Greeting from the Interim Program Director

The Jewish Studies program at Rice University is off to a strong start. This year our focus has been on expanding our course offerings, enhancing our communication efforts and commencing a community outreach initiative. Over the course of this academic year, eight classes will be offered in the program. We are fortunate to have two visiting scholars — Drs. Shira Lander and Alec Mishory — who are helping to broaden the program’s curriculum.

We launched our Web site, jewishstudies.rice.edu, where prospective and current students can learn about the program and the Houston community can learn about upcoming lectures. Our faculty has been teaching in the community through the Center for Living and Learning at the Jewish Community Center. This fall, over 150 adults attended our lecture series on Moses Maimonides.

I invite you to explore our Web site and to join us at the JCC as we share our knowledge about Jewish music and art. If you have questions or would like to discuss a gift, please contact Debbie Diamond, development liaison, at 713-348-4619 or ddiamond@rice.edu.

Paula Sanders
Dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies
and professor of history

Academic Highlights

Eight Jewish studies classes will be offered this academic year. The following two courses are new to the Jewish studies curriculum. To learn about all of the classes, visit jewishstudies.rice.edu.

The Sephardic [Spanish] Jews and their Diaspora: A Contribution to Hispanic Culture

Luisa Kluger, lecturer in the Center for the Study of Languages

This course, which is funded by The Maurice Amado Foundation, will investigate the contribution of the Sephardic Jews to the Hispanic cultural heritage in Spain and in the Ottoman Empire. The class will explore questions such as: Why is the expulsion of the Spanish Jews called “a Diaspora within a Diaspora”? When did the Jewish Golden Age of Spanish literature take place?

Jews and Art

Alec Mishory, the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Professor in Israel Studies

This course will explore art made by Jews, for Jews, as well as depictions of Jews by themselves and others. The class will address questions such as: How do Jewish artists reflect their Jewish identity in their works? What Jewish ritual objects are used at home? Mishory’s position is funded jointly by Rice University and the American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise.

(Continued)
Recent Gifts to Jewish Studies at Rice University

- The Desiree and Max Blankfeld Fund for Jewish Studies provides annual awards for student projects in Jewish studies, including but not limited to internships, research projects, workshop participation and study abroad. The first awards will be available during the 2010–2011 academic year.

“Deisi and I were thrilled when we learned that Rice University would be establishing a Jewish studies program. We feel that it is of utmost importance to provide a program at Rice for both Jewish and non-Jewish students that will, among other things, emphasize the rich tradition of Jewish heritage encompassing cultural, religious, historical and geographic contexts.”

— Max Blankfeld

- For the third consecutive year, the American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise has awarded Rice a grant to support an Israeli visiting professor during the 2010–2011 academic year.

The Jewish Studies program thanks the following donors whose generous gifts provided the funding to commence our efforts:

American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise
The Maurice Amado Foundation
Myra ’63 and Arthur Bahme
in honor of Nathalie and Herman Shultz
Deisi and Max Blankfeld ’95
Gloria and Buzzy Bluestone
Susan and Raymond Brochstein ’55
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