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Marla Brettschneider, Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies, COLA, travels to Israel

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Marla Brettschneider

Professor of Political Science & Women's Studies - College of Liberal Arts

Professor Brettschneider traveled to Israel this summer to conduct research on Golda Meir's political life.



Professor Marla Brettschneider

In accordance with the new UNH Strategic Plan, my project for this summer trip to Israel and Palestine was interdisciplinary. The project involved original research on Golda Meir's political life.

Golda Meir was a life-time international political activist, life-time member and leader of a socialist living experiment (kibbutz), one of the few women heads of state in history, and the only known Jewish woman head of state. Even with these "few" distinguished lines on her resume, little scholarly research has been conducted on Golda Meir in any field: Israeli politics, Jewish politics and theory, Jewish women or feminism. From a traditional view of political leaders, focusing on her prowess as a Prime Minister of Israel, Meir is a relatively forgotten figure. As a political leader of potential feminist interest, her legacy is reduced to being (first by David Ben Gurion) oft referred to as the "best man in the (Israeli) government." She becomes a fascinating subject to explore in the larger study of Jewish feminist political thinking I am conducting, however, if one approaches Meir with an alternative methodology. In this project I bring together experimental methods in Jewish and in feminist genealogies in an effort to deepen our understanding of feminist "situation" (de Beauvoir). In doing so I intend to forge new models for theorizing politics and how we may claim historical legacies that can assist us politically today. In this project I intend to both expand the field of Jewish feminist studies as well as to utilize Jewish feminist studies in broadening feminist genealogy and theory more generally. The unique circumstances of Meir's life, political activity, and thinking make her a central subject for this project.



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