

Featured Faculty



Mark Eddy

My wife, Jennifer, and I moved to Cleveland in 2001 from central Oklahoma where we were graduate students at the **University of Oklahoma (UO)**. I received my PhD in the History of Science from UO and my Master degree in Library and Information Science from **Kent State University (KSU)**. I began working as a part-time reference services assistant at the **Kelvin Smith Library (KSL)** at **Case Western Reserve University (CWRU)** and later was hired as a full-time academic librarian at KSL in 2006.

My role as a **Research Services Librarian** at CWRU combines instruction, student and faculty research support, collection-building, and service to the CWRU community. Growing up with a historian/teacher and an academic librarian for parents, I was instilled from an early age with higher education, scholarship and public service as core social values. My graduate studies at the University of Oklahoma also provided the opportunity to work with a wonderful community of research librarians in preparation for a career in academic

librarianship.

Since becoming the librarian for the **Department of Religious Studies (RLGN)** and the **Program in Judaic Studies (JDST)** in 2011, I've enjoyed working closely with Department and Program faculty to build our library collections in support of teaching and research initiatives. In addition to the library's core collection, KSL offers a wide variety of JDST reference works in both print and media. These include numerous journal and monograph series, the JDST **Israeli Film Collection**, acquisitions made through the **Daniel Jeremy Silver Fund for Special Purchases**, as well as additional JDST resources housed among the library's collection of oversized art books, and in KSL's **Special Collections** of rare books



Kelvin Smith Library

and manuscripts. I also enjoy collaborating with faculty to help plan campus events that promote CWRU scholarship and academic programs. For example, Professor Peter Haas and I worked together to plan a panel discussion on **Religion and the Internet**, which took place at KSL, in spring of 2013.

I must admit that a big part of my heart will always belong to my home state of Colorado where I enjoy fly fishing, hiking, and being in the mountains with my family whenever I have the chance. But since coming to the Midwest, I've come to absolutely love CWRU, Cleveland, and Ohio.

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Program in Judaic Studies

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COLLEGE OF
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Student Awards and Honors

The Ira and Ruth Bressler Prize

To a student who has done outstanding work in the area of Jewish Studies.



Ashley Dainas

Hometown: Highland Park, IL

Academic Interests: Cognitive Science, Psychology, Religious Studies

Extracurricular Activities: I sing soprano in Case Concert Choir and I enjoy writing fiction in my spare time.

Hometown: Royal Oak, MI.

Academic Interests: Particle physics, optics, and nanofabrication.

Extracurricular Activities: I am part of the CWRU Swing Dance Club and the Newman Catholic Campus Ministry, and I participate in German Club events.



Emily Griffin

The Eudese and Elmer Paul Prizes

To one or several undergraduate or graduate students who demonstrate an interest in Jewish Studies or Jewish contemporary life.



Arielle Clayman

Hometown: Youngstown, OH

Academic Interests: Public Health, Medical Ethics, Hebrew Language, Jewish History and Philosophy

Extracurricular Activities: I am actively involved in the Jewish Community Health Initiative (jewhealth.org) and the Chabad on campus. In addition, I am a Cleveland Clinic volunteer.

Hometown: Needham, MA

Academic Interests: Biology and Pre-medicine

Extracurricular Activities: I am involved in Hillel, Phi Sigma Rho, and Alpha Phi Omega.



Arielle Bloostein



Michelle Filanovsky

Hometown: Toledo, OH

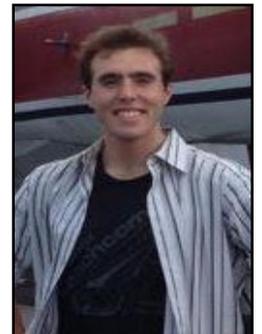
Academic Interests: Medicine, Dermatology, Neurology, Psychiatry, International Medicine

Extracurricular Activities: Past co-president Jewish Medical Student Assoc., organizer Shabbat dinners for Case grad students and Cleveland young professionals; past leader Peru Health Outreach Project. I enjoy medical Spanish classes, volunteering at a local high school, conducting dermatology research, and interviewing prospective medical students.

Hometown: Closter, NJ

Academic Interests: Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering

Extracurricular Activities: Hillel Undergraduate Leadership Council Israel Committee Chair, Undergraduate Student Government Representative; member, Design Build Fly; Army ROTC, cadet.



Arik Legman

Maimonides and Aristotelian Rationality: Influences on Rabbinic Judaism

Recognition for Outstanding Achievement

James E. Holiday



James E. Holiday

Moses Maimonides, active in twelfth century North Africa and Europe, is revered as one of the greatest Jewish scholars and philosophers in history. His work, the *Mishneh Torah* (c. 1187) acts as the foundation for modern Rabbinic Judaism. But Maimonides' work was a product of Aristotelian philosophy as much as Judaism. In fact, if you examine his work, it's impossible to deny the influence of Aristotle. This paper aims to expound on just how

seamlessly Maimonides synthesizes Aristotelian thought and Jewish faith.

