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COHEN CENTER FOR
MODERN JEWISH STUDIES

The Summer Institute for Israel Studies: 2019 Annual Survey

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Introduction

The Summer Institute for Israel Studies (SIIS) organized by the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University brings together a cohort of college and university faculty each summer in a one-of-a-kind program designed to equip scholars to engage in quality teaching and research about Israel. Through a two-week residency at Brandeis attending seminars and lectures by leading scholars in the field, and a 10-day tour of Israel, the SIIS Fellows gain exposure to the field of Israel Studies and design courses for their home institutions. After the summer program, SIIS Fellows have access to Schusterman Center resources and an online listserv for SIIS Fellows (Shain, 2018).

In June 2019, the Summer Institute for Israel Studies (SIIS) welcomed its 16th cohort of scholars, bringing the total number of SIIS Fellows to 336. Since its inception, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) has conducted annual follow-up surveys with program alumni. The ongoing research has found that SIIS Fellows continue to bring courses on Israel to their campuses and contribute to Israel studies scholarship through publications, conferences, and other platforms (Koren & Fleisch, 2014; Shain, 2018).

This report begins with an overview of the 2019 study methodology. The report then describes the current academic and professional positions of Fellows from the 2004-2018 cohorts. The report details Fellows' activities in the 2018-19 academic year including the number and types of courses taught, research and publications, work with students, and media appearances. Also explored are Fellows' perceptions of the climate for teaching about Israel on their campus, their use of Schusterman Center resources, and their reflections on the SIIS experience. The discussion section summarizes the findings.

Methods

Two versions of the survey were used in 2019. One version, much shorter in order to increase responses from earlier SIIS cohorts (2004-2010), asked about current academic position, courses taught in 2018-19, conference attendance, and publications. More recent cohorts (2011-2018) received a longer survey that asked additional questions about their teaching and courses, campus climate, publications and appearances, and use of SIIS resources.

Both versions of the survey were fielded August 8-December 5, 2019. Multiple emails and a phone call were used to boost the response rate. Schusterman Center staff members also used the SIIS listserv to encourage Fellows to complete the survey. The response rate for cohorts 2004-2010 using the shorter survey was 47%. The response rate for cohorts 2011-2018 was 55%.¹ Response rates varied across cohorts, but were highest among the most recent cohort (2018) (Table 1). The timing of this survey, in fall rather than spring, may have impacted the overall response rate (51%). The response rate has declined steadily since the first survey in 2005 (66% in 2018; 65% in 2017; see Shain, 2018).

¹ The 2019 cohort was also surveyed to gather preliminary data on the Fellows' teaching and involvements. This data will be presented in the 2020 survey report.

Table 1: Response rate to fall 2019 SIIS survey, by SIIS cohort

SIIS cohort	Number in cohort sent survey	Number responding	Response rate
2004	16	8	50%
2005	20	6	30%
2006	18	11	61%
2007	17	8	47%
2008	22	12	55%
2009	20	8	40%
2010	20	9	45%
2011	22	9	41%
2012	20	13	65%
2013	20	11	55%
2014	21	11	52%
2015	22	10	45%
2016	20	11	55%
2017	22	11	50%
2018	23	18	78%
All cohorts	303	156	51%

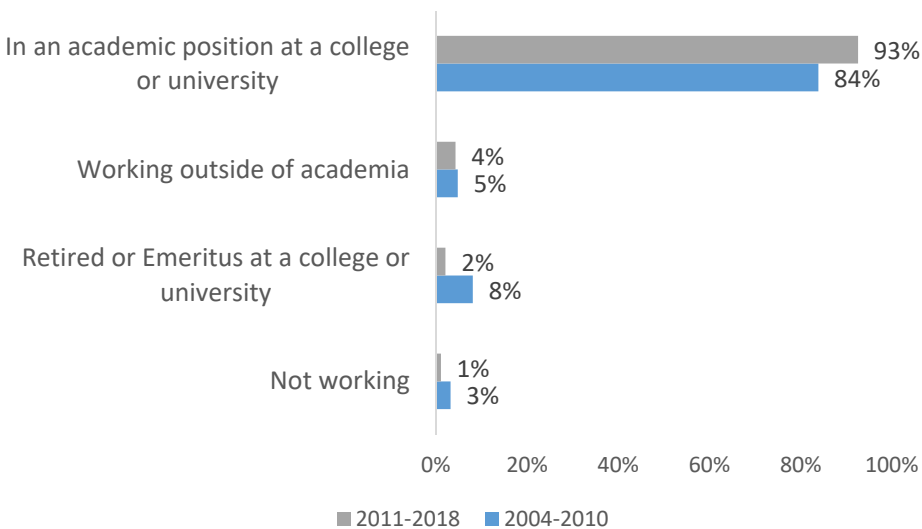
Note: Some Fellows were not sent an invitation to complete the survey either because they had previously indicated that they did not want to participate in future surveys or because they had indicated that they no longer worked in academic settings

Findings

Academic positions

As of fall 2019, 89% of SIIS Fellows who responded to the survey were in academic positions at colleges or universities. As would be expected, those from earlier cohorts (2004-2010) were more likely to be retired (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Professional positions of SIIS Fellows



Courses

A majority of Fellows (87%) taught college or university courses in any subject during the 2018-19 academic year. Fellows in cohorts 2011-2018 were more likely to have taught courses (93%) than those in cohorts 2004-2010 (78%).

