A Word from Our Former Students

Brooke Laing (16, M.A. student in Human Rights Program, University College of London)

“Coming from Boone to London, I have really enjoyed being in the heart of popular activism. Major protests regarding a host of domestic and international human rights issues occur almost weekly. It has been inspiring to see thousands of people join together to stand up for the rights of their fellow humans so regularly and with such passion. The student body of UCL is very politically active and the department hosts frequent panels and lectures from notable speakers, including the heads of numerous UN Committees and NGOs on the frontline of Human Rights, such as Jeffrey Sachs and Philip Alston. There are experiences that can only be found in a politically active and international city such as London.

My decision to pursue a career in Human Rights is a direct result of the involvement with the Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies Center. The Center not only provided specialized expertise in Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies, but also offered powerful lessons as to why these kinds of atrocities occur placed particular emphasis on the importance of prevention, and celebrated the cultures and lives of the persecuted, rather than teaching about them as statistics. These lessons deeply affected me. I accepted my offer to attend University of Florida, studying at the University of Florida has been a great experience. I have so many resources both academically and socially at my disposal, and the UF Hillel is enormous! As I pursue my Master’s degree in historic preservation, I look back at my time here as an advocate for human rights and the prevention of atrocities today. Now, as I near the end of my Masters in Human Rights Program at University College of London, I believe that the practical expertise I’ve gained here at UCL in combination with the knowledge I amassed under the tutelage of the Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies Center have given me the tools to help enact change, and to try and help protect those who are unable to protect themselves from their oppressors.”

Jocely Kitan (16, M.A. Student in Historic Preservation, University of Florida)

“I know without a doubt that my academic and professional accomplishments have been shaped by my experiences with both the undergraduate history program at Appalachian and my involvement with the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies. My experiences as a history major with minors in JHPS and Political Science, a member of the Heltzer Honors College, following the Center Fellows student organization, and working with the annual Martin and Doris Rosen Summer Symposium nurtured and challenged me to pursue my studies at a higher level, preparing me for the rigors of graduate school.

Following graduation in May 2015, I was awarded a scholarship for the one year Masters in History program at Brandeis University. My master’s thesis examined Henry Ford’s The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem and its subsequent use among hate groups in the United States. Following graduation from Brandeis in May of 2016, I traveled to Poland on a graduate fellowship with the Auschwitz Jewish Center examining the legacy of the Holocaust within post-Communist Kraków, Łódź, Warsaw, and Oswiecim. When I returned from Poland I accepted a newly created position with the USHMM working in donor relations and special events. My work takes me across the country, meeting with donors and working to spread awareness for the museum.

Little did I know when I accepted my offer to attend Appalachian that I would be where I am today. I will be forever grateful to the university for the opportunities afforded to me by my association with the History Department and the Center. My collection of experiences provided me with a background to succeed in graduate school and professionally, fueling my passion to pursue Holocaust and genocide studies. It is not an exaggeration to say that my professional and personal accomplishments would not have been possible without my involvement with the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies.”

Spring Newsletter 2017

54,000 interviews with Holocaust Survivors Now Accessible at ASU and the Center

ASU is the latest university and research institution to provide full access to the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive (VHA). The largest archive of its kind worldwide, the collection contains over 54,000 video testimonies of Holocaust survivors as well as hundreds of accounts by witnesses and survivors of other systematic mass killings, including the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (1994) and the Armenian Genocide (1915-1925). The testimonies were taken in more than 40 languages. ASU and its Center join more than 30 other universities and museums in more than 13 countries in providing access to the entire archive. ASU is the only site in Western North Carolina, where the Shoah Foundation’s VHA can be used in its entirety. Students, scholars, teachers and campus visitors will be able to access the Visual History Archive through Belk Library and Resource Center. The Library of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies also has two computer terminals, where users can work with the complete archive of genocide survivor and witness testimonies. The Center wishes to thank Belk Library for collaborating with the Center and ASU’s College of Arts and Sciences for bringing this unique resource to Appalachian.

Forthcoming Center Events

August 5-10, Martin and Doris Rosen Summer Symposium “Remembering the Holocaust” at the Courtyard Marriott, 1659 Highway 193.

“The Holocaust is a defining event in human history. It is a painful reminder of the very real danger that our world is still faced with. As we approach the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the focus of the 16th symposium is on the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa. With this in mind, the symposium aims to bring this unique resource to students, scholars, teachers and campus visitors.”

