

Postdoctoral Fellows



Moran Balaish

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology >> Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Moran Balaish was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled "A Lithium Solid-State Memristor- Modulating Interfaces and Defects for Novel Li-Ionic Operated Memory and Computing Architectures" at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This research will investigate lithium ionic carrier and defect kinetics in oxides to design material architectures and interfaces for novel Li-operated memristors as alternative memory and non-binary computing architectures. Her PhD research focused on the development of a Perfluorocarbon modified air-cathode/non-aqueous electrolyte system for Lithium-oxygen batteries. Moran aims to fabricate design and investigate Li-type oxides as novel functional ceramic and glass-type oxides in memristors for information storage and computing.



Raphael Isaac Benhamou

Tel Aviv University >> SCRIPPS Research Institute

Raphael I. Benhamou was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled "Rational Design of Small Molecules Targeting RNA", under the supervision of Prof. Matthew D. Disney at the SCRIPPS Research Institute. In this project, he will utilize chemical synthesis and chemical similarity searching to develop a library of similar compounds to derive structure activity relationships (SAR) to selectively inhibit miR-210 with minimal effect on other RNAs. These studies will result in novel small molecules with nanomolar activities. Importantly, the results of these studies will identify the required chemical properties in a small molecule that are necessary to afford potent, selective, and cell permeable anti-miR-210 compounds. The collected results will contribute to the designing of the next generation of anti-miR-210 compounds and chemical probes to validate their targets. He focused his Ph.D. research on the development of new antibacterial and antifungal compounds targeting the microbial membrane and of novel fluorescent molecular tools to be used as probes to study the mechanism of antifungal drugs.



Chen Edelsberg

Tel Aviv University >> Stanford University

Chen Edelsberg was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled "'The Only Weapon at My Disposal': Female Hysteria as a Strategy of Resistance in Hebrew Literature" at Stanford University. This research will investigate the portrayal of hysteria in the heroines of Hebrew literature by women writers and afford deeper insight into hysteria as a literary form. Her PhD research focused on the Author-Reader relationship in American and Hebrew postmodern literature. This research was conducted at Tel Aviv University. During this period Chen was a researcher at the Kipp Center for Hebrew Literature and Culture at Tel Aviv University and taught at the department of Literature.



Yael Elster

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> Harvard University

Yael Elster was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled "Evaluating the Housing Market Effects of the Residential Segregation of Ultra-Orthodox Jews" at Harvard University. This research relies on a theory of dynamic segregation which predicts that once the minority share in a neighborhood exceeds a "tipping point", all the majority group leaves. Yael intends to examine whether such "tipping points" exist in the Israeli case and to explore the housing market effects of the segregation process. Her PhD research focused on how the repeated rocket attacks against Israel affect electoral and economic outcomes. Yael was awarded the President's Doctoral Fellowship for an Outstanding PhD student by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Hebrew University and have received research grants from the Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research, the Pinhas Sapir Economic Policy Forum and the Swiss Center for Conflict Research, Management and Resolution.



Tsivia Frank Wygoda

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> Yale University

Tsivia Frank Wygoda was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled “Impossible Homeland, Paradoxical Longing, Shifting Belongings. The Place of Algeria in Contemporary French-Jewish Culture”. This research will analyze the presence, the memory and the function of Algeria in postcolonial French-Jewish culture, from the start of Algeria’s war of independence in 1954 to the present day, through the analysis of major literary works and their reception. Tsivia’s PhD research on the Jewish-Egyptian poet Edmond Jabès focused on the relationship between work-in-progress, poetics and interpretation of texts; it offered a new contextualization of Jabès’ rewriting of Jewish identity and textuality in post-war France, in the shade of the Holocaust and of the author’s exile from Egypt to France. Tsivia was part of the Honors Program for Outstanding Doctoral Students. Her dissertation received the Hans Wiener Prize in the Humanities. In the past two years, Tsivia has taught literature at the Department of French Culture at Bar-Ilan University.



David Helman

Bar-Ilan University >> Johns Hopkins University

David Helman was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research titled “Forecasting Risks of Violent Conflict Outbreaks in Africa and the Middle East from the Climate–Scarcity–Conflict Nexus” at Johns Hopkins University. This research will seek for direct and indirect relations between climate, water/food scarcity and violence to establish a causal predictive model of potential violent outbreak risks. His PhD research focused on ecohydrological responses of Mediterranean forests to climate change observed from satellites. Currently, David develops numerical as well as satellite-based water/crop models for early prediction of wheat yield as part of the Israeli Wheat Project (MIzam). He also works with on Precision Agriculture techniques.



