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# **Summer Institute for Israel Studies: 2004 and 2005**

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*July 2006*



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## INTRODUCTION

In June 2006, Brandeis University's Summer Institute for Israel Studies (SIIS) conducted its third annual program to help build the field of Israel Studies on college and university campuses in the United States and around the world.<sup>1</sup> SIIS brings faculty members from a diverse selection of subject areas and institutions to the Brandeis campus for two weeks of intensive study with senior scholars in Israeli history, culture, society, and politics around the world. SIIS then takes its participants to Israel for a week of learning with Israeli politicians, scholars, and writers. They visit Israeli universities, historical sites and museums in order to increase their knowledge and experience of Israel. As a fundamental component of the program, SIIS helps participants develop syllabi for new courses about Israel to introduce on their campuses.

The goals of the Institute are to

- Help university and college faculty develop courses about Israel
- Further the development of a field of Israel Studies within a broad, multi-disciplinary context
- Create a network of scholars to enhance teaching [and research] about Israel in the future
- Further the dissemination of knowledge and understanding about Israel

Three independent evaluations of the first two years of the Institute were conducted in 2004 and 2005. Two evaluations, based on in-depth interviews with participants both before and after program itself, focused on the extent to which the participants felt these SIIS goals were accomplished. In a third study during the spring of 2005, the research team surveyed the 2004 cohort of SIIS participants completing an inventory of the courses they had given in the 2004-05 academic year and those they had planned for the future. The three studies completed in 2004 and 2005 found that SIIS had successfully accomplished its short-term objectives:

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<sup>1</sup> SIIS was founded in 2004 with a generous gift from Phyllis and Joseph Gurwin and the cooperation and support of The Dorothy and Julius Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations of the American Jewish Committee. Additional support has been provided by, among others: Arlene Zimmerman Kaufman and Sanford M. Baklor; Ronald Stephen Baron; Irwin and Roberta Chafetz; Stanley and Judith Frankel Family Foundation; Guilford Glazer; Shirley and Milton Gralla; Alan C. Greenberg; Roger and Susan Hertog; Ronald Kaiserman; Beth Schultz Klarman and Seth Klarman; Stevin A. Levin; Edward C. Levy; Roland Lorie; Joseph Low; Judd D. Malkin; Eda and Joseph Pell; Rebecca Amitai and Morty Schaja; Louise and Michael Stein; and grants from The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation; The Koret Foundation; San Francisco Federation's Jewish Community Endowment Fund; Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; Solelim Fund of UJA Federation of New York.

- Thirty-eight faculty from colleges and universities around the world have participated in the program so far. They come from as far away as Australia and as close as UMASS Amherst. They include historians, sociologists and anthropologists as well as teachers of English and comparative literature.
- Both 2004 and 2005 cohorts appreciated the breadth and depth of the Institute's offerings. They said they came away more knowledgeable about Israel in a diverse range of subject areas.
- Participants in the 2004 cohort felt strongly that SIIS should include an Israel experience, and that was added the following year. Participants in 2005 said the trip to Israel was an essential part of the program and had been of great benefit to them.
- Participants developed collegial ties with each other and with the faculty and staff of the program.
- All participants from both years submitted syllabi for courses they planned to teach about Israel, and eight of those in the 2004 cohort taught courses in the 2004-05 academic year that were directly affected by their participation in SIIS. These nine<sup>2</sup> courses in the 2004-05 academic year attracted approximately 250 students.

In the spring of 2006, the survey was repeated, again soliciting information about courses given and planned about Israel. The 2006 survey also asked participants from both cohorts to reflect on their experience in SIIS—to discuss other areas in which SIIS had influenced their teaching, scholarship, and other work on campus. As well, it asked participants for their suggestions to improve SIIS in the future.

## **FINDINGS**

- Almost all alumni of the program have taught or plan to teach courses about Israel, and most of these courses go beyond the traditional topics of the Israel-Arab conflict or pre-state Zionism and deal with Israel as an organic, complex culture and society.
- Over 450 students enrolled in such courses in the 2005-06 academic year.
- Courses about Israel were taught in a variety of departments – most in Jewish Studies programs, but also in departments of sociology, English, religion, and history. Cross-listing provides a larger body of potential students, and more than half of these courses were listed in at least one other department in addition to their home subject area.
- Participants expressed their appreciation for the Israel experience component of SIIS. Both the 2004 participants who went in the winter of 2004-5 and the 2005 participants who went immediately following the two weeks at Brandeis

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<sup>2</sup> One alum of the 2004 program taught two courses in 2004-05.

considered the Israel trip an essential contribution to their understating of Israel.

- The two cohorts continue to design and adapt new Israel courses for the future contributing to both their own and their students' knowledge of Israel.

**Table 1: Courses and Students Impacted by SIIS 2004-08\***

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-08
Number of participants teaching courses	8	16	23
Number of courses offered (or planned)	9	23	27
New/adapted	6/3	10/13	14/13
Number of (potential) students	250	450	700

\*An additional new course with an approximate enrollment of 50 students is planned for 2009.

## DISCUSSION

The survey was available to respondents for over a month. Of the 38 participants in both cohorts, 35 responded (92%). Of the non-respondents, one is not currently in a teaching position; another cannot be reached (the Institute has no valid contact information); and the third declined to respond.<sup>3</sup> One of the respondents is also no longer in a teaching position.

### *New and Adapted courses*

Participants in the 2004 and 2005 cohorts offered 23 new or adapted courses this year attracting more than 450 students. Of the 35 respondents, 16 taught at least one course about Israel in 2005-6. Eleven of the 2005 cohort offered new or adapted courses in 2005-06. Proportionately, that is much the same as the previous year. It is also very much in keeping with the time required for course preparation and introduction. Of the nine 2005 participants who did not teach new or adapted courses in 2005-06, six had courses planned for the future. One of the nine had been on Sabbatical. Two were in administrative positions and had not expected to be teaching. Both had given lectures and one had hired a scholar in Israel Studies for his area. There were also nine in the 2004

<sup>3</sup> Although this participant did not respond, we know she taught a course on Israel during the spring semester 2006. According to the university catalogue, her course, *Israel: 1948 to the Present* enrolled 80 students. During the Fall 2005 term, she taught a course entitled *History and Memory of the Holocaust*. It is possible that Israel, as it relates historically to the Holocaust and as a place where the memory of the Holocaust is uniquely present, was part of that course as well. It was listed as a seminar enrolling 17 students. These data are not included in the report since they could not be verified with the instructor.

cohort who had not taught a new or revised course about Israel in 2005-06. Almost all of them (seven) had future courses planned. One was on Sabbatical and another is no longer teaching.

