

# The Yeshiva University OBSERVER



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## YU ANNOUNCES SHIFT TO REMOTE CLASSES AND FINAL EXAMS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE FALL 2021 SEMESTER



### NEWS

BY REBECCA ADUCULESI,  
NEWS EDITOR

In an email sent out to the YU community on December 20, 2021, YU announced that due to the “significant increases in COVID-19 cases throughout New York State over the course of the past week,” all undergraduate classes and final exams will be remote starting on Wednesday, December 22, 2021.

In the email, YU stated that although the university’s number of positive COVID-19 cases is low, it is nonetheless making this shift to “protect the health and safety of our community.” In addition, YU stated that it made this decision because “we expect that the NYC and the Tri-State area cases will continue to go up based on most recent available data.”

Although classes will be remote,

dormitory buildings, Batei Midrash [Torah studying hall], libraries, cafeterias and athletic centers will remain open to students. In addition, students will still have the option to stay on campus for Shabbat [Sabbath], and there will be in-person or grab-and-go meal options available. However, in all other university events and activities, food will not be available.

The email stated that weekly COVID-19 testing will remain in place, and the university “will be in touch with details regarding testing requirements for the Spring Semester.” In addition, students are expected to continue wearing facemasks in all public indoor spaces unless they are eating or drinking. Finally, YU told students and faculty, “If you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID, you should NOT come to class or work.”

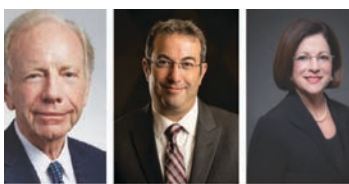
The email concluded by telling students that YU will be “sharing additional information in the coming days with updates on COVID protocols for the remainder of the semester including updates on testing, boosters and events for the winter and spring semester.”

Some students expressed positive feelings about this announcement. An anonymous student (YC ‘23) told the YU Observer, “There was a palpable fear among the student body that because YU was one of the first schools to go online when the first wave of COVID-19 came ashore over a year ago, YU would be hesitant to close down again. Given the proliferation of a disease with still unknown effects, I am happy to see YU put the safety of its students before the politics of the institution and the image that closing down early might create.”

Chloe Schreiber (SCW ‘23) expressed that she found part of this announcement to be shocking. She told the *YU Observer*, “I think that because there are only a couple of more days left of classes in the semester, it made the decision to move fully online a lot less difficult. The requirement of finals to be given fully online is a lot more shocking, and I’m curious to see how teachers will be formatting their exams given the switch.”

However, some students were unhappy about this announcement. An anonymous student told the *YU Observer*, “I understand why it’s necessary, but last year was so lonely. I can’t imagine this being what everyone really wanted. Exams are going to be chaotic.”

### INSIDE THIS EDITION



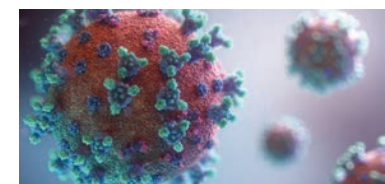
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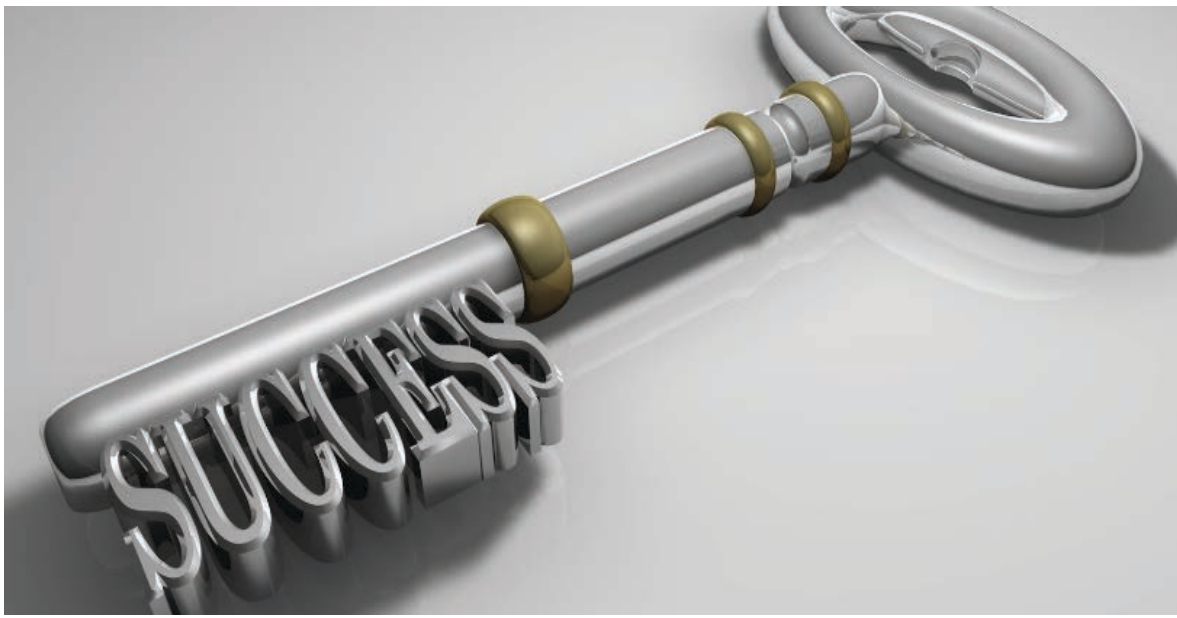
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## EDITORIAL



## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING HOW TO LOSE

BY SHOSHANAH MARCUS,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

I received my first participation trophy sometime around first grade. My mom thought it would be a good idea for me to undertake soccer as a hobby after school. Disclaimer: I was terrible at soccer, and after that horrible season, I would never play again. Still, I received a plastic star trophy covered in gold paint with the word “Winner!” printed on the front. Yet, when I received the trophy, I hardly felt like a winner. Honestly, I almost wish I didn’t get that trophy at all.

Society’s obsession with giving out participation trophies to make children feel that “everyone is a winner” is counterproductive.

I feel that it does more harm than good, as it can hinder children from developing the skills they need to learn as well as the ability to learn how to lose. This logic is also flawed because if everyone is a winner, then really no one is a winner at all; every win requires relative losses.

Learning how to lose is, in my opinion, more important than learning how to win. Having the ability to get back up after you fall down is a crucial aspect of the human experience. If we don’t experience being knocked down, we will never know how to build ourselves back up. You have to experience the soreness from lifting 1 lb weights before you can lift the 50 lb weight. Arguably, what distinguishes successful people is their ability to successfully know how to fail. In “What it Really Means to Win, Lose and Find Success Through it All,” Christopher D. Connors agrees, elaborating that

“we learn from failures, mistakes, adversity and setbacks. How we begin to win is by moving forward with a positive attitude and strong work ethic and building our foundation for our next win on the previous losses.”

Many of the most successful people started out having more losses in their lives than wins. In fact, more often than not it was the losses themselves that inspired and initiated the wins. As Connors writes, even Steve Jobs was fired and rehired by his own company before finding success; J.K. Rowling herself experienced poverty and abuse, among other hardships, prior to

Many of the most successful people **started out having more losses in their lives than wins.**

becoming one of the most successful and well-known authors of the 21st century.

Nowadays, it seems like the extreme concern society places on the winner-loser scoreboard is self-defeating. Accomplishments cannot be truly appreciated at face value because society is so consumed with keeping score. Without experiencing the bitterness of losing, we can’t appreciate the sweetness of winning.

This semester has not been easy for many of us. From the recent horrific tragedy in Woodmere to the chilling rise in antisemitism, the Jewish people have experienced unique hardships that have made this semester particularly difficult. In addition to all of this, coming back to campus in the midst of a global pandemic, returning after the majority of classes were virtual, meeting friends in person for the first time, or just working through

the college experience in general has left many of us feeling overwhelmed and, quite honestly, emotionally drained.

The way I see it, in learning to adapt as more hurdles are thrown our way we have two choices: we can either view this first semester back at school as just a loss, or we can transform the hardships that we have endured and learn how to lose. Connors advises, “Outstanding accomplishments in our lives come when we stay positive, work passionately and fervently in a cause or for a goal that may seem impossible... And winners know that it is through losing that we begin to build for the next win. We’re forced to go back to the drawing board and draw up the plans that will lead us to the life of our dreams.” It is only once we learn how to lose that we can truly learn how to win.



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# THE CREATION OF A COMMUNITY



BY ADINA BRUCE,  
FEATURES EDITOR

For a school that prides itself in being a beacon of the Jewish community, community is a surprisingly hard thing to find at Yeshiva University. The short turnover rate of students, due to the shortened number of years that people attend YU, creates an environment where it can be hard to feel like you are part of something larger than yourself. It is extremely common for students to sail through their years at YU without getting involved in any campus organizations or partaking in campus life. Sometimes attending YU can feel like an academic grind, going from class to class, never making a lasting impact.

While this is an issue that I have personally noticed throughout my time at YU, I am grateful to the communities I have been able to find, and hope that the characteristics of these smaller communities can be applied to the larger university community.

One of the communities that I have felt most honored being a part of this year is the Stern Computer Science department. The establishment of the new

computer science (CS) Lab has created a collaborative and supportive environment where I have been able to connect with and learn from students at all different stages in their Computer Science journey. I am thankful for the relationships I have made this semester as well as throughout my years being a CS major. The comradery that is found in the CS lab is something that I will remember fondly as a highlight of my last semester at Stern. Conversations about feelings of imposter syndrome, stress with job applications and the workload of CS classes have been cathartic, encouraging, and helpful. The mix of sympathy and advice I have always got from my fellow CS students and teachers has been invaluable in my journey as a CS student.

More than just a space which encourages connections created outside of class, the Stern CS department has created a community in other ways. The CS@SC Whatsapp group chat is an invaluable resource to current and past Stern CS majors, where job listings, offers of advice and support, as well as memes, are posted by both current students and recent graduates. The creation of a physical space where personal relationships are able to be developed, as well as the resources

found in a virtual space, means that I can confidently say that the Stern CS department is a thriving community. I think this partnership of real life interaction paired with a continuation of relationships past the short few years as an undergraduate student is a combination that can be applied to other smaller communities within YU to help students feel like they are part of a community while at YU as well as maintain that connection after they graduate.

A different community that I am also proud to have been a part of is the YU Pride Alliance. In my first editorial for the YU Observer, I wrote about the importance of including women's voices in Torah learning. My main argument then was that the inclusion of perspectives strengthens the quality of discussion and learning for all. This argument is applicable to many different people present in the YU and Orthodox communities, including members of the LGBTQ+ community. There is, however, still much work that must be done to create a safe space where members feel comfortable enough to outwardly share their perspectives and experiences. Through the work of the YU Pride Alliance events and spaces are created where the value of welcoming all is put in the

forefront. I hope that the value of holding space for the existence of others and different perspectives is something that can become more accepted within the larger YU community.

I am grateful to other communities that I have been a part of during my time at YU: the YU Observer community, the Stern Beit Midrash community, the Seforim Sale community, and the Twenty Something Minyan. All these groups of students, graduates and friends have supported me, encouraged me, and pushed me to become a better person. I hope that these kinds of spaces and opportunities are available for all students, and believe that the greater YU community will be stronger and enriched because of increased student participation and connection. Furthermore, I want to encourage students to take it upon themselves to participate in and help create the community they would like to be a part of, as a community can only exist through the commitment and involvement of individuals.

**WANT TO SHARE YOUR OPINION?**

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EMAIL [THEYUOBSERVER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:THEYUOBSERVER@GMAIL.COM)



## BROOKDALE RESIDENCE HALL ELEVATORS EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE TECHNICAL ISSUES



BY MILI CHIZHIK,  
NEWS EDITOR

On Thursday, December 4, 2021, both of the elevators in the Brookdale Residence Hall on Beren Campus were out of service. Five days later, the left elevator was again out of service, resulting in widespread frustration amongst students.

After multiple recent incidents with elevators, such as when a student was trapped in an elevator or when the elevator dropped, the Brookdale elevators broke down again. According to YU facilities, the elevator was out of balance and the indicator board did not show the correct floor on every trip. The elevator was then shut down and off service until the mechanic came to the site. With the elevators out of service, the students were required to use the stairs, which posed a major problem for those with physical disabilities and impediments.

On December 4, 2021, the Beren University Housing and Residence Life (UHRL) team sent an email to the students in Brookdale saying, “At present, the Brookdale elevators are both out of service. We are very sorry for the inconvenience this is causing tonight and we are working to resolve this immediately. The elevator technician is currently working on the issue

and will put the left elevator back in service as soon as it is ready.” They continued by telling students to contact the Associate Director of Operations in Residence Life, Ms. Kylene Planer, with any questions they may have and that they will update the students when more information comes up.

Five days later on December 9, 2021, Beren UHRL team again shared with the students the following: “We’re sorry to report that the left elevator is currently out of service as it is not working properly. We know how frustrating this is and we’re staying in close contact with Facilities as we wait for the technician to arrive on site and put the elevator safely back into service. We will update you all once we learn more.”

Randy Apfelbaum, YU’s Chief Facilities & Administrative Officer, shared with the YU Observer that the YU administration is “aware of [the] recent issues with elevators in the Brookdale Residence Hall.” He continued by saying, “We understand and apologize for the frustration and inconvenience this creates for students living here, and we know that accessibility and efficiency play important roles in creating a productive learning environment for our students. While we are pleased to share [that] the elevators have been serviced and [we] hope to have both Brookdale elevators back in use by later this week, we are working on a more permanent resolution to this issue,

and we plan to replace both elevators after the spring semester.”

Apfelbaum described the administration’s plan until the elevators can be fully replaced, saying, “To help limit further interruption of service in the interim, we have engaged our third-party maintenance provider, in an advanced capacity to provide more frequent on-site inspection and on-call maintenance of the elevators, as needed, until they can be replaced.”

Many expressed the urgent need for the elevators to be replaced. Sophomore Rina Shamilov (SCW ‘24) shared with the YU Observer, that “it’s no surprise that the elevators keep breaking because the school seems to be implementing temporary fixes. At this point, the elevator situation isn’t shocking, but it’s an issue that needs to be remedied.”

Others voiced the inconvenience brought by the frequent breaking down of the elevators. Additionally, Marcella Homsany (SCW ‘24) told the YU Observer, “as someone who lives on the 20th floor, the Brookdale elevator is extremely inconvenient and unacceptable. Doing laundry is a game of luck. In addition, the second elevator has been broken since the holidays and I wonder where the funding provided by the student body for building maintenance is going if it clearly isn’t going to the things in the building that need maintaining.” Similarly, according to Re-

becca Aduculesi (SCW 2023), “It is super frustrating that the elevator is always out of commission. There are 20 floors in Brookdale, so the elevator line is long as it is, and when both elevators are broken, it really is a tircha [hassle].”

Furthermore, the issues with the elevator are not confined to the Brookdale Residence Hall. Junior Eliana Lebowitz (SCW ‘23) shared her experience with the YU Observer regarding an incident that occurred in the 245 Lexington building a few weeks ago. “The elevator in the 245 Lexington building was very packed and we were on our way to the third floor and the doors opened up and someone came into the elevator, Lebowitz described, “The doors closed and instead of it going up, it fell down, probably less than a floor. However, we all felt it fall and it was a scary moment. Then it continued going back up and, thank God, everyone was fine. But it wasn’t considered a big deal because in Stern, people get stuck in the elevator for hours and the elevator falling a handful of feet isn’t a big deal. The fact that it’s not a big deal because it happens so often is crazy to me.”



## NEWS

## GPATS ANNOUNCES INCREASED STIPEND, NEW THIRD YEAR PROGRAM

BY SHOSHANAH MARCUS,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF &  
DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

Yeshiva University's Graduate Program In Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS) notified students on December 2, 2021 that they will be increasing the yearly stipend given to the program's students as well as adding a new third year of the program.

In their blog post, published on December 14, 2021, YU expressed their gratitude for the \$1 million donation given over five years "to support GPATS stipend increases and programmatic enhancements." They extended their thanks, saying that "[t]hrough the generous support of Ann and Jeremy Pava and the Micah Philanthropies, GPATS will increase first-year student stipends and facilitate programmatic enhancements."

According to GPATS's website, the current annual stipend for

students is \$5,000. The new announcement stated that GPATS will raise the first year student stipend to \$7,500, and "[a]dditional donations to GPATS will award an increased stipend of \$10,000 per year to second-year full time students." The post reflected that "[t]he generosity of these grants will enable Yeshiva University and GPATS to continue to recruit top aspiring Orthodox female scholars while deepening their intellectual and professional development."

The blog added that "prominent anonymous foundation" will fund the "highly selective Shana Gimmel [Third Year] initiative for top GPATS students." Nechama Price, director of the GPATS program, shared in a quote to the YU Commentator, "It has been a dream of mine for many years for GPATS to be able to have a formal Shana Gimmel program, which includes an exclusive afternoon seder for the Shana Gimmel

students as well as a generous stipend. Such a program will allow more women to spend three years immersed in full time Torah study."

This expansion in the program is the result of a rising interest in recent years. In 2020, the program announced their biggest enrollment to date with 23 students in their 2020-2021 class.

Current GPATS students expressed their excitement regarding this announcement. Ariella Etshalom (SCW '20) told the YU Observer that "being a part of GPATS is one of the most amazing experiences; I have the opportunity to learn daily and immerse myself in Torah with an incredible cohort of women. It is amazing to see the communal endorsement of this Yeshiva University program, and I have so much Hakarat Hatov [gratitude] for Nechama Price and all the administrators who support us in our Torah learning."

GPATS is a "two-year master's program that provides women an opportunity for post-college, high-level study to further their growth in Torah knowledge and skills. This program creates an elite cadre of female scholars of Talmud/Tanach [Bible] and Halakha [Jewish Law] who will serve as leaders and role models for the Orthodox Jewish community. After completing the... program the women will receive a master's degree in Biblical and Talmudic interpretation."

Price included in the blog that the program is "grateful for the partnership and support of our GPATS donors." She expressed her joy saying, "We are greatly excited by these upcoming changes and look forward to watching our GPATS students become leading teachers and role models for the next generation."