The 2019 survey for cohorts 2004-2010 asked about the number of courses Fellows taught during the 2018-19 academic year that focused on Israel for a majority of class time (Israel-focused courses), and the number of courses that were not specifically about Israel but included content on Israel (Israel-related courses). Cohorts 2011-2018 were asked for the number of Israel-focused courses and the number of Israel-related courses they taught, as well as follow-up information about the department, focus area, and student enrollment for Israel-focused courses.

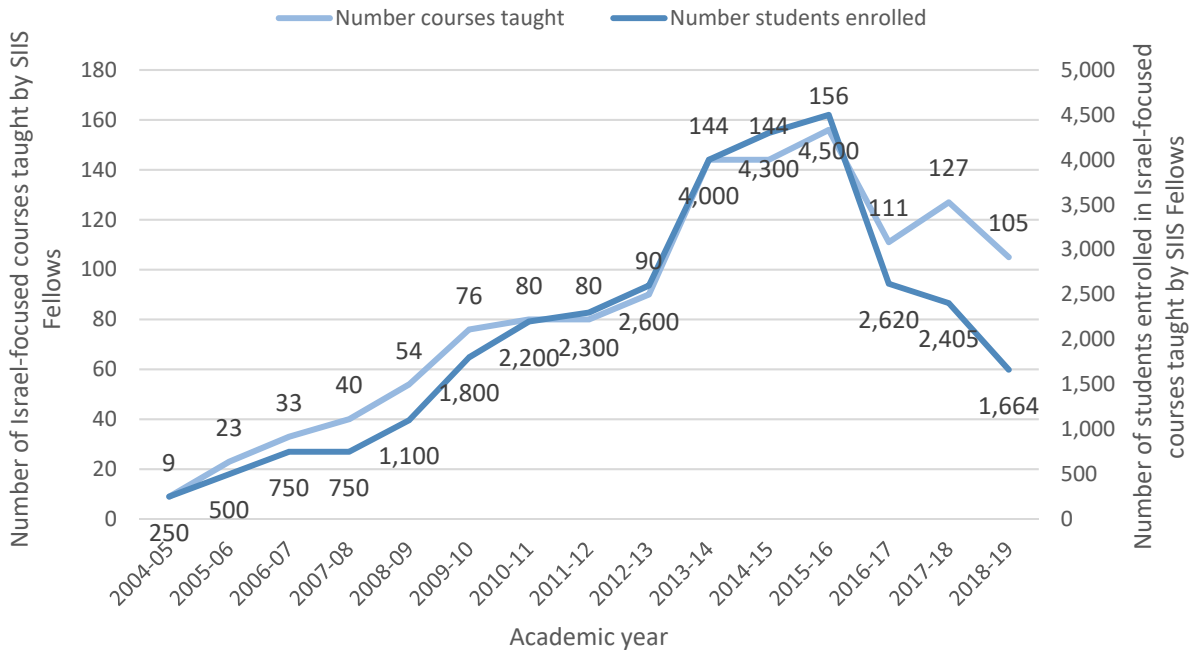
Israel-focused courses: Number and reach

In the 2018-19 academic year, 49% of survey respondents taught a college or university course with a specific focus on Israel.

Forty Fellows taught a single course focused on Israel, while 25 taught multiple courses. In total, at least 105 courses about Israel were taught by 65 Fellows.² These courses reached at least 1,664 students (Figure 2). This brings the total number of Israel-focused courses taught by SIIS Fellows since 2004 to 1,272, and the total number of students enrolled to 31,739.

² The survey asked for the number of courses focused on Israel with a maximum of “8 or more,” which one respondent selected. The number of courses reported is therefore a minimum number. Additionally, due to nonresponse from a substantial portion of Fellows, the data from the 2019 survey should be treated as minimum estimates. Some of the 147 Fellows who did not complete the survey, and for whom no information is available, may have also taught courses about Israel.

Figure 2: Number of Israel-focused courses taught by SIIS Fellows and number of students enrolled, by academic year



Israel-focused courses: Course characteristics

Detailed information about Israel-focused courses was only gathered from Fellows in cohorts 2011-2018. One quarter of the courses (25%) taught by these Fellows were first-time offerings.

The survey asked for additional information for up to four Israel-focused courses for each Fellow, and captured data on 81 courses taught during the 2018-19 academic year. Thirty of these courses were taught at international institutions, including ones located in Canada.

