**Israel Dialogue Reflections:**

**HANNAH LIFSHUTZ, International Affairs & Political Science Major**

I have traveled a lot.  I think that a truly exceptional traveling experience is one during which your knowledge is furthered simply by being in the country.  Living in a place provides a kind of knowledge that is not possible to acquire in the classroom. My experience in Israel was one that provided me with insight and expanded both my understanding of the geopolitical complexities and the intricate nature of Israeli culture. From the Old City of Jerusalem to the arid Negev desert, we experienced the variety of the Israel landscapes. Our classes in Israel--both Israel in Literature and the Arts as well as Politics and Media--allowed us to explore Israeli culture and society, and the artistic and political offered different perspectives.  The work we did in the classroom also provided a context for our developing understanding of the difficulties surrounding us. Most importantly, I believe I walked away from the experience with a much fuller understanding of the conflict that has permeated the region for a century.  While I felt safe to be in the country in spite of its being such a turbulent time, I was also able to experience the conflict first hand, which afforded me the kind of deep knowledge and understanding that you can only really get from personal experience.

**TEDI ROSENSTEIN*,* Behavioral Neuroscience Major**

My experience in Israel was definitely unique and I will never forget the places I saw or the people I met. I had no idea what to expect before going to Israel. My family is Jewish but I was raised Catholic, I had only a rudimentary idea of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and I had never been to the Middle East before. Tensions were high before we arrived and I was skeptical about the trip while still in Boston. When we landed in Tel Aviv the night of July 2nd, all of my fears and apprehensions immediately dissolved as the beauty of the country mesmerized me. Walking around Jerusalem was a very powerful experience, knowing that the ground I walked on and the buildings I stepped into were older than any I had ever been near. The history and passion that people around the world have for this place was awe-inspiring and I felt honored to see the Old City, drive past Bethlehem, and walk through the Holocaust Memorial at Yad Vashem.

When we moved to Tel Aviv, almost everything changed. Bomb sirens were heard at least twice as often as in Jerusalem. I wanted to see the beautiful Mediterranean and walk through the land that was first encountered by the settlers of Israel, but the conflict did not allow us to experience this aspect of the trip. Unfortunately we had to leave a few days ahead of schedule, but I am glad that I was able to witness these powerful events.

While this conflict may seem to rip people apart on the surface, I saw so many more coming together for strength, love, and peace. My favorite part of this trip was the entirety of it. The people I met, the perspectives I received, and the love and support that kept me safe. I would never trade my time in Israel because it will continually teach me throughout my life to be a caring, calm, and brave person.