collection included:

- Pre- and post-seminar interviews with participants
- Post-seminar interviews with presenters
- On-site observations

This report synthesizes the data from these interviews and observations. It describes the organization of the program, its content, challenges, and discernible outcomes.

**Personnel and Organization**

Essential elements of a seminar of this nature are the presenters, participants, and structure. This section describes those elements: how the presenters and participants responded to each other and the hours, materials, and pace of the program.

**Presenters**

"We hoped to enlarge the perspectives of the participants by contact with outstanding scholars in a variety of fields related to the study of Israel."

- Organizer -

The nine presenters were selected and contracted with by January of 2004. They were chosen on the basis of their scholarship, teaching, and ability to communicate effectively in English. Six of the presenters have appointments in North American universities, two in Israeli universities, and one in both an American and an Israeli institution. Several were involved in the initial planning of the Institute. Some had close ties with the Institute’s leaders. All were motivated by their concern for professional standards for teaching about Israel at the college level and the development of the field of Israel studies. In their interviews, they conveyed clear understanding of and commitment to the goals of the Institute.

"I saw someone teaching what I’ve taught in the past [and he was doing it] in a vastly superior way...I took notes and will try, to some extent to imitate him—his organization and clarity, the passion and charm. [Another presenter], I learned a tremendous amount just from eating dinner with him—issues connected with his own experiences."

- Participant -

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8 See Appendix A.
The Institute’s four core staff members were present for all of the sessions and their on-going presence established a sense of continuity from one session to the next. For example, the Institute’s director was able to call on observations from previous sessions to help participants relate to the material of subsequent presenters. Only two of the other presenters were able to attend more than one or two of their colleagues’ sessions, but most presenters did not feel this was a problem. They had each reviewed the schedule, felt they knew what the other presenters were covering, and understood and appreciated the organic composition of the seminar.

Participants expressed high regard for almost all of the presenters. Although some participants and presenters criticized the heavy concentration on lecture style employed by some of the Institute’s faculty, they had high praise for most. Presenters whose sessions took place early on in the Institute seemed to get better reviews from the participants. This may be entirely coincidental, or it may be due to the exhaustion that was evident by the beginning of the second week. A third possible explanation is that the last week included treatment of the Arab-Israeli conflict, a more politically charged subject.

There was only one woman among the presenters, and some participants and presenters as well as the organizers of the seminar felt that more women should have been on the faculty. The Institute had hoped to engage a female scholar to explore the issue of gender in Israeli scholarship and in the contemporary university, but she was not available.

"I was so delighted with the way most of this went. Even in lecture mode—[the presenters showed an] incredible receptivity to working with us, letting their lectures drift if need be, [they] did great work."
-Participant-

Although participants and presenters all identified lacunae in the program, few were willing to give up any of the existing presenters to accommodate those from other fields. Some did suggest the possibility of changing the schedule so that no presenter would give more than two sessions. This year almost all presenters gave three sessions.

Participants

"We assumed that there are few individuals outside Israel trained to teach Israel Studies as a field that embraces history, literature, and the social sciences beyond the narrow focus of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The 17 participants proved how right we were. Some have focused directly on the conflict and others have examined Israel as a way of illustrating larger themes in their discipline as in literature or anthropology. Others have taught aspects of Jewish history and Zionism. Not one has offered a course that would qualify as a 'survey' on Israel with the kind of integration suggested by the concept of area studies."
-Organizer-

The Institute was not able to begin recruiting participants for the seminar until funding was assured in December 2003. Despite their late start, they were successful in attracting a diverse group of participants through dissemination of information on the Web and through distribution of leaflets at the meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies. Ten of the participants were men and seven were women. Fourteen of the 17 were from North America; the others were from
Brazil, Turkey, and England. Six were in their early thirties, eight were between 35 and 55, and three were older than 55. Almost all held Ph.D.s (two are in the process of completing their dissertations.) Six had titles of lecturer or instructor, three were assistant professors, three were associate or adjunct associate professors, and five were full professors. They came from a variety of fields and departments: six from history, four from religion, and the remaining seven from sociology, anthropology, literature, and political science. Nine of the 17 had experience living in Israel, and eight were fluent Hebrew speakers. Two of the 17 were not Jewish. In summary, they provided a mix of age, experience, academic titles, nationalities, and backgrounds.¹⁰

"There was a generational gap. There were people there who had lived through the history of the State and people there who were born, you know, more recently for whom it was history they have to acquire, not lived history. That in itself was interesting...Some had lived on kibbutzim, studied in universities there and returned after 1967... Then there were people like me who only began to learn about Israel in the last 10 years."  
- Participant -

The participants also represented a variety of institutions. Three were from Jewish institutions of higher learning—one of them from a seminary where, in the words of one of the presenters, he could have an enormous impact raising the question of "what do rabbis in the field need to know about modern Israel?" One participant was from a Christian seminary where he hopes to be able to ameliorate the anti-Israel view he finds so common among the seminary's graduates. The remaining 14 were from secular colleges and universities that vary in terms of the size of their undergraduate population in general and their Jewish population in specific.

Participants valued their diversity and considered the opportunity to work with people from other disciplines and other campus situations a real asset of the Institute. With only one exception, participants were extremely positive about their colleagues and felt they learned from each other. A few of the participants were senior scholars in their field. Two or three of them were frequently mentioned by their fellow participants as individuals with whom they wanted to stay in contact because of their expertise. They valued having Orthodox Jews as well as non-Jews in the group, and they appreciated the multiple perspectives brought by participants from different countries. As one participant put it, "I could get a sense of the variety of ways of seeing the problems we were looking at." A few participants voiced concern about the lack of any Palestinians in the group. Although a Palestinian from Al Quds was accepted, he was unable to obtain a visa in time for the seminar.