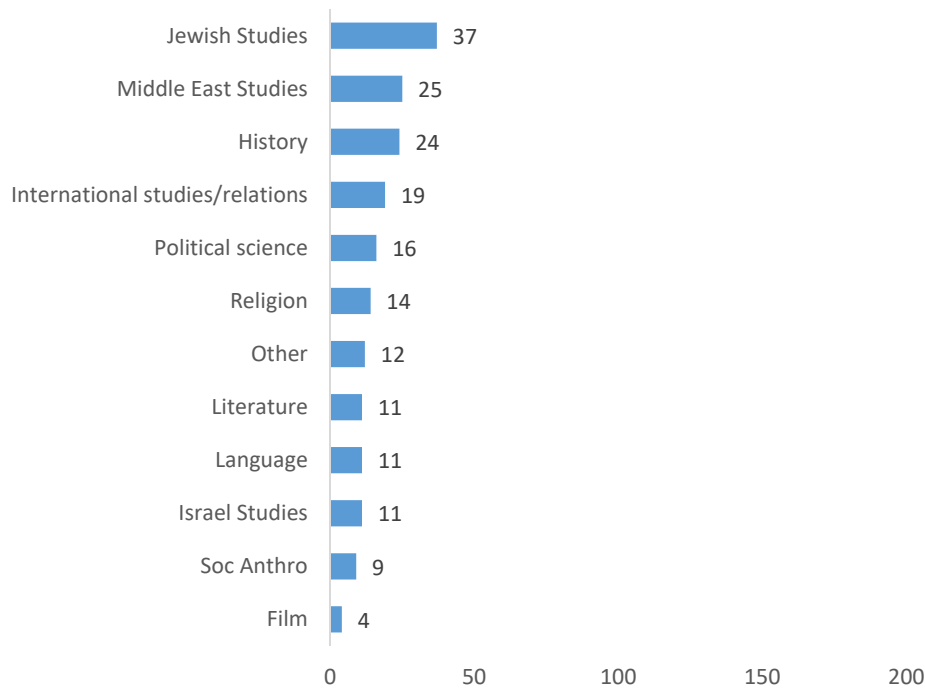
As shown in Table 2, the majority of the Israel-focused courses taught by SIIS Fellows had only undergraduate enrollment (59%). Fellows indicated all of the departments in which their Israel-focused courses were listed, most commonly in Jewish Studies, Middle East Studies, and History (Figure 3). The most common topical foci of these courses were Israeli society, history, and culture (Figure 4).

Table 2: Student course enrollment

Students taking courses	Proportion
Only undergraduates	59%
Both undergraduates and graduate students	25%
Only graduate students	15%
Total	100%

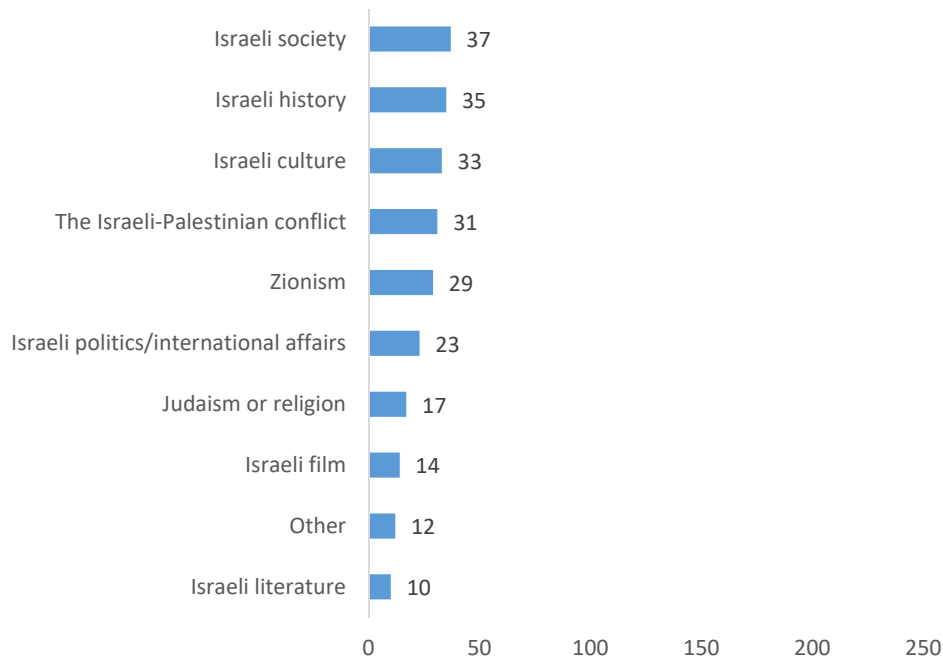
*Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=79

Figure 3: Department of course listing



**Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018. Total selected departments (select all that apply), n=193 selected departments for 81 listed courses.*

Figure 4: Courses' central area(s) of focus



**Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018. Total selected focus areas (select all that apply), n=241 selected focus areas for 81 listed courses.*

Israel-related courses

In the 2018-19 academic year, 73% of Fellows from cohorts 2004-2018 taught at least one college or university course that was not specifically about Israel, but included content on Israel. In total, 91 Fellows taught 172 courses with content related to Israel in the 2018-19 academic year.

In response to an open-ended question about how SIIS influenced the content of these courses, Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 mentioned using particular texts and resources, such as videos from the SIIS program. Fellows also described how their participation in SIIS helped them gain more confidence in understanding the current political situation in Israel from multiple viewpoints and in bringing this content to their courses and conversations with students.