The new and adapted courses offered in 2005-06 span a range of fields and topics. Table 1 summarizes the departments in which courses were offered or cross-listed. Other departments offering or cross-listing Israel studies courses are: Film, Communications, Comparative Literature, Peace Studies, and International Affairs . Two courses were listed as Core Curriculum and one was part of a program in adult education.

**Table 2: Departments in which New and Adapted Courses were offered**

Departments	Number of Courses Offered	Number of Courses Cross-listed
Judaic and Near Eastern Studies	8	6
Adult Learning	2	
Core Curriculum	2	
English	2	
History	2	2
Religion	2	1
Sociology	2	1
Other	3	5

Thirteen of the courses taught this year were adapted from courses previously taught; 10 were completely new. One participant taught both a totally new course and an adapted course this year. *Modern Israel: History, Society, and Culture* was an adaptation of a previous course. The professor set out to enable 17 juniors and seniors “to appreciate the history and development of Israeli culture and society” and to “achieve an understanding of the Arab-Israel conflict.” He said he was satisfied that he had accomplished these goals. The same teacher introduced a new course as well entitled *Religion and Power in Modern Israel*. This seminar course, also designed for juniors and seniors analyzed “a number of religious and moral issues that confront Israeli society, including: the authority of Jewish law in the State of Israel; territorial compromise of Greater Israel; [and] the conversion crisis as it pertains to Russian immigrants.” The professor again felt good about achieving what he set out to do in the course. Both courses attracted students with Hebrew proficiency which enabled him to use original texts. As a senior faculty member and scholar, he did not consult with colleagues or staff of the Institute in preparation for either course, but he felt SIIS had helped him identify relevant literature and films and to deal more effectively with controversies about Israel.

Demonstrating the variety of types of courses offered by SIIS alumni, one respondent had designed a new course entitled *Bringing Israel Home*. She sought to help students develop “a strategic vision for why and how we teach Israel in various educational settings.” Another participant offered *Comparative Approach to Government and the Third Sector: The Cases of the U.S. and Israel* comparing non-governmental organizations—non-profits—and their relationship to the central government in Israel



and the United States. This course, according to the professor who designed it, demonstrates the differences in this critical relationship in the two countries. She felt that students in the course (four graduate students) began “learning about Israel as a country similar to others rather than an occupier.”

Most of the courses taught in 2005-06 were designed with upper-level undergraduates in mind. Fourteen of the 23 fell into this category. Only three were offered for freshman or sophomores: *Good and Evil*, an exploration of “ethical questions related to Israel's wars and the Holocaust;” *Imagining Adolescence and Coming-of-Age*, a course “to help students gauge the important ways that the figure of the child/adolescent is employed by artists to explore Jewish culture” specifically in the literature of Israel and North America; and *Jewish Experience*, an introductory course on Jewish history which deals with Israel only in that context. Three courses were designed for graduate students: *Modern Israel in Historical and Theological Perspective*, *Bringing Israel Home*, and *Comparative Approach to Government and the Third Sector: The Cases of the U.S. and Israel*. One was open to all undergraduates (*History of Modern Israel*) and another, on Zionism, was offered in an adult education program.

Few participants consulted with their colleagues in SIIS or with SIIS staff members on the preparation of their courses. Although there were several rich conversations on the listserv eliciting resource suggestions, this was not typical. Only five participants said they had consulted with their colleagues “very much” or to a “great extent,” and only one reported such consultation with staff members. Perhaps this means that participants got so much out of the Summer Institute itself that they did not need further consultation. On the other hand, one might wish for more of a discussion going on among graduates of the program. The listserv, which was inaugurated last year to bring that conversation to the Web, is just beginning to be used in the way SIIS organizers intended. This may be a function of participants’ lack of familiarity with the technology, a lack of time to pay attention to yet more emails, or a desire to preserve autonomy in syllabus preparation. Participants may feel insecure about asking others for help. Perhaps as they see others using it, as in the following example, they will themselves feel more comfortable about consulting for ideas, resources, and suggestions on-line.

An example of the listserv working well in this regard in a May 2006 conversation:

Participant 1: Hevre: Any bright ideas re [primary sources for contemporary Zionism and or Gush Eiminim?] Thanks.

Participant 2: Hi. I think by far the best source is Aviezer Ravitsky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Radicalism* (U of Chicago P) and any of his more recent essays. Best wishes.

Participant 1: Agreed, the question is: are there primary sources floating around that we could use in teaching non-Hebrew readers?

Participant 3: On the Israel trip we took in January, there might have been brochures, etc. that we could have picked up on our West Bank visit. I don't think I did, but maybe someone else picked it up and could share it. Maybe web sites?

Everyone's on the web these days. I also recently read *The Jewish War* by Tova Reich. Not primary material, it's fiction, but maybe would serve your teaching needs to discuss the more extreme (messianic) religious Zionist perspective. But I'm not sure what you need for your class.

Participant 4: Hi. Funny you should ask because I just taught about religious Zionism and settlement in my class last week. I used "From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut: The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society" by David Newman in *Israel Studies* Vol. 10, No. 3, Fall 2005 (he has an excellent bibliography as well). I showed excerpts from Chaim Yavin's 5 part documentary "Land of the Settlers: A Journey Log." (You can order it from Americans for Peace Now, I think it's \$100.) Then the class split into groups to look at the party platform of Mafdal, Arutz Sheva, Women in Green, and the Yesha Council (all online) to do a little discourse and rhetoric analysis.  
Hope that's helpful.

Participant 1: This sounds great. How was that movie? Evenhanded? Scholarly/critical; more polemical/political? Don't we have web access to *Israel Studies*?