Efrat Herzberg Druker

Tel Aviv University >> University of Wisconsin–Madison

Efrat Herzberg Druker was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled “Does fertility matter? Changes in fertility and income inequality in the US” at the University of Wisconsin- Madison. This research examines the extent to which changes in fertility contributed to the rise in income inequality. More specifically, the research will examine the intersections between levels of fertility and education levels at the household level and examine the extent to which these changes and patterns contribute to the rise in income inequality. Her PhD research focused on family demographic changes and the rise in income inequality in Israel. Upon completion of her dissertation, Efrat joined a research project at the University of Haifa that deals with computer use at the workplace and its contribution to the gender gaps in the labor market in the US.



Deborah Marciano

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> University of California, Berkeley

Deborah Marciano was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled “The Conformist Brain: a brain study of the influence of social information on decision-making”. This research will investigate the influence of conformity on decision making and its neural correlates. Her PhD research focused on the electrophysiological correlates of outcome comparison and used a combination of neuroscience techniques and behavioral economics paradigms. It was conducted at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During this period, Deborah was also the manager of Ratiolab, the interactive decision-making lab of the Ferdermann Center for the Study of Rationality, and she volunteered as a behavioral economics consultant for several governmental offices and organizations.



Rinat Meir

Bar-Ilan University >> Columbia University

Rinat Meir was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled "Multifunctional Nano-Biomaterials for Biomedical Applications" at Columbia University. This research is aimed to develop and engineer advanced materials for targeted delivery of therapeutics in various medical applications. She focused her Ph.D. research on the development of nanoparticles for cancer diagnostics and targeted immunotherapy. Rinat's research is highly interdisciplinary as it merges chemistry, biology, medicine, materials science and engineering.



Michael Peer

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> University of Pennsylvania

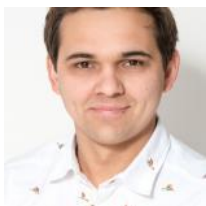
Michael Peer was awarded a Fulbright postdoctoral fellowship to pursue his research project titled "characterizing the brain's large-scale space representation system" at the University of Pennsylvania. This research will investigate the neurocognitive systems used to encode cognitive maps of the large-scale environment, and their possible use to map other types of knowledge in more abstract domains. His PhD research was conducted in the Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center. This research focused on disruptions of brain networks in neuropsychiatric disorders, and on the use of similar brain mechanisms to orient in space, time and the social domain.



Rachel Rac-Lubashevsky

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev >> Brown University

Rachel Rac-Lubashevsky was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled "The role of reinforcement learning on control over working memory". She completed her PhD in Cognitive and Brain Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, where she also taught courses. In the proposed study will investigate how learning from positive outcomes shapes the voluntary decision that a perceived or remembered information is relevant to be represented in working memory and to guide behavior. In her PhD research, she focused on understanding the neurocognitive properties of the controlled selection of information into working memory and how it differs from automatic selection of information.



Kiril Solovey

Tel Aviv University >> Stanford University

Kiril Solovey was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project focusing on algorithmic aspects of robotics. He is particularly interested in robot motion planning, which aims to allow autonomous robots to effectively navigate in complex environments. In his PhD degree he worked on multi-robot systems and sampling-based algorithms. During this time he was supported by the Clore Israel Foundation. His two recent publications have received best-paper awards.



Ilya Svetlizky

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> Harvard University

Ilya Svetlizky was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue his research project titled “Irreversible (Plastic) Deformation of Materials” at Harvard University. This research will use experimental model system to explore the underlying processes governing plastic deformation, over the different length scales involved. His PhD research focused on rupture dynamics at the onset of frictional motion.



Naomi Yuval Naeh

Tel Aviv University >> Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Naomi Yuval Naeh was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to pursue her research project titled “Imagining the Carboniferous Period: Coal and Nature in Nineteenth Century Britain” At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This research will explore the place of coal in British culture as natural curiosity, intersecting imaginations of deep time, ideals of nature and industrial modernity. Her PhD research was conducted at Tel Aviv University and focused on plants in nineteenth-century British urban culture. Education - PhD in History of Science, Tel Aviv University - MSc in Biology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem - BSc in Biology and Amirim Program in the Humanities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Moshe Yagur

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> University of Michigan

Moshe Yagur was awarded a Fulbright Postdoctoral fellowship to pursue his research project titled "Interfaith residential patterns in Medieval Egypt according to Cairo Geniza documents." This research aims to document and analyze dwelling habits of Jews in medieval Egypt and the Levant, and their significance for inter-religious contacts and influences. Moshe's PhD research examined cases of conversion to Judaism and from it in the Jewish communities of medieval Egypt and the Levant. Systematic analysis of these cases enriches our understanding concerning the way Jewish identity was perceived by the members of the community. During his research he was a fellow at the Center for the Study of Conversion and Inter-Religious Encounters (CSOC). Upon completion of his dissertation, Moshe joined a research project studying the cultural significance of converts in medieval Islamic civilization.

