

Distinguished (Senior) Scholar Fellows



Alexei Sivertsev

DePaul University >> Bar-Ilan University

Professor Alexei M. Sivertsev is a professor at DePaul University's Department of Religious Studies. He received his BA from the Historical Archival Institute, Russia State University for the Humanities, and MA and Ph.D. in Hebrew and Judaic studies from New York University. His research focuses on the study of Jewish cultural dynamics in late antiquity. Sivertsev was awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar fellowship for his project "Text and Image in the Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic: Towards a Nonprogrammatic Reading." He will explore the fifth-century synagogue floor mosaic in the city of Sepphoris in Lower Galilee and church mosaics in the neighboring sites of Horvat Kenes and Khirbet Bata, both in the vicinity of the present-day town of Carmiel. The project is part of a broader attempt to understand how a variety of religious, ethnic, and linguistic communities in late Roman Palestine constructed their symbolic environments and imagined themselves in relation to these environments.



Deric McNish

Michigan State University >> Bar-Ilan University

Deric McNish is an associate professor of theatre at Michigan State University, where he also serves as director of the MFA Acting Program and director of undergraduate research for the College of Arts and Letters. He is a senior editor of the International Dialects of English Archive, an editorial board member for the Voice and Speech Review, and an English language specialist with the U.S. Department of State. He received an MFA in Theatre from Case Western Reserve University and a PhD in Theatre from the University of Colorado Boulder. His research explores how collaborative theatre-making fosters intercultural dialogue, enhances English language learning, and builds global communities. His work also explores inclusive performance practices and the representation of identities on stage and screen.

Professor McNish was awarded the Fulbright Distinguished Scholar fellowship to teach and lead workshops at Bar-Ilan University and develop a creative project titled Global Voices: Theatre, Disability, and Cross-Cultural Connection.



Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili

University of Pittsburgh >> Tel Aviv University

Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Public and International Affairs, where she also serves as the founding director of the Center for Governance and Markets. She received her Ph.D. and MA in political science and an additional MA in agricultural and applied economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She also holds a B.S.F.S. in international politics from Georgetown University.

Murtazashvili was awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar fellowship for her project, Formal Rules, Informal Networks: The Abraham Accords and Regional Alliances in Global Perspective. Her research examines how legal and institutional frameworks shape emerging regional alliances in the Middle East, with a particular focus on the Abraham Accords. The project draws on comparative research from regions including Central Eurasia and Eastern Europe to investigate the influence of formal institutions and informal networks on diplomatic cooperation, regional stability, and prospects for peace.



Jessica Weaver

Arizona State University >> Technion - Israel Institute of Technology

Professor Jessica D. Weaver is an associate professor of biomedical engineering in the School of Biological and Health Systems Engineering at Arizona State University and her research centers on developing translatable cell-based therapies for the treatment of disease, with a focus on cell therapies to induce tolerance in transplantation and for the treatment of type 1 diabetes. The Weaver lab uses biomaterials and immune engineering approaches with the aim to generate immunosuppression-free transplantation strategies.

Weaver was awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar fellowship at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, where she will collaborate with Biomedical Engineering Faculty on her research proposal "Vascularized macroencapsulated cell therapies for the treatment of type 1 diabetes".



Wenbin Yu

Purdue University >> Tel Aviv University

Professor Wenbin Yu was awarded the Fulbright Distinguished Scholar fellowship to collaborate with Dr. Igor Berinskii at Tel Aviv University. He will apply the mechanics of structure genome to develop a powerful computational tool for design and analysis of bioinspired metamaterials with fibrous microstructures.

Prof. Yu is the Milton Clauser Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University. He also serves as the director for the Composites Design and Manufacturing HUB (<https://community.cdmhub.org/>), an AI-human interactive platform serving the global composites community, and as the chief technology officer of AnalySwift LLC. His areas of expertise include micromechanics and structural mechanics, with a focus on anisotropic and heterogeneous materials and structures. His recent work focuses on the development of CompositesAI (<https://compositesai.com/>), an initiative to consolidate and deliver expert knowledge in composites through the power of artificial intelligence.