"The quality of engagement of participants was on an equal footing with presenters themselves... It would be hard to say who I didn't learn from."  
- Participant -

Most of the presenters were also enthusiastic about the diversity of participants and said they enjoyed the challenge that it posed for them. Three presenters were displeased with the differing levels of preparation among participants and the differing potential they have to effect change in

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¹⁰ The significance of faculty titles varies by country.

¹⁰ See Appendix B for a list of institutions and tables describing participants characteristics.
their home institutions. "The participants were a diverse lot," one presenter said." Some can do it tomorrow, some are not really equipped and some are at colleges where it would make no sense to introduce such a course." He questioned whether some of the institutions were really going to introduce courses on Israel; he was concerned about the “intellectual caliber” of some of the participants; and he felt strongly that only full-time faculty should be included in future seminars. Another presenter suggested a two track system to address the issue of different levels of knowledge and intellectual sophistication, but no other presenter thought such an approach would work.

At the other end of the spectrum, some presenters said there were participants who might have been better used as presenters. Since they were already teaching courses about Israel, one presenter questioned whether it was a good use of financial resources to bolster their work rather than bring “new blood” into the field. In fact, only two of the participants who had prior experience teaching about Israel had done anything that they considered to be interdisciplinary. Participants as well as the Institute’s founders were seeking to develop a broader approach—to be able to present Israel using an “area studies” method. Experienced participants were no less enthusiastic about what they achieved in the seminar than were those with less experience. All felt the seminar provided them with resources, knowledge and skills to improve the way they would teach about Israel. The Institute’s organizer also used the knowledge of participants both as a method of engagement and as a way to stimulate the interest of their colleagues. During the seminar, he would ask individuals to give their views as experts in their fields.

"There were deep differences among the backgrounds of different ‘students’. Some could replace me in teaching the seminar and some were pure beginners."

- Presenter -

Participants had varying political positions—from a more conservative, uncritical stance of supporting Israel to more left-wing sympathy with the Palestinians. To the extent that there was any tension around those differences, it surfaced only twice during the interviews. The first instance was a participant who felt another did not belong at the seminar because of the latter’s sympathy with the Palestinians. The second was a criticism by one who felt his views of Edward Said’s work were not given a fair hearing. Almost all participants, however, considered the Institute’s management of the differences exemplary. Participants all felt it provided a safe and comfortable environment for them to share their views and learn from each other.

"The presentation made me understand people I disagree with politically much, much better than I ever could have before. They seemed much more understandable and more human although I continue to disagree with them."

- Participant -

In order to attract the kind of participants that would be most able to implement the goals of the Institute, presenters and participants suggested starting recruitment earlier, advertising in
American, Israeli, and Palestinian professional journals, and trying to attract more participants from outside the Jewish studies area.

Structure

The seminar explored significant issues and gave participants familiarity with current research and with classic scholarship in the emergent field of Israel studies. The first week of the seminar focused on the history of the State of Israel: Zionism, settlement, politics, society, and culture (including Modern Hebrew literature and film). The second week continued the exploration of Israeli literature and more recent history covering the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israeli Arabs, and Israel-Diaspora relations. At the end of the seminar, all participants submitted syllabi which have been posted on the Institute's website.

Schedule. The days were organized around three sessions: a 2 ½ hour session in the morning and in the afternoon, and a 1 ½ hour session in the evening. Participants were engaged from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and, with one exception, they were housed on the Brandeis campus. They had meals together and discussed ideas from the sessions and from their work on their syllabi. Many of them reported that their most productive conversations took place over lunch and dinner. They watched Israeli films, explored sources on Israel specific to the courses they were designing, and in general, stayed up late trying to catch up on the “vast” amount of reading suggested by the Institute’s presenters.

Materials. Assigned readings were embedded in a schedule on the website in a PDF format. Individual presenters had their own ways of formatting their bibliographies. Some readings could be downloaded and some could not. Participants received many of the books listed on the website’s “Bookshelf” as well as a subscription to Israeli Studies free of charge. Those and the required readings were sent out in late May, at approximately the same time the website was made available. Given the timing, some participants did not receive required readings before they departed for Brandeis. Some participants brought hard copy of readings and (too many) books with them. Others were not able to download the readings and came to the Institute feeling less prepared. The Brandeis University library summer hours were in effect which limited access to reserve resources and sources for syllabi preparation. Participants had access to university computers and were able to do on-line research during the time they were not in seminar classes.

The Institute completely covered the costs of the seminar for its participants and provided them with a $2000 stipend. This generosity coupled with the gift of the Bookshelf as well as the many resources both in hard copy and on-line in down-loadable form was greatly appreciated by participants.

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11 One of the presenters suggested “Perspectives,” an American Historical Association publication that advertises summer institutes.
12 See Appendix C for an example of one day’s schedule and assignments.
13 Only one participant found it difficult to use.
Pace. Both presenters and participants noted that the pace of the program was intense although some participants said that was the way it should be. One observed, “I felt like I was back in grad school and I liked that.” Most of her colleagues were exhausted by the pace, the amount of reading and the length of the day. While one said, “It would have been nice to have had one evening off. Boston looked so nice,” another felt it was a waste of time to have the day off on Sunday. One of the presenters suggested that a more relaxed atmosphere might be created by having at least one meal provided by an off-campus caterer.

Summary

Participants considered the group of presenters a major asset. Although skewed toward the field of history (five of the nine), they had diverse areas of expertise and, according to participants, they were knowledgeable and skilled teachers. Their different teaching styles appealed to the different learning styles among the participants. It may be possible in the future to assure greater gender balance and to expand into other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology by limiting each presenter to two sessions. Such additions would entail greater expense but would enable the Institute to give its participants a broader basis of knowledge about Israel.

The Institute attracted a diverse and balanced group of participants in a relatively short period of time. Starting the publicity for next year earlier, broadening the advertising strategy while focusing on specific target campuses and fields of study, and carefully defining the characteristics of participants who can best accomplish the Institute’s goals may help enrich the program. The Institute’s structure allowed participants to learn from each other. This cross-fertilization, regarded by many as the strongest feature of the program, should be continued.

