Dr. Lior Sternfeld
Department of Middle East Studies
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

My life before BGU:
I studied Middle East Studies at BGU for both my undergraduate and Master’s degrees. I completed my Ph.D. in the Department of History at the University of Texas, Austin. My research topic is the social history of Iran and the modern Middle East. My dissertation and my first book are an integrative history of the Jews in 20th Century Iranian society. After completing my doctorate, I worked at Penn State University as an Assistant Professor. From there I am returning to the place where it all began – Ben-Gurion University.

Why BGU?
The Department of Middle East Studies was always my academic home. It was here that I was shaped as a student and researcher. The reputation of the Department over the years as a place that challenges conventions, conducts groundbreaking research, and provides a variety of points of view is something I have always been proud of as a student and a graduate. The Department is comprised of world class researchers and I am proud to be a member of the faculty.

An insight from your research:
It might sound trivial, but the most interesting things in historical texts are what isn’t written in them. What has been erased, silenced and omitted tells us much more than what is written.

Something that doesn’t appear on your resume:
I am mad about soccer, basketball, college football and music. I can watch games one after the other for days on end (during major tournaments). I can’t work without background music and I have to check the news every few minutes.

When I grow up:
As a child I wanted to be a soccer player or a veterinarian (or both). Today - is it still possible to become a soccer player? I’m asking for a friend...

Sources of inspiration:
A single book changed my life: “All the Shah’s Men”, which my beloved wife, then my girlfriend, gave me in 2005. As a result, I decided to take a course on Iran, and the rest is history. Also my mentors over the years, political figures and social leaders. But above all, my parents Zahava and Itzik. They are my compass to this day.

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Lennon or McCartney?
Mom or Dad? Lennon is a legend. A musical genius and a philosopher. McCartney in the early years was much more interesting musically and has become less interesting over time. I saw McCartney in concert, an experience I’ll never forget.

Night or morning? Both. It depends on the season and the number of children under the age of 6 at home.

Mac or PC?
Once you go Mac, you never go back!

Pizza or burgers?
As long as it’s vegan - both!

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