The papers and lectures of this conference will address the culture of Rabbinic Judaism in late antiquity. The first centuries of the Common Era saw the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. This time period has been referred to as the “formative period” of Judaism. Some of the major Jewish movements and groups during this time include the Dead Sea sectarians, Jewish Messianic movements as well as the core group of Jewish culture, the Rabbis. Major Jewish texts, e.g., Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud, were created during this period. The papers of this conference will address Near Eastern, Greco-Roman, and Iranian influences upon Rabbinic Judaism. The presenters will discuss exegetical strategies, cultural icons as well as emotions and ritual in rabbinic texts.

Program:

Prof. Rivka Ulmer  
BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY  
11:00  
"Egyptian Cultural Icons in Homiletic Midrash"

Holger Zellentin, MA  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
11:30  
"Exegesis vs. the Messiah: a Rabbinic view on the Adoption and Passion in Luke"

Prof. Herbert Basser  
QUEENS UNIVERSITY, Canada  
1:35 -2:20  
"Moving Heaven and Earth: The Power of Tears in Rabbinic Culture"

Prof. Reuven Kimelman  
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY  
2:25 -3:10  
"What is New in Rabbinic Prayer"

Study Break and Conversations with our speakers  
3:10 -3:25  
Refreshments

Prof. Maria Antonaccio, Chair, Department of Religion  
BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY  
Greetings

Prof. Yaakov Elman  
YESHIVA UNIVERSITY & HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
3:25  
"The Regulation of Sex in the Babylonian Talmud in the Light of Zoroastrianism"

Prof. Lawrence Schiffman  
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
4:15  
"The Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Halakhah"

Prof. Mayer Gruber  
BEN GURION UNIVERSITY, Israel  
5:00  
"Alternative Biblical Theologies of Sacred Space: A View from the Mishnah"

Provost Stephen Bowen  
BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY  
5:45  
Closing remarks

This program is made possible by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Chair in Jewish Studies, Bucknell University. Additional support for Professor Gruber’s and Professor Schiffman’s lecture was granted by the University Lectureship Committee; the Committee for Campus Diversity supported the Study Break.

An exhibition at the Bertrand Library will focus on the theme of the conference.

Rivka Ulmer, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Chair in Jewish Studies, Bucknell University, Assistant Professor of Religion.