



Gratz Insider, May 2017 - Story Continuation

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## Faculty Updates

Prof. Joseph Davis will be speaking at [Lower Merion Synagogue](#) for Shavuot at 3 a.m. on the morning of May 30 to May 31. Yes, 3 a.m.! He will be participating in *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, the Jewish custom of studying Torah all night long in celebration of Shavuot. This marathon study session commemorates the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Prof. Davis will be discussing the Talmudic story of King Solomon and the [demon-king Ashmedai](#).

Prof. Davis will also be speaking this fall at the [annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion \(AAR\)](#), which will be held in Boston from November 18-21. This event, co-hosted with the Society of Biblical Literature, is the largest meeting of religious scholars in the world. Prof. Davis will be presenting on Jewish hagiography, anti-hagiography and extended families in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Prague. In layman's terms, that means he will be discussing legends told in the 18<sup>th</sup> century about the rabbis of Prague by their descendants, their opponents and the descendants of their opponents. This presentation continues some of Prof. Davis' work on Jewish folklore, Jewish families and Prague Jewry.

Prof. Ruth Sandberg, the Leonard and Ethel Landau Professor of Rabbinics, was recently published in [Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations](#), an electronic journal published by the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College. Her article is entitled [Rethinking the Notion of Universality in Judaism and Its Implications](#).

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, an adjunct faculty member at Gratz, received the prestigious honor of having been selected to present an [ELI Talk](#), basically the Jewish version of a TED Talk. Listen to Kaplan-Mayer's talk, entitled [Faith, Companionship and Vulnerability: Standing With Families Who Have a Child With a Disability](#).

Kaplan-Mayer was also recently hired as the director of a new program being launched by the Gratz Jewish Community High School (JCHS) this fall, called [Jewish Creative Art and Performance for Teens](#), or JCAP. Through this program, students who are passionate about the arts will have the opportunity to connect with Jewish culture by working with Jewish artists in their areas of interest.