Professor Yu has authored one book and over 130 journal papers and ten computer codes, widely used by tens of thousands across the globe. He is a fellow of both the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American Society for Composites (ASC), and an Associate Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA).

Master's Degree Fellows



Aviva Schwarz

Princeton University >> Tel Aviv University

Aviva Schwarz was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a master's degree in security and diplomacy studies at Tel Aviv University. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, with minors in Near Eastern Studies, Hebrew, and diplomacy. At Princeton, she was a fellow in the program on religion, diplomacy, and international relations. Her research focus was Near East regional studies and national security. Aviva's senior thesis examined how intelligence communities learn from strategic surprise failures, and she examined the case studies of October 6th, 1973, and October 7th, 2023.

Outside of thesis research conducted in Israel, she was awarded research grants from Princeton to conduct fieldwork for other projects, including in the Philippines, Spain, Canada, and Ireland. She also interned in the U.S. House of Representatives and at an aerospace and defense firm in Tel Aviv. Aviva hopes to pursue a career in the nation's service in the field of national security.



Caroline Dibble

University of Virginia >> Tel Aviv University

Caroline Dibble was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue an MA in security and diplomacy studies from Tel Aviv University. Her areas of interest include geopolitics and international security, governance and stabilization, and China-Middle East relations.

Caroline previously served as a senior program assistant with the Middle East North Africa Center at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Washington, DC, where she supported policy research, conflict analysis and grassroots peacebuilding initiatives under the Israel, Palestinian Territories, Egypt and Levant program. Prior to USIP, she worked at the National Democratic Institute as a project assistant where she supported democracy and governance projects with the Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Syria teams.

Caroline graduated from the University of Virginia (UVA) with a BA in foreign affairs and history and an MA in religious studies with a concentration in religion, politics and conflict. While at UVA, she studied Arabic at Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco and French language and politics at the Institute of Political Studies in Lyon, France.



Dawson Clifton

U.S. Military Academy West Point >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Dawson has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue an MA in Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Currently, he is expanding his research to better understand messaging and communication tactics used by Hamas. After the Fulbright program, Dawson will return to the U.S. to continue his military service as an Armor officer before pursuing a career in foreign affairs.

Dawson Clifton attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated with a B.S. in Arabic and a minor in terrorism studies. During his time at West Point, he was the president of the Model Arab League team and a participant in the Domestic Affairs Forum. He has a plethora of experience pursuing professional development opportunities in Morocco, Jordan, Chad, and Egypt with the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of State.



Doron Loewenberg

University of Pittsburgh >> Tel Aviv University

Doron Loewenberg was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a master's in cyber politics and government at Tel Aviv University. His goal is to take what he learns in Israel back to America and help both the U.S. government and private tech corporations prepare necessary regulations and standards that will ensure new technologies like generative AI are used responsibly and safely.

Before going to Israel, Doron graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh's David C. Frederick Honors College with a BA in the history and philosophy of science and a minor in computer science. While at Pittsburgh, Doron was heavily involved in the university's intercultural exchange programs. He was a proud member of Quo Vadis, an organization that promoted knowledge of non-American cultures by taking community members on tours of the university's nationality rooms, a set of 31 rooms designed by committees from all around the world.

Doron hopes that his passions for intercultural exchange and responsible technology use will help him bridge the gap between American and Israeli developers and ensure that those two tech superpowers will work together to tackle humanity's next big issue.



Eilah Goldberg

University of Maryland >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Eilah Goldberg was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a master's degree in Israel Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As such she will conduct research examining the changing demographics of American Jewish immigration to Israel. Eilah's academic and professional work focuses on the Arab Israeli conflict, Israeli history, and Jewish world history.

Eilah graduated summa cum laude from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County with a BA in history and a minor in Jewish Studies. During her time at UMBC, she served as the Chabad student president, was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society and received the John Bell-Clifford Maas Prize for Academic Excellence, awarded to students with the highest overall academic record in the Department of History.

Additionally, Eilah was published in UMBC's Bartleby journal and won the award for Best Fiction Entry with her piece based on Jewish Early-Modern European women. During her sophomore year, she also studied abroad at University College London in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies.



