

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Department of Jewish Studies

Submitted by

Carlos Fraenke Chair

June 1 2017

Faculty

Professors

David Aberbach on sabbatical leave, winter 2016

Carlos Fraenkel (Joint appointment with Philosophy)

Gershon D. Hundert

B. Barry Levy

Associate Professors

Eric Caplan (Joint appointment with the Faculty of Education) on sabbatical leave, winter 2016

Yael Halevi Wise (Joint appointment with English), on sabbatical leave, winter 2016

Lawrence Kaplan, on sabbatical leave, winter 2016

Assistant Professor

Daniel K. Heller

Faculty Lecturers

Lea Fima

Esther Frank

1. Research and Publications

Members of the department published a number of high profile books and papers in 2016. Lawrence Kaplan, professor of rabbinics and Jewish thought, published *Maimonides: Between Philosophy and Halakha* with Ktav press. The book contains an annotated edition of the lectures on Maimonides that Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, a seminal figure in modern Orthodox Judaism, gave in 1950-51. In these lectures one of the greatest modern Jewish thinkers engages the greatest Jewish philosopher on perennial issues at the core of Jewish thought: how faith relates to reason, how philosophy relates to the divine law.

Teaching Philosophy in Palestine: Philosophy in a Divided World came out in paperback with Princeton University Press. It was a finalist for the 2016 Sheikh Zayed Book Award in Arabic Culture in Other Languages. The German (Hanser) and Spanish (Ariel) translations also appeared in 2016. The German version was one of the best German non-fiction books in March 2016 (No. 2) selected by Norddeutscher Rundfunk and Süddeutsche Zeitung.

[ÄÖL GRE Uae Qkiem: V \ M R- QIH ZIL] M B C p Fmocya Q W \ * \ G R Z P N S c W M tach
trzydziestych] Kwartalnik Historii) \ G y. Lawrence Kaplan had a particularly productive year;
besides the book, he published two peer-reviewed journal articles and one peer-reviewed book chapter,
including "Knowledge and the Perplexities of the Time" in Jewish Quarterly Review. Carlos Fraenke published two peer-reviewed
book chapters and continued to develop a public-intellectual voice with a commentary in Boston Review
and a critical review essay of Salman Rushdie's latest novel in the London Review of Books.

Papers in 2011 were presented all over the world. Here is a representative sample: David Aberbach
spoke at Cambridge University; Yael Halevi Wise in Jerusalem; Dan Heller at the University of Sidney
and Monash University; Gershon Hundert at Brown University; Lawrence Kaplan at the University of
Hamburg; and Carlos Fraenke gave the keynote lecture at the Philosophicum Lech in Austria and spoke
at events in Vienna, Potsdam, Chicago, Stans. 4 TJ ET BT 1 0 0 1 120.828, BT 1 0 qBr c BT 1 0 ly

2.

having successfully concluded research for a new Yiddish faculty lecture in which we were able to attract our first-ranked candidate, Dr. Yuri Vedenyapin, to McGill. Yuri was our first choice by far. He comes from a similar position at Harvard and is universally acclaimed as the best teacher of Yiddish language and literature in the world. He is also an outstanding scholar (PhD, Columbia) whose main vocation is teaching which makes him such a good fit for this position. He is also well connected with our department's strongest cluster in Eastern European Jewish history, culture, as well as with our cluster in Jewish literature, but he will also be able to contribute to the Faculty of Arts at large (German, Russian, History etc.)

Since the summer of 2011, the department has offered an intensive seminar on Eastern European Jewish music in partnership with O H J . D Q D G D & D Q D G D ¶ V O D U J H V W D Q Q X D O I H V W the arts. Taught by Hankus Netsky, professor of music at the New England Conservatory, leader of the . O H J P H U & R Q V H U Y D W R U \ % D Q G D Q G P X V L F D O n g S o f J e w i s h W R U I R U music² the course combines classes on Jewish music with personal encounters with outstanding Jewish musicians and attendance at nightly concerts. In 2011 more than a dozen McGill students attended the event for a full week in mid-August.

Greatly enriching were also several public lectures for which the department was able to attract outstanding speakers. In the winter of 2016

2016 Flegg Annual Lecture, an extraordinarily successful combination of recital and lecture, titled "Forbidden Voices: A Tribute to Jewish Holocaust Composers." It introduced over 200 attendees to the music of Jewish composers who were persecuted, murdered or otherwise affected during the Holocaust. It was a unique opportunity to hear Jewish music that has rarely or never been performed and to rescue it from silence and oblivion. This was not only an academic achievement but arguably an act of cultural justice. Dr. Liane Alitowski, lecturer in Jewish music in our department who is an accomplished concert pianist herself, was the architect of the event in collaboration with Prof. Eric Caplan. She performed the pieces in collaboration with musicians from O F * L School of Music as well with Cantor Gideon Zelmey and the choir from the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue. The participants introduced each composer.