

# JEWISH LITERATURE

Spring 2006

A project of the Boston College Jewish Studies Program

PROGRAM:

## Spring Salon: Jewish Literature: Its Nature and Place in World Culture

Sunday, February 5, 2006

3 pm

Boston College, Gasson Hall 100, Chestnut Hill, MA

Free and open to the public

Conducted in the style of a Salon, this event brings together Boston College faculty and students and the Boston community for a moderated conversation about the nature of "Jewish literature" and its place in world culture.

The panelists include: Prof. Dwayne E. Carpenter (Romance Languages and Literatures) and Prof. Maxim D. Shrayer (Slavic and Eastern Languages), who co-direct the BC Jewish Studies Program, and members of the Boston College faculty: Prof. Elizabeth Graver (English), Prof. Franck Salameh (Slavic & Eastern Languages), Prof. Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (English), and Prof. Rifat Sonsino (Theology). Editor of *Boston College Magazine* Ben Birnbaum will serve as the panel's moderator.

**Ben Birnbaum** is special assistant to the president of Boston College, editor of *Boston College Magazine*, and executive director of the Office of Marketing Communications. A graduate of Ner Israel Rabbinical College, Queens College, and the University of Vermont, he has published essays, poetry, and fiction, and his work has been anthologized in *Best American Essays*, *Best Spiritual Writing*, and *Best Catholic Writing*.

**Dwayne E. Carpenter** is codirector of the Jewish Studies Program, Professor of Spanish, and head of the Hispanic Studies Program in Boston College's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. He holds doctorates from the University of California, Berkeley, and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. He has published widely on the legal status of Jews in medieval Spain, attitudes towards conversos in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, Jewish-Muslim-Christian relations, Hispano-Hebrew literature, and medieval games and gambling. Among his books are *Alfonso X and the Jews* and *Alborayque*.

**Elizabeth Graver** is Professor of English at Boston College, where she teaches literature and creative writing. Her acclaimed books include the novels *Unraveling*, *The Honey Thief*, and *Awake*, and the award-winning collection of

stories *Have You Seen Me?* Graver's stories and essays have been anthologized in *Best American Short Stories*, *Best American Essays*, *The Pushcart Prize Anthology*, and *Prize Stories: The O. Henry Awards*. She is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship.

**Franck Salameh** is Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies in the Department of Slavic & Eastern Languages at Boston College. A native of Lebanon, Salameh earned his doctorate in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University. His research interests include non-Arab minorities in the Middle East, Arab nationalism and its rivals, and language and identity in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is currently working a book titled *Language, Identity, and Memory in the Middle East* and an edited volume *The End of Arabism and the New Middle East Order*.

**Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks** is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Women's Studies Program at Boston College. Seshadri-Crooks specializes in post-colonial theory, Anglophone literatures, and critical theory, with an emphasis on psychoanalysis and Marxism. Her books include *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race* and *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*. At present she is working on a book on the concept of "the Other" under the working title *The Other Difference*.

**Rifat Sonsino** is the Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, Mass., and Adjunct Professor at Boston College's Theology Department. Rabbi Sonsino holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in Bible and ancient Near Eastern studies. His books include *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law*, *Finding God: Selected Responses* (co-author Daniel B. Syme), *What Happens After I Die? Jewish Views of Life After Death* (co-author Daniel B. Syme), *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths*, and *The Many Faces of God: Modern Jewish Theologies*.

**Maxim D. Shrayer**, a bilingual author and translator, is Chair of the Department of Slavic and Eastern Languages and Professor of Russian and English at Boston College, where he codirects the Jewish Studies Program. Shrayer's books include *The World of Nabokov's Stories*, *Russian Poet/Soviet Jew*, *Genrikh Sapgir: Avant-Garde Classic* and the forthcoming *Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature*, as well as three collections of Russian poetry. A native of Moscow, Shrayer has edited and cotranslated two books by his father, the Jewish-Russian David Shrayer-Petrov.

Sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program, the Office of the Academic Vice President, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Copies of the panelists' books will be available for purchase and signing.

Information: 617-552-4820.