Jonas Rosenthal

Dartmouth College >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Jonas Rosenthal graduated from Dartmouth College in 2025 with a BA in Middle Eastern studies modified with mathematics. His senior honors thesis, "What Euclid Did Not Write: Non-Mathematical Influences on the Riddles of Ibn al-Banna' al-Marrakushi's Tanbih al-Albab," examined and translated the previously unstudied religious riddles of the prominent 14th century Maghribi mathematician and mystic, Ibn al-Banna' al-Marrakushi. His research focuses on the intersection of mathematics, linguistics, theology, and identity among Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the manuscript tradition of the medieval Arab world.

Jonas received a Fulbright fellowship to pursue an MA in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in order to continue his research into the social and religious roots of mathematical development during the medieval Islamic period.



Kennedy Farrow

Boston University >> Tel Aviv University

Kennedy Farrow is a filmmaker focused on documenting women's spaces. Her work aims to inform ideas of femininity and a woman's role within a given culture or society.

Kennedy currently runs the cinema & media studies program at Boston University where she has helped develop an undergraduate program centered on the study and analysis of images and representation across the globe. Using the Maya Deren archive at Boston University, she has conducted independent research on this important mid-century filmmaker and used Deren's extensive storyboards and notes to inform her own filmmaking. She graduated Cum Laude from Boston University with a degree in classical civilizations, where she focused on women's experiences in Ancient Greece and Rome, specifically through representations of the mythical Amazons on Greek pottery.

As a Fulbright master's fellow, she will study documentary cinema production at Tel Aviv University with the aim of continuing to document women's stories, both past and present.



Myles Behar

Indiana University >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Myles Behar has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to pursue a master's in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. While there, he plans to gain deeper insight into significant cultural and literary touchstones for his research project, "How the use of keywords, such as 'martyr' and 'genocide' differ from the Western world to the Middle East." In doing so, he seeks to understand how these ideas have directly influenced the opinions of college-age individuals on the Israel-Hamas War.

Myles Behar attended Indiana University, where he graduated summa cum laude with a BA in history and a minor in political science. During the spring of 2024, Myles interned at the think tank the Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA). He has just completed an honors history paper on the significance of historical analysis and personal experience in proposing methods of managing the regional and nuclear ambitions of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Sam Libenson

Harvard University >> University of Haifa

Sam Libenson graduated from Harvard College in 2025 with a BA in social studies and philosophy and a minor in Near Eastern languages and civilizations. A student of political theory, Sam wrote an honors thesis about the persistent presence of mythology in secular political environments, focusing specifically on how certain mythologies associated with the United States Constitution inform various interpretive philosophies of the text.

Sam was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a master's in Israel Studies at the University of Haifa where he will continue his study of political mythology by examining the mutual construction and co-development of Israeli and Palestinian identities.



Savannah Sandage

Arkansas State University >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Savannah Sandage graduated in 2025 with a BA in economics and a BA in world languages and cultures from Arkansas State University. Her academic interests lie at the intersection of ancient myth, political authority, and economic systems in the ancient Near East. Before receiving the Fulbright award, Savannah completed an undergraduate honors thesis titled Divine Order and Economic Authority: The Rhetorical Power of Enuma Elish in Structuring Neo-Babylonian Society. Her research drew on rhetorical theory, temple inscriptions, and economic records to explore how the Enuma Elish myth reinforced royal legitimacy and temple-based economies in the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Savannah has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue an MA in archaeology and the Ancient Near East at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She plans to deepen her study of ancient Near Eastern literature and explore how ancient writing systems shaped economic and political life in the region.



Sidney Fulford

Johns Hopkins University >> Tel Aviv University

Sidney Zoll Fulford has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship to pursue a master's degree in cyber politics and government at Tel Aviv University. She earned her bachelor's degree from Indiana University Bloomington, where she double majored in political science and history. She went on to complete her first master's in international affairs at Johns Hopkins University, studying at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) campus in Bologna, Italy.

