It’s official: Students can now major in Jewish studies at KU

By Barbara Bayer

Students at the University of Kansas can now officially earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in Jewish studies. The decision was finalized last month. Professor John Younger, director of KU’s Jewish studies program, said this week that four students have officially declared a Jewish studies major and a fifth may declare shortly.

“We have been given the total green light,” said Dr. Younger. “Our first student signed up for the major within five minutes of announcing to our students that we could have students declare the major.”

Dr. Younger expects two people to graduate with a major in Jewish studies soon, even as early as December. One of those students had already received permission to declare Jewish studies as a special major. Molly Rissien became the first student to graduate with a special major.

Hillel prepares to bring 550 KU students, alumni and parents together for its annual Rock Chalk Shabbat event to be held tomorrow, Oct. 23, in the Kansas Union. (For more information, see Page 11.)

Dr. Younger, who is not Jewish, has guided the process of formalizing a Jewish studies major since he began running the department in January 2013. The proposal was submitted in April 2014, and it only took about a year and a half — which Dr. Younger said is considered really fast — to get it through all the necessary committees.

Dr. Younger said the faculty is all ecstatic about this news.

“Working for the faculty of the Jewish studies program has been a real joy,” he said. “It’s a fabulous faculty to work with and that’s one reason why this went through so fast. It was real easy for us to do.”

Dr. Younger said requirements for a Jewish studies degree include:

• Two courses in Jewish history and/or culture
• Two courses in Judaism
• Completion of intermediate level Hebrew
• Three electives

In addition Dr. Younger said a capstone course, one that “pulls everything all together,” is also required.

Becca Levine, a KU senior from St. Louis who plans to graduate in May 2016, is excited about the official Jewish studies major.

“It means that KU will become more competitive with schools such as Indiana, Ohio State and other schools with large Jewish populations who already are succeeding with their Jewish studies programs,” Levine said.

One of the popular classes for Jewish studies students at the University of Kansas is Intermediate Hebrew I.

Oslo boomers: Palestinians born after 1993 accords set a teen terror trend

By Alex Traiman

In 1993, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization entered into the Oslo peace process, in the hopes of reaching a final status peace agreement by 1999. In 2015, Palestinians born after the signing of the Oslo Accords are distancing themselves from the agreement, instead turning toward violent acts of terror.

Notably, on Oct. 12, 13-year-old and 17-year-old Palestinian terrorists seriously injured two Israelis in a stabbing attack in the northern Jerusalem community of Pisgat Ze’ev.

Chief Bentzi Sau acknowledged the phenomenon of teenage terrorists, claiming that “more than half of the detainees” in recent terror attacks in Israel are minors.

According to Khalil Shikaki, director of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR), the Oslo Accords take on a different meaning for the younger generation of Palestinians than for those who were adults at the time of the signing.

“The older generation remembers the pre-Oslo conditions and therefore tend to be less critical of that agreement than the younger generation who sees Oslo as a miserable failure.”
Jewish students can now officially major in Jewish studies

from page 1

who hope to be Jewish professionals to KU, who will “hopefully stay and build both the Lawrence and Kansas City Jewish communities.”

“My Jewish identity has had an opportunity to grow and prosper over the past four years thanks to the Jewish studies department and KU Hillel. I did have to choose religious studies to come to KU because there was not a Jewish studies major at the time, but I will now be adding Jewish studies as a second major. It turned out to be a great path for me because I have been able to see the intersectionality between Judaism and other religions through my studies,” continued Levine, who may pursue opportunities with Hillel, NFTY or a federation and then proceed to study for the rabbinate.

Now that Jewish studies has become an official major, Dr. Younger has more work to do as the department chair. One of his main objectives will be to recruit faculty specifically for Jewish studies. Up until now faculty who teach Jewish studies content courses are housed in other departments, such as religious studies or languages.

“We don’t have a professor in Jewish studies in our program. We have a visiting assistant professor who has been with us for three years and I’m going to try to get him on tenure-track. He teaches an ancient Israel archaeology course. We have lecturers, such as Rabbi Neal Schuster, but we don’t actually have a designated faculty in Jewish studies yet,” Younger said.

The Jewish studies department will also need to keep track of alumni and begin raising money.

“We now have an academic program where we can say we are graduating real people who need to go on and do real things in this field and go to Jewish studies graduate school. We need the money to send them, we need the money to get faculty to train them better,” he said.

Dr. Younger would also eventually like to start a graduate Jewish studies program at KU.

“First I’d like to start a graduate certificate. I think that will be pretty easy. To start an M.A. program we will need to have faculty in our program,” he said.

Additional programming is in the department’s future as well.

“It would be nice to have a lecture series and do something other than Israeli films and pizza. We’d like to do something a little bit more content oriented.”

Earlier this month the department hosted the 27th annual conference of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association. Participants came all the way from Austria, Belgium and Jerusalem as well as communities closer to home such as Missouri State, University of South Alabama and University of Virginia.

“That is also going to put us on the map,” Dr. Younger said.

FUDGE SALE $7.99 reg. $10.99lb.

Order Online! www.lauralittlecandy.com

Laura Little’s Candies

2100 West 75th St. Prairie Village, KS 66208 | 913-722-2226 Fax: 913-722-0143

REAL ESTATE

BUYING, SELLING, RELOCATING
The CLASSIC approach to service ... please call me.

REECE & NICHOLS
Senior Marketing Executive • Multi-Million Dollar Club
816-560-6565 | 913-652-4435
diana@dianaresnick.com

Boresows's Lawn, LLC
“A Cut Above the Rest”

Personalized service year-round.
Mowing, fertilizing, landscaping, verticutting, aerating, seeding & shrub trimming
FREE Estimates

Jerry Judd • (816) 761-2327 • (913) 897-3981