



Religious Studies at UNO

October 2006

Fall lectures and conferences keep faculty busy

Shirley and Leonard Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights



Dr. Stephen Marks, François-Xavier Bagnoud Professor of Health and Human Rights Harvard School of Public Health Senior Fellow, Harvard University Committee on Human Rights Studies will be the 2006

Shirley and Leonard Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights speaker on Thursday, 19 October 2006.

His lecture will be on “Human Rights in Development: Competing Claims and Economic Empowerment.”

The lecture will be held in the Dodge Room on the third floor of the Milo Bail Student Center at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome at no charge.

The emphasis of Marks's work is on the interface of health and human rights, drawing on the disciplines of international law, international politics, international organizations, and international economics.

Marks's current interests include integrating human rights into sustainable human development and developing human rights indicators of relevance to poverty reduction strategies. He has been a consultant to the United Nations Development Program on this topic and expects to collaborate on a new project for UNICEF with Professor Ajay Mahal.

Previously he was principal investigator for a major grant by the Government of the Netherlands on the right to development. The aim of this research is to introduce human rights concepts into development planning and implementation at the national and

international levels. He is also interested in international efforts to limit human genetic manipulation, focusing on human reproductive cloning and germline gene therapy. This study explores the human rights implications of these techniques and the assumptions of opposing attitudes on this question. He also works in the area of human rights education and training.

Global Studies Conference



The 29th Annual Global Studies Conference will be held 5 – 6 October at the Milo Bail Student Center.

His Majesty Prince Reza Shah Pahlawi of Iran will be the keynote speaker on Thursday, 5 October during opening activities. Speakers include UNO faculty members, Barbara Robins, Ana I. Carballal, Rory J. Conces, and Hugh Reilly. Chairing sessions from UNO are Paul Allen Williams, Conces, Judith Boss, Maria Arbelaez, and Owen G. Mordaunt.

Conces is chair of the conference committee. Additional information may be obtained by calling 402.554.2947.

The conference runs concurrently with the European Studies Conference.

8th Annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology Conference

The 8th Annual Batchelder Biblical Archaeology Conference will be held 9 – 11 November at the W. H. Thompson Alumni Center.

Dr. Gideon Avni, Israel Antiquities Authority Archaeologist of Jerusalem, will be the keynote

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speaker at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 9 November. He will talk about “David and Jesus: Archaeological Perspectives.”

Participants at the conference are also invited to view two exhibitions of antiquities in the Bethsaida Library and Gallery, Arts & Sciences Hall 343. “Silent Spectators of the Sacred,” an exhibition of first century stones from Herod’s Temple Mount in Jerusalem is on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. “Ancient Writing in the Mediterranean World,” a collection of ancient writing implements, coins, Egyptian figurines, and inscriptions in Aramaic, Hebrew, Mesopotamian cuneiform, Latin, and Coptic has been donated by the Museum of Archaeology and Biblical History, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The conference is co-sponsored by International Studies and Programs at UNO, and the Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford.

To register for the conference or for more information and a complete schedule of events, contact Steve Reynolds, Bethsaida Excavations Project coordinator, 402-554-3108.



Religious Studies major Hanna Wanzenried was among members of the dig at the Bethsaida Excavation Project this summer.

Bethsaida Excavation Dig has successful year

About 75 students and volunteers from universities across the nation spent a part of their summer this year in Israel at the Bethsaida Excavation site.

Among the UNO students who participated were Hanna Wanzenried, Lucy Franks-Wanzenried, Eleanor Hoeger, Terrance O’Donnell, Ryan Phelan, Scott Collins, Amanda Mansavage, Jessica Schefcik, Joanna Holland, and Matt Lillig. Joining them from UNO were Dr. Rami Arav, director of excavations, and Steve Reynolds, Bethsaida site archivist and project coordinator.

A great deal of data was retrieved about the city gate of Bethsaida that dates to the 10th century BCE; about the structures behind the city gate and about the Hellenistic Roman residential house, Arav said. The group uncovered multiple items of interest during this year’s dig, including blades, bones, a bronze bowl and various pieces of pottery and monumental architecture that predates the Eighth century BCE gate complex.

Also at the dig were Co-directors: Dr. Nicolae Roddy (Creighton University) Dr. Elizabeth McNamer (Rocky Mountain College), Dr. Carl Savage (Drew University), Dr. Richard Freund (Hartford University), Dr. John T. Greene (Michigan State University), and Prof. Dr. Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn and Dr. Stephanie Keim (University of Munich). Others participating were Dr. Aaron Gale (West Virginia State University), Dr. Gordon Brubacher (Messiah College), and Maha Drawsha (University of Connecticut). Photographers: Christine Dalenta, Hanan Shafir, conservator: Orna Cohen. Geographer Dr. Philip Reed (South Florida University). Land Surveyor: Shai Schwartz.

