

GEORGE L. MOSSE/LAURENCE A. WEINSTEIN

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL

Greenfield Summer Institute

Jews and Science

July 9–13, 2017

University of Wisconsin–Madison



CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Greenfield Summer Institute

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Jews have been particularly important figures in the scientific world since the nineteenth century, but scientific inquiry—the investigation and understanding of the natural world and humans’ place in it—has been a Jewish preoccupation since antiquity. This year’s Greenfield Summer Institute will take up the Jewish world’s relation to science and scientific understanding, and ask and answer such questions as whether there is such thing as a “Jewish” approach to scientific inquiry, how a Jewish ethics affects the way science is done, and whether the process of scientific method leaves a place for what could be called the divine. Speakers will address – among other topics – what science looked like in the ancient Jewish world and in the Talmud; Jews’ role in the advancement of science in the modern period; how contemporary advancements in brain imaging and our understanding of memory matter for Jewish remembrance; and how racial “science” affected the Jewish world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Speakers will include a New York Times bestselling author and a National Jewish Book Award winner. The Institute will conclude with a panel that will bring together themes from across the four days’ discussions and give attendees a chance to ask some “big questions.”

Space is limited, so please register early.

Can’t make it for the whole Institute? You can register for each day’s lectures and events separately!

Final registration deadline: July 9, 2017

Online registration: jewishstudies.wisc.edu/greenfield

The Greenfield Summer Institute is sponsored by the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies through the generosity of Larry and Roslyn Greenfield.

SUNDAY, JULY 9

5:30–6:00 p.m.

Arrival and appetizers

Fluno Center

601 University Avenue

6:00–8:00 p.m.

Opening Dinner

Fluno Center

Welcome and opening remarks by Dean John Karl Scholz and Tony Michels

All lectures will be held at Grainger Hall, 975 University Avenue, unless otherwise noted.

MONDAY, JULY 10

Encounter with the Modern World

9:00 a.m.

Jews and The Science of “Race” in Turn-of-the-Century America

Eric L. Goldstein (Emory University)

In the United States (as elsewhere) during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jewishness was often understood in both popular and scholarly discourses as a matter of “race.” In order to assert some control over how Jews were understood by the scientific and medical communities, and also as a way to contest some of the more threatening conclusions about Jews, Jewish scientists and physicians conducted studies of Jewish “racial” characteristics during this period and published them in leading journals. This lecture will examine some of these works (focusing on Franz Boas and Maurice Fishberg), laying out the contours of the discussion and assessing the various methods open to Jewish scientists in responding to the dominant scientific discourses of their day.

10:45 a.m.

Science for the People: Popular Visnshaft in Yiddish

Tony Michels (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

What does it mean to become an American? For thousands

of Jews who came to the United States around the turn of the 20th century, to become an American meant to acquire a secular education. But many of them were barely literate, and few had sufficient time or money for formal schooling. Under the banner “knowledge is power,” Jewish intellectuals initiated a concerted drive to bring all branches of science to the immigrant masses in their mother tongue, Yiddish. The encounter with *visnshaft* was a revelation to those who had little prior exposure to it in Eastern Europe. Through it, thousands of Jews discovered the modern world.

1:30 p.m.

The Meaning of Science for the Founders of Academic Jewish Studies

Amos Bitzan (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

In the early 19th century, Jewish scholars looked to *Wissenschaft* (German for “science”) to solve the problems posed by modern life to Jewish religion and culture. What did they mean by science and why did they believe that it was so crucial for the revival of Judaism?

3:15 p.m.

Film (Optional)

Details to follow.

TUESDAY, JULY 11

Ancient and Medieval Science

9:00 a.m.

Science in Ancient Israel

Alice Mandell (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

What evidence do we have for the ways in which ancient Israelites thought about natural phenomena? How did they harness their environment to deal with the processes of birth, aging, and death? What evidence do we have for how ancient Israelites thought about the Divine’s control over nature? This talk will examine the blurring of the categories of science and religion in ancient Israel and Judah drawing up the biblical and archaeological record.

10:45 a.m.

Rabbinic Science

Jordan D. Rosenblum (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Rabbinic law, or halakhah, is understood as a comprehensive system for regulating and explaining the natural world. In offering these answers, ancient rabbinic literature debated the halakhah of matters large and small: from how to put on pants, to whether a dead elephant can be used for a wall of a sukkah; from how to go to the bathroom, to how to calculate the circumference of a circle; from breastfeeding on the Sabbath, to the contours of human-dolphin intercourse and reproduction. For the rabbis, science was not a separable entity, but a component of halakhah. In this talk, we will examine Talmudic texts in which scientific inquiry and halakhah intersect. We will explore questions of astronomy, medicine, and math, and see how they arise amidst important theological and cultural debates.

1:30 p.m.

Judaism and Science: Maimonides' Cosmos

Steven Nadler (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

It is often taken for granted that science and religion are (and must be) at odds with one another. In fact, even in the Middle Ages, a good deal of progressive science was done by devout Christian, Jewish and Muslim thinkers. Maimonides, perhaps the greatest Jewish philosopher of all time, was committed to reconciling religious faith with rational scientific and philosophical truth. In this lecture we will consider just how he approached this reconciliation.

3:15 p.m.