It gave me greater background—historical, cultural, political, and literary—for teaching Israeli authors. (2013 cohort)

I was more sensitive in selecting the work of Israeli authors and attempting to contextualize it than I had been before participating in the SIIS. (2017 cohort)

I have a background in Israeli studies that enables me to feel confident that I am offering my students a well-informed and balanced view. (2018 cohort)

Made me more confident about explaining modern Israel. (2014 cohort)

SIIS influenced the content of these courses by introducing me to new sources and authors. Most importantly, SIIS taught me how to hold multiple narratives simultaneously, which I in turn taught my students. (2018 cohort)

I provided a course on migration politics and in it was met with a few students who have been influenced by BDSers to regard Israel's politics on migration. I felt confident to explain migration politics in a way I would have, frankly, otherwise avoided altogether. (2016 cohort)

I taught Biblical Hebrew Language and Exegesis, and I mentioned sometimes what I learnt at SIIS or saw in Israel related to the texts. (2018 cohort)

I was able to talk about the Palestinian administration in the West Bank, Rawabi, etc. with greater knowledge. I talked about the Israeli political system, their lack of a constitution, their political parties with a greater understanding. (2016 cohort)

In my 'Problem of Law' senior seminar I spent four out of sixteen weeks on 'Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East' a direct result of encountering Profs. Feldman and Shikaki at SIIS. (2016 cohort)

SIIS workshop provided theoretical (books, lectures) and practical (trip) knowledge in incorporating a section on Israel for my survey course in Comparative Politics. (2015 cohort)

Campus climate

For the first time, the 2019 survey gathered quantitative data about the political situation on Fellows' campuses by asking close-ended questions about their respective campus' climate. Prior SIIS surveys asked open-ended questions about the political climate on campus for teaching about Israel.

A majority of Fellows (62%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus (Table 3). Most Fellows (61%) also reported that they had not heard hostile remarks made about Israel by different campus constituencies in the 2018-19 academic year (Table 4). Remarks that did occur were more commonly made by students (19%). None of the Fellows reported that they heard such remarks from campus administration.

Table 3: Perception of a hostile environment toward Israel on campus

Strongly disagree	26%
Disagree	36%
Somewhat disagree	17%
Somewhat agree	17%
Agree	2%
Strongly agree	1%

*Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95.

Table 4: Experience of hostile remarks toward Israel by campus populations

None	61%
By students	19%
By professors	14%
By administration	-

* Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95. Does not equal 100% based on responses to each option in four separate questions.

The plurality of Fellows have not seen a change in course enrollment in their department in the last two or three years (Table 5). While almost half (45%) have seen no change, the rest are almost evenly split between those who have seen lower enrollment (29%) and those who have seen higher enrollment (26%).

Table 5: Perception of enrollment changes in department generally

Much less enrollment	5%
Somewhat less enrollment	24%
No change in enrollment	45%
Somewhat more enrollment	21%
Much more enrollment	5%

* Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95.

Other academic work with students

Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 were asked a series of questions about their work with students apart from teaching. Over one quarter of Fellows (29%) worked with students on Israel-related academic work apart from teaching classes in the 2018-19 academic year. As shown in Table 6, most commonly, they worked as a graduate thesis advisor or as a dissertation committee member (17%).

Most Fellows (86%) have not led tours of Israel with undergraduate and/or graduate students in the last five years (Table 7). Thirteen Fellows responded that they have led such a tour at least once since 2014. In response to a follow-up question for those who led at least one tour, these Fellows reached a total of 320 students through leading tours of Israel in the last five years.

Table 6: Other academic work with students related to Israel

Graduate thesis advisor or dissertation committee member	17%
Student group advisor	11%
Undergraduate thesis advisor	8%

* Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95.

Table 7: Number of tours led of Israel with students since 2014

None	86%
1	7%
2	4%
3	2%
4 or more	1%

* Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95.

Research and publishing

Academic conferences

Half (50%) of Fellows from cohorts 2004-2018 attended at least one conference in the 2018-19 academic year. Small numbers of Fellows attended conferences with some or an overall focus on Israel (14% attended AJS, 4% attended AIS, and 2% attended MESA). Fellows more commonly (39%) attended other academic conferences that did not have a specific focus on Israel (e.g., AAR, ASA, ASMEA, MLA).

If they reported attending a conference, Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 were asked about their role at these academic gatherings. Of those who went to a conference, most presented original research related to Israel (70%), and over one third (39%) served as a discussant or chair on a panel related to Israel.

Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 were also asked if they are members of academic organizations. Just under one third of Fellows are members of AIS (32%) and AJS (29%). Only 8% of Fellows are members of MESA, while 51% are members of other academic organizations (e.g., AAR, ASMEA, MLA).

Table 8: SIIS Fellows Membership in Academic Organizations

Academic organization	Proportion members
AIS (Association for Israel Studies)	32%
AJS (Association for Jewish Studies)	29%
MESA (Middle East Studies Association)	8%
Other professional organization(s)	51%

* Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=92

Publications

Forty percent of Fellows from cohorts 2004-2018 reported publishing a scholarly or general work on Israel in the 2018-19 academic year. One quarter of Fellows published scholarly works such as books,

book chapters, and/or peer-reviewed articles (25%). About one-in-ten Fellows (12%) published a magazine, newspaper article, or blog post.

Table 9: Books published by SIIS Fellows in 2018-19

Title	Author(s)/Editor(s)	Language
<i>Israel's Mediterranean Gas: Domestic Governance, Economic Impact, and Strategic Implications</i>	Ashwarya	English
<i>Points of Contact: Dance, Politics and Jewish-Arab Relations in Israel</i> נקודות מגע: הריקוד והפוליטי ביחסי יהודים-ערבים בישראל	Roginsky and Rottenberg	Hebrew

*Four Fellows responded that they published books in 2018-19. The other two Fellows did not provide a clear citation.

Media and other engagements

Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 were asked a series of questions about requests to speak on Israel-related topics and about their participation in talks, film screenings, and other appearances in the 2018-19 academic year.