The participants also represented a wide variety of institutions. It is not clear to what extent the Institute had targeted specific kinds of schools (colleges or universities, “Jewish destinations” or not, North American or international, etc.) This should be a consideration going forward, particularly since the Institute’s long-term goal is to change the institutions through its work with their faculty members.

The seminar was an intense two weeks for both participants and presenters. Although some participants complained about the pace, others said they think there is no other way to impart vast amounts of information and allow for the processing and analysis that would enable them to find meaning and the ability to translate the material into courses for their students.

Subject Matter

The seminar focused on two areas: content (what to teach about Israel), and pedagogy (how to teach about Israel). Presenters and participants used the two together to support the creation of syllabi as a product of the seminar.
### Content

The seminar includes an overview of Zionist thought but primarily focuses on the social, political and economic history of the State of Israel including settlement, immigration, nation-building, cultural studies including literature available in English translation, ethnic and religious/secular divides, Arab-Jewish relations within Israel and between Israel and states in the region, and international relations.

- SIIS Website -

All participants in the Institute said they learned a great deal from the seminar and that they gained knowledge in areas previously familiar and unfamiliar to them. Historians learned from historians—about the intellectual roots of Zionism and its religious aspects, about urban planning, mandate society and politics, and the religious aspects of Zionism. Professors of literature learned aspects of Israeli fiction and new ways to teach works with which they were already familiar. One said he had never looked at the issue of Hebrew culture in Europe and “what it meant to transform that or transfer that to Palestine in the pre-State period.” A professor of religion, who was familiar with much of the work on modern Jewish religious thought and its relation to messianism, nonetheless found that he expanded his understanding through the seminar. An historian in the group learned more about pre-State Palestine and found himself gaining a “comprehensive, nuanced and perceptive” view on the situation of Israeli Arabs.

“Being a student of, and teaching history of international relations I didn’t expect to learn much in this field, but still the documents that we had access to and the way the seminar was presented certainly helped a lot in terms of organizing my thoughts.”

- Participant -

One participant felt the exposure to Israeli films was “very, very helpful. I would recommend that be broadened even further and organized in a fashion that would be helpful for people to plug-in even more immediately to their classes.” Nine of the seventeen participants included film in the syllabi they created at the seminar. Two of them were in the field of literature so their decision may not be surprising, but the others were in anthropology, history, sociology and political science. An historian, who already knew a great deal about politics, said he learned most in the area of literature and film.

“Although we were not exposed to a great number of authors, most of us who were new to [Israeli literature] were really inspired to incorporate that kind of work in our syllabi.”

- Participant -

Even the most senior scholars among the participants found materials that were new to them and new uses for materials with which they were already familiar. Many participants said they would use a diagram presented during the seminar for mapping out options of Judaism in the modern world. An historian with experience teaching about Israel hopes to use Israel’s proclamations and charters of Palestinians much the way they were used by one of the presenters. One or more of the fiction pieces were entirely new to most of the participants and, although many had never used literature before in their courses, they incorporated those stories into their syllabi.
Participants’ syllabi reflect their apparent desire to impart everything they learned at the seminar to their students, but an experienced teacher expressed concern that “a great deal of the material was too sophisticated and too dull in format to be useful for undergraduate instruction.” He felt it would be a mistake to assign them to undergraduates. “They won’t read it and if they do, they won’t understand it,” he said. But he nonetheless found many of the readings useful for his own knowledge and for class preparation.

Pedagogy

One of the biggest areas of disagreement and criticism—but also an area that was greatly appreciated—was how to teach about Israel. Only three of the participants, all confident in their teaching techniques, felt the seminar should focus solely on content. One is at a university that provides a two-week seminar on how to teach for all new hires plus ongoing professional development in teaching skills. Another said that teaching is very personal and “what will help me teach better is a good grasp of materials and sources and resources...grappling with the issues would have helped me more than talking about techniques or organization of my syllabus.” One relatively young and inexperienced participant would have liked more “how-to” while another at the same career stage did not feel that was necessary.

The other 14 participants considered the seminar’s pedagogical content valuable, and six of them said there had not been enough. One said she may have gained less than others in this area because of her previous teaching experience, but she would have liked more discussion, perhaps in small groups. Another reported a “strong interest” in pedagogy and said she thinks that even the most experienced faculty members would want to talk about teaching strategy.

At the end of every session, organizers stimulated discussion of the pedagogical implications of the material that had been covered. They raised issues such as “the point of view that one has as a teacher, scholar, and/or Jew or non-Jew” and the complexity of the work. Participants appreciated that time at the end of the sessions. It was not only an opportunity to discuss the “how-to” issues of the material, but also a time to open up the discussion among the participants, particularly when the presenters had taken more of a straight lecture approach to the topic.
"I believe, and most of my colleagues were of the same opinion, that we came to the seminar expecting to learn teaching tools to handle the very difficult question of presenting the Israeli position to our classes. We did not get much of it."
- Participant -

The balance between pedagogy and content varied by presenter. Some addressed the issue straight-on and some demonstrated the use of materials pedagogically. In commenting on one particular presenter, a participant said he was "riveting as a model of pedagogy," while another was disappointed in the same presenter: "we did not move into—how are we going to use this information, what does it mean for our own courses—at all."

"[He] was very good at pulling back numerous times and assessing what all this amounted to pedagogically."  
- Participant -

Pedagogy was also the area in which participants claimed to have learned the most from each other, particularly in the “off-hours”: over lunch, between sessions, and in the evening. They discussed approaches to subject matter, the use of materials, and how to present the most controversial topics. The more senior participants, who had taught about Israel, Zionism, or even Jewish studies, shared their syllabi, their success or lack of success with different texts, and the techniques and kinds of questions they employed to generate discussion on volatile issues.

