FROM THE DIRECTOR – DANIEL TERRIS

Legacies of Understanding

Distinguished philosopher and theologian Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an internationally recognized authority on Islamic science and spirituality, came to Brandeis in late November to receive the second Joseph B. and Toby Gittler Prize. The prize recognized Professor Nasr’s lifetime of contributions as a scholar to improving racial, ethnic, and religious relations.

His talk, “Re-Evaluating The Meaning of the Other in Our Lives,” challenged Brandeis community members to rethink the nature of our deepest relationships in an era when identities are fractured, and technology has redefined what it means to be human.

Professor Nasr spoke of religion as a source of hope and power, since for the vast majority of people, it is a principal marker of identity. But he also spoke about the need for nations and peoples to redefine their sense of self, and their relations with other nations and peoples.

Certainly the major challenges humanity faces today are global in nature, but Nasr’s formulation urges us not merely to attack those problems tactically, but to participate actively as citizens in remaking our nations’ connections and conflicts with others. Most importantly, Nasr counseled,

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Center Launches New Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts

The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life announces its new Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, directed by Dr. Cynthia Cohen. Through courses for undergraduates and graduate students, practitioner residencies, and documentation and research projects, the program works with artists and peacebuilders to discover and articulate the distinctive contributions of culture and the arts to the transformation of conflict.

This new program is one of three core program areas of the Center, together with Programs in International Justice and Society and the Center’s campus activities, including the Sorensen Fellowships, “Ethical Inquiry,” and other initiatives. It builds on work undertaken within the Creative Approaches to Coexistence and Reconciliation component of the Sifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, formerly housed at the Center.

In 2011, the Peacebuilding and the Arts program will focus on distribution of knowledge and resources generated through its partnership with Theatre Without Borders, called Acting Together on the World Stage, a project which documents peacebuilding performances in zones of conflict around the world. Events on and off campus will feature the project’s documentary film and print anthology; at multi-day “intensives” artists and peacebuilding practitioners will strengthen their understanding of and capacity to work at the nexus of the arts and peace. (See page 3 for details.)

Other 2011 highlights of the program include the course “The Arts of Building Peace,” taught by Dr. Cohen in the spring, which explores the nature of the moral imagination and how the arts can be mobilized in support of non-violent resistance, to strengthen understanding across differences, and to facilitate reconciliation after mass violence; and a working conference convening educators to discuss areas of collaboration in their efforts to educate future artist/peacebuilders.

New Peacebuilding and the Arts website
For case studies, resources, updates on events, relevant links, the Acting Together on the World Stage film trailer, email signups, contact info and more, visit brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts.
The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life

Mission: To develop effective responses to conflict and injustice by offering innovative approaches to coexistence, strengthening the work of international courts, and encouraging ethical practice in civic and professional life.

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Marci McPhee, Associate Director
Barbara Strauss ’02, Senior Department Coordinator
Naoe Suzuki, Senior Program Coordinator, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts
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Founding Chair
Theodore C. Sorensen (1928-2010)

Resources from Coexistence International

Coexistence International concluded its programming in November. The wealth of practical resources CI created on coexistence and complementary approaches in divided societies will continue to be available online and by request at brandeis.edu/coexistence. For further information contact Mari Fitzduff, Director of the Masters Program in Coexistence and Conflict at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, at mfitzd@brandeis.edu.

Shifting Perspectives

The 2010 Sorensen Fellows and their “Internship in Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies” (PAX 89) classmate write about their international summer internship experiences in Shifting Perspectives: Encountering Community in a Changing World, available online as a PDF. They explore the notion of community, examine the self, and infuse personal insights with literature. Their narratives are both intensely personal and deeply thoughtful.

View or download it here:
Go to brandeis.edu/ethics, click “Publications,” and scroll to “Student Fellowship Publications.”
Acting Together to Make a Difference: Documenting, Developing, and Supporting a Field

The Ethics Center will celebrate the launch of the Acting Together project’s resources for artist/peacebuilders – a documentary film, print anthology, website, and accompanying “toolkit” – with a series of events in 2011. For registration or more information about any of these events, contact Program Coordinator Naoe Suzuki at nsuzuki@brandeis.edu or call 781-736-5001.

Weekend Intensives
April 1-3 and 8-10, 2011, Brandeis University
At two multi-day “intensives,” artists, community development professionals, and peacebuilding practitioners will explore creative approaches to the transformation of conflict, and ethical dimensions of their work. Open to the public (scholarships will be available) and free to the Brandeis community. For students, practitioners, administrators, advocates and policymakers.

■ Session I: Peacebuilding and the Arts: Core Concepts and Principles will address the issues of balancing artistic and socio-political intentions and the need to “do no harm.” Participants will design arts and peacebuilding initiatives reflecting the basic principles of the moral imagination. Guest presenter: Dr. Polly Walker.