Half of Fellows (51%) were invited to speak about topics related to Israel by community organizations, media outlets, or other institutions.³ Over half of Fellows (56%) made at least one appearance related to Israel on their campus, another campus, or in another setting (e.g., museum, Jewish organization, or online platform). Almost half of Fellows (47%) gave a lecture, and almost one quarter (24%) participated in a panel or roundtable discussion, in any setting (Table 10).

Table 10: Fellows' public presentations about Israel in 2018-19

Type of appearance	Proportion of Fellows
Gave a lecture	47%
Spoke on a panel or roundtable discussion	24%
Presented at a film screening	14%
Participated in an interview	12%
Gave a media appearance	9%
Served as a guest artist	2%

*Asked of cohorts 2011-2018 only, n=95

Continued connections with SIIS

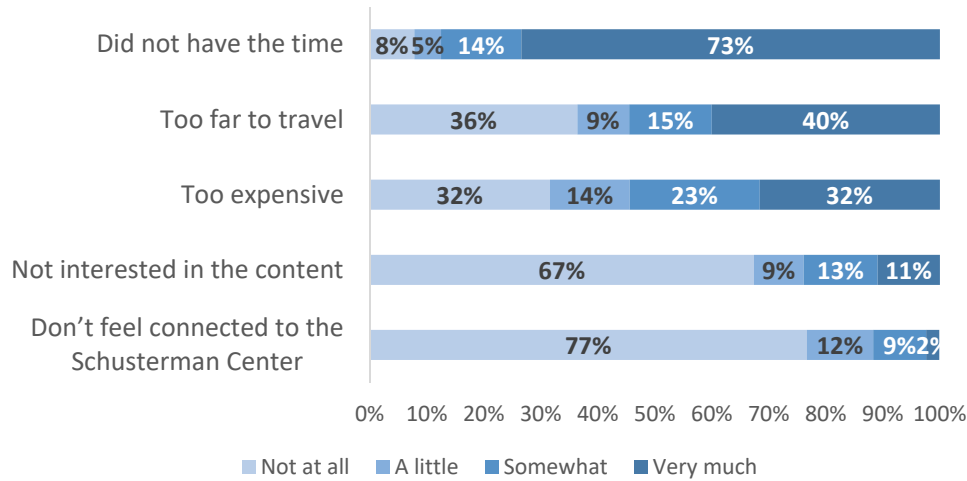
Schusterman Center annual conference

Only 10% of Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 attended the Schusterman Center annual conference in 2019. Of those who did not attend the conference, the most common reason selected was not having the time (for 73% of Fellows, this was “very much” the reason they did not attend). As shown in Figure

³ The question did not specify whether the requested appearance occurred in the 2018-19 academic year and requests may have been made for later dates. The next questions asked about the appearances Fellows actually made in the 2018-19 academic year, separate from requests for appearances.

5, only small percentages of Fellows indicated that their lack of attendance was even “a little” due to a lack of interest in the content or not feeling connected to the Schusterman Center.

Figure 5: Reasons for non-attendance at 2019 Schusterman Center annual conference

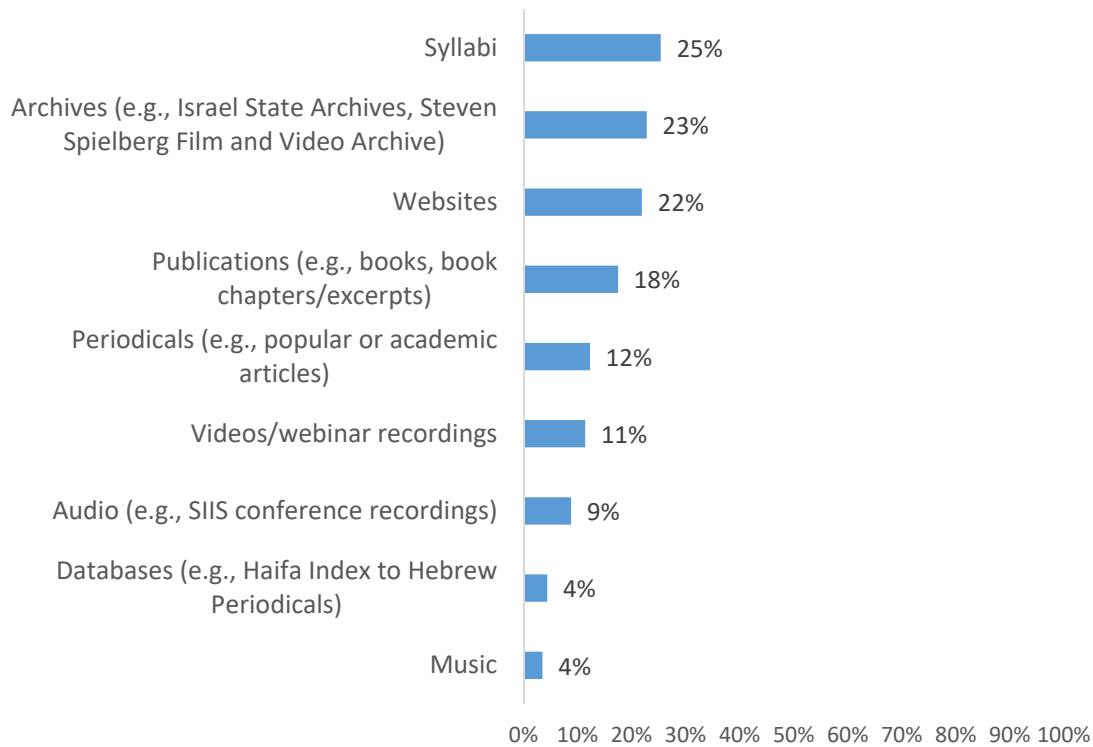


**Asked only of those in cohorts 2011-2018 who did not attend the 2019 conference, n=82.*

Using Schusterman Center resources

Over half (56%) of Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 used resources on the Schusterman Center resource site in the 2018-19 academic year. Most commonly, the Fellows accessed syllabi (25%), archives such as the Israel State Archives (23%), and websites (22%) from the resource site (Figure 6).