"And the participants—that was one of the ways in which the participants shined—ones whom I haven't mentioned—in that they were always willing to share with you. 'This is something I’ve tried and it worked or it didn’t work. Here’s a really great source.'”
- Participant -

Most of the presenters considered pedagogy an important part of the Institute’s mission—one which distinguished their teaching approaches for the seminar from their usual classes. They felt they needed to be “more geared towards that pedagogic model—giving these colleagues ... different ways to approach interesting problems.” Others felt that pedagogy was not a concern. The only way their teaching differed for the seminar from any other course they might teach was in terms of the level of the approach. “Due to the high profile...of the participants,” one of them said, “some of my observations were more articulate and elaborated.” They found the interdisciplinary nature of the participant mix a challenge that was more interesting than difficult. Only one presenter acknowledged being unsure of how to approach the group or how to balance content and pedagogy.

“I was a little bit uncertain on my own focus to this—dealing with people who were not exactly students—academics with their own areas of expertise, who are more colleagues than students. [I had to] decide between two possible approaches. One, to just do the usual cutting-edge presentation of subject matter itself, recent research, [and] scholarly debate that are going on or giving models of how this can be presented in the classroom. In other words, focusing more on the pedagogical side of it, I ended up doing some of each and I’m still not sure where the focus should have been. There is a kind of duality here to the approach. Do
you deal with them as colleagues who just need to be briefed a bit on developments in the field or are we talking here more about how do you teach a course on Israel ...and what are some of the models you use.”

He thought that the “content mode” seemed to go better in the classroom. Participants responded more, were livelier, and there was more interaction and discussion. At the same time he was concerned that participants may have wanted more pedagogy.

Summary

Although some subject areas, presenters, and teaching styles were more popular than others, all participants cited at least one area in which they felt they had gained awareness and understanding that they did not have coming into the seminar. To the extent that the Institute’s goal was to help participants gain “a sense for current research on central issues and familiarity with classic scholarship” it appears to have met its objective. In the area of pedagogy also, almost all participants felt they had expanded their abilities. Even the most critical participants—and almost all of them had constructive criticism they were eager to share—felt they had learned a great deal, that the seminar had a profound influence on how they would teach about Israel in the future, and that it had been, for them, very worthwhile.

Challenges

As in any new program, especially one with limited start-up time, there were challenges. Some of these challenges reveal opportunities for improvement and change. Others may have to be accepted as on-going issues that are part of presenting extensive and complex information over a short period of time to people from various fields and backgrounds with different levels of experience and different learning styles and preferences.

"I thought it was a bit rushed having classes morning, noon, and night. That was kind of overwhelming and it kind of wore you down, especially if you were trying to do the homework and work on the syllabus, and especially if you were trying to see films in the evening. The pace wasn’t too fast in terms of material covered, but it was a lot to prepare for classes on this schedule."

- Participant -

Intensity

As noted above, many participants found the seminar very intense. The intensity was not limited to the overall lack of time or to the strenuous amount of classroom time. It also characterized the individual sessions in which presenters tried to fit vast amounts of material and cover vast time spans and subject areas. One participant commented that an important religious group had been left out of a presentation on “Ultra-Orthodoxy in Israeli Society” because there was simply not enough time. Because of the timing of the seminar and difficulty in getting reading assignments distributed before the seminar began, many participants were unable to finish the readings before
they arrived and had no time to make up the work once on campus. Similarly, participants were not able to see films before they were discussed.

"[The Institute's organizer] knows only too well that we couldn't keep up. Many of us had printed out everything and we wanted to read as much as possible but we couldn't... Don't give so much material next time, save for resource material later."

- Participant -

The intensity was also reflected in what and how material was covered. Presenters were concerned about being thorough in particular subject areas or giving a broader overview. "Questions have to be raised about the entire nature of a survey seminar," one of them said. "Covering all bases is misguided."

Scheduling constraints also limited the opportunity participants had to consult with each other and with presenters about their syllabi. Both participants and presenters would have liked having more time to discuss the construction of the new courses.

**Presentation Style**

"Presenters should offer a range of current and classic bibliography that reflect the substance and complexity of views. They should try to avoid presenting a narrative of their own. I would tell them to act as if this were a graduate seminar—to share the state of the question."

- Presenter -

One area of concern among both presenters and participants was lecture versus discussion. Partly this was a matter of individual presenters’ personal styles, partly it was a matter of participants’ learning styles. In addition, as noted earlier, it was a function of feeling that one must “cover” a certain amount of subject matter. Recently, in the field of education, teachers have become more concerned with “uncovering” issues and subject matter rather than covering. “Uncovering” requires dialogue or conversation, and although such conversation did take place in the dormitory, between sessions, and over meals, many participants and presenters regretted the relative lack of such conversation in the classroom with some of the Institute’s faculty.

Jeff commented about a presenter who “more than others but not just him—basically went over what they’d ask them to read.” Four of the presenters, he said lectured on what they had assigned as readings. Jeff would have preferred “a discussion of the readings which would have allowed for more exploration of the issues.” For Jeff, discussion is the way he integrates and absorbs material. He needs to be able to question and respond to questions. Even the sessions which other participants described as interactive Jeff described as questions from the group being answered by the presenter.

14 The names of participants are fictitious. They are created to protect individual identities.
"Here's where there is most room for improvement—more recognition that it's impossible to cover all the pieces in such a short time—more readings with comprehensive overviews and focus in the sessions on smaller number of specifics. For example instead of a long overview of the history of Israel in the 1950s, it would have been more helpful to have assigned a book on the overview and focus on the question of should Israel have gone to war in 1956."

- Participant-

For Sue, the issue of lecture versus discussion was also one of creating an environment that would enable pedagogical issues to surface and be examined. She complained that, “half the instructors, if not more, lectured directly from the materials. I could have used less lecturing and more discussion...about the kind of questions that we could be asking about the materials, the kinds of exercises we could use, these are the kinds of blind spots we come up against when we use the materials. What are the hard things that will come up?”