■ Session II: Peacebuilding and the Arts: Cultural Community Development will focus on integrating principles of creativity, hospitality and spirituality into people-centered and dialogic community development practice. Guest presenters: Dr. Polly Walker and Dr. Peter Westoby.

Higher Education Think Tank
April 12, 2011, Brandeis University and via videoconference
College and university educators who lead programs in the arts and social transformation will explore options for a consortium of university-based programs educating students to work at the nexus of the arts and social transformation. Participants will include Erik Ehn of Brown University and Roberto Gutiérrez Varea of the University of San Francisco.

A closed working session will be followed by a roundtable discussion, open to the public, in which these educators will share their visions for the emerging field of arts and social transformation. These events will be followed by the official launch of the Acting Together on the World Stage documentary. (See below right.)

Bringing The World Stage to the Screen
On September 23, the Center and Theatre Without Borders presented the first public screening of Acting Together on the World Stage, before a packed house at the legendary La Mama Experimental Theatre in New York City. It was the kickoff event for a major international conference, “Acting Together on the World Stage: Theatre and Peacebuilding in Conflict Zones.” Participants requested copies to use in university classes in the U.S. and the U.K., and with artists and peacebuilders in conflict regions including Afghanistan, Colombia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Serbia, and Sudan. The film was also previewed for Brandeis theater students in October.

Additional screenings have been scheduled. Visit our website for details: brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts

Get connected: Visit brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts or contact Program Coordinator Naoe Suzuki: 781-736-5001, nsuzuki@brandeis.edu.

Save the date!
October 23 and 24, 2011
Just Performance: Enacting Justice in the Wake of Violence
The Center will convene artists, peacebuilding practitioners, members of the local and international judiciary, and the public to explore the performative dimensions of justice-seeking, considering public rituals, theater, truth commissions, and trials.

This conference will serve as the Brandeis launch of Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict, a two-volume anthology to be published by New Village Press in 2011, edited by Dr. Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutiérrez Varea, and Dr. Polly Walker.

Official Launch of New Documentary: Acting Together on the World Stage
April 12, 2010, 4:00 PM
Shapiro Campus Center Theater, Brandeis University
Film screening, responses from Brandeis faculty members, and reception.

Acting Together on the World Stage, co-created by Dr. Cynthia Cohen, Director of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, and filmmaker Allison Lund, documents exemplary peacebuilding performance efforts from conflict regions around the world. (Acting Together was previewed in New York in September. See left.)
The debate on the meaning of an “international rule of law” is undoubtedly a crucial one in the challenging times in which we live. And the promotion of the rule of law at the international level necessarily requires an understanding of the role that the international judge has to play in this context.

Many of the issues which you have been discussing are an integral part of my daily work. My perspective on these issues is therefore influenced by my own professional experiences, by the legal work of the United Nations which I have received the mandate to conduct, and by the challenges faced by the Organization as I witness them every day....My objective today is to demonstrate how this legal perspective has contributed to a trend “toward an international rule of law.”...

Within the Organization, the “rule of law” has been described as:
...a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency....(Report of the Secretary-General on the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies, August 2004)

What is of particular interest – and plainly stems from the emphasis put on the universality of the principles which inspired the Organization’s action in this area – is that the UN recognizes the existence of two interdependent dimensions to the concept of the “rule of law,” one national and the other international.

This implies that “every nation that proclaims the rule of law at home must respect it abroad and that every nation that insists on it abroad must enforce it at home.”(Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly, “In larger freedoms: towards development, security and human rights for all,” March 2005)

Find a link to the entire text here: brandeis.edu/ethics/internationaljustice/bij/2010.html
The Brandeis in The Hague Summer Program Returns

Following a tremendously successful pilot run in summer 2010, the Brandeis in The Hague summer program will return in summer 2011. Building on the Center’s work in international justice and its contacts in the field, the program combines coursework, field visits to international courts, and interactive workshops with court advocates and international lawyers. Applications are due March 18, 2011, and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Students are encouraged to apply well before the admissions deadline. The program is open to Brandeis University undergraduates from all class years. There are no prerequisites.


For complete details on the program and the application process: brandeis.edu/acserv/abroad/hague

For more on Brandeis Programs in International Justice and Society, visit brandeis.edu/ethics/internationaljustice

International Justice and Human Rights: Getting Involved at Brandeis

Brandeis students interested in issues related to international justice and human rights met in October with Leigh Swigart, Director of Programs in International Justice and Society, to create an interest group at Brandeis that would focus on these issues. They discussed what the Ethics Center is doing in this field, and began planning for a series of events in the spring semester that would introduce students to questions and career opportunities they might pursue in international justice. Contact Leigh Swigart if you are interested in getting involved: swigart@brandeis.edu.

Stay Up To Date!