Participant 1: Each of these parties has its own Website? A few weeks back there was a fairly harsh review of Gershom Gorenberg's new book *Accidental Empire* by our very own Gadi Taub, in the *New Republic*, but it's worth a look.

Many of the courses offered by the SIIS graduates deal with Israel far more expansively than traditional college level courses on the Arab-Israel conflict or on Zionism as a branch of European thought. Their designers wrote about the goals for their courses. They seek to convey:

- Israeli and Palestinian history, literature, and culture
- the effects of Post-Zionism on Israeli life
- the impact of persistent war, conflict and militarization; ethnic diversity and questions of democratic process;
- a deeper understanding of the history of Zionism and the arguments within and against the movement in order to shed light on the meaning of Zionism today
- Awareness of how concepts of truth affect a country's approach to and use of media.

Seventeen of the 23 new or adapted courses (78%) seem to have this expanded focus. They deal with social and political conflicts within Israel. They introduce Israel as a rich and variegated culture with roots in Middle Eastern and North African countries as well as Europe. For example, the course description for *Israel through Film* reveals the breadth of topics and ideas its teacher focuses on:

Israel is complicated: a contemporary nation-state of Jews and Arabs, a traditional homeland for Jewish people, a physical place of contested borders, and a diverse society of cultures, ideas, and people. This course uses the medium

of film to look – literally and metaphorically – at how people around the world have viewed Israel and how Israelis view themselves. Film is a particularly compelling and useful way to better understand the blurry lines between history and memory, fiction and fact, imagined communities, and contemporary dilemmas. We will look at films that examine the broad sweep of historical events, as well as ones that illuminate intimate stories of families and individual struggles. As a complement to the visual journey, we will read recent scholarship that covers such topics as: the rise of Zionism, building a nation-state and Palestinian nationalist responses; the impact of persistent war, conflict and militarization; ethnic diversity and questions of democratic process; successive waves of immigration from Jewish diasporas; social and political inequalities; and struggles over state-sponsored religion.

This course attracted 32 students during the fall semester and 32 during spring semester. It fulfills an undergraduate liberal arts requirement as an interdisciplinary ‘core’ course. The faculty member who offered these courses had the opportunity to compare the responses of two very different groups of students. During the fall term, the class attracted fundamentalist Christians who were “very preachy, often misinformed, and extremely right-wing. [They] wanted to talk about evangelism and Armageddon.” She revised the class for the spring term making her syllabus “tighter and more refined, with better readings to suit the incoming level of students’ knowledge.” She consulted some of her colleagues from the Institute in the preparation of both courses. The class dynamics and discussion improved during the spring quarter, she wrote, and students brought in articles from newspapers and, in other ways, appeared “very engaged.”

An SIIS participant from 2004 prepared a course for 2005-06 to explore the complexity of Israeli society. He designed *Contours of Identity in Contemporary Israeli Society*, “to inform students of the variety of culturally based perspectives, the historical bases for these perspectives, and the ways that such perspectives and social histories shape relations in the State of Israel.” He also sought to explore gender and encounters among Israelis with differing “cultural worldviews.”

Table 2 presents a detailed list of new and adapted courses for 2005-06.

**Table 3: New and Adapted Courses Offered by 2004 and 2005 SIIS Graduates in the 2005-2006 Academic Year**

Course Title	New or Adapted	Home Department	University	Cross-listing	Focus	Enrollment
<i>Culture and Immigration in Israel</i>	Adapted	Judaic and Near Eastern Studies	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Communications	Same as the title	6
<i>Good and Evil</i>	Adapted	Judaic Studies	Brown University	Religious Studies	Ethical Questions Related to Zionism	6
<i>History of Modern Israel</i>	Adapted	History	Sweet Briar College	International Affairs	Zionism and History	13
<i>Israel and the Media</i>	Adapted	Sociology	Stern College for Women	None	Complexity of Israeli Society and Media Bias	5
<i>Israel Through Film</i>	Adapted	Core Curriculum	University of Denver	Judaic Studies	History, sociology, film studies	32
<i>Israel Through Film</i>	Adapted	Core Curriculum	University of Denver	Judaic Studies	History, Sociology, Film Studies	30
<i>Israeli Society</i>	Adapted	Judaic Studies	University of Miami	None	Sociology and Anthropology of Israel	6
<i>Jewish experience</i>	Adapted	Religious Studies	DePaul University	None	History of Judaism	40+
<i>Modern Israel: History, Society and Culture</i>	Adapted	Judaic and Near Eastern Studies	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	None	History of Zionism; Arab Israel Conflict	17
<i>Representations of Arabs and Jews in Israeli Literature &amp; Film</i>	Adapted	English	University of Miami	Judaic Studies	Same as the title	25
<i>Sociology of Israeli Identities</i>	Adapted	Sociology	Stern College for Women	None	Conflicts between groups within Israel	10
<i>Zionism</i>	Adapted	Judaic Studies	University of Miami	History	History of Zionist Thought	12
<i>Zionism</i>	Adapted	Adult Learning	Hebrew College	None	Zionist Thinking	20
<i>A History of Modern Israel</i>	New	History	U. of California Santa Cruz - Stevenson	Judaic Studies	Politics and Culture	120

Course Title	New or Adapted	Home Department	University	Cross-listing	Focus	Enrollment
<i>Bringing Israel Home</i>	New	Professional Development	Hebrew Union College	Education	Developing a Strategic Vision for Why and How We Teach Israel in Various Jewish Educational Settings	6
<i>Comparative Approach to Government and the Third sector: The Cases of the U.S. and Israel</i>	New	Grad Department of Public and Healthcare Admin	Seton Hall University	None	Relationship of Government and Third Sector	4
<i>Contours of Identity in Contemporary Israeli Society</i>	New	Jewish Studies	Pennsylvania State University	History & Sociology	Cultural worldviews	34
<i>Film and Society in Israel</i>	New	Judaic and Near Eastern Studies	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Film	Same as the title	20
<i>Imagining Adolescence and Coming-of-Age</i>	New	English	University of Miami	Judaic Studies	Contemporary Narrative	22
<i>Israeli Society</i>	New	Adult Learning	Hebrew College	None	Selected Topics in the State of Israel	20
<i>Modern Israel in Historical and Theological Perspective</i>	New	Religion	Claremont School of Theology	None	Israel and Zionism	18
<i>Religion and Power in Modern Israel</i>	New	Judaic and Near Eastern Studies	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	None	Religious Challenges in Modern Israeli Society	5
<i>The Literature of Israel and Palestine</i>	New	Comparative Literature	McMaster University	Peace Studies, Jewish Studies	Third year survey course: Jewish history and culture of the Diaspora as well as in Israel from the turn of the twentieth century until the present. This draws on historical documents, film, and fiction. We also explored the origins of the Arab - Jewish conflict.	17