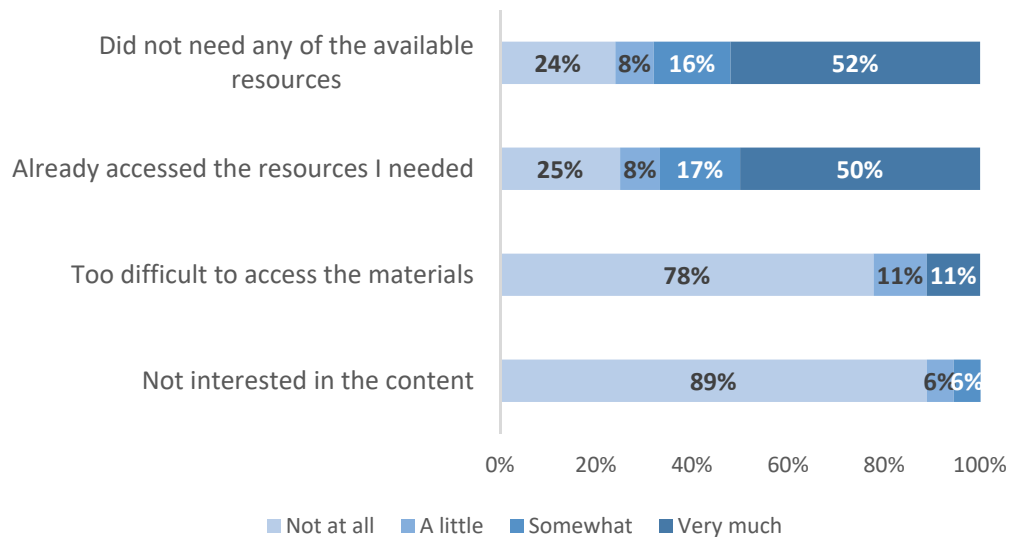
Figure 6: Use of Schusterman Center resource site materials



*Cohorts 2011-2018 only, n=95

Among those who did not access any of the resources on the Schusterman Center site in the last academic year, the most common reasons selected were that they already accessed the materials they needed or they did not need any of the available materials (67% selected each of these as at least “somewhat” the reason)(Figure 7).

Figure 7: Fellows' reasons for not using Schusterman Center resource site materials

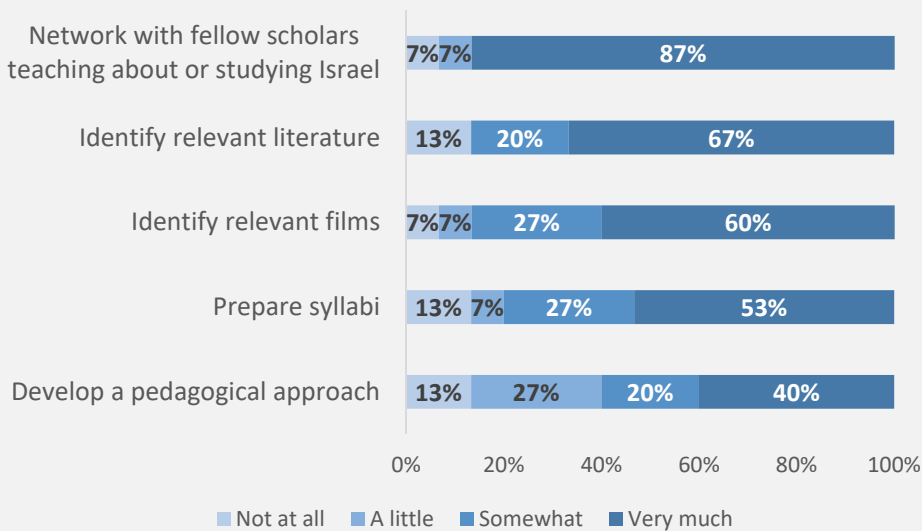


*Asked only of those in cohorts 2011-2018 who did not use resources, n=25.

