

FASPE

FELLOWSHIPS AT
AUSCHWITZ
FOR THE STUDY OF
PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

FASPE operates under the auspices of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

FASPE SEMINARY: A FELLOWSHIP ON ETHICS FOR FUTURE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The opportunity to travel and build friendships with such a diverse group of passionate and committed individuals was truly a gift; it brought to life the possibility and strength of joining hands across faith traditions and professions to confront the ethical issues we face in our time.

- Elizabeth Andrasi, 2015 Seminary Fellow

FASPE made me realize that silence and inaction are simply no longer an option for me, and as a Muslim and a future religious leader it is my duty to do all I can in the long, long battle to eradicate injustice.

- Anne Meyers, 2014 Seminary Fellow

FASPE showed me how complicit clergy were in the atrocities of the Holocaust -- a fact that challenges me not to remain complicit in the atrocities of my own, contemporary context.

Adeel Zeb, 2013 Seminary Fellow

The Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) offers a unique historical lens to engage journalism, medical, seminary, and law students in an intensive course of study focused on contemporary ethics in their professions. FASPE Fellows are granted an all-expenses paid 12-day trip to Germany and Poland to learn about the role of their chosen profession in Nazi Germany and to use that historic framework to explore the ethical issues facing their field today.

Pre-World War II professionals in Germany were known and respected internationally. Yet, leaders (and practitioners) in each of the professions, and often the institutions they represented, played a fundamental role in designing, enabling and/or executing the crimes of Nazi Germany.

The FASPE seminary program examines the roles played by the clergy in Nazi Germany and underscores the reality that moral codes governing the profession can break down or be distorted with devastating consequences. Having learned the power of their profession, the Seminary Fellows are better positioned (and more willing) to address various contemporary ethical issues facing their profession and individual members of the clergy. The program integrates historical, cultural, philosophical, and literary sources; survivor testimony; and on-site workshops in Berlin, Krakow, and Auschwitz.

The seminary program was initially developed by a committee including professors, priests, rabbis, and scholars from Georgetown University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Since piloting the program in 2010, 75 Fellows have participated from schools such as: Boston College, Harvard Divinity School, the Hartford Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Yeshivat Chovevei Torah. Instructors for the 2015 program were Kevin P. Spicer, C.S.C., the James J. Kenneally Distinguished Professor of History at Stonehill College; and Rabbi James Ponet, the Howard M. Holtzmann Emeritus Jewish Chaplain of Yale University. The 2016 program will include 12 new Fellows chosen through a national application process.

The Fellowships include all costs associated with the 12-day program, including international and European travel, lodging, and food. The Fellows are provided with reading materials prior to meeting in New York; and the academic component of the program is intensive and interactive. Daily Seminars are led by faculty and local experts who engage the Fellows in issues associated with the locations visited.

FASPE Seminary Fellows examine such topics as:

- The fate of “God's image” in the shadow of the Holocaust;
- Post War reconciliation, apologies, and confessions;
- Religious faith, exclusivism, and temptations to prejudice and intolerance;
- Dealing with authoritarianism in religion and society; and
- The role of the clergy as moral leaders

FASPE Seminary Program Outline:

- Orientation is held at the Museum of Jewish Heritage and includes touring exhibits, meeting with Holocaust survivors, and working with FASPE staff and guest scholars.
- Fellows travel to Berlin to visit and study the city’s historical and cultural sites. Educational workshops take place at such locations as the House of the Wannsee Conference, where in 1942, representatives of State and Nazi Party agencies (including nine lawyers) convened to discuss and coordinate plans for the “Final Solution.”
- Fellows travel to Oświęcim, Poland, the town the Germans called Auschwitz, where they tour Auschwitz-Birkenau and work with the distinguished staff at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. They also travel to Krakow where they explore the city’s rich Jewish, Catholic, and Polish history. Sessions devoted to contemporary religious ethics take place in seminar rooms at Auschwitz and at Jagiellonian University in Krakow, one of Europe’s oldest and most prestigious universities.
- Each Fellow submits a final written product focused on a contemporary ethical issue chosen by the Fellow. These are included in an annual journal of essays from Fellows from all disciplines.
- An Alumni Reunion & Symposium is held each year for current and past Fellows. Fellows from the most recent Program present their papers; and all gather and discuss the impact of the Fellowships

FASPE seeks to instill a sense of professional responsibility for the ethical and moral choices that the Fellows will make in their careers and in their professional relationships. Understanding that their voice and actions can positively influence their profession, they will be part of a growing cohort of religious leaders who are invested in improving the practice of all members of the clergy.

FASPE is committed to a long-term relationship with the Fellows in order to sustain the ideas raised during the Fellowships and to provide a forum for continuing dialogue among the Fellows as they move forward in their careers. Testimonials from the Fellows have confirmed the value of FASPE as they have entered their profession – as practicing rabbis, ministers, chaplains, and academics. FASPE succeeds through the long term impact on its Fellows.

For more information, contact Thorin Tritter, Ph.D., Managing Director of FASPE.

Tel: (646) 437-4307 ▪ Fax: (646) 437-4281 ▪ tritter@FASPE.info

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www.FASPE.info