"Particularly in the 2nd week there was a tendency to turn the sessions into briefings. Instructors engaged in rapid recitations in basic overviews of subjects—squeezing a lot in. At times, they discouraged questioning so that things could be covered. For the participants this was inappropriate. We could have mastered the basics on our own through reading and the time could have been devoted more profitably to specific issues."

- Participant-

Some presenters also felt that too much time was given to lecturing. One thought it was a problem distinct among the Israeli presenters. “They spent too much time going over ground that was otherwise accessible and didn’t give themselves enough opportunity to interact with participants.” Another suggested that presenters need to be reminded “not to present a paper.” They need to create a dialogue, he said, because participants always need to ask questions.

Others said that in their own sessions they tried to get away from the lecture style. One said he “leaned away from trying to give them too much content.” He wanted to raise issues “and give them a taste and the grasp of various paradigms for approaching the subject.” Another noted that in his estimation 15 of the 17 in the group “participated fully.” He said that participants appreciated his approach because they “had been listening to lectures—not that they didn’t appreciate that—but this was an entirely different style and different mode.” He suggested that a great deal more could be done by assigning documents and treating them as text study. Other presenters “should think in those terms because [participants] have to go back to their classes and they have to make their own classes attractive and interesting.”

Although most of the participants would agree with these comments, there were at least three who preferred the lecture approach. One was quite simply in awe of the “tons and tons” of information presented. For him, “information is key.” Another said more time should be spent on lectures, but when he gave examples of the style he liked, he named two of the presenters who were among the most open to discussion.
Addressing the Issue

"There was one goal we did not have and, indeed, resisted. We did not see the study of Israel as an instrument for advocacy. There are many groups who would expect, if not actually require it. We do not believe the university classroom should be transformed into a courtroom that should or could be amenable to the argumentation employed by Alan Dershowitz in his recent book, "The Case for Israel." The assumption on which I had planned the seminar was that there is controversy about Israel and on many aspects of Israeli history and society. It was our function to expose the participants to the substance and nature of these debates, even as they are familiar with other academic disputes in other areas examined in the academy...Nevertheless, it would be inappropriately disingenuous to suggest that we did not hope that the participants would offer their students the possibility of developing not only an informed but a positive view of Israel, its history, and its current predicaments. We hoped that deep knowledge would engender understanding and thereby appreciation for Israel. We hope, too, that they might become resource people on their home campuses able to discuss Israel intelligently and sympathetically when occasions—public and private—arise."

- Organizer -

Although the premise of the Institute—to educate about Israel and provide faculty members from a wide array of institutions with the knowledge and skills to teach about Israel in a broad, multidisciplinary way—was stated clearly, some participants continued to wonder what the “real agenda” was. The questions of “post-colonialism,” the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the nature of democracy in Israel were addressed in various sessions, but some of the participants said they felt those discussions were not unbiased. Only one participant felt “leaned on to adopt a particular perspective,” but six others expressed concern that not having heard and debated post-colonialist theory would hamper their abilities or the abilities of their fellow participants to confront such positions in class.

David did not want to see Israel studies become “ghettoized” from other disciplines. “I would like to see it be comfortable with a post-colonial critique, with other paradigms, national studies.” David said of one presenter, “While he would make statements from time to time like ‘you’ll all do what you want’ there were very clear signals about what’s kosher, so to speak, and what’s not.”

“Often one’s ideological enemies can be very, very useful for engaging seriously, authentically, and honestly with the problem in this particular case of Zionism and Israel.”

- Presenter -

Jake considers himself very pro-Israel, but was concerned that David’s position did not get a fair hearing. He feared that organizers were not committed to addressing “the relationship between Israel studies as a truly academic discipline and Israel studies as a kind of defense of Israel’s right to exist.” Jake said that such a discussion could have been an important component in preparing participants to teach about Israel. Presenters, he said, “very much resisted dealing with the latter.” He is comfortable treating Israel studies as an academic discipline, but he feels that the presenters could have been more “intellectually honest” with themselves and with participants about their agenda.
Rebecca reported that one of the things that struck her throughout the program was that there was a greater range of political viewpoints and perspectives among the participants than among the presenters. She got the feeling that some of the presenters avoided issues that she thought needed to be addressed both in the classroom and in public discussion—namely, the conflict. Rebecca found the instructions to avoid all talk of the conflict and of Israel's Arab minority during the first week to be "off-putting." She complained that topics such as The Wall were not discussed. Rebecca reported that "when someone said the word 'Said' (as in Edward), the leader "ducked the topic rather than address it. Participants," she said, "need to be able to address these issues on their campuses, both in the classroom and especially in open-forum debates." Rebecca was ambivalent about whether or not the seminar had prepared her to do that. Perhaps, she said, she is more confident in her knowledge and capacity to back up her viewpoints. Perhaps she is more sensitive to some of the issues than before, but she is not necessarily better able to discuss them. Rebecca is willing to accept the explanation that there are many courses focused on the conflict, and many fewer on Israel studies. Even though the seminar was specifically designed to be about Israel studies, in her view the conflict was and will always be part of the subtext.

Only one participant missed the lack of a more right-wing perspective. He felt there was definitely a culture of openness to differing ideas and points of view, but in general the seminar had a slightly "left-of-center/labor perspective." This was comfortable for him personally, but he would have liked to have had some articulate reading advancing the views of the Right. He said he was not looking for the Institute to air the view of the radical/fringe elements, but he would have liked to hear someone who could really present their case "because obviously there is a case. Half the country has some sympathy towards it." This perceived "left-of-center" slant of the Institute is particularly interesting in light of the views of others that organizers engaged in "apologetics" for Israel. Perhaps it means that the seminar was, in fact, well-balanced if it could displease both sides, but it may also signal a lack of necessary information to enable a teacher of Israel studies to understand Israel's more extreme political groups.

Access to Presenters

Some participants felt there were too few opportunities for them to question and interact with presenters outside the classroom. They would have liked to have continued conversations in less formal settings. Presenters stayed off-campus although they usually had their meals with participants. One participant felt the presenters should have stayed in the same location as the participants in order to be available for one-on-one conversations and less formal discussions. "These people," he said, "were luminaries—they are superstars in every single category," but it
was his impression that they came in to give their presentations and left shortly afterwards. He suggested that presenters be housed in the same facilities as participants in the future and that they all take their meals together.