Master's Degree Fellows



Gilat Abraham Zaefen

University of Haifa >> Columbia University

Gilat Abraham Zaefen clerked at the Israeli Supreme Court, both for the Hon. Chief Justice Miriam Naor and for the Hon. Justice Daphne Barak-Erez. Gilat currently works as an associate in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution Department at Herzog Fox & Neeman, Israel's largest law firm, ranked 'Top Tier' in all international and domestic legal guides. Gilat received her LL.B (summa cum laude) in Law and her B.A. in Psychology from Haifa University in 2012. Gilat was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue her LL.M. at Columbia Law School, with an emphasis on administrative and constitutional law.



Yaron Covo

Tel Aviv University >> Columbia University

Yaron Covo received his LL.B in law, cum laude, from Tel Aviv University. During his studies Yaron worked in Orna Lin & Co. Law Offices, a prominent Israeli law firm specialized in labor law. Upon graduation, Yaron served as a law clerk to the Hon. Justice Daphne Barak-Erez of the Supreme Court of Israel. Yaron's areas of interest focus on the intersection of sports and the law. As a Fulbright fellow, Yaron will pursue his LL.M at Columbia University, focusing on the role of sports in promoting human rights and social change.



Ruba Hamdan

Max Stern Yezreel Valley College >> Savannah College of Art & Design

Fulbright Master's Outreach fellow, Ruba, will be studying for her MFA at Savannah College of Art & Design.

Ruba Hamdan received her B.A. in Communications from Max Stern Yezreel Valley College and holds an Interior Design Diploma from 6B Studio. Ruba aspires to develop a career as a professional artist, a researcher and an art educator. She is especially enthusiastic about promoting art education as a tool for intercultural dialogue through programs for children and youth and also aspires to contribute to the enhancement of the arts in Arab society, where the field is significantly underdeveloped, by conducting research on Arab art, empowering Arab artists, organizing exhibitions and promoting Arab art internationally. Ruba hopes to advance these goals by developing her artistic voice, expanding her research and intellectual skills through living in a diverse global community and reaching beyond ethnic and gender boundaries.



Aiman Jabaren

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology >> University of California, San Diego

Fulbright Master's Outreach Fellow, Aiman, will be pursuing his Master's degree in Electrical Engineering at UCSD, where he will be conducting research in computer vision.

Aiman received a B.Sc. in Biomedical Engineering and a B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering from the Technion Institute of Technology. He conducted research in image processing at the Ultrasound Signal and Image Processing and Modeling Lab and the Neural Interface Engineering Lab during his bachelor degrees. Afterwards, he worked for two years as a pre-silicon verification engineer at Intel.



Eran Margalit

Tel Aviv University >> Brooklyn College

Eran Margalit received his BA (B.Mus.) in Music Performance (percussion) from the Buchmann-Mehta School of Music in Tel-Aviv University where he currently studying in the Vocal class. He will study towards his Master's Degree (Performance – Vocal) in the Brooklyn College Conservatory of Music in New York. Eran started his studies while serving in the Israel Defense Force as an "Excellency Musician" at the Education and Youth Corps (2012-2015). During his career, Eran has played with Israel's top orchestras including the Israel Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony and The Israeli Symphony – Rishon Letzion and sung in many choirs including the "Thelma Yalin" Alumni Choir and currently in the Israeli Opera Choir. He performed under international conductors like Zubin Mehta, Dani Ettinger, Daniel Oren, Manfred Honeck and more. In the last years, He also started teaching and instructing young musicians in "Hassadna" Conservatory in Jerusalem, The Young Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, etc.'.



Tamer Mograbi

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology >> University of Maryland

Fulbright Master's Outreach fellow, Tamer, will be learning and specializing in the field he is most passionate about, robotics, at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Tamer received his BSc in Computer Science from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology in 2015. After graduating, Tamer worked in Tel Aviv at Check Point Software Technologies as a software engineer dealing with network security and later worked in Haifa at Cadence Design Systems as a software engineer dealing with formal verification.



Yafit Shalev

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> Harvard University

Fulbright Master's Outreach fellow, Ruba, will be studying for her MFA at Savannah College of Art & Design.

Yafit Shalev received her LL.B/BA in Law and in "Amirim" (The Honors Program in the Humanities) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2013. Upon finishing her studies, Yafit served as a Legal Intern in the Ministry of Justice, and later on as a law clerk for the Honorable Deputy Supreme Court President Justice Elyakim Rubinstein. Today Yafit works as an attorney in the litigation department at Agmon & Co. Rosenberg Hachohen & Co., where she deals with civil and administrative cases with emphasis on class actions, liquidation cases, derivative suits, and administrative petitions. Yafit was awarded the Fulbright scholarship to study for an LL.M in administrative law at Harvard University.