## YU CREATES NEW TORAT TZIYON PILOT PROGRAMS IN ISRAEL

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

In emails sent to SSSB students on December 7, 2021 and the rest of students on December 8, 2021, Yeshiva University introduced three new Israel programs beginning in Fall 2022. Termed the Torat Tziyon pilot programs, these programs are for both graduate and undergraduate students.

The email announced the programs by stating that "[a]s part of our commitment to Torat Tziyon... [t]hese pilot programs will continue to strengthen our connections with Israel by providing students – especially those interested in pursuing careers in Israel or making aliyah

– the full YU experience while spending some time in Israel."

The programs will include "top-notch live classes for our undergraduate students, well-rounded Torah learning, and social activities, these pilot programs will cultivate growth for students in areas like leadership training, YU alumni networking and preparation for full-time employment or further study, all while studying in Jerusalem."

The email went on to briefly describe each new program. The programs include undergraduate, graduate, and summer programs. Each program offers unique opportunities for students from "the opportunity to

meet with thought – and business – leaders who are transforming the way we live, learn and work" to "incredible summer experiences designed to transform their future with opportunities to work, volunteer and learn in Israel."

The email concluded by explaining that "[t]hese program concepts remain under development and are subject to change and/or required approvals."

Students are excited about the opportunities these programs promise. A student (YC '23) who wishes to remain anonymous told the YU Observer, "Programs like this are why YU is a popular choice for Jewish teens. By having Torah and Israel be an integral part of the blood of YU,

opportunities like this come by nature. Unlike a generic exchange student program, this one [torat tziyon] is more focused on Israel as the Jewish homeland. This isn't about being introduced to a novel culture, it's about how to live in your future home."

*Questions regarding these programs should be directed to [ToratTziyon@yu.edu](mailto:ToratTziyon@yu.edu) or found on the Torat Tziyon FAQs site.*





## NEWS

## YU LAUNCHES “RISE UP”: THE \$613 MILLION CAMPAIGN FOR YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

In a press release on December 6, 2021, Yeshiva University announced the launch of a new fundraising campaign. The \$613 million campaign, which has been termed as Rise Up: The Campaign for Yeshiva University, is an “ambitious comprehensive campaign that will fund scholarships, publicly launched at Yeshiva University’s annual Chanukah dinner for donors, students, faculty, and staff.”

According to the press release, “[t]he campaign... plans to raise \$613 million over the next five years to ensure student success in a changing world. This will come through investments in YU’s four

areas of strategic focus: values and leadership, science and tech, entrepreneurship and innovation, and great jobs and impactful careers.” Rise Up has already raised over \$250 million since its start during the 2019 Fiscal Year.

The initiatives that will be funded under the plan include scholarships in Jewish and secular education, science and tech advancements, as well as better career training for students. The funds that have already been raised have been done so thanks to the planning committee which is co-chaired by Senator Joseph Lieber-

man and Anita Zucker. The committee is also made up of Elliot Gibber, Billy Greenblatt, Andrew Herenstein, Lance Hirt, Ira Mitzner, Ann Pava and Mark Wilf.

The committee is optimistic about this fundraiser. According to Senator Lieberman, “Yeshiva University provides a unique education that does just that. This campaign will improve our capacity to fulfill that special mission and broaden our reach as well.”

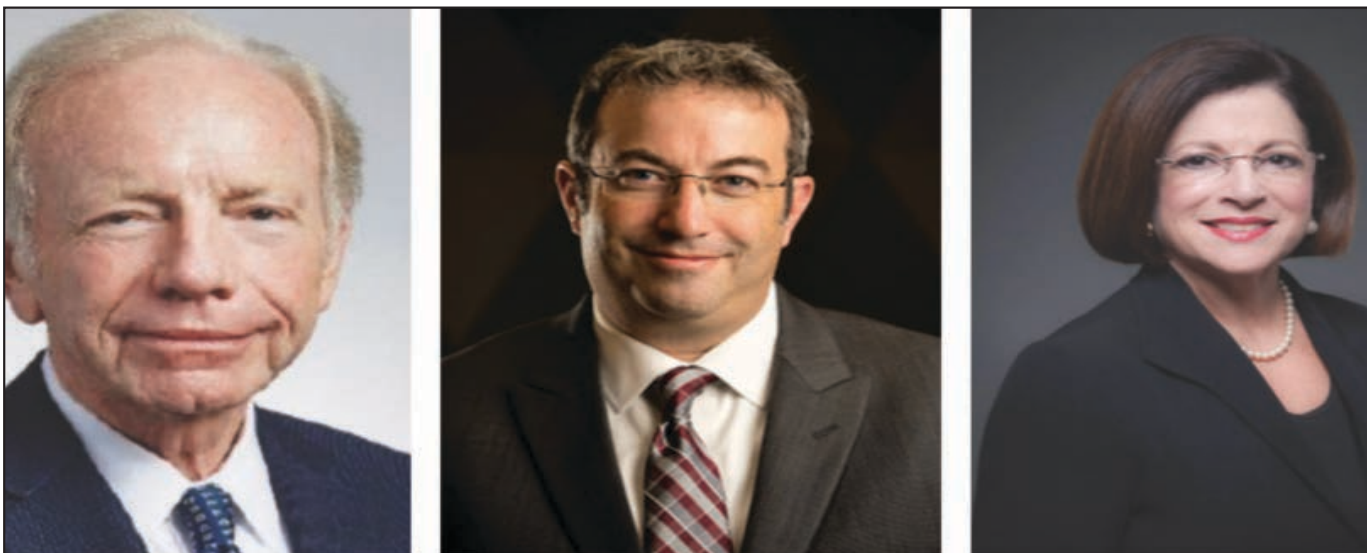
While many students are excited about the opportunities this campaign will catalyze, one

student (YC’ 23) who wishes to remain anonymous, told The YU Observer, “Coming off the heels of the massive financial downturn caused by Covid in both the reduction of student capacity last semester and the novel expenses associated with testing and safety due to it, this round of fundraising truly appears to be one of YU’s most important ones in recent memory. Based upon what we’ve seen from the campaign so far, I don’t know if YU will raise what Covid caused them to lose.”

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, President of Yeshiva University, reflected on this new initiative saying, “Raising \$613 million for scholarships, faculty and facilities reflects our core Torah values and meets our needs for the future. Committed to academic excellence and geared to empower our students to be the leaders of tomorrow, the flagship Jewish university is on the rise.”

*Photo Caption (from left to right): Senator Joseph Lieberman, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, and Anita Zucker*

*Photo Credit: Yeshiva University*



## DR. ERICA BROWN TO LEAD SACKS-HERENSTEIN CENTER FOR VALUES AND LEADERSHIP AS VICE PROVOST AND DIRECTOR

BY RINA SHAMILOV,  
NEWS EDITOR

As an extension of YU’s founding of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Center for Values and Leadership initiative that was launched in October 2021, on November 23, 2021, President Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman announced the appointment of Dr. Erica Brown, a Stern College alumna and dedicated student of the late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, zt”l [of blessed memory], as the Vice Provost of Values and Leadership and inaugural Director of the program.

Dr. Brown, in her new role, will serve as a mentor for students and educators alike, passing the torch of knowledge that had been imparted on her by her late mentor, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt”l. She hopes to extend her scholarship and leadership to both the undergraduate and graduate students, and hopes to lead a stable and solid

cohort of Jewish educators.

In addition to her numerous published works, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman shared that Brown was selected as a Jerusalem Fellow and Avi Chai Fellow, an honor that is considered to encompass bridging the gap between Torah U’Madda [the Jewish outlook of joining the religious and secular together]. Dr. Brown shared her commitment to this ideology and her excitement, saying, “The Torah gives us an outstanding blueprint to become a community bound by a sacred covenant. Being appointed Vice Provost and Director of the new Sacks-Herenstein Center is an opportunity of a lifetime to strengthen that covenant.”

In welcoming Dr. Brown to the new center, Terri Herenstein shared that “Dr. Brown’s work



and mentorship has inspired communal, business, and political leaders around the world. She is both a sophisticated scholar and programmatic visionary, and we are very excited to see the impact she will have in conveying Rabbi Sacks’ teachings to future generations of students and leaders.”

Dr. Brown will officially assume her new role on January 1, 2022, and claims, “in this new role, I intend to introduce a number of cohort-based leadership programs on the undergraduate

and graduate level, to organize public lectures and conferences with a focus on leadership and values, and to amplify the current work of students and faculty in these arenas. To be able to do this work to honor the legacy of my teacher and mentor, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, is a remarkable and humbling privilege. To return to Yeshiva University is a true homecoming.”



## NEWS

## CAMPUS SECURITY UPGRADED ON BEREN CAMPUS



BY REBECCA ADUCULESI,  
NEWS EDITOR

In an email sent out to the undergraduate student body on November 19, 2021, YU security informed students that it has upgraded the security on Beren Campus.

The email opened by stating, “We have received a few reports of encounters between students and pedestrians in the campus vicinity. We understand that these incidents can create unease among students. We

take these reports seriously, and your safety and well-being are always our highest priority.”

Students were informed that due to these incidents, YU security has increased the number of security guards on campus, expanded the hours that a uniformed New York Police Department (NYPD) officer is present on campus, reinstated the local nightly campus shuttle from 5pm-11 pm (which will provide transportation between buildings on the Beren Campus for students), and will continue to offer

security accompaniment when walking between buildings upon request. Students can call 212-340-7460 (the YU Security number on the back of every YU ID card) to request this service.

The email ended by reminding students that “walking with others is generally safer than walking alone” and “if [students] notice suspicious or concerning behavior on or near campus, please notify YU Security at 212-340-7460.”

Students were grateful for these changes to security. One any-

mous student (SCW ‘23) told the YU Observer, “Midtown can be a scary place, especially at night. I’ve had some encounters with strangers speaking to me inappropriately, and some of my friends have even been touched by strangers. The increased campus security definitely makes me feel safer.”

*Photo Credit: Yeshiva University*

## YU’S PAYROLL TIME ENTRY SYSTEM, KRONOS, EXPERIENCES A CYBER-SECURITY BREACH



BY MILI CHIZHIK,  
NEWS EDITOR

Earlier this afternoon, Dr. Sara Asher, Beren campus’s Assistant Dean of Students, forwarded an email from YU’s Chief Human Resources Officer Julie Auster to Beren campus students regarding a breach in security in their third-party payroll time entry system, Kronos.

In her December 13, 2021 email, Ms. Auster described the shutdown that would temporarily affect the “ability to access Kronos and record time.” She went on to clarify that this “is a cloud-based system that is not managed by YU. Fortunately, our Kronos information does not contain social security numbers or dates of birth, and we have no reason to believe confidential information of YU students or personnel would have been

affected.”

Regarding the pay periods that were affected, the bi-weekly and semi-monthly pay periods of 12/10 and 12/15, respectively, were not affected. Although, as described in the email, they “are preparing for the possibility that this may affect our ability to generate payroll for the 12/23 pay period...if the Kronos entry system is not up by the time we need to process the payroll.”

The YU office which manages payroll operations is working with Kronos to figure out the scope of the situation and to fix the situation. Furthermore, the email described that the employees who work hourly and have standard hours will be paid normally for their 12/23 payroll that is issued bi-weekly. Of those who worked overtime and employ-

ees that do not have standard hours and input their hours on an irregular basis, such as student jobs (i.e. peer tutors, teaching assistants, writing center tutors, etc.), YU has yet to figure out how to pay them and stated that they “will send out instructions on how to account for hours as soon as possible.”

At the end of her email, Ms. Auster recommended to all who have questions to email payrollservices@yu.edu.

This cyber-security issue came almost 8 months after a major security breach and just days after the alert sent by YU’s ITS department on December 8th, 2021 regarding the phishing and spam emails that many students received. An example of a suspicious email that was attached to the alert from ITS contained the following: “Dear Student, I’m offering a personal assistant position that pays \$750 weekly. Several attempts to email you at your edu email keeps

returning back due to the length of the job description kindly provide a Non-Edu email address where I can forward job details – hours and pay if you are interested.”

The ITS department explained to students that they must be aware of any suspicious messages that they receive and to verify the addresses that the emails are sent from. Similarly, if there is an “External Flag” on any email that comes from YU faculty or staff, even if “it comes from yourself”, one must not open it or reply. Additionally, if the reply email is not the email in the reply-to, one should also treat it as spam and should never open any attachments or links from these emails. With any suspicious emails, they should be forwarded to abuse@yu.edu. With any further questions or concerns, please email helpdesk@yu.edu, call 646-592-4357, or dial 4357 or 6123 from Microsoft Teams.



## STUDENTS RELIEVED AT EXPANSION OF INTERCAMPUS SHUTTLE HOURS



BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

Yeshiva University emailed students on Wednesday, December 8, 2021 to notify them that “the shuttle is now operating additional inter-campus routes...[t]he shuttle is open for current students, and if space allows, for faculty and staff.”

After months of reduced shuttle times due to COVID-19, the intercampus shuttle has slowly been adding more available times. Additionally, local shuttles have continued to be suspended.

The announcement has been relieving to students who do not feel comfortable traveling between campuses in the evening and at night either on the subway or in an Uber. Cayla Muschel (SCW '23) expressed to the YU Observer, “I think it’s great that YU is providing extended shuttle hours. It’s not safe to take public transportation at night and who hasn’t

needed to do some late night studying or event planning on the other campus?” Racheli Jian (SCW '25) echoed her sentiment, stating, “I think it’s really useful because it relieves the worry of having to take the subway or an uber late at night.”

Students on the Wilf campus also expressed satisfaction with the decision to expand the shuttle hours. On student (YC '23) who wishes to remain anonymous shared with the YU Observer “While to those outside of the YU family the increased shuttle times might seem inconsequential, to those of us who are a part of the family this means so much more. By increasing the shuttle times YU has made a statement that even as the world still has some concerns over what comes next, YU will always do their best to bring normalcy back to their students. Around 18 months removed from the first shut down, we are truly back to seeing our friends, going to Macs games, and just having

a normal life; vitally important things during the constantly changing times around us”

Some students still felt there was more room for improvement in the offered shuttle times. Marcela Homsany (SCW '24) told the YU Observer, “I love the idea of more shuttle times- it gives me more of an opportunity to be involved as the times are now working with my schedule. I wish there were earlier times than 5:45 though.”

The updated shuttle schedule is as follows:

*Weekday Schedule (Monday through Thursday):*

**Wilf to Beren:**  
8:00 AM – One Way

Beren to Wilf:  
5:45 PM  
7:45 PM  
9:45 PM  
11:30 PM

Wilf to Beren:  
6:45 PM  
8:45PM

10:45PM  
12:30 AM  
Sunday Schedule:

Beren to Wilf:  
5:45 PM  
7:45 PM  
9:45 PM  
11:30 PM

Wilf to Beren:  
6:45 PM  
8:45  
10:45PM  
12:30 AM

*Students can reserve seats on the shuttle at [yushuttles.com](http://yushuttles.com).*

### OPINION

## THE CASE FOR HAVING A MIDTERMS STUDY WEEK

BY ADI BENHANAN,  
WEBSITE MANAGER

Honestly, I kinda like college. Yeah, I said it.

Yeshiva University is one of the coolest institutions if you really think about it. A university that has a Jewish student body and teaches Torah Studies. Where else in the world

could you find that (aside from in Israel)? That aside, one thing that really struck me this past month was how inconsiderate the university is regarding respecting the students’ time. Yes, we are in college and we should be mostly focused on classes, but realistically, 20 year old adults have so much going on in their personal lives too. You try to juggle a social life, family re-

sponsibilities, mental and physical health, relationships, a part time job AND school. Your time seems to go down the drain. Of course, this is how life is. You’re expected to commit your time based on personal priority. For me, school is very important, but so is my relationship with my family and my mental health. School shouldn’t be my one and only priority.

Often it seems that many edu-

cational institutions do not have students’ best interests at heart. According to Investopedia, “Private colleges and universities also generate revenue by charging students tuition—considerably higher tuition than at public colleges.” The key idea is that colleges are a business. They are run by people who make

SEE **MIDTERM STUDY WEEK**, PAGE 9



## OPINION

## THE MORNING SHOW, CANCEL CULTURE, AND BROADCAST TELEVISION

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

One topic that has always interested me is cancel culture. Canceling, according to the Merriam-Webster definition is “the practice or tendency of engaging in mass canceling as a way of expressing disapproval and exerting social pressure.”

After completing the most recent season of *The Morning Show*, I was impressed by the way that they dealt with cancel culture within the context of the show. I found it to be an honest exploration of cancel culture and its place in the world, specifically when it comes to sexual abuse in the workplace.

The show began in season one with Mitch Kessler, played by Steve Carell, being fired and ‘canceled’ following a series of sexual misconduct allegations. The show begins with the aftermath of Kessler’s firing, but instead of sidelining

the character and demonizing him, *The Morning Show* brings Kessler right to the forefront and focuses on him and the terrible things he had done. Later in the second season, viewers see that Kessler regrets his actions and truly only wants to make things right even though for some people that might be too late.

To be honest, this is something I was not expecting. Normally when it comes to cancel culture, the person who is being canceled is demonized and never seen by society again. I found it particularly fascinating that throughout the show we see how many different characters perceive Kessler both as good and as bad. There is such a range of emotions and feelings about the matter within the show.

I think the messiness of the show reflects the messiness of these situations in real life. These situations are more complicated than just eradicating someone based on past actions that they may regret and want to rectify. In a world with no forgiveness, what chance do any of us have in learning from our mistakes and trying again? I think in most scenarios there should be room for second chances. Ultimately, every situation is unique and requires a tailored response, and cancel culture is the opposite of considering each situation because once someone is canceled, there is no more room for a conversation.

Not only did the show reveal the often underrepresented side of someone who has been canceled, but it also gave a behind-the-scenes

look into broadcast television and what a newsroom looks like. It was fascinating to see how scripted television is. A seemingly spontaneous song that the on-air characters appear to be slowly making up is really on the teleprompter. What is real and what is fake becomes revealed through *The Morning Show*. The irony is that the way I am learning about broadcast television is through another television series, nevertheless, it seems like an accurate portrayal.

If you are interested in the conversation around cancel culture, broadcast television, and/or looking for a great show to watch I recommend *The Morning Show*.



## MIDTERM STUDY

FROM PAGE 8

a profit based on students attending, not only on how well they do. Honestly, knowing that is really unsettling.