Map: [www.bc.edu/about/maps](http://www.bc.edu/about/maps)

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Lecture

JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN

**“A Monstrous Case: the Holocaust, Soviet Jewish Writers, and the Fate of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee”**

Tuesday, March 14, 2006

7 pm

Boston College, Cushing Hall 001, Chestnut Hill, MA

Free and open to the public

Join us for an evening with Joshua Rubenstein as he discusses the fate of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, which was organized by the Kremlin during World War II to mobilize support for the alliance with the Western democracies against Nazi Germany. Committee members felt a deep obligation to respond to the massacres of Jews that the Nazis were carrying out on Soviet territory. Writers like Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman organized a project to document the catastrophe as the war still raged; they hoped to publish their reports in *The Black Book*. But after the war, Stalin closed the committee, executed many of its members, including numerous Yiddish authors, and forbade publication of *The Black Book*. This repression devastated Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union and endangered Russian-language Soviet Jewish writers.

**Joshua Rubenstein** is the Northeast regional director of Amnesty International USA and an associate of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University. He is the author of *Soviet Dissidents, Their Struggle for Human Rights* (1985) and *Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg* (1999), and the co-editor (with Vladimir Naumov) of *Stalin's Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee* (2001), for which Rubenstein received a National Jewish Book Award in East European Studies. His latest book is *The KGB File of Andrei Sakharov* (2005).

Sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program, the Department of Slavic and Eastern Languages, the Office of the Academic Vice President, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College.

Copies of the Mr. Rubenstein's books will be available for purchase and signing.

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Lecture

DALIA FELDMAN

**“Jewish Writers in Latin America”**

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

7 pm

Boston College, Cushing Hall 001, Chestnut Hill, MA

Free and open to the public

Join us for an evening with Dalia Feldman as she discusses the complex identities of Jewish writers in Latin America. Feldman will explore how, through their writing, they confront the sense of isolation and of longing for "a homeland," for a feeling of comfort and authenticity that is common to a Diaspora people. As members of a minority within often xenophobic cultures, Jewish writers in Latin America become not only their individual products but also mouthpieces for the community, and represent a political and cultural force. The lecture will discuss works by authors from Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico, among them, Margo Glantz, Victor Perera, Moacyr Scliar, Ilan Stavans, and Jacobo Timerman.

**Dalia Feldman** was born in San Diego to a Jewish-Mexican family and spent part of her childhood and high school years in Mexico City. Presently a Ph.D. candidate in the Modern Jewish Studies Program at the Jewish Theological Seminary, Feldman has researched the history of the Mexican Ashkenazi Jewish community. Her current interests include understanding the literature of Diasporan Jewish communities, particularly Latin American, struggling with their compound identities.

Sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program, the Department of Slavic and Eastern Languages, the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the Office of the Academic Vice President, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College.

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Writers Among Us: Boston College Readings

DAVID SHRAYER-PETROV and MAXIM D. SHRAYER

Reading from *Autumn in Yalta: A Novel and Three Stories*

Tuesday, May 2, 2006

7:30 p.m.

Boston College, Devlin Hall 101, Chestnut Hill, MA

Free and open to the public

“Shrayer-Petrov is an irrepressible, powerful voice and a link to a tragic, intensely lived life in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Russia.” —*The Providence Journal*

Join us for an evening with David Shrayer-Petrov as he discusses his new book *Autumn in Yalta: A Novel and Three Stories* (Library of Modern Jewish Literature, Syracuse University Press, 2006), which includes an autobiographical novel set in Stalinist Russia, *Strange Danya Rayev*. Shrayer-Petrov is a medical scientist and the author of 20 books of prose and poetry in his native Russian and in translation, including *Jonah and Sarah* (2003). *Autumn in Yalta* was edited and cotranslated into English by his son, Maxim D. Shrayer, who is an author, professor of Russian and English at Boston College, and co-director of the Jewish Studies Program. They will be joined by a panel of cotranslators, including Arna B. Bronstein and Aleksandra Fleszar, professors of Russian at the University of New Hampshire.

Writers Among Us celebrates recent book publications by Boston College faculty and is sponsored by *Boston College Magazine*, the Office of the Academic Vice President, and the BC Bookstore. Co-sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Boston College.

Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Information: 617-552-4820.

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**The Jewish Studies Program** at Boston College was founded in 2005 and offers a minor to undergraduate students. Almost two dozen faculty members offer courses that explore, from an interdisciplinary perspective, Jewish civilization, history, culture, and religion from biblical to modern times. The Jewish Studies Program at Boston College welcomes members of the Boston

community to its lectures and cultural events. For information, call 617-552-3835 or visit <http://bc.edu/schools/cas/jewish/>