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...featuring the
CENTER FOR
JEWSH STUDIES
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

...featuring the
CONFERENCE ON
RELIGION EDUCATION

October 17-18, 2006
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17

9:30 - 10:30
Professor Sharon Feiman-Nemser, Brandeis University: "Approaches to the Study of Education"

10:45 - 12:30
Professor Michael Heyd, Hebrew University, "'A young man according to his way' or 'train up the child in the way he should go'?: Proverbs 22: 6 in Translations, Commentaries and Sermons of the Early Modern Period"

Mr. Asaph Ben-Tov, Hebrew University, "The Authority of Pedagogues and the Authority of the Ancients: Pagan Texts in Reformation Germany"

1:45 - 3:45
Professor Ephraim Kanarfogel, Yeshiva University, "'For the Student Can Outsmart His Teacher': The Right of Disagreement in Tosafist Thought"

Professor Bernard Septimus, Harvard University, "Rabbinic Discipleship and Aristotelian Friendship in Maimonides"

4:00 - 5:30
Ms. Michal Kravel-Tovi, Hebrew University, "Teaching and Educating - Aspects of Orthodox Conversion in Israel"
Dr. Susan Tanchel, Brandeis University and Gann Academy, “Teaching Biblical Criticism in a Jewish Community High School”

5:30 - 6:30
Dr. Susan M. Kardos, “Jewish Education and Community”
Respondent: Jay M. Harris, Harvard University

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18
9:30 – 12:00
Prof. Immanuel Etkes, Hebrew University, “The Hasidic Leader as an Educator: The Case of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi”

Prof. Allan Nadler, Drew University, “The Influence of Lithuanian Talmudism on 20th Century Hasidic Yeshivot”

1:15 - 2:30
Professor Tamar El-Or, Hebrew University, “Once you start: the linear destiny of religious-feminist education”
Respondent: Prof. Shani Bechhofer, Yeshiva University

2:45 - 4:00
Professor Baruch Schwarz, Hebrew University, “Hevruta in Lithuanian-Israeli Yeshivas: An Empirical Approach”
Respondent: Jay M. Harris, Harvard University

4:15 – 5:15
Dr. Jon A. Levisohn, Brandeis University, “Conference Conclusion: On Some False Dichotomies in Religious Education”

Mr. Shlomo Tikochinski, Hebrew University, “Involvement or Isolation: The Beginnings of the ‘Mussar’ Yeshivos in Erez Israel”

Respondent: Prof. Gregory Freeze, Brandeis University

PHOTOS BY MARCUS HALEVY
Thanks to the visiting professorships at the Center for Jewish Studies, we are able to host prominent scholars to teach classes in important areas of Jewish studies not covered by our full-time faculty. The Center hosted two visiting professors during the 2006 fall semester.

DEREK PENSLAR, Samuel J. Zacks Chair in European Jewish History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Toronto, was our fourth Nachshon Visiting Professor of Modern Israel Studies. Professor Penslar taught two classes, “Zionism and the State of Israel” and “Power and Identity in Modern Jewish History.”

LEE LEVINE, Professor in the Department of Jewish History and Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was our Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies. He offered two classes, “Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Permutations and Transformations” and “Visual Judaism: History, Art and Identity in Late Antiquity.”
OCTOBER 12, 2006
“The Eve of Spain: Mythmaking and the Conversion of History”

PATRICIA GRIEVE
Nancy and Jeffrey Marcus Professor of the Humanities, Columbia University
The Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies Fund

NOVEMBER 8, 2006
A reading by

ORLY CASTEL BLOOM
Eminent Israeli Writer
Martin D. and Helen B. Schwartz Lecture Fund
Co-sponsored by CMES and NELC Modern Hebrew Program

NOVEMBER 8, 2006
“Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Transformations and Permutations”

LEE LEVINE
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies, Harvard University (Fall 2006)
Estelle and Howard Rubin Fund

NOVEMBER 16, 2006
“Baghdad Yesterday: The Making of an Arab Jew”

SASSON SOMEHK
Sasson Somekh is Professor Emeritus at Tel Aviv University where he held the Halmos Chair in Arabic Literature. He is the former director of the Israel Academic Center in Cairo. He is the author of several books in English, Arabic and Hebrew, about modern Arabic literature, including a 1973 monograph on the novels of the Egyptian Nobel Laureate, Naguib Mahfouz. His memoir of his childhood, Baghdad Yesterday, was published in 2004.