Reflections of 2018 SIIS Fellows

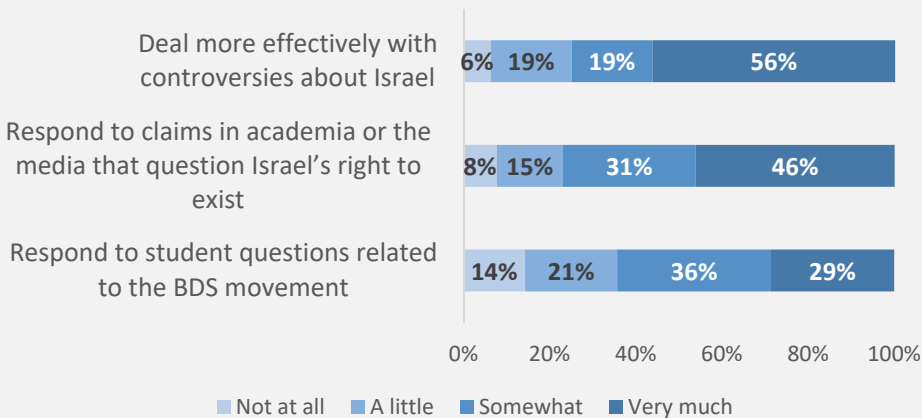
At the time of the survey, Fellows from the 2018 cohort had completed their first academic year after their SIIS summer program. They were asked to reflect on the impact of SIIS in a number of areas. As shown in Figure 8, a majority of 2018 Fellows at least “somewhat” agreed that SIIS helped them network with other teachers (94%), identify relevant literature (87%) and films (87%), and prepare syllabi (80%).

Figure 8: Reflections of Fellows on pedagogical impact of SIIS



The 2018 Fellows were also asked to reflect on how their participation in SIIS helped prepare them to respond to questions and controversies related to Israel. As shown in Figure 9, a majority of these Fellows at least “somewhat” agreed that their participation in SIIS helped them deal more effectively with controversies about Israel in their classrooms and with their students and colleagues (75%).

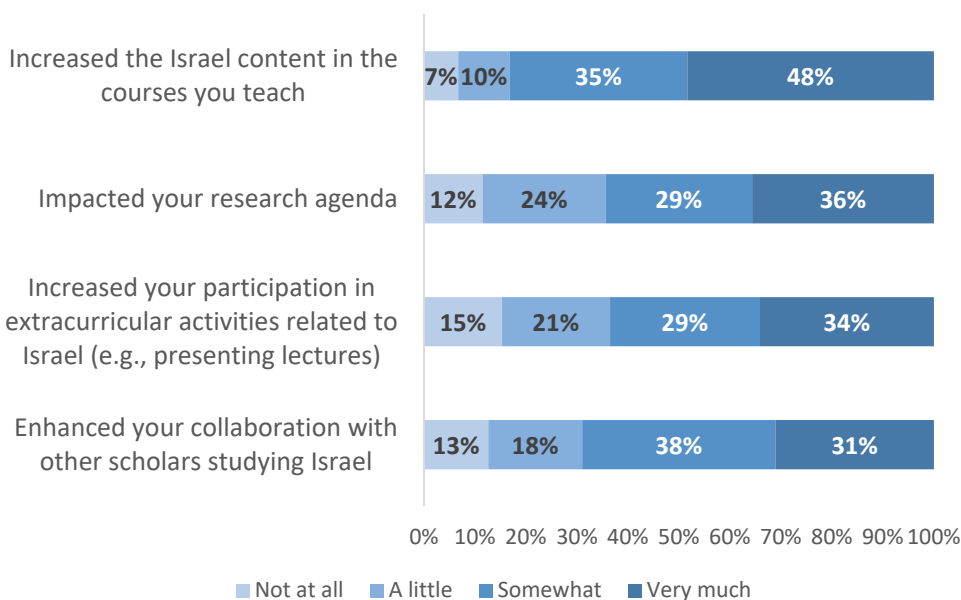
Figure 9: Reflections of Fellows on impact of SIIS in response to questions and controversies



Fellows assess professional impact of SIIS

The Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 were asked about the impact of their participation in SIIS on their teaching, research, and additional professional activities. As shown in Figure 10, the majority of Fellows responded that SIIS at least “somewhat” increased the Israel content in their courses (83%), enhanced their collaboration with other scholars studying Israel (69%), impacted their research agenda (65%), and increased their participation in other activities related to Israel (63%).

Figure 10: Fellows' assessment of SIIS impact



*Asked only of cohorts 2011-2018, n=95.

Fellows were asked in an open-ended question if there were other ways in which their participation in SIIS affected their professional or scholarly pursuits.⁴ Fellows frequently mentioned the impact of SIIS on their courses, including introducing them to topics, texts, and pedagogic perspectives. Several Fellows also mentioned the impact of SIIS on their confidence in responding to discussions of Israel on campus or in the community. Many Fellows noted the network of scholars they gained through their participation as a significant positive outcome. Some found scholars to invite for guest lectures, or identified peers who could provide resources for advancing their careers. One Fellow wrote that SIIS inspired the formation of an Israel studies department at their university.

I have used SIIS web resources in several classes AND had my students listen to some podcasts done by the Schusterman Center. (2007 cohort)

It's a very good resource. The access to people, journals, and books is invaluable especially for those of us at smaller institutions. (2009 cohort)

I have been more active in campus discussions about Israel. (2009 cohort)

⁴ Cohorts 2004-2010 were asked this question in the context of the last year; cohorts 2011-2018 were asked generally if SIIS affected their professional or scholarly pursuits in any other ways than those listed in Figure 10.