That being said, midterms are something most colleges require and they’re all probably just as terrible as ours. This past midterm season was one of the most stressful times in my life. This year, midterms felt different. The last midterm period we had was during COVID when most classes were held virtually over Zoom, so it wasn’t as bad: the pressure was not as prominent, the stress was lessened, and the workload was much lighter. This year, it seemed like the teachers really wanted to test our abilities. We returned to in-person learning as well as having classes continue during midterms.

Teachers felt as though assigning homework was a good idea on top of expecting

students to study for their outrageous midterms. While preparing the first half of the semester’s information for the midterm exam we were still learning new information in class right before the exam.

The weeks were borderline torturous, to say the least.

I asked a few friends to tell me what their experience was this week to see if I was the only one feeling a little extra stressed this semester. A student (SCW ‘22) who wishes to remain anonymous remarked to me, “While the students understand that midterms week is something every college has, midterms week has never taken on a form like this before. Besides the insane schedule of having class, projects, and assignments in conjunction with midterms,

students have to deal with the adjustment of in-person tests, closed notes, and an added time constraint. And yes, that’s what college typically is, but YU and every college need to understand that students just returned from over a year and a half of online classes and tests. Just as there was an adjustment to Zoom University, there is an even bigger need for one to return to campus. I think a lot of teachers have and continue to overlook this fact, and it’s really upsetting.”

She’s right when pointing out the importance of an adjustment period. Just like when we had Zoom, no one was used to it and needed time to adjust, but reverting back to old ways is not as simple as just doing that. The mind and body need to adapt to the learning environment we are placed in, which calls for the desperate need for an in-person adjustment period.

My question is: why do classes still have to go on while midterms are happening? Another student shared with me, “Where does one find the time to study for 5 midterms in 3 days while attending classes, and when the review was only two days before the exam?!” Can you cram a 30 page review in two days, along with an essay and two other midterms back to back, all while still going to classes? Probably not.

So, there you have it. Overall, the sleep depriving, caffeine driven, mentally unstable week really opened our eyes. We see where the priorities of the school lie, and it doesn’t seem like they have the students’ best interest in mind. Regardless of the sleepless nights, no college compares to Yeshiva University’s community and education.





## OPINION

## THE MANDATORY DORMING POLICY FOR FTOC STUDENTS

BY DANIEL GANOPOLSKY

Most, if not all, of us FTOC (first time on campus) students are familiar with one of Yeshiva University's policies, which states that we must dorm in one of the residence halls during our first-year on campus. Commuting from home or renting an apartment somewhere in the neighborhood is not an option.

The most significant objection students have to this policy is the cost. As per the Yeshiva University undergraduate Wilf housing website, living in the Rubin or Morgenstern Halls each costs \$9,500 for both semesters and the Muss Hall costs \$6,800 (but does not include air conditioning). The Beren campus rates range anywhere from \$9,500 to \$12,300. On top of these rates, students who dorm are also required to enroll in one of three meal plans starting at \$1,500 per semester. First-year students have no other choice but to pay these prices in addition to the cost of tuition.

The current housing policy was originally implemented in 2016 along with many other sweeping new changes to dorm life and its costs. At the time, Yeshiva was 38 million dollars in debt and was struggling financially. At his last Beren town hall meeting of the year, Student Molly Pocrass asked if the rumors regarding raising in housing prices were true. President Richard Joel confirmed the price changes and said "the school should not be sponsoring what is essentially luxury housing for students who are being given assistance with tuition," (qtd. in Haller). The school was in debt and the price hikes and policy changes were an attempt to lower the deficit at the time. But unlike tuition, the cost of housing is not subsidized or eligible for financial aid. First-year students are forced to pay an additional \$13,000 out-of-pocket. Many of us are consequently left with no choice but to take out loans that we otherwise would not need to. Alternative options, like living at home or splitting an apartment with five roommates, can significantly decrease the cost of our Yeshiva campus experience. Off-campus housing also leaves us with more meal plan flexibility. We can cook our own food or buy cheaper pre-cooked food, allowing many of us to avoid the cafeteria's outrageous prices.

On the other hand, I think that as students we need to realize that housing in New York City

is always expensive and Washington Heights is no exception. The Residence Halls, unlike the caf, are reasonably priced if we were to compare them with similar living situations in New York City. Therefore, I am not advocating for Yeshiva University to get rid of this policy nor lower their housing rates. The solution is for Yeshiva to open the room and board expenses to be eligible for financial aid. The university would still receive the money they need to cover the costs of operation and other high expenses, but at the same time students would be able to cut costs and minimize their loans.

Originally, I assumed that making housing costs eligible for financial aid was a legal issue. However, after a quick Google search, I learned that FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) covers the cost of room and board for students in institutions of higher education. The financial aid package Yeshiva offers should cover these additional costs as well. If housing and a meal plan is a mandatory expense for students, then these costs should be grouped with the tuition costs. Institutions like Columbia University cover room and board with financial aid, and Yeshiva University should not be an exception.

The second concern many students have, myself included, is related to the social conditions and interactions we have by living on-campus. Dorming requires the students adhere to Yeshiva University's strict dorm rules and regulations as outlined in the housing contract we had to sign. Rules such as "being a full time-student in good standing", "We must accept the housing assignment given to us, we must agree to not remove any existing furnishings nor install any large appliances, and agree that "the University may enter the room assigned to you, whether or not you are present, to conduct an inspection, make repairs, show the room or apartment or to maintain health, safety and security, and standards of conduct, or in the event of emergency", among many other rules. These strict regulations put a significant limit on the independent decisions students must learn to make when they live on their own. In my opinion, the college experience consists of two main factors. The first is gaining an education to expand your knowledge in any given subject matter for future employment opportunities or simply learning for pleasure. The second part of the college experience is growing and shaping yourself into an independent

adult. Graduating with a degree might land you a job, but it won't teach you how to make decisions about housing, picking roommates, cleaning, or cooking to name a few.

As a resident of the Rubin Hall, I make many living decisions on my own terms. However, I do not have total autonomy. I can't fully decorate my room the way I want it because it might lead to some wall damage. I can't talk too loudly in the hallways because I might disturb my floormates (who can literally hear everything through the walls). I have to share a bathroom with 30 other floormates. I can't drink wine for kiddush on shabbat. I can't drink a beer with my friends either. I constantly feel like a half-adult. The housing policy allows me to make my own decisions, but only if the administration agrees with them. Even the services that are provided for us, like having our bathrooms cleaned for us at least once every day by the University staff, create unhealthy and unproductive dependencies. Don't get me wrong, I sincerely appreciate all the work the staff does for us, but even something seemingly minimal like cleaning the bathrooms for us unfortunately reinforces a lax attitude towards how we treat the bathrooms. We end up leaving them dirtier and consequently never have to learn to clean up after ourselves. A post-Yeshiva world does not include staff to clean our bathrooms for us, and having to abide by these rules further diminishes our opportunity to learn the crucial skills we need for our post-college adult life.

Even though I've painted a relatively grim picture of the consequences of living on-campus, I think there are many underlying benefits. Having to dorm with all these restrictions may not be ideal for independent character and self-development, but we are presented with the baby steps to get us started. For most students, dorming is a more independent living situation than sleeping at home or even spending the year abroad in yeshiva – where madrichim [advisors] supervise us. Our first-year is a stepping stone to a more independent and adult lifestyle and we should use it to our advantage. We need to utilize this semi-autonomous time to develop ourselves and prepare for full-scale independence. Dorming gives us a blueprint and taste of how one could live, as well as introduces us to future roommate prospects. Without the prep, leasing an apartment or picking an apartment mate can be a very stressful and extremely mentally draining activity.

All the more so, I think living on campus with all the new students has many benefits you can't get elsewhere. Dorming creates an active community and warm atmosphere on campus. For example, the Rubin 3 Resident Advisors (RA's) have been incredible in fostering a fun and warm atmosphere on our floor. We have had floor-wide dart tournaments, pancake breakfasts, and even have an upcoming floor shab-



baton. Students from all corners of the globe, live together and have an opportunity to participate in all these fun network building events. We get to share in our collective campus experiences. We learn from each other and support each other. As a result, this environment establishes Yeshiva University as a national university rather than a local commuter school.

When I first started dorming I was quite critical of the housing policy. I dreamt of renting an apartment with some of my fellow first year students and finally being able to live fully independently. But after spending a few months in the Rubin dorm I have come to appreciate dorm life. The convenience of having a shul [synagogue], cafeteria, pool, and gym all in the same building is unparalleled. Because everything is so close, I can spend more time studying with my floormates instead of walking five blocks to my theoretical apartment. In addition, I have made many new friends that I otherwise would not have if I was not dorming. Even though I am from New York City, I would definitely prefer to dorm instead of traveling from home or renting my own apartment.

Spending our first year on campus in the dorms is a great middle step. As we slowly shift from complete dependency on our parents to full self-reliance, dorming creates a safe transitional point in our college experience. This is not the final destination, but nonetheless it is a stop that needs to be explored. By offering financial aid for room and board Yeshiva will show that this policy is more than just a mere money grab. They need to demonstrate that the goal of living on campus is to establish connections between peers from all around the globe and foster a learning opportunity that can lead to lifelong bonds and a successful adult life. Fitting hand in hand with the overall goal of college, and especially that of a Jewish university with Jewish values that apply in school, at work, and at home. I think the university should continue to uphold this rule despite its costs. Nevertheless, I think Yeshiva should do more to address and satisfy some of the concerns the student body has.



## TO BE OR NOT TO BE (A MINYAN MAN)



BY SHMUEL ABERMAN

I will never forget my first time going to the Beren campus for Shabbos to help make the minyan for the women on their campus. Last year, at the end of the semester, three students from the Wilf campus, including myself, went to the Beren campus to help make the minyan for the first time since Covid broke out. The remaining members of the minyan are rabbeim or staff members who are on the Beren campus for shabbos.

As a student who was in his first year on campus, I came in knowing very few of my fellow students, and going to the Beren campus was an excellent way for me to meet new people I otherwise would not have met. While taking many classes due to the dual curriculum here at YU and not having a lot of free time during the week, it was a breath of fresh air to be able to meet new people and have a relaxing Shabbos with all my

Shabbos needs taken care of.

While being a Minyan man, your only real responsibility is to contribute to a quorum of ten men necessary for davening and attending all of the minyanim [prayer services]. For meals, we were given a place to eat with the rest of the Minyan men separate from the women in a designated room, brought to you by the amazing waitstaff.

This year the Minyan men program has expanded the number of students who are able to go to the Beren campus to make the minyan. The Minyan men program is no longer something where there are two or three students who complete the minyan. Instead, we are used to make up the minyan, with closer to seven or eight other students (varying on a weekly basis) to be the main group of the minyan, the rest being Rabbis or Rabbi's kids. With the additional students who are now able to stay downtown, it makes Shabbos that much

more enjoyable. During davening and the meals, we are able to sing our zemiros and tefillos in a much louder and fuller group.

As opposed to last year, one huge change has been the sleeping accommodations. Although last year and in years past, YU has paid for the Minyan men to stay in a hotel a few blocks from where we daven, this year the Minyan men have been staying in the Schottenstein dorms.

In return for one making the minyan, we are given a place to sleep in the Schottenstein dorms with linens already on the beds and a room within to sleep. However, you still need to bring your own towels and soaps if you want to shower in the Schottenstein dorms. Each of us gets our own room and some weeks we even get a bag filled with the Shabbos schedule and snacks. During Shabbos, there are many amazing programming opportunities and shiurim [lectures] available to attend. Some highlights going to Beren campus

for Shabbos include the amazing shiurim given by the rabbeim, with the shiurim being much more engaging and discussion-based compared to the shiurim given at Wilf campus. Another highlight of my shabbosim at the Beren campus is all the people I have met and become friends with Beren campus, besides being a great place to meet people, it is a great place to go sightseeing. Going on Shabbos walks through the city past the Empire State Building, walking by Rockefeller Center, and pre-shabbos trips to Krispy Kreme all add to the excitement that going to Beren campus for Shabbos brings. As someone who has been a Minyan man for many weeks throughout the past year, I highly recommend others to try it out and go to the Beren campus for a shabbos. Not only is it an opportunity for you to get out of the boring routine of the week, but it's also an excellent opportunity to meet new people. In addition, it gives you the ability to see the impact you make on the shabbos environment at the Beren campus.

## DON'T HOLD BACK THE GOOD

BY CAYLA MUSCHEL,  
Arts and Culture Editor

"Do not hold back the good from the one who needs it when you have the power in your hand to do it" (Proverbs 3:27)

I was recently in a situation where a friend expressed a genuine desire to help me at his workplace. He was hesitant, however, to do something that was not strictly part of his job. He feared there would be backlash from his superiors for going above and beyond his job description. I was a little shocked that it was seen as a "problem" for someone to work beyond what is required.

Generally, we don't do things that are "not our job." That makes sense; we wouldn't want to overstep boundaries. And yet it seems that we have gone to the other extreme. Now, we live in a culture where one can suffer con-

sequences for being needlessly kind and helpful to others. Apathy to others is so prevalent, so built into our culture, that in the workplace we go so far as to punish those who do go the extra mile. We see unnecessary helpfulness as a liability.

This is often evident when dealing with bureaucratic difficulties. At work, our positions are extremely specialized. Consequently, trying to accomplish a small task often leads to being shuttled back and forth between bored employees who say "this is my coworker's job, not mine; I don't have to deal with this." (I don't know if you've ever tried to cancel a subscription by phone, but if you have, you know what I'm talking about!)

One famous halachic precept states "Kol Yisra'el areivim zeh l'zeh", commonly translated as "all of Israel is responsible for one another." The children of Israel are, at our essence,

a society. We may often encounter situations in which we bear no individual responsibility, but as a society, we always bear collective responsibility for each other. Alternatively, the precept may be translated as "all of Israel is responsible 'to' one another." We are obligated to one another.

To clarify, I'm not advocating for constant altruism without healthy boundaries. The verse says, "Don't hold back the good...when you have the power [...] to do it." Only you can decide when you have that power. For instance, if you have an exam at 9:00 AM, you probably don't really have the power to help your friend cram at 2:00 AM.

As individuals, we don't want to live in a society that is apathetic to our existence; a society that will not help us, not because it can't, but because our need means



nothing to them. I don't want to be apathetic to your existence. Your need means something to me.

Life already feels far too much like walking a tightrope. Daily life requires us to bear so many responsibilities and complete so many tasks, with often harsh consequences if we fail. Can we serve as one another's safety net?

So, please, wherever you can, take initiative and help another person. Answer that group chat plea, proof-read that essay, open those gates. Do something you're not strictly required to do: be someone's safety net.

Why hold back the good?





## YUPAC HOSTS EVENT ON “THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS AND THE CHANGING MIDDLE EAST”

BY ELI LEVI,  
BUSINESS EDITOR

On November 22, 2021, the YU Political Action Club (YUPAC), in conjunction with the Schneier Program for International Relations, hosted a live recording of Jason Greenblatt’s Newsweek podcast *The Diplomat*. Greenblatt is a former Middle East peace envoy, and at this event he hosted the Bahrain Ambassador to the U.S., Shaikh Abdullah Bin Rashid Al Khalifa. The event was titled “The Abraham Accords and the Changing Middle East” and comes weeks after a previous event focusing on events in the Middle East

and the relationship between Jews and Muslims featuring Sheikh Mohammed al Issa, secretary-general of the Muslim World League.

The co-presidents of YUPAC, Alexander Friedman and Avigail Winokur, were instrumental in bringing the event together. In Friedman’s opening remarks, he introduced the Shaikh, who, after a four-year term as governor of Bahrain’s Southern Governorate and subsequent reappointment, was appointed as a Bahrain Ambassador to the

United States from Bahrain. As outlined by Friedman, the Shaikh also played an important role in the signing of the Abraham Accords, a joint statement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States stating the public normalization of relations between the countries. Friedman also credited the interest of the student body, as indicated by the rather large turnout, for pushing for this event.

In conversation with Greenblatt, when asked what the audience could do to further the Abraham Accords, the Shaikh said to pay

close attention to what is going on in the Middle East and to realize how groundbreaking and historic the signing of the Abraham Accords was. The Shaikh talked about the king of Bahrain, saying that he has always promoted peace and that there is lots of positivity coming out of the region. Bahrain has had a Jewish community since the 1800s, and they had even set up a synagogue for the Jews that immigrated there.

SEE **YUPAC**, PAGE 15

## STERN COLLEGE DRAMATIC SOCIETY IS BACK ON STAGE!

BY GILLIAN HERSZAGE

Broadway is back, and so is college theater. After a nearly two year hiatus, Stern College Dramatic Society (SCDS) is back on stage with their upcoming production of *Radium Girls*. The performances will take place at the Schottenstein theater on the Wilf campus on December 19, 20, 21, and 23, 2021.

*Radium Girls*, written by D.W. Gregory, is based on a true story. The play is set in New Jersey in the early 20th century, when radium was used at the forefront of medical and technological innovation. The play follows a group of female factory painters who use radium based paint to provide watches with a lumi-

nous green glow. When the workers fall mysteriously ill, one young woman decides to lead the search for justice. This riveting production of *Radium Girls* is sure to touch emotional chords while exploring the interplay between science and business, and the choices that can change lives forever.

The cast and crew are beyond excited to tell this story and return to the stage. SCDS President and cast member, Baila Landa (SCW ‘23), noted to the *YU Observer*, “We are so excited for SCDS’s first performance post-covid! *Radium Girls* is a heartrending tale about corruption and the fight for justice in twentieth century

America. This is an idea that is still relevant today, and is sure to resonate with our audience.”

The show is open to co-ed audiences as it is not a musical performance. All attendees must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Special discounts are available for SCDS alumni and current YU students and tickets can be purchased at [https://scds.](https://scds.ticketleap.com/radium-girls/)

[ticketleap.com/radium-girls/](https://scds.ticketleap.com/radium-girls/).

Each month, the YU Observer aims

SCDS IS PROUD TO PRESENT  
OUR 2021 PRODUCTION...

**RADIUM GIRLS**  
BY D. W. GREGORY  
DIRECTED BY REUVEN RUSSELL

LIMITED CAPACITY  
FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS ONLY  
SCHOTTENSTEIN THEATER  
DECEMBER 19 3:00 PM  
DECEMBER 20 7:30 PM  
DECEMBER 21 7:30 PM  
DECEMBER 23 7:30 PM

BUY TICKETS  
HERE!