For more information on events, please visit our website at: holocaust.appstate.edu/events
A WORD FROM OUR DIRECTOR: TRAINING AND WORKING WITH ASU UNDERGRADUATES

Over the years, the Center for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies (JHPS) has trained hundreds of secondary school teachers from the U.S. and Europe in its Martin and Doris Rosenthal Summer Symposium on “Remembering the Holocaust.” At the same time, the Center had an even greater impact in its work with the many thousands of ASU undergraduates who have taken courses in the academic minor in Jewish, Holocaust or Peace Studies. Most of the Center-affiliated faculty members teach in the minor, introducing students to an array of topics and debates that would otherwise not be part of their undergraduate experience at Appalachian. The Center is collaborating closely with the JHPS Program and other departments in creating new faculty positions at the campus or help already-present professors to develop new courses. As a direct result, ASU students will, finally, be able to study Modern Hebrew in a for-credit course, beginning in Fall 2017. Students in these courses also benefit from the research colloquia, lectures, and conferences organized by the Center throughout the academic year. In 2016-17, ASU undergraduates had the same opportunity to interact with some of the leading scholars in the study of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, including Christopher R. Browning, UNC-Chapel Hill, Guy Miron (Yad Vashem), and Marcus Funck (TU Berlin).

As the voices of former ASU students on the newsletter’s front page so powerfully illustrate, many of our alumnae and alumni have gone on to graduate school programs in JHPS or taken positions in museums and related institutions as a direct result of their work with the Center. In their careers, they will definitely continue to keep the memory and study of the Holocaust and modern genocides alive. At a time of rising anti-Semitism, nothing could be more important in the work of a Center than to expand this work with our students. In May 2017, a record number of a dozen JHPS minors will graduate from ASU.

The next (5th) edition of the New Testament and Hostage will be published by SUNY Press.

Oulgized by the Program for Judaic, Holocaust, and Peace Studies, ASU students in a new upper-level research class on the Nazi genocide of European Jewry carried out research at archives, memorials and documentation centers in Germany and Poland over spring break. The students did not only work with numerous collections at the archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial, they also presented their research at Polish and German universities, shedding light on a range of topics from the fate of “Jewish Mischlinge” in Nazi Germany to gender dynamics at auctions of Jewish property in wartime Frankfurt/Main. The visit included a Center-organized panel in Wolfsburg, the hometown of Volkswagen, on the city’s and company’s Nazi origins and the politics of memory. Poznian Michéhl Hartung, spokesperson for the Society of Persons Persecuted by the Nazi Regime (VVN), repeatedly challenged her co-panelist Peter Kassel, the Chanc of the City Council Faction of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany. The two engaged the students in a debate over Wolfsburg’s ongoing verdration of Ferdinand Porsche, who had close ties to Hitler and Himmler and was involved in Nazi mass crimes. As Prof. Pegelow Kaplan, who led the research excursion, said: "With Prof. Amy Huchland emphasised, the travels in Europe offered ASU undergraduates the unique opportunity to conduct cutting-edge research at important research sites in Europe, meet with influential scholars, and archivists, and debate memory makers and politicians. They went to Europe as student scholars, not as ‘Holocaust tourists.’"

The group travel was supported by funding from the Miriam and Abe Brenner Foundation in cooperation with the Greensboro Jewish Federation, the Reinhart Family Foundation, and the German Academic Exchange Service. This funding enabled many students to participate, who would otherwise not have been able to afford it. Participants also presented their work in the United States, including on a public panel at ASU, and as part of the Yom HaShoah commemoration at Beth David Synagogue in Greensboro. The next excursion is scheduled for 2019.

STAY CONNECTED

To sign up for the Center’s e-newsletter with frequent up-dates on programs and activities, go to https://holocaust.appstate.edu and click on the “Subscribe” link.

YOM HASHOAH

2017/5777

On the Holocaust Memorial Day, community members, ASU staff, students and faculty participated in a ceremony at the local synagogue and eight hours of readings of the names of Jews murdered in the Shoah at the ASU campus. The Center co-organized the event with the Temple of the High Country and ASU’s Hillel chapter.

Elaine Rotheringberg reading names of murdered Jews.

Please renew your membership, consider becoming a member, or make a donation in support of the Center’s work. To do so contact the Center’s Office at (828) 262-2311.