

Holocaust, Genocide and Interfaith Education Center Manhattan College, NY

Newsletter Spring 2016

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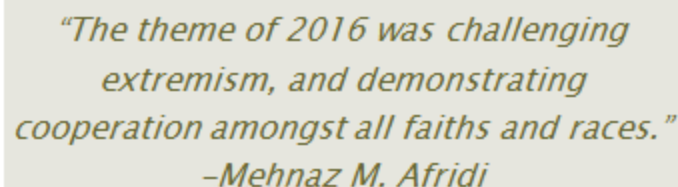
A Message from the Director

By Mehnaz M. Afridi

This has been an exciting year for HGI full of academic research, conferences and program initiatives. We were proud to present two lectures this academic year one in the fall honoring Frederick M. Schweitzer (Center's founder)

around Kristallnacht and the spring lecture on the history of Muslim-Americans and racial themes. Our featured guests were Dr. Marion Kaplan in the fall and Dr. Zain Abdullah in the spring. My message and hope the next few years is to expand the center in two ways; create academic programs nationally on teaching the Holocaust, designing curriculum for teaching Genocide to international audiences and preserving the archives of Herman Ziering (survivor and Nazi -hunter). The College and Center have been committed to the LaSallian mission by educating students and community about religion,

diversity and prejudice. We are also happy to note that Manhattan College Students of RELS 110 with the partnership of Congregation Tehillah, Islamic Center in Parkchester, Bronx and the Riverdale Y have won the 2016 Bronx Volunteers Award this year. Congrats to all.



*"The theme of 2016 was challenging
extremism, and demonstrating
cooperation amongst all faiths and races."
-Mehnaz M. Afridi*

HGI goes to the Ghetto in Venice, Italy!

By James Noeker

January was an exciting month for the Center, Dr. Mehnaz Afridi and Dr. Daniel Savoy of the Visual and Performing Fine Arts Department with Dr. Kathleen Sunshine (Cultural Consultant) led a group of 18 MC students to Venice, Italy as part of a two and a half week long immersion in the culture and history of the Venetian Jewish Ghetto.

The visit coincided with the 500th Anniversary of the establishment of the Ghetto by the Venetian government in 1516. Manhattan College was the first institution, a Catholic one at that, to pay tribute to that historic occasion. The program focused on the idea of the "other" and drew parallels between the Jews and Muslims of Renaissance Venice and the life of Muslims in Europe, noting in particular the Syrian Migrants and how Western leaders have responded to the crisis.

When the students weren't riding in gondolas or tasting food, they were kept plenty busy – classroom instruction most mornings, and afternoons spent exploring sites such as the Doge's Palace in St. Mark's Square, the Jewish Museum in the Ghetto Novo, or the Jewish Cemetery at Lido di Venezia.



Drs. Afridi and Dr. Savoy with students in the Ghetto

Dr. Afridi's institutional partner in the city, led by Dr. Shaul Bassi from Ca' Foscari, afforded the students a unique opportunity. The students were asked to conduct an interview with one of Dr. Bassi's university class students. Bassi, afforded the students a unique opportunity. The experience allowed students

to understand how Europe's modern "other", in the form of Muslim migrants, were seen. The conversations were recorded and will be archived into a documentary which will be available on our website www.hgimanhattan.com

MC students were also asked to keep a journal documenting their daily reflection on the day's events. Furthermore, students were asked by the local Jewish Museum to redesign its current floor plan in preparation for anniversary celebrations. Below you will find pictures of students enjoying their educational adventure.



Counterclockwise from the top right:

1. Students gathered outside the Venice classroom
2. Students listening to their guide explain the history of the Jewish cemetery at Lido di Venezia
3. View from St. Mark's Square toward the Church of San Giorgio Maggiore

Abrahamic Religions Conference comes to MC

By Mehnaz M. Afridi

Seventeen Scholars came together from all over the nation to discuss Jews, Christians and Muslims: Challenging Extremism. HGI partnered with the Martin-Springer Institute at Northern Arizona University and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to put on the event. The conference began with early encounters between Jews, Christians and Muslims to the contemporary issues of Antisemitism and Islamophobia from February 29th-March 1st. The diverse crowd was not limited to Manhattan College students and faculty as community groups from the Riverdale area were also in attendance. The conference hosted interfaith discussions on the extremism, prejudice and violence occurring in the Middle East.

The open discussion examined the recent events in Israel and Gaza, ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and the extermination of minorities and Christians in Syria and Pakistan. Attendees had the opportunity to participate in the discussion and receive more insight from religious leaders and scholars connected to the events.

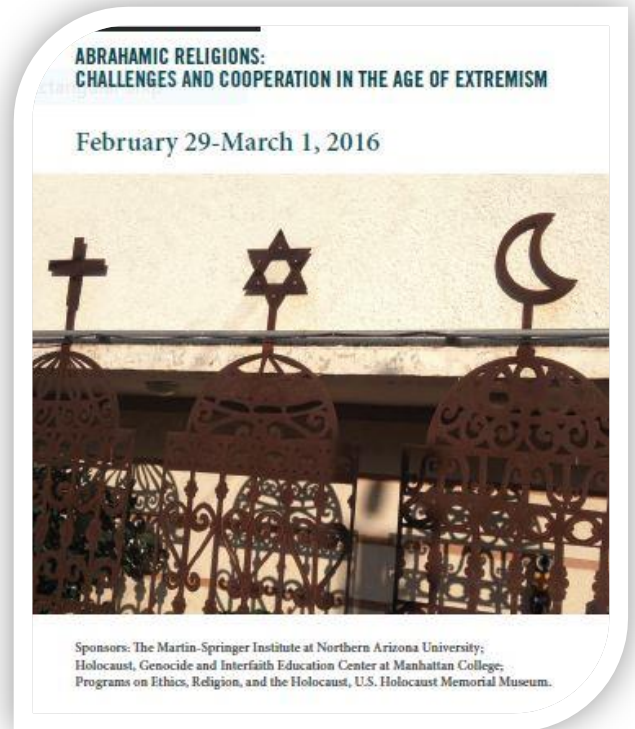
Special thanks to Björn Krondorfer Martin-Spring Institute at NAU and Victoria Barnett, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, D.C. for helping to make this conference possible.

