

Jewish Studies Faculty Seminar

Open to faculty and graduate students only

“O Beastly Jew!” Jews, Animals, and Jewish Animals in the Middle Ages



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In the high Middle Ages, northern European Christians and Jews increasingly equated Jews with animals. For Christians, the linkage was meant disparagingly—claims that Jews were fundamentally animalistic served to “de-humanize” them by highlighting their inferiority and irrationality. But a wide range of medieval Jewish authors and artists self-consciously celebrated their “beastly” identity, and sought to efface the conceptual and theological boundaries between humans and animals altogether. In this presentation, David Shyovitz will explore several manifestations of this paradoxical convergence between Christian and Jewish discourses of animality, and trace the shifting and contested status of “Jewish animals” in medieval European culture.

Tuesday, November 19 at 10am

The Bildner Center, 12 College Avenue

Please RSVP to info@JewishStudies.rutgers.edu