"I would have liked more opportunity to talk to the presenters. They came, did their thing, sometimes they came to the cafeteria, but you couldn't really go up and talk. Then they were gone. It would have been good to have had a reception or something."
- Participant -

Almost all presenters were willing to be part of the Institute follow-up—to consult to participants as they put their courses together, to give them feedback, and to share with them their own syllabi. Several participants said they wanted to invite one or more of the presenters to their universities. For his part, one presenter views this as a way to expand his own professional contacts, an opportunity for which he does not need to be paid.

Omissions

Participants and presenters suggested a number of areas that they felt should have been discussed or given greater attention. Organizers were aware of these gaps and plan to fill them in future seminars, but they had neither the time nor the personnel to do so this year.

- Feminist perspective. Most frequently mentioned was the short shrift given to the feminist perspective and the role of women in Israel's history and contemporary society. One participant may have been exaggerating when he said, "you could have gone through this conference and not realized that there were ever women in Israel," but he felt this lack most strongly. Organizers acknowledged the need to have more women on the faculty of the seminar in the future and to adjust for this omission.

- Mizrachim. A participant commented that minority sub-cultures were discussed but only very briefly and that the seminar "could have done a lot more with it." Although presenters dealt with the Ashkenazi-Sephardic divide, there was only the briefest of conversations about the non-Sephardi populations who are included under the term. It was not, he said, a delegitimization of the issue but a function of limited time. Three other participants felt this was a serious omission as did one of the presenters.

"There is no way to appreciate the tensions and possibilities that have shaped Israel in the last 50 years without confronting the Mizrachi experience. It has had a real impact in terms of culture and politics and religion. It's impossible to understand the State if you're just dealing with a settler society paradigm."
- Presenter -

- Muslim/Palestinian perspective. Although the Palestinian point of view was represented at the seminar, some participants were disappointed with the lack of exposure to the perspective of Muslim Arabs and Palestinians.

- Extremism. One presenter felt the seminar needed to have more emphasis on extremism—fundamentalism from different quarters. Ehud Sprinzak's *The Ascendancy of Israel's Radical Right*, he said, was never mentioned. "I'm sure that every presenter including
myself had read this book at one time or another, yet never once did we have a discussion of
it.” Discussions about religion and state, he said, “focused more on loss of personal status
and far less on extremism. Nor was there time devoted to protest movements, their size,
importance, and what’s behind them.”

- **Sociological themes.** Anthropologists and sociologists among the participants were
  concerned that the seminar lacked adequate coverage in the social sciences. One participant,
  for example, hopes to include in his fall course the education system in Israel, the military as
  a part of people’s lives, gender, marriage, and the family. Two participants suggested that
  the army as an educational and absorption center needed to be explored. “You just can’t
  understand modern Israel” one of them said, “without those two inputs [the army and
  terrorism].” And they were not thinking of the army purely in the sense of military history
  but “as the central integrating force in creating the society of Israel.” Another participant
  called for “more sociology, more demography, more geography.”

- **Education.** Education in Israel, according to one presenter and at least one participant is a
  critical question that was also not addressed. They wanted a discussion of the distinction
  between Israeli and Jewish education and whether Arab schools and Jewish schools should
  be kept separate.

> “I felt a lack of focus on contemporary Israel—what it’s like to live there now, the role and impact of
  major institutions in people’s lives.”
> - Participant -

- **More emphasis on pop culture.** Participants came into the seminar enthusiastic about film.
  They left with the confirmation of that enthusiasm and a desire to use film in their classes,
  but a few would have liked even more exposure to Israeli popular culture. One participant
  suggested that the seminar devote time to “music and lyrics, media issues” and more time to
  literature. Popular culture, he claims, is an area of exciting research and it generates interest
  and enthusiasm among undergraduates.

- **Free time.** One participant wanted the seminar to provide time for some “non-intellectual
  activities.” She suggested outings 2-3 times per week. For example, there was an Israeli
  performance troupe in Boston that she thought would have been of interest to the group and
given them a “chance to bond outside of class.”

All but one of the participants had suggestions for improving the seminar and individual
sessions. One would have liked to have included an Arab text in the literature section. Another
wanted more on terrorism. A few felt that the economy of Israel should have been discussed.
One participant suggested a study trip to Israel for the group next summer. Some wanted a
longer seminar, although most felt two weeks was the maximum they would have been willing to
invest.

**Summary**

The seminar was an intense experience. Participants and presenters questioned whether it was
enough time and whether presenters should teach three sessions or be limited to two so that more
topics could be added. They would have liked time for more discussion both during the sessions and in more informal settings. Through its website and listserv, the Institute offers opportunities for consultative and collegial relationships to develop as follow-up to the seminar. Almost all the presenters said they look forward to reading the syllabi, maintaining contact with the seminar’s participants, and contributing to the growth of the field of Israel studies.

All participants acknowledged that they came away from the seminar with greater information and understanding about the history, society and culture of Israel. Some of them, however, felt there were subjects that the seminar failed to address. Some brought with them to the Institute (and talked about in their pre-seminar interviews) a certain level of anxiety concerning their ability to address the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They would have liked more exposure to the arguments they may need to address in their classes and to the entire front of opposition that students interested in Israel face on campus.

Outcomes

The seminar produced three significant outcomes discussed in this section: new courses and course syllabi, a network of scholars committed to Israel studies, and more knowledgeable, confident faculty members who can continue to develop and offer courses about Israel.

"We understood that there was no possibility of a unitary and exclusive narrative or course that all would take back to their home universities. However, we hoped to enlarge the perspectives of the participants by contact with a) new materials, b) outstanding scholars in a variety of fields related to the study of Israel, and c) learn from each other as academics actively engaged in the teaching of Israel in a variety of campuses in North America and beyond. We hoped that there would be at least 17 new and different courses in as many universities that would be enriched by the kind of extensive and intensive exposure we planned.”