For details about the Center’s work in International Justice and Society and related events, or to get involved, contact Leigh Swigart: 781-726-2694, swigart@brandeis.edu.

Follow the Center on Facebook for news and updates on all Center programs: facebook.com/EthicsBrandeis.

Russian Judge Discusses Constitutional Law, International Law, and Capital Punishment

Russia has curtailed its use of the death penalty as a result of its obligations as a member of the Council of Europe, a process explained to Brandeis students by Bakhtiyar Tuzmukhamedov, a professor of international law and a counselor to the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, in a talk last October on “International Law in Russian Constitutional Justice: A Case Study of Capital Punishment.”

When Russia joined the Council of Europe in 1996, it put into place a moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a condition of membership, a transitional step to an outright ban. In recent years, public pressure in Russia for lifting the moratorium has increased in response to terrorist activity.

Mr. Tuzmukhamedov, also a trial judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, was a participant in the 2010 Brandeis Institute for International Judges. The talk was cosponsored by the Brandeis-Genesis Institute for Russian Jewry (BGI).

Read more about the event: brandeis.edu/now/2010/october/russianjudge.html

For more on the death penalty, see “Is capital punishment ethical?“ from the Center’s online “Ethical Inquiry” series. Researched by Katherine Alexander ’12, this inquiry features some of the key arguments made by proponents and opponents of the death penalty: brandeis.edu/ethics/ethicalinquiry/2010/october.html
“Year Abroad, Queer Abroad”

Six Brandeis seniors spoke about their study abroad experiences in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East at a forum cosponsored by Triskelion and the Center during National Coming Out Week in October.

Moderator Zachary Spence (who studied in Japan), Liza Behrendt (Cameroon), Alex Luo (China), Noam Sienna (Israel), Emily Smizer (Bolivia), and Greg Storella (France) shared experiences that were at times funny, frightening, disappointing, surprising, exciting, confusing, and educational.

Noam’s rainbow kippah elicited comments in Israel from “Take that off — you’re an embarrassment to the religion!” to “Where did you get that? I want one!” A Cameroonian woman assumed Liza was queer because “American women with nose rings are lesbians.”

Some struggled with languages that have gender-specific pronouns, which could make it difficult to describe oneself, friends, and romantic partners. This was particularly challenging for Zachary, as a trans man. His Japanese host mother opposed his use of the male pronoun, but his host father’s feelings were clear: “Whatever. People are people. It’s the heart.”

Greg searched for community in France, while Alex sought it in Beijing, with varying levels of success. In Bolivia Emily found community — and risk. But despite the challenges and frustrations, all of the panelists endorsed studying abroad. “I want to go again,” said Greg. “You should go!”


Interested in Ethics Center Cosponsorship?
The Center provides financial and/or publicity support for selected student-, department- and faculty-sponsored events and activities throughout the year. Proposals are reviewed monthly by a committee of faculty, staff, and students. For the application, complete guidelines, and upcoming deadlines, see: brandeis.edu/ethics/events/cosponsorship
Remembering Sorensen and Solarz

The Ethics Center lost two dear friends and steadfast supporters this fall.

Ted Sorensen: Wisdom and Inspiration
Theodore C. “Ted” Sorensen (1928-2010) served the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life for 10 years as founding chair of the Center’s International Advisory Board. In 2009 the Center’s undergraduate fellowship program was named for Ted Sorensen.

In the days following his passing, tributes to and remembrances of Ted Sorensen came to us at the Center. We share some of these below, and welcome additional tributes at ethics@brandeis.edu. The full text of these and other tributes, and a remembrance from the Center, can be found here: brandeis.edu/ethics/about/Tributes_to_Ted_Sorensen.html.

Ted Sorensen will be deeply missed by his many friends and admirers in many countries on all continents. His friends came to love Ted for his gentle manner, his wisdom and his inspiration for commitment to service to humankind. We will miss Ted Sorensen and rejoice in a life that was full, meaningful and an inspiration to so many.

– Richard J. Goldstone, Chair, International Advisory Board

As a Sorensen Fellow, I feel I was able to extend his legacy, in the minutest sense, to a place and people I would never have known otherwise. My work in Mumbai, India...extended my views of the world exponentially. The role of public service in order to create social change is something I believe in strongly, and I think Mr. Sorensen’s work and life reflected these values as well.

– Kayla Dinces ’12, 2010 Sorensen Fellow

It is such a quake shock for me to know Ted has left us forever....The Chinese version of Counselor is warmly read among Chinese readers....[They] comment, “Sorensen is a hero behind the scene.”....Ted set up an excellent example, with his unique life-long loyalty, principle and contribution....He will live forever in our heart, across borders and transcending the world.

