

Living Jerusalem: How do people of different cultures share knowledge of their heritage and practices across the borders between ethnic spaces, especially in disputed territories?

Living Columbus: If Columbus were to become the model for religious understanding among Jews, Muslims, and Christians, how would we get there and what would our model look like?

This initiative was designed to explore outreach across several types of boundaries locally in Columbus and among Columbus-based OSU students and Jerusalem-based Al Quds and Hebrew University students in a virtual community that crosses religious, national, and ethnic divides. Three outreach and engagement projects were conducted.

Living Columbus: The Salaam, Shalom, Peace Project

Fifth-grade students and their teachers at Sunrise Islamic Academy, the Columbus Jewish Day School, and St. Joseph Montessori School (Muslim, Jewish, and Catholic day schools) participated in the project. The students learned how to document and present their own religious practices by creating and hosting tours of their schools. The students also learned, many for the first time, about the traditions, cultural experiences, and religious observances of the other two groups. The schools are continuing to develop the project for a new group of fifth graders in 2008 and want to make it a part of their ongoing curricula.

Amy Horowitz, Lecturer and Program Specialist, The Melton Center for Jewish Studies, College of Humanities; Partners: Amy Shuman, Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Humanities; Tamar Rudavsky, Professor, Department of English, College of Humanities; Marcelita G. Haskins, Director, Educational Services, WOSU Public Media; Mazhar Jalil, Islamic Foundation of Central Ohio; Norman Hosansky, Congregation Tifereth Israel

Living Jerusalem: Ethnography and Bridge Blogging in Disputed Territory

Offered in spring 2006 and spring 2007, this course allowed Ohio State students to interact electronically with their counterparts at Al-Quds University, a Palestinian institution, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an Israeli institution, both located in the contested city of Jerusalem. The students communicated through weblogs and video conferencing and eventually met on a study tour to Jerusalem. The course included an examination of how the building of a virtual community facilitated the travel of culture and ideas and even understanding across hostile borders.

Ohio Interfaith Foodways Project

Community partners from the Islamic Center of Central Ohio and the Tefereth Israel Synagogue helped organize dinners hosted by Muslim, Jewish, and Christian families, featuring foodways enjoyed by the host religious group and a brief program on food and religious culture and observance. Recipes were collected for inclusion in an interfaith recipe book now in progress and all dinners were videotaped in anticipation of a short documentary that will be completed.

Jerusalem: Cultures and Communities in Contention

Palestinian, Israeli, and U.S. scholars attended this November 2006 working conference sponsored by the Living Jerusalem Project and hosted by the Mershon Center, Melton Center, and the Middle East Studies Center. One focus of the conference was on re-envisioning an edited book on Jerusalem begun in the mid-1990s. The working team reassessed essays written in the 1990s in light of developments over the past 12 years.

The Jewish children explained the concept of tzedakah, or charity.
 The Muslim children's eyes lit up when they realized that
 the word for charity in Arabic is almost identical.

PHOTOS: FOREGROUND—ISRAELI, PALESTINIAN, AND U.S. FACULTY AND STUDENTS MEETING AT OHIO STATE; BACKGROUND—MUSLIM, JEWISH, AND CATHOLIC STUDENTS



Living Jerusalem—Living Columbus



2005 EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT GRANT