

Research

Open University faculty members are engaged in a wide variety of research covering many disciplines including Social Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Exact Sciences and Engineering. The Office of the Dean of Research, headed by Prof. Anat Barnea, deals with all issues related to research at the Open University through the Research Authority, which provides support and organizational infrastructure for research at the OUI, and its various research institutes.

The Research Authority

The Research Authority locates and submits applications to external sources of funding and assistance. Further support comes from the Internal Research Fund, which allocates a variety of research grants and scholarships. In addition, a Steering Committee composed of faculty members from different disciplines oversees the Authority's academic activity, the allocation of resources, and assessment of the funding applications received.

New at the Research Authority

- An online system was launched, with the assistance of the Computer Unit, to submit applications for internal research grants similar to the existing system for large external funds. The goal is to facilitate the work of researchers and assist in adherence to Research Authority policies.
- Researchers have the option of seeking professional guidance before submitting grant proposals to competitive external EU research foundations.

Annual Research Day/Scientists' Night

Research Day at the Open University is an annual event dedicated to showcasing research conducted by senior academic faculty and academic teaching staff. This year's Research Day took place in conjunction with Scientists' Night, an event that has been held in Israel and Europe since 2007, with funding by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the European Union. The central theme of this year's Scientists' Night was computer science, marking the centenary of Alan Turing's birth, and celebrating the man widely considered to be the "father" of computer science. Many children were among the hundreds of people who attended.

Research Day/Scientists' Night featured lectures by researchers from the Open University's three research institutes, as well as guided tours and demonstrations in the Natural Sciences and Psychology labs. Other activities included lectures on computer science, astronomy, psychology and mathematics; computer games and writing a coded quiz; an inflatable planetarium and telescope observations; a lecture and screening of the movie *Blade Runner*; and a chess game between the captain of the Israeli team at the Chess Olympiad and the *Deep Junior* computer.

Research Centers

A research center serves as a scientific, institutional and practical framework for research on theoretical, empirical and applied issues in a variety of areas and on the reciprocal relations among them. The centers help researchers to create new scientific knowledge, enable cross-fertilization and cooperation, joint study of various topics, and activities with researchers and experts from Israel and abroad. Each center is run by a Steering Committee, headed by a director. The Steering Committee is composed of senior academic faculty members from several academic departments at the Open University as well as teaching staff and researchers from outside the University.

The Open University has three such research centers:

Research Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies, headed by Prof. Yoram Eshet

The Research Center for Innovation in Learning Technologies investigates new technologies and their integration into the Open University's learning processes. It encourages research by faculty members aimed at improving teaching and learning



Annual Research Day/Scientists' Night

processes in a technological environment and integrating such technologies into instruction in general, and OUI courses in particular. The Center is composed of a consortium of fifty faculty members from various departments and a part-time research fellow. It supports studies conducted by members and outstanding post-graduate students. The Center operates in close collaboration with *Shoham* (the Center for Technology in Distance Education) and focuses on creating a strong, cohesive Israeli research community with close ties between its members and similar communities overseas. The Center conducts a wide variety of academic activities, including research seminars, symposia and conferences. Since 2006 the Center has hosted the Chais Conference for the Study of Innovation in Learning Technologies, Israel's predominant research conference in this field. The Research Center, founded in 2010, has now replaced the Chais Center, which was active from 2004.

During 2011-2012 some fifty studies were undertaken by the Research Center, all of which are published in the Center's activity report. Six seminar sessions allowed the Center's members, visiting researchers, and affiliated students an opportunity to showcase their studies. In addition, with the goal of creating a link between the Center and the general public, the Research Center organized three seminars which drew hundreds of participants.

Abstracts of several studies carried out by members of the Center are described below.

- **Dr. Nitza Geri**, "Probing the impact of video on student retention in distance learning"

The study explores the effect of online video lectures on experienced students in a distance-learning environment. The preliminary findings show that the use of video lectures has increased students' retention, although their achievements were not improved. These findings suggest that the online videos may have improved student retention by attending to their need for social interaction, even though the students did not actively participate in the interaction.

- **Dr. Yoram Kalman**, "HCI Markers"

HCI markers are signals created during human-computer interaction (HCI) which might provide information about the cognitive, mental, psychological or physiological state of the user. The concept of HCI markers is analogous to the concept of biomarkers, such as cholesterol, which are indicators of physiological or disease processes. In our study we aim to understand and classify HCI markers and their potential. The research is done in collaboration with Prof. Darren



Gergle, CollabLab, Northwestern University, Prof. Cynthia K. Thompson, Aphasia and Neurolinguistics Research Laboratory, Northwestern University and Dr Gitit Kavé, Department of Education and Psychology, The Open University of Israel.