YHS Fellowship Enters Second Year

By James Noeker

The “YHS Fellowship: Bridging Faiths and the Holocaust” Fellowship will enter its second “class”, with proceeds provided by the kind and generous donation of alumnus Mr. Mickey D’Addato (Class of 1959). The program pairs two Manhattan College students and two students from the Yeshivat Chovevei Torah rabbinical school located on the Henry Hudson Parkway in Riverdale, with Holocaust survivors to conduct interviews and other interfaith endeavors.

The pilot class interviewed Survivors Mr. Fredy Seidel and Ms. Rosa Marawa about their experiences during the Holocaust; to see these interviews visit the HGI YouTube Channel HGI Manhattan College. Other features of the program included regular meetings with the survivors at the Yeshiva in Riverdale, participating and assisting in HGI events, and attending an interfaith Seder come Passover. The last Seder was featured in the Riverdale Press. The pilot program was viewed as successful and is further detailed in an article on the College’s “Newsroom” website.



HGI to acquire A New Exhibit & Resource Space

By James Noeker

O'Malley Library will house a new space on the 5th floor behind the reference desk that will be transformed into a new exhibit and archive space for HGI. We will house a wide array of documents in the Center's possession for scholarly analysis. This research room will also hold two collections of note, the access to servers hosting some of the visual history archive of the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation and the personal collection of the late Herman Ziering.

Ziering was a Nazi hunter throughout the latter half of the last century and his collection of World War II documents, which includes telegrams, correspondence, and even an original letter from Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill.

The USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education was founded in 1994 by director Stephen Spielberg. The archive includes a wide array of audio, video, and image based resources for academic examination.

Also housed in the research room will be *Reflections of the Soul*, a collection of paintings by survivor, Riverdale local, and board member of HGI Mr. Martin Spett.



O'Malley Library

Dr. Afridi's Outreach and Lectures

By James Noeker

A few listed below:

September 20th: *Die Sonnenblume*, Response piece presentation at the Berlin Literature House, Berlin.

October 1st: "Defining Zionism" Hadassah Woman's Movement, Video for the Web, Wall Street, NY

October 15th: World Parliaments of Religion, on a panel sponsored by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on "Holocaust and Interreligious Education", Salt Lake City, Utah

October 26th: "Reconciliation between Jews and Muslims through the Holocaust", Dalton School, NYC

November 3rd: Annual Kristallnacht Lecture at "Shoah through Muslim Eyes: Kristallnacht", Merrimack College, Boston, MA

February 4th: "Freedom, religion and racism in Jewish-Muslim encounters," part of the Equity & Difference lecture series at the University of Washington, Seattle.

February 6-7th: Presentation to USC Shoah Foundation on "History and Antisemitism in the Muslim Context," at the Muslim Communities Convening Committee, Los Angeles, Ca.

February 29th –March 1st: Abrahamic Religions Conference at MC.

March 3rd: University of Connecticut, "Islamophobia today" at the School of Social Work.

Upcoming

June 1st: Annual Lecturer at the Mona and Otto Weinmann Lecture, USHMM, D.C. To register please click the following:

<https://www.ushmm.org/online/calendar/eventDetails.php?event=CHWEINMANNLECT0616>

June 5th-8th: Encountering the Stranger, conference Interfaith Center, Jewish Center in Aspen, CO.

Karski Exhibit Leaves Manhattan College

By James Noeker

The World Knew: Jan Karski's Mission for Humanity an exhibit which has been on display since February in Manhattan College's O'Malley Library, Alumni room. A Polish Catholic, Jan Karski's opposition to Nazism and advocacy for the Jews during the Holocaust was matched only by the depth of his faith. The Exhibit was created by the Polish History Museum, with significant funding from the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The opening reception featured a lecture by Andrzej Rajek, Board Chairman of the Jan Karski Educational Foundation. On February 29, a lecture by journalist and author of *Karski: How One Man Tried to Stop the Holocaust*, E. Thomas Wood shed light on the late hero's life and his personal account of Karski while he was in the process of writing his book.



Dr. Afridi with Dr. Zain Abdullah of Temple University at spring lecture 2016.



Students admire one section of the exhibit at the opening reception

We thank you for your support and look forward to another fruitful year ahead!

The Manhattan College Holocaust, Genocide, and Interfaith Education Center

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Mithat GashiLecturer, Lehman College, CUNY; CEO of Foundation for Global Education
Rabbi Linda Shriner – Cahn.....Congregation Tehillah
Martin SpettHolocaust Survivor, Artist

We are pleased to welcome Rabbi Linda Shriner-Cahn and Rabbi Asher Lopatin as the newest additions to the HGI Board!