## GENETICS AND MICROBIOLOGY CLASSES AT SCW COMPETE IN FIRST ANNUAL BACTERIAL HOLIDAY PLATE CONTEST

BY SIMA GREENBERG

On Wednesday, December 1, 2021, on the third day of Chanukah, the Yeshiva University Biology Department hosted a Chanukah-Themed Agar Plate Competition.

Dr. Babich's Genetics class competed against Dr. Schuck's Microbiology class. The representatives of Team Genetics included: Talia Tarzik, Rachel Sarraf, Shayna Dessau, Avigail Schiff, Rachel Sarraf, Alia Hakakian, Leia Rubinstein, Temima Yellin, Diana Gindi, Ariana Matthew, and Atara Neugroschl. Team Microbiology included: Adena Goldstein, Leeba Sullivan, Sandy Shaolian, Ellie Berger, and Elizabeth Kershteyn.

The provided materials included the organisms *Serra-*

*tia marcescens*, *Micrococcus luteus*, *E. coli* and a choice of TSA and DNA agar plates. Using the given organisms and their advanced biology laboratory skills, each team was tasked to inoculate a design in honor of Chanukah. After the event, each participant was given a certificate and trophy. As a member of both classes, Shoshanah Marcus (SCW '22) reviewed the results and announced Team Genetics as the winning team. The Genetics class received a prize of Chanukah chocolates for their victory. Leeba Sullivan (SCW '22) from the Microbiology class was the winner of the grand prize: a sumptuous meal in the SCW cafeteria, courtesy of the Biology Department!

The balance of technique, passion, and teamwork all in the spirit of a Jewish holiday

made this fantastic activity unique to Yeshiva University. Dr. Alyssa Schuck described the event saying, "Our students rose to the challenge; infused with enthusiasm and friendly competitiveness, they combined creativity and advanced biology lab skills as a way to celebrate Chanukah!"

Students were excited to participate in this fun-filled Chanukah themed event. As Shayna Dessau (SCW '23) said, "I really loved using my genetics skills and art skills towards a Chanukah event. It was fun to come together as a group and do a fun competition!" Photo Credit: Leia Rubenstein



## CourseValet: The Future of YU Registration and Community



BY RACHEL GILINSKI,  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

"There is no secret that the YU course list is outdated and simply frustrating to get information out of," said Oze Botach (YC '24), "and that's sugar-coating the situation."

"I was about to throw my computer at a wall looking at the YU course list," he said. Botach, born and raised in Los Angeles but currently living in Las Vegas, is a sophomore at YC majoring in Computer Science. "Just conducting searches alone requires one to go back and forth just to conduct another search," he added, referring to the standard course search system. He has "always been a huge nerd for anything comput-

er-related, and even more so for simplifying daily tasks with code elegantly," so when he found frustration in course registration, he decided to do something about the problem.

Using the programming language Python (with Flask, a micro web framework found within it), as well as coding languages HTML, CSS, and JavaScript for the site's front end, Botach started working alone over this past summer to find a solution. Unfortunately, he had to pause for a while, overwhelmed by his course load, but now that he's been actively working on the website, he was able to launch a

beta version on December 8, 2021, just in time for Spring 2022 registration. All his hard work culminated in a smooth, streamlined site: CourseValet.com. Joining Botach in his "excitement to release this project," acquaintances and professors alike reacted positively and eagerly. "We all believe CourseValet.com is the future of YU course research," said Botach.

This sentiment is echoed by fellow Computer Science students. "Oze Botach's coursevalet.com is one of the most important websites for a student at YU," said Yaakov Baker (YC

'24). "I highly recommend this website to my fellow students." Another student, Eli Saperstein (SSSB '23), is certain "that this registration season has been the easiest, most relaxing, stress-free one yet... solely because of the incredible tools available to [him] from CourseValet."

We've all heard the hype, but what exactly is CourseValet? And why is it so necessary?

"CourseValet.com is a community and course list made by



# DAF YOMI AT BEREN: THE “SEVENTY FACES” OF DAF YOMI PODCASTS

BY HANNAH ADLER

“So how are you doing it?” Seemingly one of the most basic questions that an individual could be asked, but in the context of learning Daf Yomi, the potential answers seem endless. From accompanying Shiurim (Torah classes) to email lists, the Daf Yomi enterprise has grown exponentially over the years. Just a quick Google search will reveal the myriad of ways to approach this tremendous feat, and personally the sheer amount of content can be overwhelming. This massive exposure led me on a journey to find the most essential Daf Yomi podcasts currently being produced.

**The Classics:** This category is both expansive yet constantly evolving, in that the space of Daf Yomi podcasting is a relatively new invention. One would be remiss to exclude the prominent influences of websites like YUTorah and TorahAnytime for the sheer variety of content accessible

on their platforms. That aside, in the more contemporary space are the likes of those produced by independent synagogues, as

behind the optimal time range for a Daf Yomi practice has its own unique history, with many focusing on the most efficient

It truly embodies the statement found in the Mishna in Avot 1:16, “Shammai used to say: make your [study of the] Torah a fixed practice; speak little, but do much; and receive all men with a pleasant countenance.”

So what has worked best for me? In an effort to be wholly authentic, I will admit that the mission of “Staying Up With the Daf” continues to feel immense. There are days when the Daf itself takes me close to an hour to get through, and others where I barely want to start in the first place. Having these “companions” has been the most integral factor in my ability to not only stay on track, but glean the most from this process. The feeling of having a reliable voice and method to turn to six days a week really helps me connect to the global effort that is the Daf Yomi cycle, and for that I am immensely grateful.



well as those featured on the OU Torah website and app. These tend to follow a more traditional form and on average fall out at the thirty minute mark. For a beginner who is looking for a consistent accompaniment to motivate their learning schedule, this is a great path to take.

**The Time-Crunch:** The dispute

retention model. For the practiced Daf Yomi veteran, these quick overviews of the Daf (page of Gemara) harmonize the vast amount of content while still making each individual Daf feel relevant to each person. Because of the shorter form, this category has grown in popularity with its ease of accessibility.

## STAFF WRITER PROFILES: TOVIYA SLAGER

BY RU BENHAMOU, FEATURES EDITOR, ON BEHALF OF THE YU OBSERVER

Each month, the *YU Observer* aims to highlight some of the YU undergraduate students who have written articles for us over the course of the semester. For the December 2021 edition, the *YU Observer* is highlighting Toviya Slager.

**Name:** Toviya Slager  
**College:** Yeshiva College  
**Major:** Mathematical-Economics and Psychology  
**Minor:** Finance  
**Year:** Fourth Year  
**Favorite part of being on (or back on) campus?** Nagel, there is no place better for a

quick snack.  
**What do you miss most about Zoom school?** I miss being able to take my classes anywhere. I did class at Joshua Tree National Park, Sequoia National Forest, and from a kayak.  
**Currently Reading:** “Nudge”, “Central Banking 101”, and “Gödel, Escher, Bach”  
**Currently watching:** Don’t watch very much, but would recommend “The 100”  
**Currently listening to:** Eitan Gedalya  
**Coke or Pepsi?** Be’er Mayim plain seltzer - extra carbonated  
**Android or Apple?** Android.  
 What kind of question is

that?  
**What’s a quote/thought/ or piece of advice you have for your fellow students?** Life is busy. Don’t forget to stay in touch with your friends and family.

See some of Toviya’s past articles here:  
<https://yuobserver.org/2021/11/gamestop-the-real-story/>  
<https://yuobserver.org/2021/08/complexities-of-investing-in-china/>  
<https://yuobserver.org/2021/08/can-the-fed-control-inflation/>



Photo Credit: Toviya Slager



# CLUB PROFILE: SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING CLUB

BY RU BENHAMOU,  
FEATURES EDITOR

to highlight one club available to the YU undergraduate community. For the December issue, the *YU Observer* is highlighting the Skiing and Snowboarding Club.

**Club Name:** Skiing and Snowboarding Club

**Heads:** Eli Saperstein, David Price, Nina Yurovsky, Leeor Savin

**Relevant Campus(es):** Beren, Wilf

**What is your club's mission statement?:**

To provide as many ski trips, events, and experiences that we can for as many students as possible.

**Why is this club important?**

YU is a place for people to get “the college experience” and do things that students who come from around the world from various (financial) backgrounds might not have had the opportunity to ski otherwise. This club is a tool to give the student body access to an expensive and exclusive New York experience along with the ability to unite, bond, and build a community over a fun winter sport.

**What was your pull to start the club?**

Skiing is an expensive sport. With the help of YU's resources, we could make skiing accessible for everyone. As an experienced skier, I was familiar with the group sales and discounts that are a part of the financial model for ski resorts and wanted to be able

to have access to those discounts. In addition, transportation is difficult and becomes cheaper when you go with a group as opposed to getting yourself there.

For many, the issue with going skiing is a financial one. This club is an opportunity to help everyone in YU participate in the sport I know and love, giving those who might not be familiar, access to the potential savings that going as a (student) group might have.

Another thing is that in my experience, while the cost is difficult even for those who can go, one of the barriers is not having people to go with. The hope I have is that students will be able to use our chat to arrange ski trips for themselves and build a chevra (community) by going with others, united by their common interest in skiing (not snowboarding) over winter breaks, the weekend, or during night seder.

Our club will be a forum where people can share the skiing related deals they see, whether it's a cheap lift ticket on Groupon to a beautiful set of skis on Ebay.

**What are some things your club is planning on doing?**

We are excited to be planning a ski trip (the first of many!) for the coming semester tentatively put for January 30, 2022 right after the midwinter break, so save the date! We are also hoping to be able to make YU related skiing/winter swag as well as running the annual YU snow tubing trip. Most importantly is of course making memes about the plight of skiers who have to deal with their

snowboard “friends.”

**What are some plans you have for this semester/future semesters?**

We are looking to organize a huge ski trip to Vermont or Colorado, and maybe have a shabbaton (snowboarders will be allowed). In addition to our ski trips and swag.

**What is your favorite OSU-provided food for club events?**

Snow-Cones and Ben & Jerry's

**How is your club adapting to being back on campus?**

We are a new club and excited to provide off campus events to help students ski in a post-Covid global warmed climate/environment.

**What is your advice to someone looking to get involved on campus?**

Talk to Baruch Lerman, write articles for the newspapers (contact the YU Observer @symarcus@mail.yu.edu) when people hear they will come over to “argue,” attend club events, stay after class to “talk” (argue) with students you disagreed with during class. But to all my fellow introverts, remember that it is the extroverts who need to learn to be less. Less



is more. Be friends with who you want, make niche group chats and go shopping with other introverts. If that fails, get adopted by your local orthodox extrovert (see beginning of answer).

**Anything else to say about your club:**

Join our Whatsapp chat: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/FtDjYz4jZS-BJmBf97RlacB> for updates!

Are you a YU undergraduate club head interested in seeing your club featured in a future edition? Email us at [theyuobserver@gmail.com](mailto:theyuobserver@gmail.com) with your club name and the names of the club heads!

## YUPAC

FROM PAGE 12

open-minded and open to discussion.

The event ended with a live Q&A session. Co-president Winokur began her question by first thanking Mr. Greenblatt and the Ambassador and saying, “We look forward to continuing the dialogue and hope to have many more YUPAC events.” Winokur then continued and asked about some of the backlash from some groups regarding the signing of the Accords. The Shaikh said that

when they signed the Accords, they were more surprised by the overwhelming support of the majority of the population and included that the dissenters were few and primarily from radical groups. The Shaikh ended the event with the message that the future of Abraham Accords is about building friendships and partnerships.

Presidents Winokur and Fried-

man shared their excitement about the success of the event, telling the *YU Observer*, “It was a great honor to bring this groundbreaking event to YU which celebrated the Abraham Accords and the new opportunities brought by it. The event was a tremendous success, with almost 100 students in attendance and over 2,000 people watching the livestream. It gives me special pride

that it was students that proposed this event and played a major role in its planning, showing that YU students can be at the forefront of change in the world.”

*Photo Credit: YUPAC's Instagram Story*



# ANOTHER MACCABEE MIRACLE: 50 STRAIGHT WINS

BY AVIOR HAZAN,  
FEATURES EDITOR

What a time to be a fan of the Yeshiva University Maccabees! Now reigning as the #1 ranked NCAA Division III men's basketball team in the country, the Macs also boast the longest active winning streak in all of college basketball with a blazing 50 consecutive wins.

After their 'slimmer than usual' victory of 93-86 versus New Jersey City University on December 15, 2021, the Macs extended their streak to an unprecedented 50 straight wins, which began in November 2019 with a 77-58 win against Caltech, according to yumacs.com. "What's crazy in my mind – is that they haven't lost since before COVID," says MacsLive segment producer Dovid Price (SSSB '24). "I have been stopped in the streets multiple times with people asking me if I went to YU," continued Price, "it's not just YU hock, or even Jewish hock, it's Heights hock, too." The excitement on cam-

pus is tangible, as the juggernaut Macs continue to prove themselves through all types of adversity.

The record-breaking #1 rank was released on November 28, 2021 by a website cited on the official ncaa.org website as d3hoops.com. The most recent ranking was released a day after the Macs dominated Medgar Evers College, with a final score of 104-59, on December 12, 2021.

Yeshiva University first broke the top 25 teams for men's bas-

ketball in January 2020, placing #24 ahead of Brandeis University. Ranked at #4 last season, the

October, the Macs rose to #2 in the national rankings, and finally #1 after eclipsing Randolph-Macon College (now ranked #2) as of December 12, 2021.

One springboard after another, the Macs continue to feed off of performances such as Ryan Turell's 51 point game, which had students calling him "Jewish Jordan." During the game, Turell shot 21-for-30 from the field, an astounding 70.0%, and an impressive 8-for-15 (53.3%) from 3-point range. For reference, the average 3 point completion percentage in the 2020-2021 NBA season was 39.2%. "Watching Ryan is extremely exciting. Whenever he's on the floor, he puts on a



Macs have been on an impressive streak, slowly but steadily establishing their command over the Skyline Conference. This past

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## COURSEVALET

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a student for students," said Botach. "We need a dynamic search on a modern site." Divided by campus and semester, CourseValet shows all of Yeshiva University's available courses. The platform allows students to easily add courses of their choice to their "Favorites" list, view professor ratings, and make forum posts completely free from any kind of censorship. The search function is easy to use, with more advanced search features available. Soon, within the next week or so, the platform will begin to "also show your schedule for you," rendering Coursicle and other external schedule-planning websites obsolete. It also conveniently helps students avoid accumulating countless RateMyProfessor tabs by integrating these ratings directly into the website, right by the respective course information. Users can submit their own ratings for

professors they've taken in the past, anonymously or otherwise, right in the same field as the other RateMyProfessor ratings. Furthermore, they can hold discussions and ask questions in the forum space, effectively replacing Yeshiva University: In the Know, Stern College: In the Know, and similar Facebook groups. CourseValet even has a page dedicated to prayer times, listing the Hebrew date and the prayer times for each of the three daily prayers at many of the minyanim available to Yeshiva University students.

This is a far cry from the tedious and frustrating system that Yeshiva University students formerly had to resign themselves to using. "As we all know, searching for courses through YU's website is extremely difficult and inefficient," said Baker. Saperstein offered his own testimony,

saying that "YU's own antiquated systems have caused me so many issues," and that CourseValet is an "incredible tool." He had "always had trouble using YU's website for registration... a chore that led to many meetings with academic advising." This time, he was able to plan his courses according to the requirements. "With a couple of clicks," said Saperstein, "I had every class on a professional-looking calendar." Baker is also thoroughly pleased with this new addition to the course-searching scene. "CourseValet is great," he said, "because it has improved searching, RateMyProfessor scores, comments, a schedule builder, and more."

With its streamlined features and smooth interface, there's no doubt that CourseValet is the future of course registration here at Yeshiva University. "I believe CourseValet.

com will change how students at YU sign up for courses," agreed Botach. He also believes that the forum will be a place where students can communicate, sharing notes and thoughts on courses. As he said in a forum post, all this is only "a small drop in the bucket" of what he has planned. He's been actively updating the platform thus far, continually trouble-shooting for bugs and errors, and he hopes to continue improving it, with any new features guaranteed to streamline the process even further. He is open to receiving feedback or suggestions for further improvements at oze@obotach.com. "CourseValet is an amazing site that will make your course search easier, connect you with other students, and more," said Botach, "so join today."

Photo Credit: Oze Botach



## MACCABEE

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show and is dominant on both ends of the floor” says Yehoshua Segal (YC ‘21), lead Play-By-Play announcer for MacsLive. “NBA? Who knows?! But given his trajectory and what his improvement has been from year to year, it wouldn’t surprise me

at all!”

On December 30, 2021 the Macs will encounter perhaps one of the biggest hurdles they have yet to face: #4 ranked Illinois Wesleyan University. The game is set to take place at 8:00pm in the Max

Stern Athletic Center, and it is bound to be a big one.

Photo Credit: Danielle Lane

## STUDENTS RESPOND TO THE QUESTION: IS YU A YESHIVA OR A UNIVERSITY?

BY AARON SHAYKEVICH,  
OPINION EDITOR

This month, the *YU Observer* sent out a survey collecting the thoughts of YU undergraduates regarding the question: is YU a Yeshiva or a University? A total of 187 students filled out this survey. Quotes were edited for grammar and punctuation. Excerpts of some quotes were taken for length and consistency.

If there’s one thing Yeshiva University is famous for, it is its dual identity. As its name implies, YU simultaneously contains characteristics of both a yeshiva (place of Torah study) and a secular university. This evokes a broader question: what exactly IS Yeshiva University? Is it more of a yeshiva, more of a university, or unequivocally both? This is a multifaceted question and one that requires much discussion. The purpose of this article is not to answer this question but rather to provide some insight into how students feel about YU as an institution, its identity, as well as their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs on what the school is doing correctly versus what may need to be changed.

At YU, undergraduate programming is spread across two separate campuses: Beren and Wilf. For the women on Beren, there is only one general Judaics program. All core religious and Hebrew classes are taken under the Rebecca Ivry Department of Jewish Studies, which also contains a separate track, called Mechina Pathways, for women to whom “Hebrew language and textual study” may be relatively new.