This year's survey asked participants about the composition of their classes. Some respondents wrote about the class level—the numbers of juniors and seniors, for example. Others wrote about the subject majors their students pursued. Not surprisingly, most students came from the departments in which the courses were listed or cross-listed. Most participants who answered the question wrote about how knowledgeable (or not) their students were about Israel at the beginning of the term. Nine respondents said their classes attracted students with little, very little, or no knowledge of Israel at all. In a Jewish institution, the participant said students had “awareness of and concern with Israeli and Zionist issues but little understanding and knowledge of contemporary Israeli society.”

Three classes were described as “diverse” or “mixed.” The institution, its location, the existence of a Jewish Studies concentration, and the composition of the student body as a whole influenced enrollment in Israel studies classes. Participants in SIIS come from a diverse group of institutions so their classes attract diverse groups of students.

One participant from a large state school wrote a detailed description of his class:

The students primarily are majoring in history and sociology. A few are Jewish Studies majors. Almost all of them are juniors and seniors (I think there is one first-year student), with about 1/3 due to graduate at the end of the semester. One student is African American, and one is in ROTC. One student was raised in Israel; one has Israeli parents; and several have visited Israel on vacation. One student says that he intends to immigrate and enlist in the IDF after the course ends. A couple students are enrolled because they have taken other courses with me. Most of the students support the State of Israel and Zionism. One or two are involved in student organizations that seek to construct ties of understanding between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. One student is an avid consumer of news about Israeli politics.

Participants also discussed the problems they confronted in the new courses they taught, although three could not identify any problems. Two were concerned that students did not complete the reading although one of them thought it was his fault for assigning too much. Three others complained of lack of quality textbooks, topographic maps, or materials in English. A sociologist felt the need to have presented more sociological theory “to help students place and conceptually understand material I was presenting about Israel.” The course would need two terms to cover the both the theory and the substance of the material. Three SIIS participants mentioned student ignorance as a drawback. In one case, graduate students were reluctant to speak because they had “little background in field.” Another had undergraduates who were “very preachy, often misinformed, and extremely right-wing.” One cited concern about “uncritical thinking.” Other issues:

- Logistical issues of scheduling a course in the late afternoon
- Low enrollment because the course was so demanding
- “Problem with my syllabus: [it's] still too conflict-centered”

- Not having enough room in the class for the 160+ students who wanted to take the class.

The survey also asked participants about aspects of their courses that were great. The “class dynamic” and the quality of discussions were mentioned most often. A sociologist said the structure of his class in which students would present the readings and other students prepared questions led to mini “panel discussions” at the end of class. “Students were very interested and concerned about the material,” a faculty member at a Jewish institution said. “They really wanted to know and understand the way history has shaped contemporary Israeli society.” Another participant noted that her class required participation “and that created an atmosphere of frank and substantive exchange of ideas.” A historian was particularly pleased that the students in his class, *History of the Modern State of Israel*, were able “to tolerate and appreciate diverse views and perspectives.” A literature teacher wrote, “The classroom was very, very lively and the written responses were composed with a great deal of candor and depth.” Another literature teacher at a large, private institution described what she considered great about teaching her course:

everything: my department bought three films from Brandeis University for this course, the syllabus was great--the students loved the texts I chose. I also provided them with a course-pack which included further documentary, historical and literary material. They did readings from Ahron Bregman's *The History of Israel* (which worked very well as background for a literature class). We did music and film and the class dynamics were wonderful.

All 16 participants who taught new or adapted courses responded to the question about course evaluations. For two the question was not applicable. Two said no, and twelve said, yes, the evaluations were conducted, but they were not yet available. Nine said evaluations had been or would be done but had not yet been made available. Only one had evaluations from the previous term. She said they could be faxed if requested. One SIIS participant has been nominated for a university teaching award. He included the student’s rather effusive letter of nomination which referred to the balance of his Israel course:

He brilliantly asked his students, including myself, to read literature and watch films that addressed both sides of an issue in the Middle East, which allowed us to identify the parallels in the arguments of either side of the story. In doing so, [he] undoubtedly challenged his students to push aside their personal biases or opinions regarding the issue and absorb the materials as well as fellow peer opinions in an effort to better understand the issue.

### ***Influences of SIIS on other Courses***

SIIS, according to almost half of its participants (17), had an impact on their teaching beyond courses specifically about Israel. Most of these are courses in Jewish Studies or about Jewish themes and ranged from *History of the Jews* or *Varieties of American Judaism* to *Holocaust Theology* or *Three Responses to Modernity: Heschel, Soloveitchik, Buber*. One participant from a large public university teaches a course on Jews and Anti-

Semitism. He said the Institute had affected the amount of time he spent on contemporary anti-Semitism in the post-Holocaust world, especially in the Middle East. One participant said SIIS influenced the way he would teach a course on modern Western Civilization. Another said it would influence his courses: *History of Modern Africa*, and *History of the Idea of Race*.

#### *Future New and Adapted Courses*

Twenty-three respondents said they are in the process of preparing one or more courses in Israel studies for the future. These participants estimate that the 28 courses will reach almost 750 students between the summer of 2006 and 2009. Of course, the 2006 SIIS cohort, scheduled to begin their studies in mid-June, 2006, will also teach courses about Israel in 2006-07 and beyond, and these numbers will increase accordingly. A summary table follows with the number courses planned by 2004 and 2005 participants for the coming academic year (2006-07), whether they are new or adapted, and the total projected enrollment. A detailed list of all proposed courses for the future with additional information appears in Table 5.