Co-sponsored by CMES and Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

DECEMBER 14, 2006
“Envisaging Jewish Assimilation or the Meaning of Moses Mendelssohn’s Beard”

MICHAEL SILBER
Senior Lecturer in History of the Jewish People, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
The Leon I. Mirell Lecture Fund
In December 1984, Peter Solomon (AB ’60, MBA ’63), then a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers, announced the establishment of the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies. This organization seeks to provide an ongoing base of support for the Center and to enable it to expand its present areas of activity. Annual support from the Friends helps shape the future of Jewish Studies and sustain the Center as an influential, multifaceted enterprise at Harvard.

Some of the specific projects the Friends of the Center for Jewish Studies include:
- student research projects (both undergraduate and graduate, school-year and summer);
- graduate student fellowships;
- research-related expenses for visiting scholars;
- public lectures and class presentations by distinguished scholars;
- doctoral dissertation advising by specialized scholars from outside Harvard;
- group discussions of research in progress for Harvard faculty and students in Jewish studies.

If you know anyone who might be interested in joining the Friends, would you please notify the Center 617.495.4326 so that we may acquaint him or her with the Center’s work.
2006-07

COURSE OFFERINGS

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

CORE CURRICULUM
- Jewish Life in Eastern Europe
- Tel Aviv: Urban Culture in Another Zion
- Jews in Modern Times: From the French Revolution to the Emergence of Israel
- Modern Jewish Literature
- “Athens and Jerusalem”: Self and Other in Classical Greek and Hebrew Literature
- The Book of Job and the Joban Tradition
- From the Hebrew Bible to Judaism, From the Old Testament to Christianity
- “If There is No God, All is Permitted”: Theism and Moral Reasoning

FRESHMAN SEMINARS
- Cemetery as History: Jewish Burial Places and Their Christian Context in Europe and North America

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
- Comparative Themes in the Literatures of Medieval Spain: Seminar
- Mysticism and Literature: Seminar
- Literature and Politics: The New York Intellectuals

HISTORY
- The Jews in Muslim and Christian Spain
- Vichy France: Conference Course
- The Holocaust: History and Memory
- Central and Eastern European History: Seminar
- Ethnic Identities in Classical Antiquity: Seminar

LITERATURE
- Saul Bellow’s Planet
- The Holocaust and Problems of Representation
- From Type to Self in the Middle
- The Comic Tradition in Jewish Culture

NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS
- Biblical Archaeology
- Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures
- Biblical Interpretation: Seminar
- Jewish Apocalypticism
- Israelite Wisdom Literature
- Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Seminar

POSTBIBLICAL JEWISH STUDIES
- Introduction to Yiddish Culture
- Modern Jewish Religious Movements
- Modern Jewish Thought
- History versus Literature in Modern Jewish Texts
- Jewish Identities in Antiquity: Permutations and Transformations
- Jewish Literature in the Islamic World, 650-1300
- Deconstruction and Questions of Jewish Identity: Seminar
- Jewish Society and Culture in Early Modern Europe
- Gender Roles and the Role of Gender: Jewish Society in Medieval and Early Modern Europe
- Zionism and the State of Israel
- Power and Identity in Modern Jewish History
- Guided Readings in Jewish History
- The Origins of Rabbinic Law
- Visual Judaism: History, Art, and Identity in Late Antiquity
- Does Glikl Stand Alone? Jewish Autobiographical Writing, 14th-19th Centuries
- Reading and Research in Postbiblical Jewish Studies

HEBREW LANGUAGE COURSES
- Elementary Classical Hebrew
- Intermediate Classical Hebrew
- Rapid Reading Classical Hebrew
- Elementary Modern Hebrew
- Intermediate Modern Hebrew
- Advanced Modern Hebrew
- Contemporary Israeli Culture
- The Layers of Hebrew in Texts about Jerusalem
- How to Say “I Love You” in Hebrew
- Hebrew for Academic Reading

HEBREW LITERATURE AND HISTORY COURSES
- Introduction to Rabbinic Literature
- The Origins and Development of the Classical Jewish Liturgy
- Maimonides’ Book of Knowledge and its Medieval Critics
- The Problem of Language in Medieval Jewish Thought
- From Jewish Literature to Israeli Literature: Seminar
- Problems in the Literature, History, and Religion of Israel: Seminar
- Literature of Israel: Seminar
- The Medieval Torah Commentary: A Practical Introduction: Seminar
- Joseph and Esther: Seminar
- The Binding of Isaac (Akedah): Seminar
- Song at the Sea: Seminar
- Rabbinic Stories and Rabbinic Thought: Seminar
- The Poetry of Judah Halevi
- Classical Hebrew Language and Literature
- Postbiblical Hebrew Language and Literature