Book Club: *The Mathematician's Shiva* (Optional)

Stuart Rojstaczer

Stuart Rojstaczer, winner of the 2014 National Jewish Book Award for Outstanding Debut Fiction, scientist, and UW-Madison alumnus, will give a talk and answer questions about his intriguing debut novel, *The Mathematician's Shiva*.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12

Philosophers, Writers, and Science

9:00 a.m.

Sick Jewish Writers: The Art and Science of Writing with Tuberculosis

Sunny Yudkoff (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Tubercular Yiddish and Hebrew writers who sought both “the cure” and creative inspiration at sanatoria around the globe have a fascinating history. Tracking the health travels of writers across Europe, America, and the Middle East, we will ask what it meant for a Jewish writer at the turn of the twentieth century to be diagnosed with tuberculosis--then an incurable disease.

10:45 a.m.

William Friedman, William Shakespeare, and the Birth of Modern Cryptography

Irwin Goldman (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Early in the 20th century, the eccentric millionaire George Fabyan built a scientific research laboratory in Geneva, Illinois in part to investigate the idea that Sir Francis Bacon had written Shakespeare’s plays and embedded a code in Shakespeare’s First Folio. Fabyan recruited a plant geneticist named William Friedman and, beginning in 1916, Friedman developed a series of approaches to encryption that were to revolutionize the field of cryptography. His most remarkable work used ideas from genetics and statistics, focusing on analysis of frequencies of letters in language use. Friedman’s efforts resulted in solutions used by the U.S. government and its allies to solve complex military ciphers, and to break the Japanese Purple code during WWII, leading to the development of the National Security Agency.

1:30 p.m.

The Science of Memory

Brad Postle (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Once the topic of speculation by philosophers, our understanding of how our memories work has grown

dramatically over the past half-century. In particular, the careful scientific study of one dramatic case, a patient known by his initials H.M., defined many of the principles that have guided memory research up through the present day. This presentation will address some of what we know about memory, as well as what it's like to carry out scientific research on a phenomenon with which everyone has intimate experience, and about which everyone has some intuition.

5:30 p.m.

Closing Dinner

Grainger Hall

975 University Avenue

THURSDAY, JULY 13

Torah Codes and Reflections

9:00 a.m.

**The Strange and Mathematically Troubling Story
of the Torah Codes**

Jordan Ellenberg (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

In 1994, a group of Israeli mathematicians published a paper with a startling claim, apparently backed up by sound mathematical reasoning: that the words of the Torah contained predictions of events that took place thousands of years after its writing. The controversy over the “Torah codes” spawned bestselling books and created an intellectual rift among Jewish mathematicians. I’ll talk about how the claim worked, how it eventually unraveled, how the question looks from both a mathematical and Jewish perspective, and explain how the underlying statistical principle applies more broadly to investment returns and assessing results in social science.

10:45 a.m.

Panel Discussion: Reflections on Themes

Moderated by Jordan D. Rosenblum (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

REGISTRATION/PAYMENT INFORMATION

Fees > The fee for the Greenfield Summer Institute is \$195 for all programming, including the opening and closing dinners. Registration received after June 25 will be subject to a fee increase. *For information about programming or kosher meal options, please contact the Center for Jewish Studies at 608-890-3572.*

A la carte pricing > \$50 to attend lectures and afternoon activities on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday / \$35 to attend lectures on Thursday morning / \$30 opening OR closing dinner for Greenfield registrants / \$30 to attend opening OR closing dinner for those not attending Greenfield (i.e., additional friends and family)

Registration Online > Participants are encouraged to register and pay online with a credit card at jewishstudies.wisc.edu/greenfield.

Registration by mail > You may still register by mail using the form on the next page and mailing it to the address below with a check for \$195 payable to UW-Madison.

CALS Conference Services

640 Babcock Drive, Madison, WI 53706

FAX: 608-262-5088

For registration questions, call 608-263-1672 or email conference@cals.wisc.edu

Please be sure to register only once!

Confirmation of your registration, as well as information about the lectures, housing, specific events, and parking will be sent to you after your registration has been processed. This information will be sent via e-mail if you register online, and via US Mail if you register via mail.

Parking > Underground parking is available in Grainger Hall. Information about access to parking will be sent after your registration has been received.

Lodging > The Institute has blocked rooms at several nearby hotels. A list of hotels, with information about discounted rates, is available on our website and will also be sent after your registration has been received.

PLEASE CHOOSE AN ENROLLMENT OPTION

	Early Bird Cost	Cost after 6/25/2017	# of People	Subtotal
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete Package	\$195	\$225	x _____	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> A la carte options				
Event				
Sunday opening dinner	\$30	\$35	x _____	\$ _____
Monday lectures & events	\$50	\$60	x _____	\$ _____
Tuesday lectures & events	\$50	\$60	x _____	\$ _____
Wednesday lectures <i>(does not include dinner)</i>	\$50	\$60	x _____	\$ _____
Wednesday closing dinner	\$30	\$35	x _____	\$ _____
Thursday lectures	\$35	\$40	x _____	\$ _____
			Total amount enclosed:	\$ _____

Name (s) _____

Guest names (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I would like to be included in the 2017 Greenfield Contact Sheet.

I would NOT like to be included in the 2017 Greenfield Contact Sheet.

Please note any special assistance you require due to dietary restrictions, visual and/or hearing impairments, or mobility limitations.

For more information: Phone: 608-890-3572 / E-mail: greenfield@cjs.wisc.edu / jewishstudies.wisc.edu/greenfield



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