Sameer Sharara

Technion – Israel Institute of Technology >> University of California, San Diego

Fulbright Master's Outreach fellow, Sameer, is planning to start his LLM studies at Northwestern University.

During his academic life, Sameer volunteered in many NGOs, besides taking part in the Ambitions Forum, which accompanies – socially, academically and personally – first year Arab law students in Israeli universities. In 2014, he participated in MEPI Student leadership program at Benedictine University. Sameer completed his internship in the largest law firm in Israel, Meitar Liguornik Geva Leshem Tal. As a certified lawyer, he joined the global firm PwC to complete his accounting internship. Currently, he is a tax inspector in the Israeli tax authority.



Nahum Shemi

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> Northern Illinois University

Nahum Shemi received his BA in psychology and the "Amirim" humanities honors program from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He then proceeded to work as a psychometric tests' developer at the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, a risk analyst for a Swedish online payment company and an editor of Hebrew poetry translations. Nahum was awarded the Fulbright Fellowship to pursue MA studies in philosophy at Northern Illinois University. He hopes to research intersection areas between philosophy and psychology and possibilities of inter-disciplinary fusions. The first attempt at which would be research into ethical implications of psychodynamic theory.

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow



Inbar Ben Menda

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem >> University of Minnesota

Inbar Ben-Menda serves as a Department Head at the Legal Division of the Israeli Civil Service Commission. As such, she is responsible for the legal research and support for the advancement of diverse populations and their integration into the Israeli Civil Service. In the fulfillment of this and other responsibilities, such as providing legal advice regarding competitive exams and procedures for civil service positions, Ms. Ben-Menda has the opportunity to promote and instill important democratic values such as equality, due process and civil rights. Ben-Menda is a member of the Israeli Bar since 2006. She holds two degrees in law: L.L.B. from the Hebrew University and L.L.M from Bar-Ilan University. She also earned an Executive M.A. in Public Policy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Through her fellowship she is hoping to promote the idea that diversity in the civil service will make the State of Israel stronger socially, politically, as well as economically.

International Writing Program Fellow



Tehila Hakimi

Tehila Hakimi was awarded a Fulbright International Writing Program Fellowship (at the University of Iowa), to write her first novel, titled temporarily - I Shot America. The novel stems from her previous interest in the relationship between gender, work and violence, and elaborates on it. Tehila Hakimi is a poet, a writer and a mechanical engineer.

Her books include We'll Work Tomorrow (poems). 2014; In the Water (graphic novel) with illustrations by Liron Cohen. 2016; Company (novellas). Resling Publishing House: The Lab Series for Contemporary Literature, forthcoming 2018. Tehila received the Israeli Minister of Culture Prize for Emerging Poets 2014 and The Bernstein Prize for Literature 2015.

Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Fellows



Mervat Yosef

University of Haifa >> Boston University

Mervat Yosef received her B.A in communication disorders from the University of Haifa in 2017. Mervat has an interest in anthropological linguistics and is looking forward to enrich her knowledge in this field through the FLTA program at Boston University. Since graduation, she has been working in a school for children with autism in attempt to understand the basis of interactions and communications within people; Mervat also works at a bilingual (Hebrew and Russian) kindergarten specializing in language and speech disorders. Her job is promoting their communication with the world by improving their speech and language.



Naila Shaqqur

Gordon College of Education >> Stetson University

Naila Shaqqur received her B.Ed in English Literature and Education at Gordon College of Education in Haifa. She recently finished her research in Children's Literature and Multicultural Education. Naila will participate as an Arabic Teaching Assistant at Stetson University in DeLand, Florida with the Fulbright program, which through this experience, she will facilitate and help enhance students' Arabic proficiency through developing their Arabic language skills. Naila believes that teaching Arabic as a foreign language will help bridge the social and cultural gaps between Americans and Arabs.



Amal Shamia

Beit Berl College >> Florida State University

Amal Shamia received her B.Ed. in English literature from Beit Berl College, Kfar Saba, Israel. She has worked as an EFL tutor years prior to the beginning of her career as an English teacher in the Negev. She is an alumni of the NESA UGRAD undergraduate program in the U.S. and will participate in the Fulbright FLTA program at Florida State University. During the course of this program, she will provide help by applying her teaching experience and her knowledge of the Arabic language. She is a core believer that language learning promotes acceptance and therefore a more peaceful world. She aims to contribute in building better relations amongst different cultures.