

# An Economist

A PUBLIC LECTURE

# Reads the Mishna

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A lecture sponsored by Penn's College of Arts and Sciences, the Jewish Studies Program Kutchin Seminar Series, and Department of Mathematics

Recently, newspapers worldwide carried the news that Israeli/American Robert Aumann had received the 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics for his work in game theory, a mathematical decision-making tool that has many interesting and contemporary applications that can be applied on a basic level. It also has

applications to Jewish Studies; in articles written with co-author M. Maschler, Aumann applied game theory to understand a bankruptcy case in the Mishna - the text which forms the backbone of the Talmud.

The Mishna divided the assets in the case in a seemingly bizarre way that puzzled Talmudic scholars for centuries. Through the lens of game theory, Aumann and Maschler were able to determine the rules used by the Rabbis in the Mishna to

Dr. Lefcourt Ruby received her Ph.D. in Mathematics from Penn in 1996. She now works in math education consulting in Israel, providing curriculum and professional development to schools and educational media companies. Her principal affiliation is with the Israel Center for Teaching and Learning (ICTL). (website <http://www.ictl.org>)

distribute the money. The solution is an application of game theory that can be readily understood, and which can be applied to contemporary situations.

We invite you to celebrate the achievements of the Israeli/American scholar, in a context that is simultaneously engaging, contemporary and timeless.

No specialized knowledge of mathematics or Jewish studies is required. Questions? [jsp-info@ccat.sas.upenn.edu](mailto:jsp-info@ccat.sas.upenn.edu); 215-898-6654

**Tuesday, Jan 31 5pm**  
**Bodek Lounge, Houston Hall**