**Table 4: Summary of Courses Planned for the Future by 2004 and 2005 Cohorts**

	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-09 and undetermined</b>
Number of participants planning courses	15	8
Number of Courses	19	9
New/adapted	8/11	7/2
Total projected enrollment	528	225

Some of the courses in preparation are further reworking of courses introduced this year or last year (*Sociology of Israeli Identities*, and *Israel through Film*), while others are being developed for the first time (*History of the State of Israel and Zionism, Then and Now*). The courses are in a variety of departments and cover a range of topics. A course entitled *Special Topics*, taught by an historian and focusing on American and Israeli Jewry, is difficult to classify. Eight clearly focus on history or Zionism, and one, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, deals with the current political situation between Israel and its neighbors. The remaining 19 courses focus on the society (*Justice Issues in Israel/Palestine*, *The Shaping of Israel Society and Culture*), culture (*Popular Culture in Israel and Palestine*), religion (*Interdisciplinary Honors* which focuses on Zionism and Messianism or *Religion and Conflict in Modern Israel*), or something more difficult to classify (*Gender and Sexualities in Israel*, or *Contemporary Israel: State and Society*).

Most of the courses are undergraduate (19) with most of those upper level classes for juniors and seniors (14). Five courses are designed for graduate students. The others were either unspecified, adult education, or for all undergraduates. Anticipated enrollments in the courses under development range from 5-8 for a graduate level education course to 50-60 for courses tracing the history of the state.



**Table 5: Courses about Israel Planned for the Future**

Name	New/ Adapted	University	Focus	Enrollment Estimate	Year	Term
<i>The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Literature and Film</i>	New	University of Miami	Coverage from 1948 Until Present	15	2006	Summer II
<i>History of the State of Israel</i>	New	York University	Survey of the History of the Country	50	2008	NA
<i>Justice Issues in Israel/Palestine</i>	New	Arizona State University	Politics of Everyday Life; Construction of Symbolic and Material Boundaries Between Demarcated Groups Based on Religion, Nation, Gender, Sexual Identity, Etc.	40	2006	Fall
<i>Society and Cultures in Modern Israel</i>	Adapted	Pennsylvania State University	As Described	35	2006	Fall
<i>The Literature of Israel and Palestine</i>	Adapted	McMaster University	As Described	NA	2007 or 2008	NA
<i>Sociology of Israeli Identities</i>	Adapted	Stern College for Women	Contemporary Israeli Society	15	2007	Spring
<i>Society and Cultures in Modern Israel</i>	Adapted	Pennsylvania State University	As Titled	35	2007	Spring
<i>Media and Israeli Society</i>	Adapted	Stern College for Women	Epistemology and Media	10	2007	Spring
<i>History of Israel - A Biographical Approach</i>	New	Sao Paulo University	Israel and the Middle East	20	2006	Spring
<i>Israel: History, Politics, Society</i>	Adapted	Temple University	History of Israel	35	2006	Fall
<i>Zionism, Then and Now</i>	New	Jewish Theological Seminary	Philosophy, Intellectual History	25	2006/7	Spring
<i>Israel</i>	Adapted	Bucknell University	Culture	25	2006	Spring
<i>The Holocaust, the State of Israel, and Modern Jewish Identity</i>	New	University of Manchester	As Titled	30	NA	NA
<i>Gender and Sexualities in Israel</i>	New	University of Denver	Gender Inequality, Sexuality Politics	30	2007	Fall

Name	New/ Adapted	University	Focus	Enrollment Estimate	Year	Term
<i>Israel Through Film</i>		University of Denver	History, Sociology, Film Studies	30	2006	Fall, Spring 2007
<i>Arab-Israeli Conflict</i>	New	Sweet Briar College	As Titled	20	2007	Spring
<i>Popular culture in Israel and Palestine</i>	New	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	As Titled	NA	NA	NA
<i>History of the State of Israel</i>	New	University of North Texas	Pre-State and State	50	2007	Winter
<i>Bringing Israel Home</i>	Adapted	Hebrew Union College	Creating A Strategic Vision for Why and How to Teach Israel	5-8	2007	Spring
<i>Interdisciplinary Honors</i>	New	Broward College	Zionism, Messianism	20	2007	Fall
<i>History of Zionism and Israel</i>	Adapted	Florida Atlantic University	Israel	20	2007	Fall
<i>Religion and Conflict in Modern Israel</i>	New	DePaul University	Religion in Modern Israel	40	2007	Spring
<i>The Shaping of Israel Society and Culture</i>	New	York University	Sociology of Contemporary Israel and Formation of Modern Israeli Culture	50	2009	NA
<i>Special Topics</i>	New	Michigan State University	American Jewry and Israeli Jewry	12 (Summer in Israel)	2006	Summer
<i>Society and Cultures in Modern Israel</i>	Adapted	Pennsylvania State University	As Titled	35	2007	Spring
<i>History of Modern Israel</i>	Adapted	U. of California Santa Cruz - Stevenson	Politics and Culture	60	2007	Summer
<i>Modern Jewish Thought/Movements</i>	Adapted	Hebrew College	Religious Movements Religious Movements	15	2007	Spring
<i>Contemporary Israel: State and Society</i>	New	Middlebury College	Political Sociology of Israel	20	2006	Fall

### *Institutional Support*

Few participants wrote about receiving any particular support from their colleges or universities for the courses they had offered. A professor at a small private college said he had received none. A large public university, on the other hand, bought three films for a course about Israel, and when the faculty member teaching the course brought in an Ethiopian Rabbi and opened her class to the campus as a whole, 40 students and faculty from outside her class attended. Another respondent wrote of support he had received specifically from the Jewish Studies Program but noted that