- Organizer -

New Courses and Changes in Existing Courses

The seminar has produced 17 syllabi for Israel studies courses. Thirteen of these are for new courses; four are revisions of pre-existing courses. The syllabi range in style from very traditional chronological approaches to the history of the State to innovative, multidisciplinary courses probing into Israeli consciousness and society. Seven syllabi appear to be final or near final products; the others are first drafts. Some have vast lists of readings that have yet to be sorted through, or books whose individual chapters or sections have not been chosen. These syllabi were written in late June and participants may have worked on them since then. Not all of the courses are scheduled to be taught this fall, so their teachers have time to work on content, structure, and assignments. (See Appendix D for a summary of syllabi.)

"The course aims to challenge your assumptions and build your critical and interdisciplinary knowledge about Israel/Palestine. Specifically, this class will focus on the overlap or convergence of the political and personal as experienced in everyday life in Israel/Palestine... Throughout this semester we will observe how what is considered to be “political” in Israel informs what is considered to be “personal” in Israel. Indeed, we will examine whether it is possible to distinguish between the political and the personal, how such distinctions (or convergences) have been crafted in Israel/Palestine, and how they have been contested.”

- Participant Syllabus -
If all the courses outlined in the syllabi are taught and enrollments are as expected, more than 500 students will be touched indirectly by the first summer of the Institute. (See Appendix D) All of the courses that have been planned are upper-level undergraduate courses. If the courses are successful in generating enthusiasm and graduates believe that the field holds promise, there is potential to influence some students to continue on as graduate students in disciplines with an Israel studies concentration. Seven of the participants teach or advise graduate students (one teaches MA candidates in education). These students may find their way into the field, but this kind of impact may not be measurable for several years.

"I was intrigued by how diverse and interesting the syllabi turned out to be."
- Participant -

Network for Israel Studies

Participants look forward to maintaining contact with each other and with presenters. Some of the participants have already exchanged invitations to give guest lectures at each other’s school. One is particularly eager to invite those in her disciplinary area as well as some who “diverged” from her politically. She also commented on how eager the presenters were to be called on for assistance and indicated that she intends to take advantage of their offer. Another participant hopes that he will be able to go to the Institute’s website and “hear that so-and-so assigned X and it generated thus, or that students reacted thus and so.”

"I have established a relationship with a number of people. I will ask them what they're doing and what works with students."
- Participant -

One of the people who was most critical of various aspects of the seminar said she will hand in her final syllabus and is eager to see others’. She is happy to participate in any follow-up forums or discussions and will attend the American Jewish Studies conference if there is a gathering there. She hopes the website and listserv will develop into a forum for asking questions, sharing resources, connecting, getting feedback and “raising issues they didn’t get to discuss.” Although she suspects that “participants didn’t gel as a group as much as they might have,” she plans to be in touch with them and with the presenters.

Only one participant made a distinction between staying in contact with participants and with presenters. Among the former there were a “few” whom she has plans to “look up,” and while she would like presenters to give her feedback on her syllabus she is “less sure about following up with them as colleagues.”

A participant whose Israel course may be delayed for two or three years said that nonetheless the program was “fantastic.” It alerted him to key issues and where to find resources and it enabled him to build “a network of people I can contact.”
More Faculty Knowledgeable and Comfortable Teaching About Israel

Finally, participants report a greater knowledge of many aspects of Israel and a greater comfort level being able to discuss complex issues and sources of conflict. This outcome has implications that go beyond the classroom and speak to the potential for the seminar’s participants to engage students and colleagues in extracurricular activities and informal conversations.

"I’m better prepared now but I’m only beginning to understand. Now I’m better prepared to read more and know where to turn...I feel I have a lot of preparing to do myself before I really bring these ideas into the classroom. The main questions that really disturbed me are questions that have disturbed me for years but I’ve left them on the back burner—questions about the nature of Israeli democracy...What was most helpful about the seminar was introducing us to the academic debate about it—where you can reach out for resources and different perspectives, but also reminding us that Western values are not universal values."

- Participant -

Ethan is an example of a participant who was not entirely comfortable talking about Israel prior to the seminar. He confided during the pre-seminar interview that he felt an increasing unease personally about the perceptions of Israel and in some ways felt “vulnerable” because of that. Not too long ago Ethan had “a terrible argument with two friends from my graduate program.” He had spoken of his concern about how his discipline and its professional organization seemed to view unfavorably not only Israel supporters but anyone who had any favorable impressions of Israel or interest in studying Israel. There had been a censure motion which he opposed. He felt that his friends attacked him. Ethan said that the entire experience left him feeling exposed and somewhat uncomfortable discussing Israel with his students or colleagues. After the seminar, Ethan said that one of the major benefits was a new way to think about the conflict. The course, he said, had given him the knowledge to deal with issues of violence and confrontation in Israel.

"By placing things [in perspective], all kinds of things including Palestinians in and outside of the green line, the difference between Hamas and the PLO and thinking about Israel in the context of nationalism in a more sophisticated way than I had done—all these things made it more possible for me to speak and think about Israel in a less reactive and more objective manner and thus be more ready to teach about it and do research there."

Karen reports feeling better now because she knows more. In the past, she reported having difficulty responding to discussions about Israel. She avoided conversations about the Arab-Israeli conflict. Now, she says, knowing that there are others facing the same issues that she faces and knowing that they are trying to grapple with how best to explore and discuss the issues, she feels she has a “support group and listserv” that will help her. She feels “not so all alone.”

Summary

All participants and presenters thought creating the syllabi was very effective. It gave participants the opportunity to concretize their thoughts and systematize how they wanted to present what they had learned. It was an extension of the learning opportunity of the seminar and demanded (and will continue to demand) that participants delve into more sources and re-
examine those to which they have already been exposed. It modeled active learning and will contribute to the long-term outcomes envisioned by the designers.