For the men on Wilf, there are several different religious learning programs to choose from. Men can join the James Striar School (JSS), the Isaac Breuer College (IBC), the Stone Beit Midrash Program (SBMP), or the Mazer Yeshiva Program (MYP). While the educational directive of JSS and IBC is more inclusive of Tanakh, philosophy, and Jewish history, the SBMP and YP programs on Wilf place a larger emphasis on the study of the Talmud and offer almost exclusively shiurim (Torah classes) in Gemara. The biggest difference, however, between the IBC and JSS programs compared to the MYP and SBMP tracks is the learning structure. IBC and JSS are both classroom-based with discrete courses taught in different subjects throughout the morning from different rebbeim or professors. SBMP and MYP on the other hand are restricted to a single Rabbi and focus more on a chavrusa (learning Torah in a pair) style of learning, which is then reviewed and expanded upon in shiur. The fact that YC offers both programs like JSS and IBC along with programs like SBMP and MYP suggests that YU itself is aware of the different needs of its students. YU recognizes that some are more likely to perceive YU as primarily a university or primarily a yeshiva

In response to the *YU Observer*’s survey sent out to students regarding this debate, the majority of students did agree upon one thing: finding meaning in their Judaic courses. For the Wilf campus respondents, 84.9% of students responded that they found meaning in their Judaics courses, while

15.1% responded that they found meaning sometimes. No Wilf students indicated that they found no meaning at all, suggesting a campus-wide appreciation for education in Judaic subjects. There was, however, still some critique for how Wilf handles its Judaic classes. One anonymous IBC student conveyed a feeling of disconnect between the teachers and the students’ needs and commented that “the Judaic classes are not guided towards the students as well as their religious futures. They are simply a stage for the teacher to preach with no regard to the students’ questions or understandings.” Many other students voiced their frustrations that their Gemara shiur does not count towards the Jewish studies requirements. Six students wrote some variations of the plea to “allow YP and BMP to fulfill Judaic requirements.”

For the Beren campus respondents, the responses were more diverse: 41.5% of Beren students said they found meaning in their Judaic courses, 43.6% said they did sometimes, and 9.6% said they didn’t find any meaning. The remaining 5.3% had other responses about finding meaning in their Judaic courses. The Beren students also had differing opinions on the Judaic courses offered. One anonymous second-year student expressed that she wanted for her Judaic classes to be worth “more credits and [that YU should not] combine them into one class on [my] transcript since [Beren campus students] have to attend three separate classes and want that to be acknowledged.” It should be noted that the policy for Judaic courses requirements has recently been modified and that this anonymous student is referring to

the old system. Others disagreed and asked for the classes to be “l’shma [for the sake of learning]” instead of classes having tests, assignments, and grades. Racheli Gottesman (SCW ‘24) expressed that “a seder/shiur structure is really lacking at Stern. This structure allows both relationships between students and teachers [and]. It’s really unfortunate that it isn’t an option.”

When asked outright, many students had opinions on whether YU is more of a Yeshiva or more of a University. 45.4% of students answered that YU is both a Yeshiva and University, 34.6% answered that YU is a University, and 13% answered that YU is a Yeshiva. The remaining students gave other responses. A few of these outlier responses highlighted that Beren students and Wilf students have different environments. “I think Yeshiva College is a Yeshiva and Stern is a University,” wrote Gila Linzer (SCW ‘24).

When asked for comments to explain their rationale, many diverse opinions arose. Aaron Singer (YC ‘22) wrote that “it seems that more people suffer through Judaic classes in order to get a degree than suffer through their secular classes in order to learn Torah. Therefore, YU is foremost a University, not a Yeshiva.” This opinion highlights that the question of whether YU is a Yeshiva or University is subjective to each student rather than an objective fact. The Jewish courses and

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# AN ALBUM REVIEW OF TAYLOR SWIFT'S RED (TAYLOR'S VERSION)

BY DANIT FORMAN

On November 12, 2021, after a much anticipated wait, Taylor Swift dropped her re-recorded album: Red (Taylor's Version). This album is the second release of her planned re-recordings, after Fearless (Taylor's Version) was dropped on April 9, 2021.

Since Swift first announced in 2019 that she would be re-recording all of her old music, many have characterized the power move as changing the standards of the music industry. The re-recordings are a direct result of Swift's music being sold to Scooter Braun, a popular music executive, without Swift's consent or ability to regain possession of her master tracks. Now Swift is re-releasing her previous albums in order to gain ownership of the entirety of her music, allowing Taylor's fans, or "Swifties," to continue to enjoy her music without the guilt of supporting Braun or the injustice that Swift experienced.

While the album includes classic hits from the original Red album such as "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" and "22", Swift added several new songs that have the same feel and sound as the original songs with some added modern elements. This blend gives the listener a sense of nostalgia combined with the excitement of

a new album. The songs demonstrate Swift's matured vocals and talent for lyric writing. Swift also brings a more modern experience to her listeners by featuring popular artists on some of the new tracks, including Phoebe Bridgers in "Nothing New" and Chris Stapleton in "I Bet You Think About Me." In addition to the previously unreleased songs, Swift also added her songs "Better Man" and "Babe," which were sold to other bands back in 2012. Now with her own vocals, Swift gives the listeners a whole new experience with these familiar songs.

The highlight of the album is Swift's extended, 10-minute version of the fan favorite song "All Too Well." Swift has been teasing "All Too Well (10 min version) (Taylor's Version) (From the Vault)" for a long time, with cryptic posts and a teaser trailer for a short film that accompanies the song. The release was well worth the wait. The track includes all the verses and bridge that fans have come to know and love, with the addition of new lyrics that bring a whole new dimension to the song.

In one of these new verses, Swift paints a scene of her waiting for her lover (allegedly Jake Gyllenhaal, according to fan speculation) on her 21st birthday, staring at the door, willing him to walk through. When fans heard this new verse

for the first time, they immediately connected it to one of Swift's original Red songs: "The Moment I Knew." On this track, Swift writes about her waiting for her lover to walk through the door at her birthday party. Although Swift doesn't specify that it is meant to be her 21st birthday, it is assumed that she is referring to the same moment that she writes about in "All Too Well." Prior to the new additions to "All Too Well," the song was completely separate from "The Moment I Knew," but now with the new lyrics it's clear that Swift intended these two songs to be related to each other. This is only one example of how Swift has revamped her album after almost ten years have

passed since its original release date.

Overall, the album is a perfect mix of Swift's country roots and the pop music that she does so well. It satisfies the listener's need for childhood reminiscence while bringing more crowd-pleasing hits to the music industry and leaves "Swifties" ready for her next re-recorded album to drop.



## SWEAT IT OUT NEAR STERN COLLEGE

BY JESSICA MAJOR

As a college student, it is easy to get overwhelmed, stressed, and consumed by school work. It is easy to get lost in a world full of early morning classes and late night studying, and one can feel fully removed from other life activities and stress relievers. I both believe and practice that exercise is an essential component of maintaining a student's sanity as it provides relaxation while incorporating another aspect of life that is not school.

While education is vital, looking

after one's mental and physical health is just as crucial, and the outlet of working out allows students to take their noses out of their books and improve their mental and physical health. Now that I hopefully convinced you, a Yeshiva University student, to incorporate exercise into your schedule, you are probably wondering: where do I begin? Where can I find a workout space that suits my independent needs and can ultimately help achieve my goals? Lucky for you, I am going to suggest a number of different workout classes all walking distance to and from Stern College.

Only one block away from the Brookdale dorm, there is a 305 Fitness Studio (<https://305fitness.com>) where working out feels like one big dance party. At 305, you are receiving all of the benefits of a full 45 minute cardio exercise class, without the thought "when is this going to be over?" Personally, as a dancer, I find 305 workout classes to be incredibly fun and entertaining. It is a judgement free zone where the staff are constantly hyping the class members up, emphasizing the importance of self confidence and expression. All of the teach-

ers are bursting with positive energy and they constantly express the importance of loving yourself and the people around you.

Another great NYC workout option is Soulcycle (<https://www.soul-cycle.com>) which is located near Stern College on West 27th Street, and is one of my all time favorites. Spinning for 45 minutes on a bike is not the only thing that you are signing up for. Soulcycle is a community based workout

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PAGE 21



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world  
you  
may be  
one  
person,  
but to  
one  
person  
you  
may be  
the  
world.”

-Dr. Seuss



## SWEAT IT OUT

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space where the staff and participants feel like one big family. I always find that everyone at Soulcycle is incredibly friendly and warm, making the workout a safe, enjoyable, and comfortable environment. Each Soulcycle instructor has their own flavor and each class has a different atmosphere, depending on the instructor's music taste. If you are obsessed with music like I am, the class playlist will totally make or break your workout. I think it takes a few tries to find an instructor that you truly connect to, but once you find that person, you will be hooked! One thing that is absolutely certain about a Soulcycle class is that you will always leave the studio dripping in sweat and feeling extremely satisfied with your workout.

A less dance based class is Barry's Bootcamp (<https://www.barrys.com>), an intensive workout that incorporates both cardio and conditioning. When you sign up for the class, you are given the option to either begin on the treadmill or on the floor. If you start on the treadmill, then the second half of your class will be focused on floor work, and vice versa. While on the treadmill, the instructor will give you guidance on how to maintain and up your speed, while also giving

you challenging incline numbers interspersed with walking breaks. The floor part of the workout incorporates some type of fast pace conditioning, mainly weight lifting, with a combination of standard floor workout exercises. People tend to find Barry's Bootcamp challenging for two main reasons: either they hate running, and/or because there is one instructor that tells both the people on the treadmill and the people on the floor what to do, if you aren't very focused on their directions, it is easy to get lost or confused.

The reason I enjoy Barry's Bootcamp is because it is a two in one workout where you are gaining a full body cardio class along with a weight training, conditioning session.

While the rush of a group class can be exhilarating and motivating, working out independently in a lo-

cal gym can be both relaxing and less time consuming. Attending a dual curriculum college means that we don't have as much free time as other students. I live in a building a few blocks from

them, because everyone is focused on their own independent workout. I would suggest going to a gym if you are someone who knows which equipment is most effective for you, and if you prefer to workout on your own or you can bring a buddy with you in order to increase motivation.

Overall, there are a number of different exercise classes and facilities that are aimed to help people pursue their workout goals and aspirations. My advice is to be open minded and to acknowledge that each place has their own benefits and downfalls; therefore, it is helpful to switch up your weekly routine and not be too rigid with your exercise choice. No one ever finishes a workout and feels a sense of regret, rather, you will experience a sense of accomplishment and pride. I believe that if a person, especially a college student, incorporates exercise into their busy schedules, it will ultimately

help reduce stress, perform other tasks with more ease, and improve mental and physical health.



school, and when I don't have the leisurely time to attend a workout class, I workout downstairs in my apartment's gym. There, I am not forced to listen to an instructor, rather, I have the freedom to choose my own path and workout routine. Additionally, at the gym a person is less likely to focus on the people around

## YESHIVA OR UNIVERSITY

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the Judaic core requirements may be considered a burden for some and a blessing for others. This sentiment was shared by another student who expressed, "Multiple factors go into it. Such as what morning program one is in, how seriously each student takes their *lemudei kodesh* [holy studies], and does the student view their morning program *shiur* or classes as a primary focus, or is it viewed as something that one is obligated to do because of the institution that he or she attends."

Others, however, felt that the matter is much more objective. An anonymous student (SCW '23) shared that "having transferred from a public college, I am both exasperated and amused by student objections to Stern's comprehensive Judaic Studies requirements... YU is nationally acclaimed for its unsurpassed Judaic Studies program. We are the only institution

of our kind, and we all had the option of bidding farewell to Judaic Studies upon graduating high school. Let us wear our choices with pride." This student strongly felt that Yeshiva University is not solely a University and that Judaic courses are an integral part of YU. Eli Schloss (SSSB '24) mentioned, "I believe that there are decisions made by the university which have ramifications on the Yeshiva, but the vice versa is not true." Schloss clearly expressed that YU can be split into a Yeshiva and University, but that the University part of YU is given priority.

Overall it seems that there is no true consensus between students regarding the question of whether Yeshiva University is more of the former or latter. It appears to some students that YU itself has an identity crisis. As Zachary Notkin (YC '24) wrote, "Yeshiva University has never known if Judaic studies syn-

thesize with secular studies or are independent." At the end of the day, however, the undergraduate students at YU all did indeed choose, for one reason or another, to attend YU. Therefore, most students can acknowledge something within YU that is unique in comparison to other colleges. Yeshiva University exists for students to experience the combination of Judaic classes and secular classes. This topic clearly requires more discussion between

peers, Rabbis, teachers, and faculty so that the YU community can try to visualize a clear future for YU.

Survey responses can be found at [YUObserver.org](http://YUObserver.org)





# LICORICE PIZZA REVIEW



BY ANDREW  
WARREN

Licorice Pizza is a new film directed by Paul Thomas Anderson (PTA). Set in early-nineteen-seventies Los Angeles (LA), it follows twenty-five-year-old Alana Kane, a photographer's assistant searching for a purpose. Everything changes when she meets Gary Valentine, a fifteen-year-old enterprising actor. A curious relationship develops between the two as they start businesses together, fall in and out of love, and discover what it is they truly value.

This wonderful film features two incredible breakout performances. Alana Haim (Alana) performs like a seasoned actress; it is hard to believe this is her first role. Like Julia Fox in *Uncut Gems*, you cannot look away when she's on the screen. She's funny when she needs to be; Her outbursts are entertaining as opposed to annoying. Her facial expressions are malleable, shifting from adoration to contempt whenever Gary says anything stupid. I can't wait to see her in her next movie.

The other new actor is Cooper Hoffman (Gary), son of the late Phillip Seymour Hoffman. This is a tricky role, balancing outward confidence with a subtle, but intense, self-doubt. For most of the film Gary projects swagger and bravado, but there are a few moments when he comes face-to-face with his own limitations and his facade drops. It's not always obvious but it's there if you notice it.

The supporting cast is great too, with performances from Skyla Gisondo, Bradley Cooper, Benny Safdie, the entire Haim family, John Michael Higgins, and more. The film also manages to juggle its tonal shifts with great skill. It's funny when Gary flirts with Alana, but incredibly suspenseful when he calls her to confirm that she has a new boyfriend. It's light when Gary and his friends make dirty gestures with gas cans, but nerve-wracking when their truck stalls in hilly LA.

It's a Paul Thomas Anderson film. That means the directing, the

writing, the soundtrack, is all top notch. The film's flaws lie mostly in its storytelling. The first hour focuses primarily on the relationship between Gary and Alana. However, at a certain point that aspect takes a back seat to the seventies Hollywood setting. The story becomes less serialized and more episodic. What was a romantic coming-of-age story is now a series of vignettes featuring real people from that time period. The actor William Holden shows up, along with the hairdresser and film producer, John Peters. The politician Joel Wachs makes a substantial appearance in the last act. The scenes with these characters feel quite indulgent as they don't fit it naturally with the rest of the film. The climax is weakened as it's too dependent on undeveloped storylines involving these real people. Had the director been more focused in his vision, it would have been a more cohesive movie.

However, *Licorice Pizza* isn't a movie you watch for the story;

you watch it for the atmosphere. Movies are emotional simulations. We enjoy movies because they make us feel things we don't get from our normal lives. *Licorice Pizza* made me feel joy, romance, excitement, and passion. I'll admit I thought it faltered in the middle, but I didn't want it to end. I'd give a 8/10.

However, I don't believe that every YU student will feel the same way, so allow me add the following conditions. If you've heard of the movie before and are waiting to see it, you will enjoy it. If you haven't heard of it, but you liked *Dazed and Confused*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, or *Boogie Nights*, then you will probably still enjoy it. If you haven't heard of those movies, *Licorice Pizza* probably isn't for you.

Also watch *Boogie Nights* now! What the hell is wrong with you? It's on Showtime.

**WANT TO WRITE FOR  
THE OBSERVER?**

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# PATIS BAKERY REVIEW

BY DANIELLE LANE,  
MANAGING EDITOR

Throw away your sourdough starter and put down your frozen cookie dough. The newest kosher bakery is taking the Upper East Side by storm. Patis Bakery opened their Upper East location only a few months ago but has already become the hot spot for fresh, delicious pastries, breads, and salads. From their unique sandwich offerings to their array of authentic French croissants, there is almost nothing on the Patis menu that disappoints.

After years of a void in high-end kosher bakeries in the Upper East Side community, Patis has stepped up and declared themselves the undisputed champions of kosher bread. My personal favorites are the s'mores croissants with homemade marshmallow toasted to perfection and the pastrami lox croissant sandwich which perfectly

balances sweet pickled onions, savory lox, and a light buttery croissant. The country white sourdough bread also did not disappoint.

Patis's wide ranging menu offers everything from perfectly brewed coffee to soups and salads to challah bread on Friday afternoon to many assorted pastries. Anyone can find something to enjoy on their extensive menu.

Their Upper East Side location is Patis Bakery's fifth location. Customers can also visit Patis at its flagship location in Lyndhurst (New Jersey), as well as in Avenue M (Brooklyn), Teaneck (New Jersey), and the Upper West Side.

Price range (\$1-\$16)



## THINGS TO DO IN NYC: ONE WORLD OBSERVATORY, CENTRAL PARK, HIGH LINE, AND MORE

BY RONI LEIDER,  
STAFF WRITER

There are countless things to experience in New York City, and here are just a few!

**One World Observatory**  
Located on Fulton street in Downtown Manhattan, the One World Observatory attracts people of all ages to see an incredible, breathtaking view of New York City from 102 stories up.

Where: 85 Fulton Street New York, NY 10007-0089

Price: from \$41.37

To find or more:  
[https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g60763-d8072300-Reviews-One\\_World\\_Observatory-New\\_York\\_City\\_New\\_York.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g60763-d8072300-Reviews-One_World_Observatory-New_York_City_New_York.html)

**Central Park**  
With free admission, Central Park is beautiful to walk around at all times of year. There is

extensive scenery within the park, which attracts visitors from around the world..

Where: Runs from 59th Street to 110th Street

Price: Free

To find out more: <https://www.central-parknyc.org>

**High Line**  
This elevated linear park is the perfect place to take a stroll. There are numerous vending options throughout the park, and the entire area is surrounded by New York City's towering skyscrapers.