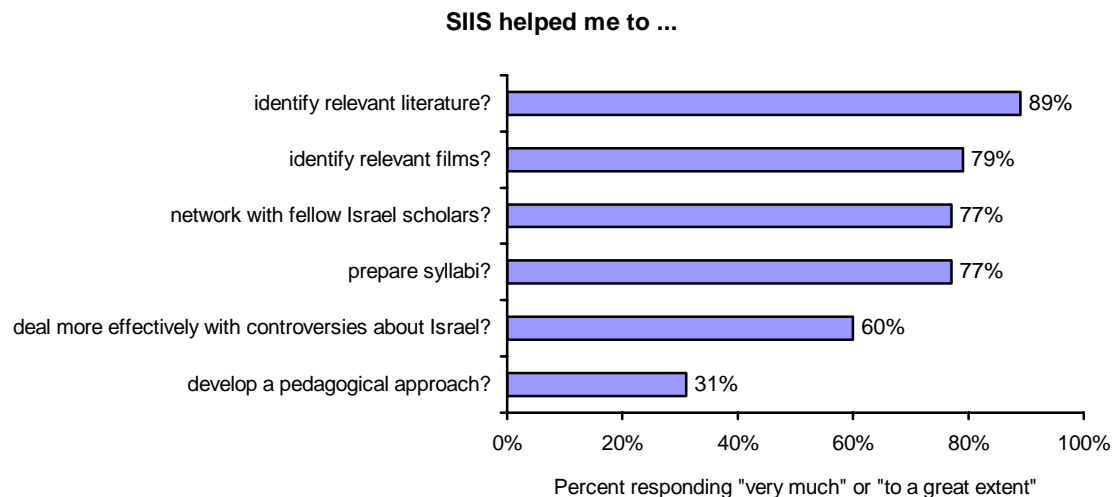
other departments have been willing to cross-list the course. Religious Studies allowed it to count toward one student's major. And, faculty in the newly emerging Middle East Studies Program distribute information about the course and are willing for it to count toward their major."

Two other respondents indicated that their schools had supported their courses on Israel. Four said they had received no particular support and three said the question was not applicable. The remaining four who taught courses in 2005-06 about Israel did not answer the question. No one wrote of specific attempts to prevent the introduction of courses about Israel nor did they write about efforts to stand in the way of expanding existing courses.

### *Effects on participants*

This report has focused on the courses offered or planned for the future by participants in the first two cohorts of SIIS. It has been about the impact of the Institute on the institutions in which participants teach. This section will focus on the participants' comments on the impact of the Institute on themselves as scholars and researchers.

**Figure 1: Effects on Participants**



Since their participation in the Institute, 14 participants have attended professional meetings or conferences related to Israel Studies. Twelve have subscribed to professional journals related to Israel, the Middle East, or Jewish Studies. Neither of these activities can be attributed to SIIS, since participants did not tell us about such attendance or subscriptions before the Institute, but the survey also asked about the overall impact of SIIS participation on respondents' teaching and course development, on their participation in Israel-related extra curricular activities on or off campus, and on their future research. Respondents were overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the Institute and its influence on their teaching. The largest number of participants commented on their access to more and better resources for teaching and the acquisition of greater knowledge of the field. An assistant professor at a large state university with little previous experience teaching about Israel wrote:

[The Institute] helped tremendously. I became much better informed about current research as well as perspectives different than my own. It helped inform me more fully about the current scholarly debates and political controversies. My understanding of the Orthodox and of Palestinian perspectives has improved most especially. These, I think, help me to present a more balanced perspective in the classroom and to be able to accept political positions with which I disagree. The trip to Israel further enhanced the sense of familiarity that I could convey to students.

A professor with considerably more experience teaching about Israel at another large public university said the Institute had

... improved my course on Israel tremendously by introducing me to new literature and approaches to teaching the subject. It has revitalized my course and my commitment to teaching courses on Israel.

Some respondents were more specific about the resources they learned about while others were more general in their descriptions. Two examples, again from large state universities, illustrate this difference:

It brought me up to date on the scholarly treatment of the question of Israeli Arabs. I got some good ideas on how to present early Zionist texts and how to utilize short stories in my Israel course.

Enrichment of curriculum, confidence to deal with controversial issues, incalculable increase in the depth and breadth of my lectures, awareness of scholarly controversies, awareness of resources.

Faculty from private colleges and smaller institutions were equally enthusiastic about the application of information and resources from SIIS to their teaching. One simply wrote that it had widened his "basic knowledge" of the subject. Another said he is "thinking differently about how to teach Zionism/Israel, both substantively and methodologically."

Someone who has not yet had the opportunity to apply knowledge from the Institute to his teaching, nonetheless wrote of how his thinking had been changed. When he teaches about Israel in the future it will be informed by his participation in SIIS and he will teach

his course on Zionism “more in terms of Israel studies, cultural approaches, [and] connection to intellectual history and political science.”

Everyone who responded to the survey wrote something about the impact of SIIS. For 17%, SIIS had served “very much” or “to a great extent” to help them feel part of a network of scholars in the field. Some highlighted this particular benefit:

Networking with colleagues was great, meeting people whose work I know and use either at Brandeis or in Israel was incredibly useful.

Three wrote that SIIS had given them the confidence to teach in this field. For one who said he had no graduate training in the field, SIIS “was supremely beneficial and gave me the confidence to teach a course on Israel.” A full professor with many years of experience in teaching and scholarship in Jewish studies said, “The most important thing is that [SIIS] gave me much-needed confidence.”

One respondent wrote about an effort to establish a collaborative between two neighboring public institutions to offer an Israel Studies Certificate program. Others simply described their overall impression of the Institute. “A model for thoroughness, openness and clarity,” “a great resource,” “a wonderful experience”. One felt his participation in the Institute had “helped smooth the way” at his college for the new course he offered. “The biggest benefits,” he said, “were in relation to course content and the scholarly network. My course will be better rounded and more cutting edge than in absence of program.”

Finally, one of the participants wrote that the Institute

made me aware of the contours of the field of Israel Studies, familiarized me with scholarship and resources, and helped to fill gaps in my education. It provides the preliminary basis for me to educate myself further and to teach with greater depth and understanding about Israel.

At the same time, the Institute went beyond influence in classrooms and profoundly affected the extra-curricular activities of participants and even their own research agenda. Almost half of respondents (17) said they had been inspired to do more to disseminate information about Israel outside of their classrooms. One said he has “made a point of attending events at the Hillel” and has repeatedly offered to help with their events as a speaker. Another wrote that she and her class

... were invited to several lectures and group events and we attended several together as a class. Some students went on their own to further events (even a play ... based on Emile Habiby's famous novel, *The Secret Life of Saeed*.) I also invited a guest speaker to our class who is of mixed Israeli-Palestinian background: Jasmin Habib.