"I just want to express my appreciation for being included in [the seminar]. It was stimulating and quite fun and it helped me to rethink my own research concerns."
- Participant -

Participants said that they would be consulting their colleagues about the courses they teach and issues that arise. They indicated that they will stay in contact by phone, e-mail, and the listserv, and will seek each other out at professional meetings. They hope the Institute will plan "reunions" and other opportunities for them to meet. Naturally, some participants formed more and closer ties than others. They reported looking up to the more senior scholars in the group and especially to those who had experience teaching about Israel. They all intend to pursue the learning they gained through their subsequent connections to each other and to the presenters. The seminar appears to have succeeded in creating a community of scholars committed to trying to extend their work into the field of Israel studies—at least in the immediate future.

**CONCLUSION**

"It is a great program—a very important idea that fills a very special need right now."
- Participant -

The evaluation makes clear that participants were changed by the seminar in terms of what they know about Israel and how they will convey what they have learned to their students. The Institute’s long-term success will be measured by the extent to which their colleges and universities are changed as well. If participants are able to reach students and faculty on their campuses and convince them of the relevance of Israel studies within the larger mission of academia, the Institute will have moved even closer to its vision.

"Those people in the mainline universities—public or private—in those areas they can become the Israel voice within their respective departments. The specialty in modern Israel is a niche waiting to be filled. The sky’s the limit!"
- Presenter -

The long-term evaluation of the Institute, therefore, will need to focus on measures of change at colleges and universities:

- Increased courses on Israel with broader, more interdisciplinary content,
- Increased demand for Israel studies on campus,
- Graduate students motivated to concentrate in Israel studies,
- An increase in serious scholarship in the field,
- Recognition of Israel studies as a valid part of the academic curriculum.

It will be necessary to follow the participants in this cohort and their institutions over the next
three years to observe how participants' experiences at the seminar affect their campuses. Ultimately the question is whether individual professional development can affect system change. The evaluation of the pilot seminar makes clear that education and training can change individuals—broaden their knowledge base, expand the range of their thinking, and raise the level of their skills. It is left to be seen whether their talent and energy is sufficient to build a field of study and to change institutions of higher learning.

"Participants did feel that they were participating in something special and everyone I talked to sensed that excitement. Definitely this is something we want to replicate. We want people who have that genuine excitement and want to learn about teaching Israel Studies."

- Presenter -
Appendix A

Presenters

Arnold J. Band, (Ph. D., Comparative Literature, Harvard University) Professor Emeritus of Hebrew and Jewish literature primarily at UCLA

Steven Bayme (Ph.D., History, Columbia University) Director of the Contemporary Jewish Life Department of the American Jewish Committee and the Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations

Alan Dowty (Ph.D., History, University of Chicago) Kahanoff Chair in Israeli Studies at the University of Calgary

Aviezer Ravitzky (Ph.D., Hebrew University) Rosenblum Chair in the Department of Jewish Thought at the Hebrew University

Elie Rekhess (Ph.D., History, Tel Aviv University) Senior Research Fellow of the Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel-Aviv University

Sharon Pucker Rivo, co-founder and Executive Director of the National Center for Jewish Film and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis University

Emile Sahliyeh (Ph.D., Georgetown University) Associate Professor of Middle East Politics and International Relations at the University of North Texas

Eugene R. Sheppard (Ph.D., History, UCLA) Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish History and Thought, and Assistant Director of the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry at Brandeis University

Ilan Troen (Ph.D., University of Chicago) Stoll Family Chair in Israel Studies at Brandeis University and Lopin Professor of Modern History at Ben-Gurion University
Appendix B
Participants

Institutions
Arizona State University
Binghamton University
Bilkent University, Turkey
Pennsylvania State University
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
Stern College for Women
Sao Paolo University
Temple University
State University of West Georgia
Boston College
Jewish Theological Society
Bucknell University
University of Manchester in the UK
Touro College
University of Miami
Claremont Graduate University
York University, Toronto

Participant Characteristics

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15 The significance of faculty titles varies by country.
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Appendix C
Schedule for One Day
at the Brandeis University Summer Institute for Israel Studies

Thursday, June 24

• 9:00 - 11:30: Alan Dowty: Israeli Political Culture:
   Building a civic state; the Ben-Gurion legacy. The impact of security issues. The 1977 upheaval;
   reassertion of tradition and erosion of ideology. The Arab-Israel conflict since 1948; the 1967 war
   and the occupied territories.
   - Essential reading: Alan Dowty, The Jewish State, chs. 4-6, 10.
   - Important reading: Alan Dowty, Israel/Palestine, ch. 5.
   - Background reading: Asher Arian, Politics in Israel.

• 2:00 - 4:30: Avi Ravitzky: Ultra-orthodoxy in Israeli society.
   Readings from David Landau, Piety and Power: The World of Jewish Fundamentalism (Hill and

• 7:30 - 9:00: Panel: Israel as a Democratic and Jewish State: Part I: Religion and Politics Panel
   with Avi Ravitzky, Alan Dowty, Ilan Troen.

   Suggested reading:
   - Dowty, Alan, "Is Israel Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the "Ethnic
     Democracy" Debate", Israel Studies 4:2 (Fall 1999).
     (Spring, 1999).
   - As'ad Ghanem, Nadim Rouhana and Yiftachel, Oren, "Questioning "Ethnic
     Democracy"", Israel Studies 3:2 (Fall, 1998).
   - Smooha, Sammy, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype", Israel Studies 2:2 (Fall
     1997).
   - J. D. David, ed., The State of Israel: Between Judaism and Democracy (Israeli
     Democracy Institute: Jerusalem 2003).
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<td>World Religions</td>
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* CST and CGU = Claremont School of Theology and Claremont Graduate School
** The participant from Sao Paolo will also be offering a smaller module through the Jewish Agency and the Jewish Cultural Center of Sao Paolo.