Where: It runs from Gansevoort

Street to 34th Street on the West Side of Manhattan



To find out more: <https://www.thehighline.org>

Chelsea Market

After walking the highline, Chelsea market is a great place to grab a bite or to browse through unique stores and window shops.

Where: 75 9th Ave New York, NY 10011

Price: Free

To find out more: <https://www.chelseamarket.com>

Starbucks Reserve

With only 43 locations worldwide, the Starbucks Reserve provides coffee lovers with a delicious experience.

Where: 61 9th Ave New York, NY 10011

Price: Varies

To find out more: [https://www.starbucksreserve.com/en-us/locations/new-york?utm\\_](https://www.starbucksreserve.com/en-us/locations/new-york?utm_)





## SCDS'S RADIUM GIRLS ILLUMINATES THE STAGE

BY RIVKA SHAVELSON

After a year off stage due to COVID-19, Stern College Dramatics Society (SCDS) is back with their production of D.W. Gregory's *Radium Girls*.

Upon entering the theatre, the tension and excitement was palpable as I walked in to review their final dress rehearsal. Upon seeing Director Reuven Russell, I ask him what he is most looking forward to in returning to the theater. He answers with no hesitation: "Same things I'm always excited for, for taking the story from page to stage. For taking everyone's excitement, expressing the idea of the play, bringing it to the stage, and showing everyone what theater's all about."

SCDS's production of *Radium*

*Girls* takes us back about one hundred years to Orange, New Jersey, where a group of young women raise their voices and fight against the harm and injustice they have faced at the hands of the corporate world. We are introduced to the radium factory workers; young women, many of whom have quit school to bring more money to their families. Grace (Rachel Gilinski), Irene Rudolph (Baila Landada) and Kathryn Schaub (Leah Goykadosh) are three friends who sit for hours a day, painting dials on watches with radium paint. This paint has a luminous glow and the bright numbers on these watches aid soldiers in battle. It is for the war effort, they are told.

"Radium cures," they say. Celebrity Scientist Marie Curie

(played by Mikki Treitel), the Dr. Oz or Dr. Fauci of her day, tells the press that radium can remedy almost anything. Radium could be used to relieve joint pain, treat cancer, and is simply drunk as a health tonic to ensure vitality.

But then Irene mysteriously falls ill and dies. As more and more "radium girls" get sick, Grace and Katherine work to discover the cause of this strange plague. The play's suspense rises as viewers witness the reaction of the factory heads. Factory president Arthur Roeder (Elisheva Hirsch) and former factory president Dr. Von Sochocky (Amalya Teitelbaum) discuss the plight of their employees.

We normally expect characters

and themes in a story to be black and white, good or bad. The radium girls are innocent and the factory owners are evil. Right? Well, maybe not. The motives of many characters in the show are seemingly ambiguous. What is the real cause of the girls' illnesses? Does anyone know? This intentional lack of clarity extends to other characters as well. When Grace falls ill, we expect her mother (Sara Nava Weiss) to care only about her daughter's health, but to the audience's dismay, she seems more concerned about receiving financial compensation from the company for her daughter's ailment.

As the plot develops, the audience is drawn into the mystery of who is re-

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**Milkshakes**

with Elbow Room

**\$6.50**

**Jerusalem Café**

36<sup>th</sup> St. between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Ave





# A REFLECTION ON SPOTIFY WRAPPED 2021

BY CAYLA MUSCHEL,  
ARTS AND CULTURE EDITOR

A few months ago, the *YU Observer* staff shared our staff Spotify picks. As the year winds down, Spotify Wrapped comes out, providing a chance to look back on individual music tastes.

Every December, Spotify releases "Spotify Wrapped," a personalized analysis of a listener's streaming habits in the form of a social media story. The listener learns various analytics about how many minutes they spent listening to music this year, what artists they listened to most, which song would play in the background of their life as they hypothetically slay a dragon.

Spotify Wrapped is partly an acknowledgement of the incredible amount of data Spotify has collected, and partly a way for us to benefit and learn from the constant data collection. More than anything, it's an opportunity for us to look back in a uniquely 21st century way. Before this decade, it would have been a

tedious undertaking to record and analyze an individual's music taste over the course of a year. Now, it's almost like a journal, a path toward introspection.

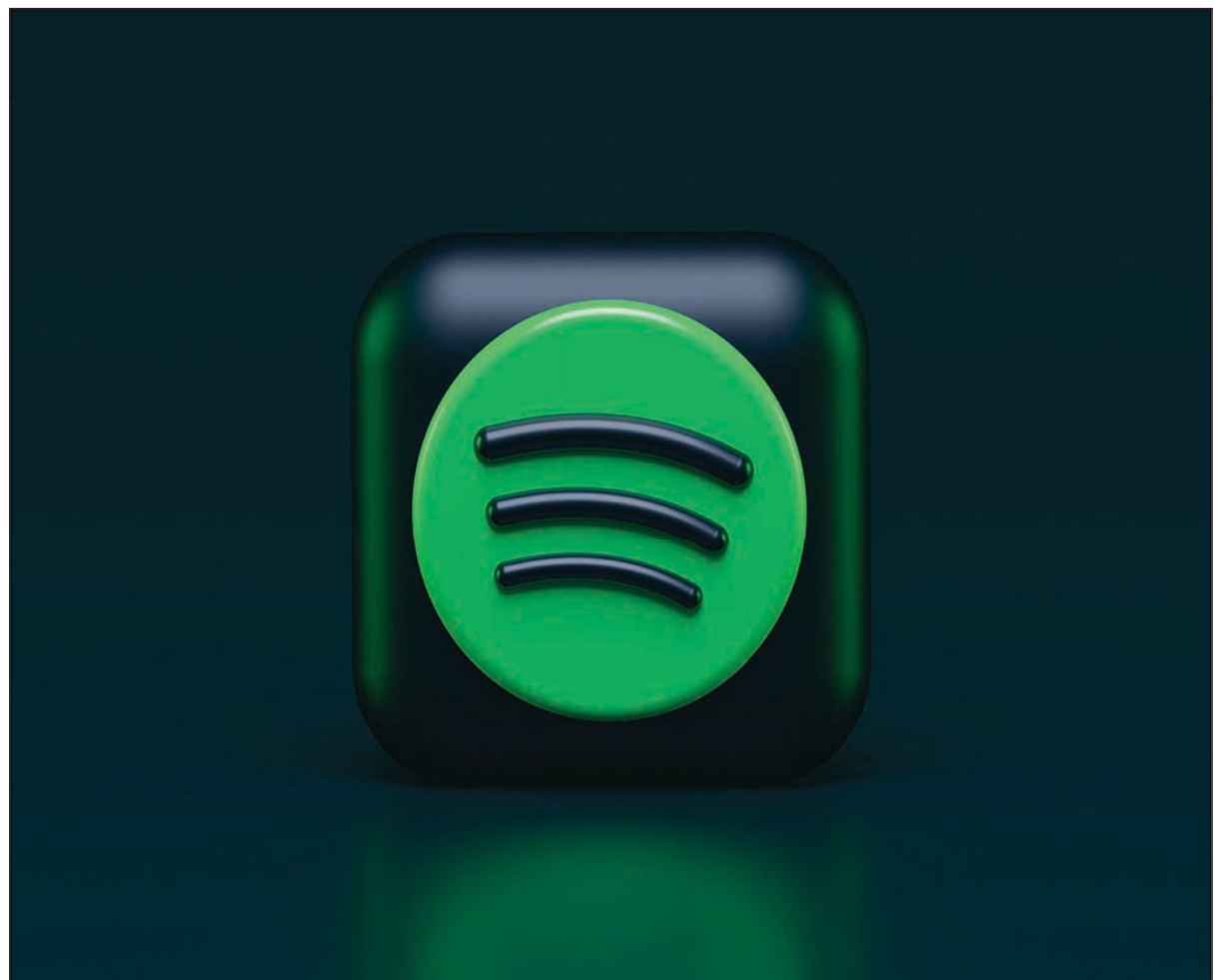
Music taste does say something about a person's personality; indeed, Spotify Wrapped can serve as an internal, yearly reflection.

What did you listen to most this year? Did it reflect your feelings?

Were you wistful? Giddy? Was this a year of determination? Was it one of sorrow? Did you cry this year? Did

you laugh?

What does your music this past year say about you?



## RADIUM GIRLS

### REVIEW

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sponsible for endangering the radium girls. While the plot is heavy and pulls at the heartstrings of viewers, there are also brief moments of comic relief which allow the audience to step back from the emotional intensity and give a chuckle.

I was especially taken by the acting skills of the cast members, which really drew me in to the psychological experience of their characters. In her role as Grace, actress Rachel Gilins-

ki's realistic facial expressions and emotions made me cry along with her and feel her pain. When the opening lights rose, actress Elisheva Hirsch transformed into Arthur Roeder. Her expressions and body language were so real and dynamic, it was hard for me to recognize this actress as the Stern College student that she is. Lastly, the vocal projection and clear articulation of Ms. Wiley (Baila Landa), drew me in and caused me to become highly invested in her character's struggles.

I am amazed at the degree to which Russel along with every cast and crew member has invested their time to craft and perfect this play. Coming off the heels of a nearly two year hiatus due to the pandemic, SCDS presents a true masterpiece that informs its viewers of an important and transformative point in history in a thrilling and engaging way. I applaud every participant of Radium Girls and urge anyone looking for a night of high

quality entertainment to go out and see the show

## THINGS TO DO

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id=go\_cmp-10167244537\_adg-107385648408\_ad-547159133437\_kwd-407413159100\_dev-c\_ext-\_prd-\_mca-\_sig-CjwKCAiA78aN-BhAlEiwA7B76pyuotVRV-j4bCJNav-acXdiB98ttNc-Bx68-uTD1kF1PP1OsMFNN-JGSxoC5P4QAvD\_BwE&utm\_source=google&utm\_term=starbucks%20reserve%20roastery%20nyc&utm\_cam-

paign=Brand-Starbucks-Roastery-NewYork-Exact&utm\_medium=cpc&utm\_matchtype=e&gclid=CjwKCAiA78aNbHAlEiwA7B76pyuotVRVj4bCJNav-acXdiB98ttNcBx68-uTD1kF1PP1OsMFNNJGSxoC5P4QAvD\_BwE

Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience

This art exhibited completely immerses the participant into a world full of the works of Van Gogh.

Where: 300 Vesey St 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10282

Price: Prices vary, student ticket \$21.50

To find out more: [https://feverup.com/m/96017?utm\\_source=affiliate&utm\\_medium=rakuten&utm\\_](https://feverup.com/m/96017?utm_source=affiliate&utm_medium=rakuten&utm_)

campaign=3825471\_TourScanner&utm\_content=10&utm\_term=uk\_network&ranMID=45370&ranEAID=LvZl-MufOFvU&ranSiteID=LvZlMufOFvU-iIHpamYDsZ6zYrW5dL-gl8w



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## STUDENT RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: AVIVA MARMER

BY LEIA RUBINSTEIN  
Science and Technology Editor

I had the opportunity to ask Aviva Marmer (SCW '23) some questions about her research on campus.

**Leia Rubinstein (LR): Hi Aviva, tell me a little bit about yourself.**

**Aviva Marmer (AM):** I am a senior majoring in biology, hoping to pursue a career in medicine.

**LR: How did you get involved in this research?**

**AM:** There are a lot of research opportunities with professors on campus. I had friends that had worked with Dr. Schuck before, so I reached out to her, and she immediately agreed to allow me to join her in her lab for this semester.

**LR: Who's lab do you work in, and what do you study?**

**AM:** I work in Dr. Schuck's lab, where we are studying the effects of microorganisms in the oral cavity in preventing cancer.

**LR: What did you hope to gain from this research experience?**

**AM:** When I started to research, I hoped to learn more about how to conduct and execute research.

*I work in Dr. Schuck's lab, where we are studying the effects of microorganisms in the oral cavity in preventing cancer.*

I learned how to develop, execute and analyze experiments. I learned valuable lab skills and techniques as well.

**LR: Are there any real-world applications of this research?**

**AM:** Results of this research may aid in the development of medicine and prevention methods

for cancer by providing valuable information regarding whether specific microorganisms prevent cancer in the oral cavity.

**LR: What role do you play in this lab?**

**AM:** I help Dr. Schuck construct and execute the experiments and analyze

data.

**LR: Is there anything that you encountered that was especially difficult during the research?**

**AM:** No, Dr. Schuck will help if anyone struggles to complete a given task.

**LR: Do you have any advice for**



**students who are interested in lab positions?**

**AM:** I would suggest that any student who is interested in getting involved in research on campus email their professors. They should be afraid to reach out, and professors love to have students join them in their labs and teach them valuable skills. Doing research with a professor allows you to develop a deeper connection with them.

**LR: Thank you so much Aviva! This was all so interesting.**

**AM:** My pleasure!

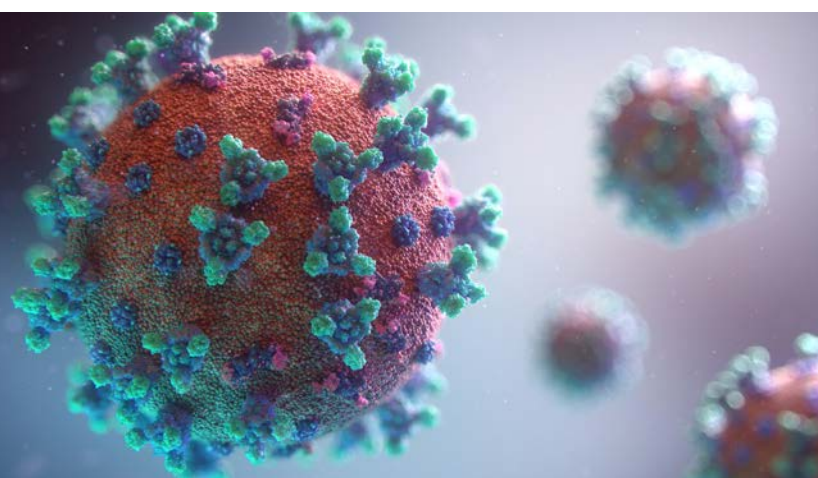
## THE BASICS OF COVID-19 VARIANTS

BY MIRA POSTELNEK

As the COVID-19 virus continues to mutate and spread, scientists around the world are continuously tracking the changes. They are working to understand how the variants spread, how they affect public health, and whether the current vaccines will be effective against these new variants. The following article is a compilation of research from various medical journals regarding recent COVID-19 variants and contains no personal opinions on the topic.

**How do variations occur?**

Variants in the virus occur due to a change in the genetic material called RNA (ribonucleic acid). The coronavirus contains a spike protein that enters the cells and then copies its RNA inside the infected cell. If there is an error during the RNA copying process, the RNA changes resulting in a mutation. Mutations in the virus' RNA give rise to various variants such as Delta and Omicron. Dr. Stuart Ray, vice chair of medicine for Data Integrity and Analytics at John Hopkins University, says,



“It is the nature of RNA viruses, such as the coronavirus, to evolve and change gradually. Geographic separation tends to result in genetically distinct variants.”

**How are these new variants/mutations found?**

A nasal sample is obtained from an infected patient, the swab is then processed through a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and the genetic material is extracted for testing. Next-generation sequencing (NGS) can identify new coronavirus strains without prior

*Mutations in the virus' RNA give rise to various variants such as Delta and Omicron.*

knowledge of the organisms. NGS will fragment the DNA into multiple pieces, add adapters, sequence the DNA fragments, and then reassemble them to form a genomic sequence. This method of sequencing can determine which variant is infecting the patient.

**How do these variants differ?**

A defining detail of the coronavirus is the spike protein which covers the exterior of the SARS-CoV-2. Researchers found that with differing

mutations, the spike protein is affected differently. Some of the new variants seem to bind more tightly to our cells, reports Dr. Bollinger, a professor of infectious diseases. Bollinger explains, “This appears to make some of these new strains ‘stickier’ due to changes in the spike protein and therefore more easily transmitted.” These characteristic changes are why some mutations are able to spread faster than others — a higher rate of contagion results in more people infected and more illness and death. Bollinger explains that since severely ill patients from a specific mutation will die due to its severity, the virus will then have less opportunity to continue infecting others. Alternatively, as observed in the case of the Delta strain, the faster-spreading variant will infect more people, leading to numerous hospitalizations, and, unfortunately, deaths.

There have been several identified variants of the SAR-Cov-2 virus since its first outbreak in 2020. Four variants have been reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be present in America. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently identified a new variant named Omicron. These variants

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## COVID VARIANTS

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spread more rapidly due to their mutations than the original coronavirus. The Delta variant was responsible for the surge of infections in India in December 2021. The Delta strain was identified in America in March 2021 and is responsible for the majority of cases in the United States now. This variant is believed to be twice as transmittable as the Alpha variant. Although fully vaccinated individuals can still be infected by the Delta variant, infection occurs less often with less severe symptoms than for unvaccinated individuals affected by the Delta variant.

Due to multiple mutations on the spike protein, the

Omicron variant is more transmissible than the Delta variant (based on preliminary evidence). CDC expects that “[a]nyone with Omicron infection can spread the virus to others, even if they are vaccinated or don’t have symptoms.”

There is not a lot of information known about the newest Omicron variant. Scientists speculate that Omicron could cause more severe illness or death than infection with other variants if it is able to infect fully vaccinated individuals. Omicron’s potential strength to infect even vaccinated individuals is due to the multiple mutations in its spike protein. The many changes on the spike protein seemingly affect the antibody’s ability to recognize and block the virus from causing infection. The CDC

still states the best way to reduce the risk of infection is through vaccines. All three vaccines provide high protection against the Delta and previous variants; however, there is no guarantee of effectiveness against new variants such as Omicron. Dr. Ray said regarding vaccines protecting against newer variants, “There is evidence from laboratory studies that some immune responses driven by current vaccines could be less effective against some of these variants. The immune response involves many components, including B cells that make antibodies and T cells that can react to infected cells. A reduction in one does not mean that the vaccines will not offer protection.” Just as the flu mutates annually, resulting

in modifying the vaccine to match, the vaccine development for coronavirus can be “accommodated and changed if necessary.”