In 'The Book of Knowledge' from the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides divides Creation into three categories; things composed of changing matter and form, things composed of unchanging matter and form, and things that exist as form without matter. This three-tiered hierarchy is consistent with Aristotle's 'Cosmology of Nested Spheres' in his work, *De Caelo* (2009). The first and lowest tier speaks of the sub-lunar world, comprised of the four forms of matter (earth, water, air, fire) and is inherently chaotic as each type of matter strives for its natural state; water rises above earth, air above water, and fire above air. The next tier speaks of the perceived celestial spheres. These are comprised of 'ether'; a substance of unchanging and orderly nature. The moon acts as a threshold between the ether and lower forms of matter, according to a number of shared characteristics between the two. The highest tier of created things accounts for the angels; beings of pure thought. While the separation of angels from celestial bodies isn't strictly Aristotelian, it does show influences from Aristotle's teacher, Plato, in his *Theory of Forms* (Rice 1998).

According to Maimonides the angels exist as purely

abstract entities, not bound by the limitations of physical matter. But, taking the Torah at face value, there are plenty of examples where humans interact with angels as physical beings. Maimonides deals with this by reinterpreting these verses as allegorical rather than literal. He contends that it isn't a matter of the Prophets literally seeing these supernatural or super-lunar beings, so much as the Prophets conforming to human nature, and perceiving their insights as received from physical beings similar to themselves. For example, Maimonides might explain Jacob's struggle with an 'angel' as an internal struggle to grasp insight from the super-lunar realm, and then come to terms with what he must do. Maimonides explains that angels, as beings comprised of pure thought, can't be distinguished or ranked by different physical characteristics since the stature of angels isn't physical, but conceptual. According to Maimonides (Russel 1983: 5):



6) When we say 'some being below those above it', this is not a reference to physical positions, like one person sitting above another. It is rather like saying about two sages, one of whom is greater in knowledge than the other, that the one is 'higher than the height of the other' or that dominance is above weakness.

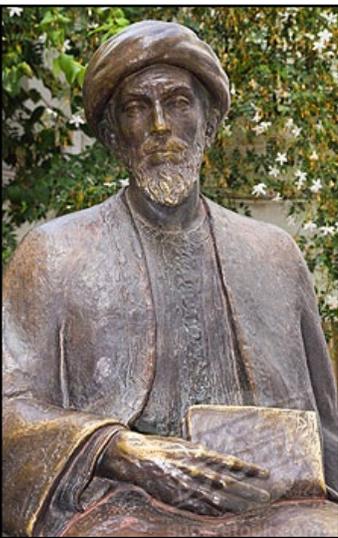
According to Maimonides, angels exist above the material Earth and hold dominion over

it. His nesting of angels based on levels of understanding God is analogous to Aristotle's 'nested spheres' and how they affect one another. He goes on to clearly define the hierarchy of angels, the highest being the holy *Chayyot* who have the greatest level of intellect and purity below God, and the lowest tier being the *Ishim* who serve as conduits for insight from the super-lunar realm of form and knowledge, to the sub-lunar realm of changing materiality. Maimonides writes (Russel 1983: 5):

8) . . . Even those on the topmost level cannot comprehend the reality of [the existence of] God for the reason that their intellect is insufficient for them to do so, but they understand and comprehend better than those on the levels below theirs do. Even those on the tenth level have some understanding of God, but it is beyond the capabilities of humans, who are comprised of both form and material, to grasp and understand as well as those on the tenth level do. None knows God the way He Himself does.

In this final excerpt, Maimonides further elaborates on the differences between levels of intellect, asserting that it is impossible for entities on a lower level of intellect to truly comprehend their intellectual superiors. Hence human prophets perceive angels as physical beings comprised of matter and form similar to themselves, rather than perceiving them more accurately, as higher forms of pure thought. This theme carries on through all levels of intellect until reaching the highest, that of the holy *Chayyot*, who nevertheless lack the ability to fully understand the true nature of God. The only entity capable of understanding God is, of course, God Himself.

Maimonides' ultimate goal was to fuse Jewish faith with Aristotelian rationality through academic rigor, and most Jewish scholars agree that he did a remarkable job. His efforts with the fourteen-volume *Mishneh Torah* earned intellectual respect within Judaism, and introduced a much needed level of order after several centuries of Jewish displacement and disorganization. Some of the concepts introduced by Maimonides create complex theological challenges, but it doesn't detract from the fact that, on the whole, his insights gave the Jewish people a guide they lacked prior to his work. Despite his sometimes questionable reasoning, his overall contributions to what would become Rabbinic Judaism cannot be denied.



Statue of Maimonides in Cordoba, Spain

References Cited

- New Perspectives on Aristotle's De Caelo*. 2009. Eds., Alan C. Bowen and Christine Wildberg. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Rice, Daryl H. 1998. *A Guide to Plato's Republic*. New York: Oxford Press.
- Russel, H.M. and J. Weinberg, trans. 1983. *The Book of Knowledge from the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides*. New York: KTAV Publishers.