YIDDISH
- Elementary Yiddish
- Intermediate Yiddish
- Advanced Yiddish
- Modern Yiddish Literature I: The Yiddish Short Story
- The Yiddish Novel Under Tsars and Stripes
- Studies in Yiddish Drama
- Modern Yiddish Literature: Yiddish and Yiddishism, 1864-2000: Seminar
- Yiddish Language and Literature

STUDY OF RELIGION
- Judaism: The Liturgical Year
- Time and Space in Rabbinic Judaism
- Midrash: Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Rabbinic Period

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL COURSES
- Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament
- Reading Midrash

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL COURSES
- Jewish Law: The Legal Thought of Maimonides
- Talmudic Law for Beginners

EXTENSION SCHOOL COURSES
- Modernity and Tradition in Jewish Literature
- Jewish Life in Eastern Europe
- A Thematic Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)
- The Bible and Politics
JESSICA BLOOM grew up in Wellesley, MA and was drawn to Harvard’s Yiddish program. Throughout her college experience she knew that she wanted to combine her interests in Yiddish Studies and Latin American Studies, as well as Spanish and Yiddish languages. Now a senior, she is concentrating in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and obtaining a certificate in Latin American Studies.

Jessica has appreciated the opportunity both to study Yiddish at Harvard and to work one-on-one with professors such as Ruth Wisse to create an individualized academic plan combining her diverse interests. She first decided to focus on Argentina, the Latin American country with the largest Yiddish-speaking population, and then Buenos Aires, the city in Argentina with the most Yiddish speakers. Her interest in learning about the importance of Yiddish language to Argentina’s Jewish community led Jessica to focus her senior thesis on two prominent Yiddish-speaking figures on opposite sides of a political divide in Argentina’s Jewish community.

The Buenos Aires Jewish community divided in 1952, Jessica explains, over the revelation of stories indicating that Stalin was murdering Jewish writers. One of the central figures in Jessica’s research was prominent in the leftist, labor, Zionist movement and a leader in Yiddish scholarship. The other was a well-known Communist leader who refused to believe the stories about Stalin. Looking at the writings of these two influential figures at this critical time for the Jewish community of Buenos Aires, Jessica examines some central questions that arose among Argentinian Jews at that time about the role of Yiddish and the future of their Jewish community. Should they write and speak in Yiddish, Spanish or Hebrew? What is Yiddishkeit and can you transmit values without the language?

Last semester, Jessica studied in Chile and was one of ten students selected from North American college Hillel groups to attend a conference in May for Latin American Jewish community and institutional leaders. There she felt she learned a great deal about Latin American Jewish communities, experiences of Jews in Latin American culture, and differences between North and South American perceptions of what defines Jewish communities and ties to Israel.

In addition to her studies, Jessica plays saxophone in a klezmer band she helped to found during her freshman year that performs at Hillel and at parties and festivals around campus.
**JENNIFER HEILBRONNER** is a second-year doctoral candidate in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. It was a course she took as a Religious Studies major at Yale, recalled Jennifer, that “got me hooked” on Jewish studies, particularly Jewish history. Her interests within the field of Jewish studies are diverse, but Jennifer is most interested in modern Jewish history and issues of gender and identity, particularly religious identity, over the past three centuries.

Of her experience at Harvard, Jennifer says she “loves the professors,” the classes and the academic atmosphere. She has appreciated the opportunities available at Harvard to expand her background in Jewish studies. Her undergraduate courses dealt mainly with ancient Judaism, and now she is expanding her expertise to include modern topics and “a background in the theory and vocabulary of modern Jewish studies.” When Gerhon Hundert, last year’s Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies, discussed the negative impact of events in Galicia in 1648 for the Jews in his seminar, Jen says, “I was overwhelmed at first with how much more I needed to learn about Jewish history. The experience of gaining that background has been a challenge which is now very rewarding.” Now she is working on narrowing in on a topic for her doctoral dissertation.

Jennifer has taken advantage of opportunities off-campus, as well. With an Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship from Center for Jewish Studies, she spent last summer in Jerusalem studying Hebrew at an ulpan at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and working on a paper in the Jerusalem library of Hebrew Union College on the early Reform movement in Israel.