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## SWOOP: THE PORTABLE MRI

BY NAOMI FRIED  
Staff Writer

If you have ever had a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan, you know how big the machine is. It will usually take up the whole room; the massive machine is seemingly unportable and very expensive. MRI may be used to diagnose or monitor treatment for a variety of conditions within the brain, chest, abdomen, and pelvis. Out of all imaging techniques, MRI images are among the most detailed images available in the medical industry today. Unlike other imaging techniques, they are completely safe and don’t give off any radiation.

When patients exhibit stroke symptoms, doctors have to decide as quickly as possible if the symptoms are caused by a clot that can be dissolved with blood thinners or if there is a bleed in the brain that has to be treated with surgery. An MRI scan can help determine this by detecting if there is bleeding in the brain. This method of diagnosis is very accurate but the main challenge is MRI availability. MRI machines are among the most expensive imaging devices and can cost anywhere between 1 to 3 million dollars for just one machine.

Additionally, there are high maintenance costs associated

with the machine, and the machines require great amounts of power to operate. The machines are very large and can’t be moved on a regular basis. All these factors contribute to the low availability of the machines and the long waiting times of patients. Due to these reasons, MRI scans are challenging to obtain during a medical emergency.

A new invention has made MRI more available: Swoop, the portable MRI imaging system created by Hyperfine.

The portable MRI machine is a new product that does not have the disadvantages that the traditional MRI machine has; it is small, portable, and inexpensive. Scans can be made

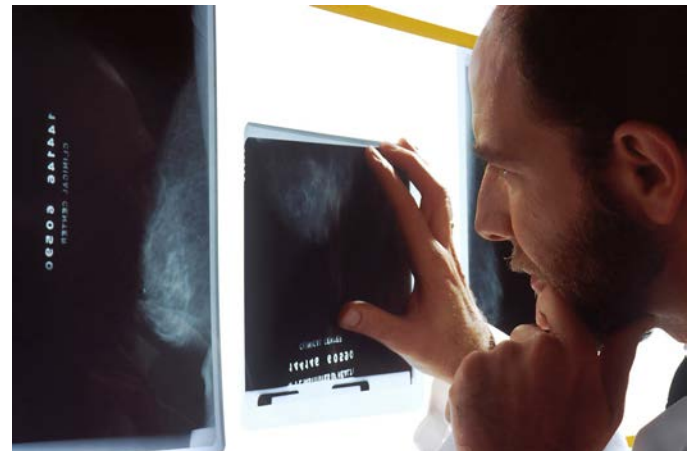
while a patient is in their bed. This can help alleviate some of the anxiety and fear associated with getting an MRI. Because it is an open machine, there is also less of a concern for people who suffer from claustrophobia. The machine can be transported to different areas so that people with less access to care can also benefit from it. Additionally, the low cost and high availability will allow for frequent monitoring over long term periods of chronic diseases. Until now, MRI was used mainly for diagnosis and monitor-

ing over long time intervals, and this new technology can be used more frequently for more rapid information.

What is different about portable MRI technology that allows for these benefits? To answer this, one needs to understand how an MRI machine works.

An MRI machine records images of the soft tissue by producing magnetic fields and radio waves

into its surroundings. Our body is mainly composed of water. Water molecules have one oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms. The hydrogen ions are also known as protons. Water is polar, and when introduced to a magnetic field, high-energy water molecules will start spinning in alignment with the magnetic field. Some water molecules are lower in energy and will not spin. This is where the radio frequency comes in: the radio frequency will give the low-energy water molecules the energy they



need to spin at the same speed as the rest of the water molecules. Once the radio frequency is introduced, all water molecules will spin along with the magnetic field. The radio frequency is then stopped. The low-energy water molecules will release the energy they absorbed and return to their original position. This return movement releases energy which can then be translated into an image that radiologists use to detect abnormalities.

Most MRI machines are closed machines, and they operate at a high magnetic field. The strength of a magnetic field is quantified in tesla (T) measurements. A strong (high) magnetic field is between 1.0T and 3.0T. There are also open MRI machines that have a lower magnetic field and operate at between 0.2-0.35T. The stronger the magnetic field, the higher the image

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## PORTABLE MRI FROM PAGE 27

quality, and the faster the image can be obtained. Closed MRI machines have a higher magnetic field, and their structure allows for less magnetic frequency to escape. Open MRI machines will allow more magnetic energy to escape, and, therefore, an image of lesser quality will be obtained.

The portable MRI machine operates as an open MRI machine. It has a low magnetic field, which could raise concerns regarding

the images quality. These concerns can be disproven by the promising results of the Yale New Haven study. The study, which was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, differentiated between patients with COVID-19, and patients without COVID-19. Out of the 30 patients who had neurological abnormalities detected by conventional MRIs, 29 of those patients' abnormal findings were detected by portable MRIs. This shows a 97% accuracy with portable MRI in comparison to conven-

tional MRI. The study also discusses the accuracy in COVID-19 patients. In patients with COVID-19, out of 20 patients who were scanned with conventional MRIs, eleven of these patients were also scanned with the portable MRI and the findings were found to be in agreement with conventional MRI studies. The study's findings were as follows: "This experience demonstrates that low-field, portable MRI can be deployed successfully into intensive care settings. This approach may hold promise for portable assessment of neu-

rological injury in other scenarios, including the emergency department, mobile stroke units, and resource-limited environments."

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## FORGOTTEN FEMALE SCIENTIST: HYPATIA OF ALEXANDRIA

BY ELIZABETH  
KERSHTEYN

Science has had many martyrs, the most prominent among them being Galileo Galilei and Giordano Bruno. However, few people know that both of these great men were preceded by a remarkable woman: Hypatia of Alexandria.

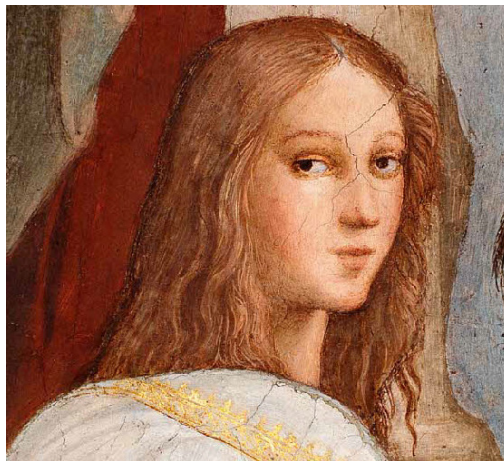
Hypatia was born in Alexandria in the Eastern Roman Empire in the 4th century. She was a prominent mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher

who lived during the rise of Christianity.

Hypatia was the daughter of a great mathematician and astronomer, Theon, who encouraged his daughter's love for science

and teaching. Hypatia taught students from all over the Mediterranean, lecturing on the works of Plato and Aristotle. Despite being a pagan herself, she was tolerant of Christians, and in fact, many of her students were Christians. Unfortunately, Hypatia lived during a time when Christianity and paganism were

fighting each other to be the official religion of the empire. Hypatia considered the destruction of Serapeum, the temple of Greco-Egyptian deity Serapis which



also housed the remnants of the great Library of Alexandria, one of the greatest tragedies.

Hypatia was a Neoplatonist, meaning she believed in a philosophy that held that happiness was attainable without an afterlife and that one should focus on meditation and studying while disregarding the distractions of the world. Because this view of Neoplatonism was not supported by the Christians at the time, Hypatia was attacked by a mob of Christian zealots. These zealots dragged her to the church where they stripped

her naked, tore her body to pieces, and set them on fire. This kind of punishment was reserved for Alexandria's vilest criminals.

Hypatia was a remarkable woman because she was a female scholar during times of great change and uncertainty. Even though her devotion to science brought her to death, Hypatia's work and legacy still lives on today. Hypatia is an example of how nothing can stray a person from their passions and beliefs.

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## FOLDING@HOME: BREAKTHROUGHS IN CORONAVIRUS RESEARCH DONE FROM YOUR HOME

BY LEORA  
KRONENBERG

When we look at pictures of how a protein looks on a molecular level, we are looking at snapshots of the protein. In reality, proteins move around in ways we can't fully see from a picture, so we rely on computer simulations to see how they fold and unfold.

Yet, building a computer simulation for a moving protein is very difficult,

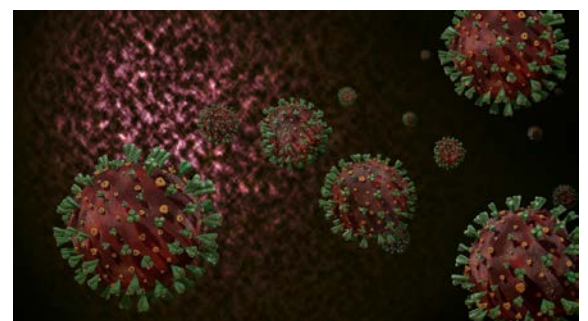
*Folding@home is a volunteer based organization that simulates folding and movements of protein*

since each part of the protein moves in such an individual way. It takes years to code one second of a protein's movement

because of its complexity. That's where Folding@home comes in. Based in Washington University School of Medicine, Folding@home is a volunteer

based organization that simulates folding and movements of protein. Anyone who signs up can download the software on their own computer

and code for a very tiny, specific part of the protein, which gets put together in the end to form the bigger picture. It's like the world's biggest supercomputer, making protein movements that would take hundreds of years to code possible to see on a computer screen today.



Folding@home started because the creators wanted

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## FOLDING@HOME

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to see the movements of the Ebola Virus. They were looking for cryptic pockets in the protein in order to kill it. Cryptic pockets are openings in a protein that

one could bind drugs to in order to denature it. Using the power of a volunteer base, they were able to find some, which has been useful in finding a cure. Folding@home has also been instrumen-

tal in SARS-COV-2 research. People want to help in times of crisis, so it's volunteer database is only growing. Folding@home is now the most powerful supercomputer in the world. Using that power, they made breakthroughs

in how the proteins on the coronavirus functions. For more information on their research and how to sign up to volunteer, go to their website

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# THE HAZARDS OF WORKING AT A GAS STATION

BY SIMA ZUCKER

Growing up in New Jersey, I took gas attendants for granted, especially once I learned how to drive. Most states in the country require self-service at gas stations, but I didn't know that until I moved to New York City. Most of us try to avoid the unpleasant fumes at gas stations by making our stops at gas stations as quick as possible. But did you ever wonder about the dangerous chemical exposures to gas station workers and those living near a fuel distribution center?

Analyzing chromosomal aberrations in cells is a universal method for determining genotoxic risks. When the frequency of chromosomal aberration in the cells of gas attendants was tested, there was a higher percentage of damaged DNA compared to the experimental group of gas attendants. In Barcelona, a study compared 50 gas-filling workers working at 11 different stations and a control group of 43 healthy university students. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare urinary metabolites of the subjects. There was no significant difference in the average number of micronuclei in the gas station workers. Higher levels of hippuric acid and phenol were found in the urine of gas station workers.

Benzene is carcinogenic and its main modes of human transmission are smoking and gasoline. A study was done in Brazil to test the levels of benzene that gas attendants are exposed to. The study compared the levels of benzene in 179 gas-filling attendants, 90 gas station convenience store workers and 100 office workers. The levels of benzene in the workers were measured by using UV detection to test the amount of trans,trans-Muconic Acid (ttMA) in the urine. The results showed that the convenience store workers had the highest levels of t,t-MA: an average of 0.221 mg/g creatinine. Next, the gas-filling attendants had the second to highest levels: an average of 0.195 mg/g creatinine. The average level of

the office workers control group was significantly lower than the rest: 0.126 mg/g creatinine. This experiment clearly shows the biological dangers for gas station workers.

In a study of 40 gas station attendants and a group of 40 control subjects, a variety of basal, differentiated, karyolytic, condensed chromatin, karyorrhectic, pyknotic, binucleated, micronucleated, and nuclear bud cells were analyzed. They found a significant increase in micronuclei and nuclear buds amongst the gas attendants. The results showed an increase in chromosomal instability, DNA damage, and cell-cycle abnormalities in the experimental group. This experiment supports the carcinogenic concerns for gas station attendants. Benzene causes breaks in the DNA strands, topoisomerase II, defects to the mitotic spindle and chromosomal translocations. With these defects, aneuploidy occurs more frequently and has the potential to cause leukemia.

To determine the correlation of male infertility with occupational exposure to petrol, diesel and kerosene, a study was carried out by exposing mice to varying concentrations of the given chemicals. In a sperm abnormality assay, the sperm were analyzed after 35 days of exposure. There was an increase in frequency of abnormally shaped sperm cells amongst the mice who were exposed to the poisonous leachate. Some of the interesting shapes included amorphous head, knobbed hook, double tail, and banana-shaped sperm. The low sperm quality indicates a low-quality DNA in the participating mice. Oddly shaped sperm heads are usually due to a mutagen, a change in the DNA. The most frequent sperm ab-

normality was the amorphous head which was strongly associated with petrol and kerosene. Regarding the sperm count, the mean sperm count per epididymis declined significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the negative control. Both the sperm quality and count increased in the mice, both contributing factors to lower levels of fertility. High exposure to the given chemicals increased the frequency of genetic damage in both somatic and germ cells. Benzene exposure affects the levels of testosterone in the blood, which can lead to male hormonal imbalance and infertility.

Sister chromatid exchanges, DNA cross linking agents, DNA adduct formations, and impairment of DNA repair mechanisms are different types of DNA damage caused by the potent chemical, benzene. The DNA of two female Brazilian gas attendants who had experienced benzene poisoning was studied.

Only 3 pairs of chromosomes were studied: 1, 2, and 4. Complex chromosomal rearrangements (CCR) were identified with fluorescence in situ hybridization. For example, it showed chromosome 2 was slightly folded over. A decrease of natural killer cells was found with a mutant gene CD16 expression. When a person does not have enough natural killer cells, the body doesn't detect viruses and illnesses as efficiently; the immune system is weakened. Additionally, excessive exposure to benzene caused early pregnancy loss in both women. More research has shown that the chromosomal abnormalities caused by benzene negatively affect one's ability to produce healthy children.

When looking for a more efficient source of fuel, it was proposed that methanol should be used as an alternative method of fuel. They performed an experiment to determine the genotoxic effects of methanol. Instead of ethanol alone, the gas attendants were exposed to a combination of fuel: 30% methanol, 60% ethanol, and 7% gasoline. An interesting result was the apparent coloration between the wives of gas attendants having miscarriages. The scientists suggested that the methanol caused damage to the germ cells.

Mitochondrial DNA lacks protec-

tive histones and does not repair as efficiently as nuclear DNA.

The relative mitochondrial DNA copy number (MtDNAcn) was studied in an experimental group [gas station workers] and a control group [unexposed]. It was observed that the gas station workers had a significantly higher mean concentration (0.74) in comparison to the control group (0.67). This study shows that mitochondrial DNA is more susceptible to mutations than nuclear DNA. The mitochondrial DNA in the sperm does not enter the egg. All the mitochondrial DNA in a fetus is exclusively from the egg. Therefore, abnormalities in the female mitochondrial DNA can negatively affect female fertility.

More mutations caused by benzene and other potent chemicals in fuel are continuously being discovered as genetic research becomes more accessible. For all the mutations that are known, there are so many more that are not yet discovered. When occupational exposure of a specific chemical is confirmed to cause cancers, infertility or any other dangers, government regulations are put in place to limit hazards. However, government regulations don't protect you completely; just like we do not know all the dangers, neither does the government.

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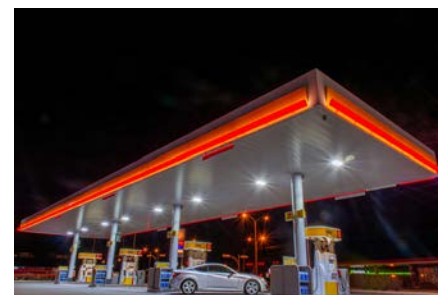
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## BUSINESS

## 3 STOCK HIGHLIGHT: DECEMBER 2021 EDITION

BY JAKE SHECKTER,  
Business Editor

Each month's edition of the YU Observer this year will include a "3-Stock Highlight" on a few stocks that have been in the news lately, have fascinating stories, or provide for an interesting read. On behalf of the YU Observer, we'd like to remind everyone that these stock picks are for educational purposes only and

are not to be taken as financial advice or used for investing any real cash. This month, we will be highlighting

Apple Inc. (AAPL), Coinbase Global Inc. (COIN), and Rivian Automotive Inc. (RIVN).

Apple Inc. (AAPL)

Even if you aren't familiar with the stock market world, chances are you still have an Apple product in your pocket right now, that is if it's not in your hand reading this article on the YU Observer website. This helps explain the fact that Apple Inc. is currently approaching a \$3 Trillion dollar market capitalization. If (most likely when) Apple reaches this incredible benchmark, shares of Apple's stock would hit around \$182 each, and Apple will once again enter historic territory. This month, analysts from Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan, and Evercore ISI have increased their price targets on the stock to \$200.

There are a few reasons for the raised price target: optimistic views on Apple's newest iPhone, rumors regarding upcoming products including an Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR & VR) headset, and of course, Apple's superstar ability to attract users and keep them close with sticky products. One of the major "sticky factors" Apple uses to hold on to its customers is pretty straightforward: App Store Apps. If you own an iPhone, chances are you're going to download or purchase a ton of apps, and when it's time to buy a new phone, you'll buy another iPhone to keep those apps. The same type of idea may apply to Apple's VR/AR headset, that is if they can incorporate some

third-party developer support we already love on our iPhones. What do you do when you've already become the company with the largest market cap? You find new services to monetize to become even bigger.

For those who enjoy looking into stocks' fundamentals (like me), there is a lot to like about Apple. Shares of the stock have gained nearly 19% over the last 30 days, annihilating the S&P 500's 0.3% gain over the same time period.

*This month, we will be highlighting Apple Inc. (AAPL), Coinbase Global Inc. (COIN), and Rivian Automotive Inc. (RIVN).*

With such a drastic spike in share prices, many investors may feel like they've missed the boat, but this stock definitely isn't one to shrug off so easily. Looking at Apple's most recent earnings report, the tech giant has shown off incredible revenue and earnings per share growth. Revenue during the period climbed 29% year over year to \$83.4 billion, and earnings per share increased from \$0.73 in the period a year ago to \$1.24. Additionally, Apple boasted record revenue in every one of its geographic and product segments. What makes this outstanding performance even more impressive is the current supply-constrained operating environment. Apple's management has stated that revenue would have been nearly \$6 billion higher during the recent period if it wasn't for silicon shortages and COVID-related interferences in manufacturing.