Before receiving her Fulbright grant, Sidney focused on global security and diplomatic studies through her work at SAIS. Her academic and professional journey has been shaped by a deep interest in international cooperation, emerging technologies, and the evolving dynamics of global power. Her current research explores defense strategy and regional geopolitics, with a particular focus on the relationships between Israel and its neighboring countries. Looking ahead, she intends to concentrate on the intersection of cybersecurity and technological innovation between Israel and the United States.

PhD Research Fellow



Carter Barnett

Johns Hopkins University >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Carter Barnett was awarded a Fulbright PhD Research Fellowship to pursue his project, "Beyond Medicine: The Mission Hospitals of Ottoman/Mandatory Palestine, 1850-1950," under the mentorship of Professor Liat Kozma at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His project investigates how patients, Christian missionaries, and colonial officials used and understood mission hospitals in nineteenth and twentieth-century Palestine. This work builds on existing scholarships in the social history of medicine to incorporate a diversity of historical perspectives beyond medicalization narratives prone to simplification. Rather than solely attributing the proliferation of mission hospitals to medical efficacy or colonial intervention, his project evaluates the paradoxical hospitality of missionary institutions. Carter received his BA in history and Arabic from Baylor University and an MA in Middle Eastern studies from the University of Texas at Austin where he completed the dual language track in Arabic and modern Hebrew. He is currently a PhD candidate researching the history of religion, healing, and hospital care in the Department of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University.

Open Study/Research Fellows



Amanda Bruckstein

Appalachian State University >> Technion - Israel Institute of Technology

Amanda Bruckstein was awarded a Fulbright open study research fellowship to pursue the project "Linking Traditional and Innovative Processing of Emulsions and Nano-Emulsions to Digestion" with Dr. Uri Lesmes at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology. Her research investigates how different processing techniques influence the digestive behavior of emulsions and nano-emulsions, with a focus on nutrient bioavailability and food design. The project aims to address physiological gender differences in digestion and support the development of nutrition strategies tailored to individual health needs.

Amanda completed her BS in nutrition and foods, with a concentration in dietetics and a minor in exercise science, at Appalachian State University. Her undergraduate research included studying hydration and physical performance in women across the menstrual cycle and exploring dermal absorption in an environmental physiology lab. These interdisciplinary experiences shaped her interest in integrating human physiology and experimental design into food science research. Her long-term goal is to contribute to the development of evidence-based functional foods and to advance personalized nutrition strategies that improve health outcomes."



Dalya Koller

Brandeis University >> Tel Aviv University

Dalya Koller was awarded an open study/Research Fulbright fellowship to pursue "Walt Whitman and the Bible: The Song of Songs in Leaves of Grass," a project that explores the intertextual relationship between the Song of Songs and Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass. She will examine how Whitman's poetics both draw on and transform the biblical love poem's language, imagery, and theology, while also considering broader questions about what it means to engage with a text through translation. She will work under the mentorship of Dara Barnat at Tel Aviv University and Carra Glatt at Bar-Ilan University.

Dalya received her BA from Brandeis University in 2025, where she studied Comparative Literature, Philosophy, and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. During her undergraduate career, she conducted independent research and completed an honors thesis on modern English translations of the Song of Songs. She also spent a semester at the University of Montpellier studying French language and literature and studied Arabic throughout her time at Brandeis.



Isaac (Izzy) Salant

University of Massachusetts Amherst >> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Isaac "Izzy" Salant was awarded a Fulbright open study research grant to create the theatrical work, "The Salant Generation," with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the National Library of Israel and Center Stage Israel. This project will examine the teachings and life of Rabbi Shmuel Salant—the former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, and Izzy's great-great-great-great-grandfather—through a modern Jewish lens. His research and theatrical goals aim to tell important Jewish stories to the world.

Izzy is an internationally produced and award-winning playwright and journalist, specializing in telling Jewish stories. He is also a member of the Dramatists Guild. Prior to his Fulbright grant, he served as the West Coast correspondent and social media manager for Jewish News Syndicate. He also serves on the artistic panel of the Jewish Plays Project and is an artist in residence at The Braid in Santa Monica. He received a BA in theater and a B.A. in journalism from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.