Two graduate in August

Fatema Reza and Karen Leanne Smyth were among graduates from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in August. They both graduated with minors in religious studies from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Film Society to hold festival

The University of Nebraska at Omaha Film Society will hold a Film Festival 16 November at the Westwood Theaters. The festival will feature film shorts by UNO students. It will begin at 7 p.m.

Other Film News

In other film news, **Dr. Michele Desmarais** and **Dr. Beth Ritter**, academic director of Native American Studies, are in production on a short film with a working title of "But they were Hungry." It is the story of a Native American girl who attended the Genoa Indian School in the early 1900s.

Students

Karen Kempkes has been awarded an Honors Scholarship for the 2006-07 school year from the Division of Continuing Studies. She is pursuing a Bachelor of General Studies with an area of concentration in Religion.

The Scholarships are given to the highest ranked full-time female and male students with senior, junior, and sophomore status are chosen. Kempkes has a 3.905 GPA

Faculty Notes



Dr. Rami Arav has joined the religious studies faculty full-time as an assistant professor. He will teach Introduction to World Religions along with some upper division courses in the area of Biblical

Archaeology. He is director of the Bethsaida Excavations Project and has edited, with Dr. Richard A. Freund, three books on the project, *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee, Volumes 1-3*.

Arav has been at UNO since 1994. In recent years, his appointments were in International Studies and Programs and the Department of History. He holds his bachelor of arts degree and master of arts degrees from Tel Aviv University and received his Ph.D. from New York University.

He will be eligible for the priority or excellence funding which the religious studies program has received from the University of Nebraska Central Administration to establish a tenure track position in Biblical archaeology.

Dr. Rory Conces is founding a new journal entitled *ID: International Dialogue*. A unique feature of this journal is that it will have two editorial boards, one that is Omaha-based and the other that is based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will also publish non-English submissions from Europe in the original language along with an English translation.



Dr. Conces is planning another trip to Europe during the upcoming Spring break. He will venture to Sarajevo, where he has been invited by the Faculties of Philosophy and Political Sciences to give a paper on hyperintellectuals and civil society building in Bosnia; and to Graz, Austria, where he has been invited by two organizations, the Philosophical Society of Graz and the European Research and Training Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, to present papers on civil society and democracy building in the Balkans. He also plans to find some other work to do with all of his idle time.



Christian Haunton has joined the religious studies faculty as a part-time instructor this year, teaching Introduction to World Religions..

Haunton graduated from UNO with a criminal justice degree and holds a masters degree from the University of Iowa. He has presented papers at the Batchelder Conference for Biblical Archaeology, ASOR Annual Meetings and AAR/SBL Regional Meetings.



Dr. Guy Matalon has been named to the Jewish Federation Chair of Judaic Studies at UNO.

Matalon has been in the religious studies program since 2000 and holds his PhD from New York University.

He and **Dr. William Blizek** were interviewed on anti-Semitism by John Keenan with the Omaha World Herald. Matalon was also interviewed by KPTM Fox 42 on the crisis in the Middle East.

Alumni News

Wendy Charbois Jensen (2001) and her husband, Troy, announce the birth of their first child, Peter Samuel Jensen, who was born on July 21, 2006. He weighed seven pounds, 15 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Molly Helgesen (2005) and **Greg Paskach** (2004) were married in Estes Park on July 29, 2006, with Dr. Pamela Jean Owens performing the ceremony.

They have just moved to Worcester, Mass for Greg's education. He is now working on a master's degree in Community Development and Planning at Clark University.

Jessica (Nutz) Annis (2004) and her husband, Franklin, welcomed a second son, Oden Adrick Annis on 24 July, 2006, weighing nine pounds, 10 ounces. He was 21 inches long. He joins a brother, John.

Share your milestones

Please send news about your milestones (new positions, promotions, marriages, births, future education, etc.) by sending it to Religious Studies Program, UNO, ASH 205,

6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68182-0265 or to Kathy Schwartz at kschwartz@mail.unomaha.edu.

Scholarship donations welcome

Donations are welcome for any of the religious studies scholarships. To donate to either the Ron Burke Scholarship Fund or the Dale Stover Scholarship Fund make your check out to the University of Nebraska Foundation and write the

scholarship fund name on the memo line. Send your checks to the Religious Studies Program, ASH 205, 6001 Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68182-0265.



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