The shareholder-friendly ways that Apple is deploying its cash position of \$66 billion should also be noted. Apple gave back roughly \$24 billion to its shareholders during the fourth fiscal quarter, \$3.6 billion of this amount going towards dividends and \$20 billion to open-market purchases of stock. By repurchasing its own shares, Apple reduces its total share count and therefore increases the stake of each share in the business.

Coinbase Global Inc. (COIN)

If you can stomach the major swings running rampant throughout the market these days, specifically with regards to the cryptocurrency industry, you may already be a fan of this stock. For Coinbase Global Inc., volatility has been the name of the game. Second to



COVID-19 and the pandemic, there has been perhaps no other topic receiving as much attention as cryptocurrencies in 2021. With opinions circulating that cryptocurrencies may have the potential to disrupt the very concept of money itself, along with the seemingly endless stream of new industries and profit opportunities, crypto has shaken up the financial world.

With regards to obtaining exposure to the cryptocurrency industry, Coinbase comes to the mind of many investors as a pick-and-shovel investment source. It is important to note, however, that cryptocurrencies are mainly treated as assets with real-world applications still in the early stages and speculation driving most of the activity today. Let's break down its activity. Coinbase generates the large majority of its revenue from transaction fees (88% in the most recent quarter). Therefore, Coinbase's performance heavily depends on the volatility of the crypto market. Consequently, as cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin rise in value, investors become more inclined to trade. This predicament tends to make it extremely difficult to predict the financial results for the next quarter or year.

On the bright side, assets on Coinbase's platform now total roughly \$255 billion. While the number of users making transactions monthly was down in the third quarter from the last quarter to 7.4 million, they are up 252% year over year. Coinbase now has around 73 million users. As rough as the ride may be for this blooming market and its respective investors, they have shown off an EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) margin of 50%.

Rivian Automotive Inc. (RIVN)

Over the last couple of years, Electric Vehicles (EVs) and autonomous vehicles have been the

subject of news conversation and speculation with valuations soaring left and right. It's plain to see that the EV manufacturer Tesla (TSLA) has been the highlight of the EV market throughout the pandemic, also factoring into making CEO Elon Musk not only the richest man on the planet a few times, but also Times Magazine's person of the year. However, Tesla has not been the only EV company to spread throughout the news publications recently. Rivian Automotive Inc. (RIVN) recently went public on the stock market via an IPO (initial public offering), although they are technically still in the R&D (research and development) stage and are only beginning to ramp up production. Starting off their production are the R1T and R1S models, an electric pickup truck and electric sport utility vehicle respectively.

But what really put Rivian on the map was the (2019) deal with Amazon (AMZN), in which the massive delivery company said they would purchase 100,000 electric delivery vehicles from Rivian, making this the largest order of electric delivery vehicles ever. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos stated (at the time) that while prototypes for the delivery EV will be on our roads next year (2020), they expect all 100,000 to be deployed by 2024. Amazon's purchase comes as a part of its plan to convert its delivery fleet to 100% renewable energy by 2030 (with 40% of its fleet already running on renewable energy currently). Additionally, Rivian has boasted some other services including insurance for its vehicles, a subscription to its charging network, and an on-demand servicing program where a Rivian service team will travel to you for EV-related issues. For the EV market, the future is just beginning, and with new additions to the industry coming out consistently, there's a lot to look forward to.

If you would like to learn more about the stock market and its components, you may want to look into the Yeshiva University Stock Exchange (YUSE) Club. Learn more about the YUSE at Yusegroup.weebly.com or on Instagram at @Yusegroup.



## BUSINESS BASICS: FINANCES

BY AMALYA TEITELBAUM,  
Business Editor & Manager

There is a popular saying that money equals power. When it comes to businesses and their finances, however, this phrase is not just some overused cliché.

One of the most crucial parts of creating, starting, and maintaining a business is managing the owner's finances. Business finance, commonly referred to as corporate finance, is the function responsible for identifying assets and liabilities, allocating resources, understanding a company's debt and equity, and reviewing economic opportunities amongst other elements. When it comes to corporate finance there are several parts that are critical for businesses of any size or stature.

Included in the concept of business corporate finance are three basic financial reports. Firstly, there is an Income/Profit and Loss Statement. This statement shows the company's taxed income over a specific time period. The second type of financial report is called a Cash

Flow Statement, which shows the flow of cash throughout the business and what available cash there is for making business decisions such as adding employees or planning major purchases. The third type of financial report is called a Balance Sheet, which organizes all of a business's assets and liabilities.

In order for owners to create

*One of the most crucial parts of creating, starting, and maintaining a business is managing the owner's finances.*

these financial statements, they must have an understanding of basic business formulas and software. There are several different types of common business financial formulas including the net present value formula, payback period formula, and the return on investments formula. The net present value (NPV) is the difference between the present value of cash inflows and the present value of cash outflows over a period of time. Simply put,

the NPV estimates future cash flows (FCF) and discounts them back to today's prices. The payback period formula determines the time it would take a business to recover an investment. This formula is a basic calculation that divides the initial capital by the number of months the company will take to replenish this



amount. The return on investments (ROI) formula measures the probability of an investment gain. It utilizes a ratio that compares the gain or loss from an investment relative to its cost. These formulas assist owners in comparing the cost and potential profit from each business decision the company makes.

Companies can choose to install software to assist with the analysis created based on these formulas, which will allow for quicker results on a larger scale. This software may also help an owner or company keep track of day-to-day expenses,

assist in creating general reports, and let owners know when payments are due and/or revenue is expected. While they may be helpful, business owners certainly should not rely on financial formulas and software alone when making financial decisions. It is essential that businesses utilize their finances in the most efficient way to facilitate company growth. They should use their own business experiences as well. It is essential for owners to create an analysis of themselves, their colleagues, and the current economic situation, in order to establish a more well-rounded business analysis.

## EXCHANGES, INDICES, AND ETFs

BY ELI LEVI,  
Business Editor

Exchanges, Indices, and exchange-traded funds (ETF) are all crucial aspects of understanding the trading market.

When businesses first go public or sell a part of their company to raise capital, it is called an initial public offering (IPO). Initially, raising money was the main reason for companies to go public. Due to an abundance of private equity and venture capital firms nowadays, however, most companies do not need to go public to raise money. Rather, many companies go public nowadays so that the founders and major shareholders

of the company can sell their shares of the company and receive profit. Stock exchanges serve another function in that they are a centralized place to buy and sell stock in a market regulated by the Securities and

Exchange Commission (SEC).

Stock exchanges function as a place to exchange stocks for money or vice versa in a public manner. There are many different stock exchanges all over the world. The two major United States exchanges are the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (Nasdaq) and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). These exchanges are open to trade the listed stocks and indices from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm on Monday to Friday.

Indices mimic a market or set of companies within a market and are a great mode of investing for the passive investor. Passive investing in this case would mean

*Knowing some of the basics about exchanges, indices, and ETFs is a step towards financial independence.*

using a buy-and-hold strategy, which involves buying and holding an index, stock, bond, etc. for a long period of time and then selling after the gains have compounded. There are three major indices: the S&P 500 (Standard and Poors), Dow Jones Industri-

al Average (DJIA), and the Nasdaq 100 Composite. The S&P 500 tracks the top 500 public U.S. companies by market capitalization. Market capitalization, commonly referred to as market cap, is the total value of all of the company's shares of stock. There are certain criteria other than the market cap that are necessary for inclusion in the S&P 500. One example is that any company that is to be included in the S&P 500 has to have been profitable in its most recent quarter and the sum of its trailing four consecutive quarters. A recent example of a company that had a large market cap but did not fit this criterion was Tesla. Tesla was not profitable until last year, finally making it eligible to be added to the S&P 500. The Dow Jones Industrial Average tracks 30 public companies in the U.S., picked by the Wall Street Journal and heavily weighted in industrial-based stocks as opposed to technology-based stocks. The Nasdaq 100 Composite is composed of the top 100 public US companies by market cap, excluding stocks in the financial sector such as banks,



insurance companies, and real estate brokers. Other indices include the Russel 2000, Barron's 400, MSCI China, and MSCI Japan.

One method of purchasing indices is through an EFT. ETFs are comprised of and track multiple different stocks, meaning the ETF owns shares in multiple different companies. An example of an ETF is the Standard and Poor's Depository Receipt, which tracks the S&P 500 index, which enables them to own shares in those 500 companies. There are also actively traded ETFs which not only buy and hold individual companies but also trade multiple different stocks on a daily basis. Actively managed ETFs usually follow a specific strategy of investing and are bought and sold based on that strategy.

Understanding how to invest is integral to building wealth over time. Knowing some of the basics about exchanges, indices, and ETFs is a step towards financial independence.



# HOW NFTS WILL DISRUPT THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

BY JASON LEVINE

Record labels have long been criticized as manipulative for their treatment of young musicians, often offering flashy upfront payments to distract the artist from the lopsided deal they are usually signing. In 2019, the Taylor Swift masters controversy brought this issue to the headlines, and artists like Russ and Young Dolph received attention due to their independent come-ups. While there is little incentive for the record labels to change their contract structure, non-fungible tokens (NFT) may offer a new way for artists to finance their career advancement and earn a living.

First, let's understand how an average record deal works. A label provides an initial signing bonus and fronts the money for recording and marketing. They usually give the artist between 10% and 25% of the revenue from album sales and streams, called a royalty payment. However, these royalties must pay back the label for the money provided upfront before it reaches the artist's pocket. This balance also rolls over to other projects in multi-album deals. In return, the label gets the remainder of play revenues, often the right to demand more projects in future years, and full rights to the master recordings, or "masters".

Ownership of masters is the most controversial aspect of the contract. The owner of a master recording has full rights to sell, license, and reproduce the music. The owner also has the right to prevent others from using it, including the original artist. For example, when Scooter Braun purchased Taylor Swift's masters

from her former label, he prevented her from using the material at the American Music Awards and in her Netflix Documentary. Swift lacked this right despite being the performer and songwriter of all her music. Since this story was released, other artists have revealed similar problems, and the public has repeatedly spoken out against record labels' behavior.

So, what is an NFT, and how can they provide new artists another avenue to raise capital? An NFT is a unique, digital asset with proof of ownership stored in a public digital ledger. NFTs offer artists the opportunity to crowdfund their careers while retaining ownership of their music and rewarding early supporters.

Here is how new artists with small followings can independently fund their careers: artists can release a

*NFTs offer artists the opportunity to crowdfund their careers while retaining ownership of their music and rewarding early supporters.*

limited number of NFT collectibles to their fanbase for \$10-20 each. This collectible could include album artwork, a copy of the album, or a small royalty. By selling 10,000 of these collectibles, six figures can be quickly raised to invest in recording and marketing. There is no need to make connections, negotiate contracts, or sell your masters. Instead, the fans become the record label, and the artists retain all their rights.

Furthermore, artist-to-fan distribution strengthens fan support. Instead of streaming on Spotify or buying a concert ticket from Live Nation, one can purchase a song or concert ticket directly from their

favorite artist. The artist can also capitalize on this bond by including access tokens in a few random NFTs. These tokens could grant access to a private Discord

chat with the artist, VIP concert tickets, or a meet-and-greet. This offers an additional incentive for fans to invest and would generate a lucrative secondary market.

Now, why would an artist care about secondary market sales? One of the most valuable aspects of NFT technology is the ability to include a royalty clause in the NFT code. This means an artist

can specify that they will receive a specific percentage of all revenue from the secondary market sales of their collection. Since the NFTs cannot be counter-

feited and royalty payments are forced by a public computer code, the ability to generate value as an NFT creator is much higher than the alternative of physical goods.

Even for those without access tokens, the value of original NFT collections will presumably rise, like any collectible, when an artist reaches celebrity status. This generates value for the artist and their early supporters. Buyers of the first collection will own valuable collectibles, and the artists will earn royalties when they are sold. Record labels thrive by finding the next big artist early, but now, this role is transferred to fans. NFTs



incentivize music consumers to find new artists to invest in and promote. Since the investors are also consumers, the NFT sale is a form of marketing itself.

However, there are some potential issues. NFTs may eventually become the perfect solution, but the technology is new and still has much to prove. Some NFTs provide exclusive access, but today, most are nothing more than an image or song that anyone can access. Therefore, they only offer virtual bragging rights and are often bought by wealthy enthusiasts. One could argue that many people spend time and money earning virtual bragging rights such as Fortnite 'skins' or MyCAREER upgrades in the NBA 2K video games. However, it is difficult to separate the signal from the noise during the blockchain revolution of the past few years.

As the music business is publicly disparaged and the blockchain industry continues to flourish, we are in the midst of a perfect storm for industry disruption. NFTs have serious potential to change how music careers are started and how musicians are paid. The increasing number of functions that NFT technology provides make NFTs the best alternative to traditional music contracts and may eventually render them obsolete.

## COMPANY DEEP DIVE: ALIBABA'S ORIGINS

BY ELI LEVI,  
Business Editor

Alibaba was founded in 1997 by Jack Ma. Earlier that year, Jerry Yang, founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Yahoo was visiting China, when Ma was selected to be Yang's tour guide. Meeting Yang, one of the most brilliant minds of his age, influenced Ma's understanding of the internet. Shortly after Yang's visit,

Ma founded Alibaba with seventeen of his friends in a now-famous apartment in Hangzhou, China.

Alibaba began as a bulletin board for businesses with a built-in chat capability between buyers and businesses. This eventually developed into one of the largest e-commerce platforms in the world. Joe Tsai, who was working in Hong Kong for Yahoo and receiving a \$700,000 annual salary, was so convinced of

Alibaba's success that he left Yahoo to go work for Jack Ma at Alibaba. Tsai assumed the positions of Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for a salary of \$600 a year.

Alibaba's success continued in 1999 when Goldman Sachs, arguably the most prestigious investment bank, made the first investment in Alibaba. Originally, Shirley Lin, the head of

Goldman's investing group in China, wanted to

invest \$5 million for 50% of Alibaba, but Goldman headquarters thought it was too much for a seed round investment. Instead, they used the same valuation metric



but only invested \$3.3 million for 33% of Alibaba. Around the same time Masayoshi Son, founder of Softbank, invested \$20

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## ALIBABA

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million for a 20% stake in Alibaba. Now that Alibaba was flush with cash, the company hired John Wu away from Yahoo to be Alibaba's Chief Technology Officer (CTO). Alibaba continued to expand its services and became a dominant player in China.

Always looking for more ways to grow, Ma formed a team in 2003 to create a new platform called Taobao to compete with eBay. Ma brought the team back to the original apartment in Hangzhou where he had founded Alibaba. Taobao was a secret project known only to Ma and the team. While the team was cre-

ating Taobao, they needed a way to test the platform, but since it was a secret project they could not use any typical public methods. Instead, Ma ordered everyone to find four things to sell on the platform. By transacting

being a threat to Alibaba as they did not yet know that Taobao was a subsidiary of Alibaba. Finally, Ma announced that Taobao was, in fact, owned by Alibaba.

*Alibaba began as a bulletin board for businesses with a built-in chat capability between buyers and businesses. This eventually developed into one of the largest e-commerce platforms in the world.*

with each other the team tested Taobao. Slowly the team leaked the existence of Taobao (although not that it was a subsidiary of Alibaba), and the platform began to grow rapidly. Some employees at Alibaba expressed their concern about Taobao

because of this early success, eBay moved its management team to China to squash the new competition. Concerned that eBay would beat out Taobao, Goldman sold its shares of Alibaba for \$22 million. If Goldman had held those shares until the

This announcement started a war with eBay. Early on Taobao performed well and

present day, the shares would be worth more than Goldman's market cap of \$127 billion. Alibaba needed more capital to compete with eBay so Yahoo invested \$1 billion for 40% of Alibaba. Shortly after Yahoo's investment, eBay in China collapsed.

Later, Alibaba had a \$25 billion initial public offering (IPO) in 2014 the largest IPO to date. Jack Ma and Alibaba have a fascinating history and there is only so much I can include here. Jack Ma, despite not being great at math and buying his first computer at age 33, managed to found the most successful company China has ever seen. Never be scared to dream big.

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# Yeshiva University UNDERGRADUATES can take courses at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies.

Classes are open to students either within the BA/MA Program or as upper-class undergraduates taking graduate courses with permission.

## CLASS SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2022

### MONDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Aaron Koller**

Ancient Egypt and the Bible

**4:50 P.M.**

**David Berger**

The History and Nature of Anti-Semitism

**NEW COURSE**

**6:50 P.M.**

**Josh Zimmerman**

From Catastrophe to Renewal: Polish Jewry since 1939

**Ephraim Kanarfogel**

Readings in Medieval Talmudic Commentaries and Halakhic Compendia (tractate 'Avodah Zarah)

**NEW COURSE**

### TUESDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**JJ Schachter**

History, Memory, and the Commemoration of Catastrophe: From the Destruction of the Temples through the Holocaust

**NEW COURSE**

**4:50 P.M.**

**Jeffrey Gurock**

American Jewish History 1881-1967

**Ari Mermelstein**

Introduction to Biblical Studies

**6:50 P.M.**

**Mordechai Cohen**

Kabbalistic vs. Philosophical Exegesis

**Ephraim Kanarfogel**

Introduction to the Literature of the Rishonim

### WEDNESDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Shalom Holtz**

Book of Jeremiah

**4:50 P.M.**

**Jess Olson**

German Jewish Intellectual History

**6:50 P.M.**

**Josh Karlip**

In the Land of Atheism: Rabbinic Thought and Writing in the Soviet Union

**NEW COURSE**

**Daniel Rynhold**

Survey of Modern Jewish Philosophy: Evil & Suffering

### THURSDAY

**2:50 P.M.**

**Shira Weiss**

Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought

**Joseph Angel**

Rabbinic Aramaic of Eretz Yisrael

**NEW COURSE**

**4:50 P.M.**

**Steven Fine**

Jewish Art & Visual Culture

**Richard Hidary**

Topics in Aggadah: Talmudic Stories

**6:50 P.M.**

**Ronnie Perelis**

Varieties of Jewish Autobiography

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