Four credited the Institute with expanding their abilities to discuss Israel more knowledgeably. A well respected senior scholar wrote that he had gained “deep background” and that SIIS “has helped enormously.” He went on to list specific capacities and abilities he felt he had attained through his participation in the Institute:

1. New capacities in discussions with Israel scholars who we regularly bring to campus for lectures.
2. New capacities in discussion of issues as an observer and member of the audience for job talks to fill a position in Ethnic Studies in Arab/Islamic American Studies.
3. Better ability to discuss Israel issues with Jewish community leaders and committees (ADL, JCRC, AJC, etc.)

Through his exposure to Israeli film at SIIS, another participant has been able to “inaugurate a monthly Israeli film series.” The series not only shows the films, it also brings in the either the director of or a scholar of Israeli film to introduce each movie. “This series has been a significant success.,” he wrote. “We have averaged about 125-150 viewers every month.” He was involved in Israel activity on his campus before, but since SIIS he has also been involved in planning a lecture series on Israel for the 2006-07 academic year and developing a scholar exchange program between Israeli faculty and his university. He is in the early stages of arranging an Israel experience for non-academics from the technology industry, and he is trying to attain university approval for a student study program in Israel.

The accomplishments of others are much more modest, but significant nonetheless. One has given a presentation on "Israel's Media Problem" to his university's Hillel. Another has been active in a pre-existing film festival. A third has “served on various university forums on the Middle East” and has “spoken on Israeli literature at various venues in the surrounding community.”

About 75% of respondents said the SIIS had influenced their research. The scholarship of some of the respondents already centered on Israel. For them, the influence may have been relatively minor. For example, a historian said he was expanding his research to include Israeli political thought. A teacher of theology said it helped “confirm his current agenda of research into religion and nationalism in modern Jewish life.” In a similar vein, a third wrote:

I am currently writing a journal article on the novelist A.B. Yehoshua and have just published a book on modern Hebrew literature that was greatly stimulated by my conversations with SIIS colleagues as well as with its faculty.

Yet another wrote about the effect of SIIS on her approach to the research rather than the subject area itself.

This is something of a "chicken or egg" question as the study of Israel was a key area of research focus for me before I enrolled in SIIS. The agenda hasn't changed, but my questions have become richer and more nuanced as a result of SIIS and my ongoing reflection through teaching, reading, and involvement in other Israel-related activities such as the Reform Zionist Think Tank.

Since SIIS, however, some of the participants are pursuing new directions or expanding their areas of interest. Some examples:

[SIIS] has strengthened my desire to do research both on Israel and in Israel. I do not see myself becoming an Israel Studies specialist in the future but I would like to expand my work to compare specific issues between Eastern Europe, Israel, and North America.

I hope to compare the results of my study on the response of the American Jewish religious communities to wife abuse with [the response of] Israeli religious communities.

I am planning a future book on the two centers of modern global Jewish life in a post-Holocaust world, North America and Israel. I also now read regularly in Israel Studies.

I ... have it in mind to do a community study of an Israeli town to study change over time in the reception/transmission/construction of Zionism and Israeli identity.

### *Suggestions*

Participants were almost unanimously enthusiastic about the Institute and the learning and stimulation it provided. Nonetheless, they had suggestions to improve the program.

Six people commented on the extensiveness and timing of the readings. A junior faculty member thought the Institute's organizers could do more to require people to complete the reading before they arrive, while a more senior participant suggested that somewhat less pre-Institute reading would be more realistic. Another participant said that the reading assignments needed to be clearer. Others suggested that organizers should provide more lead time for the reading. In fact, this was done the second year, but three of the five who made this point were from the 2005 cohort. One full professor from a prestigious college acknowledged that he did not do all the reading before he came to campus.

I couldn't do much reading before the Institute. The routine obligations of teaching and research (and parenting!) make supplementary reading almost impossible. Then again, scholars are pros at "faking it" and there's nothing wrong with assigning reading that most won't be able to complete.

Other participants had more substantive ideas for change. One suggested assigning a faculty advisor to each participant to help individually with research and course design. In a similar vein, another suggested using participants from earlier programs as mentors for new cohorts. Three participants, two with extensive experience as researchers and teachers and all three extremely enthusiastic about the Institute, nonetheless suggested that the program needed to be less frontal and have more time for discussion. One wrote:

My main suggestion for the institute itself is that I think it would help to have a couple of sessions focusing directly on pedagogy in relation to teaching on Israel. Most of the sessions focused on "content" (history, literature, etc.). While those were useful in their own terms, what was missing was a direct discussion of how teaching on Israel raises difficult pedagogical issues—such as how to deal with students who come to the study of Israel with strongly held positions and are

reluctant to engage in a process of questioning those opinions or viewing matters from a different perspective.

One participant said SIIS would benefit from more Palestinian contributions, but another would have liked less time spend on “Israel/Palestinian stuff.”

Going forward, almost all participants had ideas for ways SIIS could continue to support their teaching and research. Thirteen of the participants suggested future conferences, workshops, or seminars for alumni, and four (with some overlap) suggested future Israel trips. Seven said they hoped for more resources such as articles available in full on the SIIS web site. “More free books” one suggested, and another wrote “a permanent free subscription to Israel Studies would help (online only would be fine).”

Despite having already commented on the network in a previous question, five hoped that SIIS would continue to support the listserv and the developing network of colleagues. A participant in the second cohort suggested that SIIS organizers should encourage participants to share the successes of their courses. A participant who does not have a teaching position said the network was the most important benefit he received from the Institute, and he went on to describe the many areas of influence on his work.

Probably the main outcome for me has been the network SIIS has created. So, for example, in the volume I have just finished editing, ...three of my fellow participants contributed chapters as did two academic presenters. I am also in touch with other SIIS friends on research and teaching issues of mutual interest. I am liaising with Sharon Rivo re films. I have used some SIIS material in informal education setting in the Jewish and non-Jewish community ... such as music. I am sitting on an advisory committee for a new course to be developed. ... SIIS was a formative educational experience for me.

Finally, a full professor from a large state university directed his suggestions more at participants than at SIIS.