– Wei Zonglei, Beijing, China, Translator of Counselor: A Life at the Edge of History, 2001 Ethics Center Visiting Scholar

Stephen J. Solarz: Committed to Justice
Stephen J. Solarz ’62 (1940-2010), was a founding member of the Center’s International Advisory Board. The editor of the Justice student newspaper at Brandeis, Solarz went on to law school and a career in politics.

A nine-term Congressman from Brooklyn first elected at age 34, Solarz quickly became a rising star of the Democratic Party on foreign policy issues, developing especially strong ties with the Philippines, India, and Turkey, among other countries.

When Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz established the Center’s advisory board, he drew on Steve Solarz’s extensive experience and overseas contacts to help build it, and asked Solarz to join its ranks. Solarz attended meetings regularly, and pushed passionately for the Center to engage in controversial issues as an extension of the Brandeis commitment to open debate and public engagement.

“Steve Solarz was the quintessential Brandeis alumnus: tireless, outspoken, compassionate, and deeply committed to justice and democracy in every corner of the world,” says Reinharz.

“Steve Solarz lived his belief in international cooperation and dialogue,” remembers Center Director Daniel Terris, “and he always pushed us at Brandeis to extend our global reach.”

Read more about Stephen J. Solarz and his work with the Center here: brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2010/Remembering_Solarz.html.

Legacies of Understanding

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nions need to redefine national self-interest in terms of the collective self-interest of humanity and the world.

His formulation calls to mind the lives and achievements of two Center board members and staunch supporters we lost this fall, Theodore C. Sorensen and Stephen J. Solarz ’62. (See article at left.) Ted Sorensen, writing for John F. Kennedy, urged Americans to see themselves as foot soldiers, alongside people of many nations, in a “twilight struggle...against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.” As a U.S. Congressman, Steve Solarz sought partners for justice and democracy in Turkey, India, the Philippines, and elsewhere, long before it was fashionable for Americans to build global ties beyond Western Europe.

Seyyed Nasr has a long history with the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life. In 1995, as we prepared the initial conception for the Center, he participated in a campus conference in which he warned us of the dangers of defining values and ethics in strictly Western terms, and urged us to make cross-cultural understanding an important pillar of our work.

Thanks to the probing and wisdom of Ted Sorensen, Steve Solarz, and others, I like to think that we have heeded Professor Nasr’s advice to us, and continued to work in the spirit of his Gittler Prize talk. In our work with international judges, we participate in the process of changing the conception of law and justice from a set of systems rooted in sovereignty towards a complex global network of international justice. By engaging men and women in the process of building peace with the creative arts, we are building new models of relationships across traditional divides.

As Professor Nasr reminds us, we must rethink how we act – and rethink who we are.
From Guantánamo To The Hague: Human Rights Victims and Their Justice Claims
February 3, 2011, 7 pm
International Lounge, Usdan Student Center

Torture and mass atrocity receive increasing attention by the international community. Accountability for war crimes is on the rise with the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Who are victims of abuse? What do victims want? And who decides whether their demands will be fulfilled?

Laurel Fletcher ’86, Director of the International Human Rights Law Clinic at the University of California Berkeley School of Law, will discuss her work with former Guantánamo detainees and the role of the academy and legal profession in promoting victim-centered justice claims.

Preceding the talk, Fletcher and fellow Brandeis alumni James Bair ’03, Nicole Karlebach ’04, and Brahmy Poologasingham ’00 will discuss their career paths in the field of international law and human rights. (Atrium, Abraham Shapiro Academic Complex, 4 pm.)

Religion and the Quest to Contain Violence: A Symposium on James Carroll’s Jerusalem, Jerusalem
March 14, 2011, 3 – 9 pm
Sherman Hall, Hassenfeld Conference Center

James Carroll will be joined by Asma Afsaruddin, Susannah Heschel, Kanan Makiya, and Martin Marty for a symposium on the nature of religious violence through history, celebrating the publication of Carroll’s Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World, forthcoming earlier that month. Sponsored by the Center, cosponsored by the Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry and the Brandeis Interfaith Chaplaincy.

In the monthly online “Ethical Inquiry” series, we call attention to a wide range of issues with implications that may be personal, political, or even global. We highlight a broad array of opinion from journalism, academia, and advocacy organizations. Our intent is to illuminate and explore the complexity of some of the most vexing ethical questions of our time. Recent topics include:

- Normalization of Testing for HIV: Should Everyone Be Tested?
- Is it ethical to conduct medical trials among poor and uneducated populations in developing countries?
- Is capital punishment ethical?
- Debating “Judicial Activism” – How Far Should Judges Go?

You can write one too...if you are a Brandeis University student (undergrad or grad) or alum. Contact David Weinstein at djw@brandeis.edu

To be notified of new “Ethical Inquiries” follow us on Facebook or Twitter:
facebook.com/EthicsBrandeis
twitter.com/EthicsBrandeis

See page 3 for upcoming events from the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts