

LAW AS PERFORMANCE AND PLAY: A DIALOGUE

In recent years, scholars of Jewish law have turned to performance studies and play theory to illuminate the Babylonian Talmud's unique legal discourse and legal philosophy. Because characterizations of law as **play** and as **performance** emphasize the elements of theatricality, spectacle, *agon*, narrativity, fiction, representation, mimesis, and creativity in the articulation, practice, and study of law, the question arises: Does a focus on the performative and playful elements in law support or undermine the law's claim to truth and authority? The answer to this question turns on a series of prior questions: Is truth subserved or subverted by legal discourse and legal practice? If law does aim at truth, either in theory or in fact, then what is the nature or species of the "truth" at which law aims and how is it accessed? What is the nature of the authority that law claims? Are the answers to these questions different in a system of divine law vs. a system of secular law? Does the nature of law as divine or secular tend to discourage or enable an embrace of performative and playful elements, and to what end?

This one-day workshop on **Law as Performance and Play** with special attention to the question of law's authority and truth claims, is designed to put scholars of law and performance into dialogue with scholars of Talmudic law. Professor Christine Hayes, 2017-2018 Gruss visiting Professor of Law at University of Pennsylvania Law School and Robert F. and Patricia Ross Weis Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, will moderate the workshop.

Lunch will be served and dietary laws will be observed.

*This program has been approved for 4.0 ethics CLE credits for Pennsylvania lawyers. CLE credit may be available in other jurisdictions as well. Attendees seeking CLE credit should bring separate payment in the amount of \$160.00 (\$80.00 public interest/non-profit attorneys) cash or check made payable to **The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania**.*

This workshop was made possible by the Caroline Zelaznik Gruss and Joseph S. Gruss Lecture.



DETAILS

WHEN

Sunday, April 8, 2018
9:00 AM - 3:15 PM

Eastern Time

WHERE

University of Pennsylvania Law School
3501 Sansom Street
19104

USA

PLANNER

Carlyn Miller

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8:30-9:00AM Registration open

Continental Breakfast

9:00-9:30AM Welcome and Opening Remarks – “Law as Performance and Play: When Truth is at Stake” by Professor Christine Hayes

9:30-10:30AM Session I

10:45-11:45AM Session II

11:45AM-12:30PM Lunch Break

12:30-1:30PM Session III

1:45-2:45PM Session IV

2:45-3:15PM Wrap Up

*******The workshop will take place in Penn Law's Silverman Hall, Room 245A*******

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Convener and Moderator:

Professor Christine Hayes, 2017-2018 Gruss Visiting Professor of Law; Robert F. and Patricia Ross Weis Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University

Presenters:

1. **Martha Merrill Umphrey**, Professor in American Government in the Department of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought and Director of the Center for Humanistic Inquiry at Amherst College
2. **Henning Grunwald**, Lecturer, History Faculty, Cambridge University
3. **Catherine Cole**, Professor of Drama and Dean of the Arts at the University of Washington
4. **Nathaniel Berman**, Rahel Varnhagen Professor of International Affairs, Law, and Modern Culture, Brown University

Respondents:

1. **Beth Berkowitz**, Ingeborg Rennert Associate Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Religion, Barnard College
2. **Chaim Saimon**, Professor of Law, Villanova University
3. **Moulie Vidas**, Professor of Religion, Princeton University
4. **Ayelet Libson**, Assistant Professor at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya and 2018 Caroline Zelaznik Gruss and Joseph S. Gruss Lecturer on Law in Talmudic Civil Law at Harvard Law School