Jennifer is able to share the joys and trials of student life with family members nearby. She and her sister, a senior at Harvard, get together every week. And in New York, she can visit her brother and her parents, both of whom are pursuing graduate programs, as well.
Kelly Johnson became interested in Jewish studies as an undergraduate at Pacific Lutheran University, where he worked with Christopher Browning, a scholar of the Holocaust. While in Germany on a Fulbright Fellowship, he joined an old friend who was exploring his Jewish heritage, attending synagogues and visiting Jewish sites. “I kept Jewish studies in the back of my mind” for a few years, Kelly says, and toured Europe with a grunge band from Seattle. He spent his free time during tours in libraries, where he “discovered” and fell in love with Yiddish literature. “People frequently ask me how I became interested in Yiddish,” says Johnson. He explains his interest in the “unique perspective” of Yiddish literature, language and culture as an “underdog” or an ‘outside’ perspective, and is compelled by the “three thousand years of a continuous culture.”

He left his music career to attend a post-graduate program in Jewish studies at Oxford, then earned his M.A. at McGill University in Yiddish literature. There he met his wife, Yasmine, who is from India, and became interested in Indian literature and culture. He spent a year studying sitar with the world’s premier sitar player, then returned to academia to pursue a doctorate in Yiddish studies at Harvard with Professor Ruth Wisse.

Johnson has been grateful for Prof. Wisse’s encouragement to take classes on traditional Jewish sources, such as Genesis or Midrashic and Rabbinic Hebrew, which have deepened his understanding of Yiddish literature. His dissertation is on the literary repercussions of the assassination of a Ukranian soldier in Paris in the 1920s by a Jew, Sholem Shvartsbard. The soldier had been involved in the pogroms in the Ukraine that had killed much of Shvartsbard’s family. The French court found the killing justified and acquitted Schwartzbard. Johnson is exploring “the tension between the ideals of pacifism and self-defense in Yiddish literature surrounding this event,” before the foundation of Israel and before the Holocaust, from the Revolution of 1905 through 1939.

Johnson’s “incredibly enriching” experiences as a Teaching Fellow at Harvard have solidified his career goal to one day teach and conduct research at a university. Kelly and his wife welcomed their son, Rumi Jaspar Johnson, in December.

The Center for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the establishment of a new endowment fund. The gift of an anonymous donor, the Barry Shrage Travel and Research Fund will primarily support student travel and research expenses, particularly research and study opportunities that allow undergraduates to gain an international experience.

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In my fifth year at the CJS my exploration of the interaction of Middle Persian culture and that of the Babylonian rabbis of late antiquity continues to bear new and unexpected fruit. My co-explorer, Prof. Oktor Skjærvø of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), and I, have embarked on an ambitious undertaking, a modern, critical edition of one of the most difficult Middle Persian texts in the corpus, the Ḥerbedestān, a text dealing with priestly training and related matters, but together with a full commentary.

For example, two chapters deal with the question of the legal consequences of injury to a child taken for training arises. From here the text, in a multi-generational dispute, segues into questions of legal procedure: what constitutes proof of negligence?

Because of the diachronic structure of this passage, the fact that Abarg, a disciple of Sōšān, adds another factor to the discussion, the requirement that evidence of “unlawful leading” is required to convict the guardian, indicates that a development in legal concept is taking place before our eyes, as it were. Teasing out the exact meaning and significance of this passage then requires the efforts and knowledge of a legal historian and student of comparative law, especially the legal systems of Late Antiquity. And thus the third member of our informal network comes into the picture, Prof. Charles Donohue of Harvard Law School. The development of a theory of negligence in Roman law and other legal systems of antiquity, the Middle Ages and even modern times is indispensable for an understanding of these allusive, elusive, perplexing but potentially hugely informative texts which shed light on processes that can be seen at work in all legal systems.

However, the Ḥerbedestān provides not only with legal puzzles and insights, but also with more general religious and cultural ones. It discusses the question of the importance of study as contrasted with...
other religious obligations; it makes clear the obligation of study of Zoroastrian women, the responsibilities of Zoroastrians toward non-Zoroastrians, and much much more. It also encapsulates within itself the history of Iranian civilization over a millennium and a half, from a nomadic society to a world-spanning empire, from an itinerant teacher-priest to a priest operating within a more structured and hierarchical environment. Whether the concerted efforts of our informal group will unravel all the knots in this difficult text is unlikely, but we have already made progress and will hopefully continue to do so.

Thus, the resources that CJS provides, the Harvard faculty, its magnificent libraries, in this case Widener, Langdell and Andover, combine to make Cambridge one of the few places in the world where such a complex task may be undertaken.