I feel more confident when teaching about Israel on campus and in the community. (2015 cohort)

I am traveling to Israel this year to present four public lectures partly due to my participation in SIIS. (2017 cohort)

SIIS deeply affected my career path. I am still working to continue researching and teaching according to the standards I learned at SIIS. (2007 cohort)

I got an Israel Institute's 'International Courses Grant' for the spring term 2020. Thanks to the funding provided by the Israel Institute, I will teach a graduate course on Israeli Culture, at the University of Lisbon (UL), in Lisbon, Portugal, Department of History. It will be the first time that a course on Israel will be taught at the UL. The course is a revised version of the course I developed at SIIS in 2006, and I have taught it for a number of years to undergraduate students at my home institution. During my stay in Lisbon, I will also do research on my area of expertise, Portuguese-Spanish (Sephardic) Jews. (2006 cohort)

I keep in contact with scholars who attended the seminar and I keep on writing articles, particularly about Israel's foreign relations. (2007 cohort)

Found colleagues willing to write letters of recommendation and promotion through my SIIS network. (2014 cohort)

I was able to solicit more participants for the European Association of Israel Studies meeting in Prague in September 2019 through the listserv. (2008 cohort)

Yes, by putting me in contact with people who I then invited to campus for conferences and seminars on Israel-related topics. (2017 cohort)

Participation in SIIS inspired the Charles University to establish its Herzl Center for Israel Studies (<https://herzl.cuni.cz>) here, with the help of the Israel Institute. We have recently hired the Center's first director, Dr. Irena Kalhousová, who is also teaching a new course within Israel studies. (2015 cohort)

Fellows were also asked if they had anything else to share (2004-2010) or if they wanted to suggest other ways SIIS could assist them (2011-2018). Several Fellows asked for regular reminders and easier access to resources available through the Schusterman Center. Fellows also wanted to encourage the Schusterman Center to keep providing key materials such as books and webinars to Fellows. Some wanted more opportunities to collaborate with each other and with the Schusterman Center in research, publishing, and speaking opportunities.

A reminder every so often of the resources/materials available at SIIS for instructors would be great. (2017 cohort)

Continue to provide bibliographical resources and chances to participate in conferences. (2018 cohort)

I wish someone would explain how to enter the archives. It migrated and after that, I could not get in. It would be great to advertise more opportunities for networking or events, etc. through the emails. (2012 cohort)

Occasional emails with listings of important articles that we may have missed. (2014 cohort)

Continue to maintain contact and personal touch because it's easy to become distant after the summer Fellowship experience now that we've all gone back to our home institutions. (2018 cohort)

Mini-conferences, pedagogical material, opportunities for networking. More of what it's already doing so well. I would particularly appreciate if they could help build connections with resources in Israel, in my case related to business. (2011 cohort)

I do think, if possible, SIIS may send us—particularly we in the non-English speaking countries—important books on Israel. I got a free copy of Daniel Gordis' new book on Israel via SIIS. I read it and finally got published a Chinese version which, since its publication last September, has been reprinted five times, and hailed as 'the best [Chinese] book on Israel.' (2012 cohort)

Considering the number of SIIS Fellows, is it crazy to consider an annual publication of articles or something like that? (2007 cohort)

Please let me know when there are Israeli scholars in my geographic area willing to speak for a fee to my university. (2014 cohort)

Fellows also mentioned an interest in returning to Israel in conjunction with the Schusterman Center.

I wonder if there could be funding for alums of the program interested in returning to Israel for additional research or pedagogy in the field of Israel Studies. (2017 cohort)

I would like to visit Israel again to freshen my courses. (2014 cohort)

I wish there could be a follow-up trip back to Israel in which I could network, perhaps a discounted group trip in which we could have time to network with professionals in our respective areas of knowledge. (2018 cohort)

Facilitate trips to Israel, language instruction at ulpan. (2013 cohort)

Discussion

Every summer, the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies trains a cohort of scholars in teaching about Israel through seminars, syllabi development, and a 10-day study tour in Israel. The reach of SIIS continues after the program—as Fellows join a community of global scholars and have access to Schusterman Center resources, conferences, and webinars.

The impact of SIIS on campuses across the globe is clear when accounting for the work of Fellows in teaching, publishing, and presenting on Israel. At least 65 Fellows taught a minimum of 105 courses focused on Israel in the 2018-19 academic year, reaching at least 1,664 students. At least 30 courses were taught at international institutions. Additionally, 91 Fellows taught at least one college or

university course not specifically about Israel, but including content on Israel. Thirteen Fellows led a trip to Israel in the last five years, reaching 320 students.

Sixty-one Fellows from cohorts 2004-2018 reported publishing a scholarly or general work on Israel in the 2018-19 academic year. One quarter of Fellows (39 Fellows) published scholarly works such as books, book chapters, and/or peer-reviewed articles. Outside of the classroom, 53 Fellows made at least one appearance related to Israel on their campus, another campus, or in another setting.

The Fellows were generally positive about their experience and the impact of SIIS. The 2018 Fellows reflected that their participation in SIIS helped them network with fellow scholars teaching about or studying Israel, and identify relevant literature and films for their work and teaching. A majority of the 2018 Fellows felt SIIS helped them respond more effectively to controversies about Israel. Most Fellows from cohorts 2011-2018 felt that SIIS at least somewhat increased the Israel content in their courses (83%), enhanced their collaboration with other scholars studying Israel (69%), impacted their research agenda (65%), and increased their participation in other activities related to Israel (63%).

Fellows continue to look for ways to access Schusterman Center resources and connect with one another and Israel. These findings point to the ongoing impact of SIIS and its role in supporting and expanding Israel studies.

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