At this point, it is clear that the heaviest responsibility falls upon the instructor, not on SIIS. The greatest difficulty is in making the time that this area of teaching deserves. My sense is that in preparation for my first Israel course following the completion of the SIIS, I should have budgeted more time than I actually did so as to make optimal use of the things I learned. Next time I will be better prepared.

## **SUMMARY AND FINAL COMMENTS**

The seminar has been successful in producing courses about Israel and has had a profound effect on the participants themselves. Almost all have taught at least one course about Israel since their attendance at the Institute. In 2004-05, approximately 240 students in eight schools were directly affected by courses resulting from SIIS. In 2005-06, more than twice that number attended such courses. The courses themselves span a wide range of subject areas. Those Institute participants who were involved in teaching about Israel before today speak of the influence SIIS has had in helping them expand the depth and breadth of their courses. Participants said the Institute enhanced their



knowledge of resources about Israel, and created a network of scholars on whom they can draw for course design suggestions and selection of materials. Some participants are using resources they were not aware of, and some are using resources they may have known about but not felt confident that they could discuss with their students.

Many of them have taken on new roles in their communities outside of the formal academic sphere of writing courses. They organize film festivals and lecture series; they speak to Hillel chapters and open their classes to the wider campus community; and at least two actively support student study in Israel. In addition, participants said that SIIS affected their research both in expanding the Israel focus where it already existed and adding an Israel dimension where it did not exist before.

Respondents used the final comments section of the survey to express their appreciation for SIIS. Some examples from a variety of participants from a variety of institutions:

- I loved the Brandeis Israel Studies seminar. I learned a lot; saw a lot; I felt well treated by wonderful and committed people. ... The seminar was helpful to me in a huge way.
- Both professionally and personally, my experience at the SIIS has proven to be invaluable.
- Thank you for great opportunity - and for resources that break the isolation of being one of few who conduct research on Israel in my geographic region.
- I have only praise, admiration, and gratitude for the summer institute and its organizers!!
- The program has made a real difference in my teaching and opened new directions in my research. Thank you!

## APPENDIX A: SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS AND INSTITUTIONS

The plurality of 2004 and 2005 participants teach at large public colleges (15). Four teach at large private institutions; seven in schools ranging from very small (fewer than 600 students) to medium (about 5000 undergraduates). Four teach in Jewish universities and four in universities affiliated with other religions. Five teach in universities beyond North America. The following tables present more details about the 2004, 2005 and 2006 participants in the institute.

**Table A 1: Participant Titles<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Faculty Position</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Instructor	1		
Lecturer	5	3	3
Assistant Professor	3	7	7
Associate Professor	3	4	5
Professor	5	3	4
Professor and/or administrator		4	2

**Table A 2: Participant Institutions' Locations**

<b>Location</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
U.S.A.	12	18	19
Canada	2		
Other	3	2	2

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<sup>4</sup> The significance of faculty titles varies by country.

**Table A 3: SIIS Participating Institutions: Locations and Enrollments**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Year(s)</b>	<b>Enrollment</b> Undergraduates/Graduates
Arizona State	Arizona	2004	39,650 / 9,700
Bilkent University	Turkey	2004	10,840
Binghamton University	New York	2004	11,070 / 2,840
Boston College	Massachusetts	2004	9,000 / 3,900
Brooklyn College	New York	2005	11,200/4,200
Broward College	Florida	2005	21,000
Brown University	Rhode Island	2005	6,000
Bucknell University	Pennsylvania	2004	3,460 / 140
Claremont Graduate University	California	2004	2,000
CUNY-Queensborough Community College	New York	2006	10,700
DePaul University	Chicago	2005	14,700 / 7,700
Eastern Michigan University	Michigan	2006	18,170 / 4,660
Florida Atlantic University	Florida	2005	19,600 / 3,300
Florida International University	Florida	2006	28,400 / 4760
Georgia State University	Georgia	2006	18480 / 6308
Gratz College	Pennsylvania	2006	6 / 40
Hebrew College	Boston	2005	6 / 110
Hebrew Union College	New York	2005	400
Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles	California	2006	?
Jewish Theological Seminary	New York	2004	200
McMaster University	Ontario	2004	18,240 / 2,650
Michigan State University	Michigan	2005	35,100 / 8,000
Middlebury College	Vermont	2005	2,400
National University Klevo- Mogilyanska, Kiev	Ukraine	2006	?
Pennsylvania State, Slippery Rock	Pennsylvania	2006	7340 / 700
Pennsylvania State University	Pennsylvania	2004	33,670 / 6,070
Saint Louis University	Missouri	2006	7,080 / 2,900
San Francisco State University	California	2005	22,000 / 6,500
Sao Paulo University	Brazil	2004	?
Seton Hall University	New Jersey	2005	5,200 / 3000
Smith College	Massachusetts	2006	2,640 / 450
Stonehill College	Massachusetts	2006	2,430 / 10
Sweet Briar College	Virginia	2005	540 / 10
Temple University	Pennsylvania	2004	23,450 / 6,380
Texas A & M University	Texas	2006	36,230 / 8,030

Touro College	New York	2004	12,010
Trinity College, Dublin	Ireland	2006	15,000
U. S. Air Force Academy	Colorado	2006	4,400
University of Alabama	Alabama	2006	17,370 / 3,690
U. of California, Santa Cruz (2)	California	2005, 2006	13,590 / 1,390
UCLA	California	2005	24,811 / 10,500
University of Central Florida	Florida	2006	37,570 / 7,160
University of Delaware	Delaware	2006	15,740 / 3,430
University of Denver	Colorado	2005	4,400 / 4,000
University of Manchester in the UK	Great Britain	2004	24,870 / 10,680
University of Massachusetts, Amherst (3)	Massachusetts	2005, 2006	18,400 / 5,700
University of Miami	Florida	2004, 2005	9,700 / 3,000
University of North Texas	Texas	2005	24,300 / 3,500
University of Reading	Great Britain	2005	12,500
University of Texas	Texas	2006	35,730 / 11,230
University of West Georgia	Georgia	2004	8,350 / 1,810
Victoria U. Melbourne	Australia	2005	10,000+
Wellesley College	Massachusetts	2006	2,220
Yeshiva University	New York	2004	2,930 / 1,650
York University, Toronto	Ontario	2004	43,640 / 3,340