POST IT!



Rachel Friedrick

Hi,

I'm doing well and am working on my **Masters of Professional Writing** at **Carnegie Mellon University** in Pittsburgh. I'm focusing on medical and healthcare communications (and hopefully women's health!). Although I do enjoy my writing courses very much, I'm definitely missing my **WGST** and **Religion** classes from Case! I hope to expand upon and publish my thesis on **Marjorie Matthews** . . . She was definitely one of those nation-building women (like so many women in the Bible) and my study of her is part of my academic life that I surely won't leave behind!

All my best,
Rachel Friedrick

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

postit@case.edu



Have a Great Summer!



Courses of Interest for Fall 2013



JDST 201 **INTRODUCTION TO JUDAIC STUDIES** Peter Haas

An introduction to the academic study of Judaic religion and culture, this course does not presuppose any previous study of, or experience with, Judaism. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach to Judaic Studies, drawing on a variety of methods used in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Through the use of these methods, students will examine the diverse issues and questions that are driving the current field of Judaic Studies and come to conclusions about the state of the question. There may be some "field" experience, like a visit to a synagogue or to a Jewish museum. Required for the minor in Judaic Studies.

JDST/RLGN 314 **MYTHOLOGIES OF THE AFTERLIFE** Judith Neulander

The course provides a multidisciplinary approach to the idea of an afterlife, and its manifestation in diverse cultures. We will examine the way varying views of the afterlife influence religion, popular culture and palliative care, and how human creativity has shaped the heavens, hells, hauntings and holidays of diverse populations over time and across space. Students will come to see the afterlife as an integral part of lived experience, not only because it helps us to die with better hope, but because it helps us to live more richly.



JDST/RLGN/HIST/ETHS 254 **THE HOLOCAUST** Jay Geller

The Holocaust is one of the major events defining the 20th century. Combining racial ideology, scientific technology and modern industrial organization, the Nazis created a modern definition of genocide as they and their allies targeted Jews, along with certain other groups, for extermination. The course provides an overview of the historical, political and social contexts out of which the Holocaust grew. The main emphasis of the course will be on the Holocaust itself in all of its forms across Europe. The course concludes with a consideration of post-Holocaust issues such as the life of survivors and commemorations of the Holocaust.

JDST 228 **THE JEWISH IMAGE IN POPULAR FILM** Judith Neulander

The course will explore film as social practice, from the flickering silent era through Hollywood's Golden Age, to the technological dazzle of the present day. Standing at the confluence of society, history, ideology and culture, students will come to understand how popular film is shaped by, and how it actively shapes, the constant reconstruction of Jewish identity in the American mainstream.

For courses in Hebrew and Arabic visit the Modern Languages and Literatures website:
<http://www.case.edu/artsci/dmll/>

Potpourri of Past Paper Titles

A review of student essays published over the past five years in the JDST eJournal
-a sampling of diverse interests among students in the Judaic Studies Program-

A Modern Mohel's Mitzvot
Zach Rubin (Spring 2008)

The Biblical Deborah: A Woman across Cultures
Poorni Manohar (Fall 2008)

The Hebrew Alphabet and Jewish Art
Jason Velazquez (Spring 2009)

Stereotypes of Traditional Jewish Humor
Joseph Mintz (Fall 2009)

"Gentleman's Agreement": Colossal Success of Failure?
Grant Slania (Spring 2010)

Miriam's Cup: Transforming Tradition
Laura Boylan (Fall 2010)

The Persistent Notion of a Jewish Race
Jacob Emmert-Aronson (Spring 2011)

The Jewish Image in Silent Film
Andrea Sterenstein (Fall 2011)

"Look at the End of the Verse": Beruriah as Scholar and Wife
Caelyn Rosch (Spring 2012)

Punk Torah: Tattoo Art and Jewish Tradition
Caroline Roth (Fall 2012)

To read these essays on the JDST website: go to **JDST eJournal** and click on the desired semester

The Program in Judaic Studies

By bringing a variety of fields and disciplines to bear on its subject, the Judaic Studies Program at Case Western Reserve University conveys to students the complex interaction of forces that create Jewish ethnic identity. Students completing the program will have a broad knowledge of the field along with the tools necessary for continued academic study of Jewish civilization in all its manifestations.



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Support the Program in Judaic Studies

Please consider supporting the Program in Judaic Studies as we continue building on our achievements. You can contribute to our success by making a gift to the College of Arts and Sciences. Your gift allows us to continue to offer opportunities for our students to excel academically and to conduct important research. You can give online at:

giving.case.edu



Women in Times of Persecution
in Jewish Folk Legends



In Feb. 2013, students and faculty attended a presentation by **Prof. Haya bar Itzhak**, Head of Folklore Studies and Director of the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa.

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