The International Center for the Study of Loss, Bereavement and Resilience headed by Prof. Simon Shimshon Rubin, held a conference last week that focused on loss, grief and the trauma following Operation Protective Edge. The event was attended by dozens of participants who enjoyed a variety of panels from well-known experts in the field including Major Yossi Shteimitz, mental health officer for the 36th Division who spoke about accompanying the soldiers during and after the operation, Ofra Anchio, National Inspector in the Ministry of Defense’s Unit for Social Services, and Major-General (Ret.) Orna Barbibai, former Head of the IDF Personnel Directorate, who shared with the audience her professional and personal perspective from Operation Protective Edge.

Prof. Itzhak Weismann from the Department of Middle Eastern History, along with the Jewish-Arab Center, held an international research seminar for three days on the topic of Modern Preaching of Islam: Salafis, Islamic Movements, Muslim States. The conference was supposed to take place several months ago but was postponed due to Operation Protective Edge. Nevertheless, the researchers, from Israel and abroad – including from institutions like Dartmouth College, Princeton, the University of Copenhagen, etc. – showed up in a full lineup. "The conference dealt, among other things, with the question of Dawah versus Jihad. The preachy-religious side of Islam versus the side turned towards a Holy War. In order to understand the complexity of the different movements in Islam, the fanatics alongside the moderates, one must first understand these two concepts," said Prof. Weismann.
The Physical Therapy Department in cooperation with the Israeli Physiotherapy Society held a seminar day on Health Aspects in Training and Physical Activity of Children and Adolescents. Dozens of participants attended and learned how physical activity during childhood and adolescence contributes to the health of the bone tissue during adulthood. The seminar was attended, among others, by Prof. Bareket Falk, a professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Brock University in Canada and an international leader in the field of exercise physiology in children, and Dr. Naama Constantini, a sports and family physician who heads the area of Sports Medicine in the Israeli Hadassah Optimal and is also world renowned in her field.

Antonio Natali, Director of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy and his wife Paula Natali, visited Haifa last week. The Head of the Art History Department, Dr. Yoni Ascher, took part in their encounter with the Mayor of the city, Yona Yahav. During this meeting, Mr. Natali presented the Gallery which is one of the most well-known, one of the oldest and one of the most important art galleries in the entire world.

Eating salty foods doesn’t necessarily increase your sense of thirst, according to a new study conducted at the University of Haifa. "On the basis of the perception that salt consumption increases thirst, the assumption was also made that there is concern regarding an increased consumption of sweetened beverages. But our study found no correlation between the two," noted Prof. Micha Leshem of the Psychology Department who conducted the study, to several local papers as well as The Jerusalem Post.

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Library recently acquired a large donation of books from the private collection of Prof. Sasson Somekh – poet, author, translator and academician with an international reputation, one of the people who laid the foundations for the research of new Arabic literature in the world, and winner of the Israel Prize and the Emet Prize for his research in the field of Arabic literature and its relationship to Hebrew culture. The many books were absorbed into the Library with the assistance of the Dean of the Faculty of the Humanities, Prof. Reuven Snir, who also wrote a summary of the topic.

In 2014 Israelis showed increased confidence in the performance of the various public institutions, but decreased confidence in the performance of Knesset members and the cabinet, according to the latest Public Sector Performance Index conducted by Prof. Eran Vigoda-Gadot of the School of Political Science. The findings were published extensively in the Hebrew and English editions of Ha'aretz.

The permanent column of The Jerusalem Post that recalls the latest archaeological news from the University of Haifa featured the University twice last week! Dr. Reuven Yeshurun of the Archaeology Department and the Zinman Institute of Archaeology discussed the archaeological "treasure" discovered in the el-Wad Cave on Mount Carmel and Dr. Deborah Cvikel from the Department of Maritime Civilizations and a researcher at the Leon Recanatni Institute for Maritime Studies discussed building a replica of the ancient vessel from Ma'agan Michael.
“Today, the percentage of Jews [in all of Israel including the West Bank and Gaza] is 52% and in 2024 it will be just 48%. If there is no separation between Israel and the Palestinian territories, in two to three years the Palestinians will be the majority,” says Prof. (Emeritus) Arnon Soffer, Head of the Chaikin Chair of Geostrategy in his latest interview to The Jerusalem Post.

Dr. Eran Segal, an associate researcher at the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, discussed the Saudi legacy with The Jerusalem Post and said that since Muqrin is the youngest son of the country’s founder, King Abdulaziz, known as Ibn Saud, his nomination probably means that the next in line must come from "the third generation" or “Ibn Saud’s grandchildren.” “This is the main reason, to my mind, for the incoherence in Saudi policy in the last years as the struggle grew more intense,” he said. The system was relatively clear in regards to Ibn Saud’s sons, he said, but “regarding the next generation they should create a new system that will be clear and guarantee a relatively smooth succession.”

International School student Dana Rademacher continues to blog her adventures in the Holy Land. This time she voices her opinion on which coffee chain is better: Aroma or Starbucks.