- **Dr. Sarit Barzilai and Prof. Yoram Eshet**, "The role of epistemic thinking in identification and interpretation of multiple online source perspectives"

One of the main challenges of developing learners' digital literacy in the era of open knowledge is promoting their ability to critically construct meaning from diverse online sources. The purpose of the current study is to shed light on the role of students' epistemic thinking in a critical evaluation of online sources. The study focuses on students' ability to identify and interpret online source perspectives, and to use these source perspectives in order to critically evaluate and integrate multiple and conflicting online sources into a coherent knowledge.

- **Dr. Ina Blau**, "The effect of engaging technologies – clickers and interactive whiteboards – on academic achievement, performance, motivation, and self-esteem of at-risk students"

This study examines how engaging educational technology affects academic achievement, perceived learning, self-efficacy in academic performance, motivation for learning, and the self-esteem of at risk students. The anonymity of "clickers" encourages students to participate and answer questions without fear of public harm – a sense of self-efficacy in front of the teacher and other classmates. Thus, "clickers" function as assistive technology that helps enhance and maintain functional capabilities for students with learning disabilities who are characterized by low self-esteem, low motivation, and low academic achievement. The research is done in collaboration with Adva Rubin, Oranim Academic College of Education.

Chais Conference 2012

The annual Chais Conference, held in cooperation with *Shoham* (the Center for Technology in Distance Education), was the seventh in a series of national conferences on learning technology. The conference provides an arena for leading Israeli researchers and learning technology innovators to meet and share their studies. It is instrumental in guiding the Israeli research community in the use of learning technologies and reinforcing the Open University's prominent research status in this area. Held over two days for the first time, the 2012 conference was highly successful, hosting a record 700 people representing most academic institutions, as well as organizations and corporations. Over sixty lectures were delivered at

the conference. The opening lectures were delivered by Prof. Barry Wellman of the University of Toronto and Prof. David Willey of Brigham Young University. Selected articles from the conference were published for the third year running in a special edition of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning and Learning Objects*.

The Research Institute for Policy, Political Economy and Society, headed by Prof. Aviad Bar-Haim

The Open University Research Institute for Policy, Political Economy and Society is an interdisciplinary center. Its goal is to advance the study of subjects and issues – theoretical, empirical and applied – associated with the interrelationships between policy-making and implementation, and social, political and economic processes and mechanisms. The Institute supports studies focusing on Israeli or other cases, comparative research, and studies that explore international and global dimensions of policy-making and implementation. In order to create a vibrant research environment for scholars from different disciplines, the Institute organizes local and international symposia and conferences, publishes a series of working papers, and provides research assistance to its members. There are currently some twenty researchers affiliated with the Institute and to date, 19 studies, on a wide variety of subjects with political aspects, have been completed. The four latest studies are listed below:

- **Dr. Nissim Cohen, and Sagi Gershgoren CPA Adv (LLM)**, "Street-level bureaucrats, asymmetry of information and inequality: the case of income tax assessment in Israel"
- **Dr. Mordechai Schwarz**, "Might makes (contingent) right: Equilibrium in the stochastic jungle"
- **Dr. Mordechai Schwarz and Dr. Ronen Bar-El**, "Dynamics of voluntary contributions to capacity and operation of public goods"
- **Dr. Zeev Rosenhek**, "Diagnosing and explaining the global financial crisis: Central banks, epistemic authority and sense-making"

Seminars and Symposia: The Research Institute for Policy, Political Economy and Society held two seminars in simulation format on the relationship between army and society, in cooperation with the Israeli Sociology Society. Another research seminar presented papers on the subject of "Policy as Derived from Vision and Goals vs. Vision and Goals Derived Retroactively from Policy": a) The case of the new Foreign Ministry building; b) The case of plea-bargains.

At Open University Research Day, studies by eight researchers were presented in the form of mini-lectures.

The Center for the Study of Relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims, headed by Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman

This institute numbers over forty members; most affiliated with the Open University, while others represent a variety of other academic institutions. The Center and its goals have aroused considerable interest among scholars, some of whom have joined the research community and now participate in its activities, helping to advance the study of relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The diverse research conducted also contributes to the Center's public role, which includes promoting understanding of the three major religions, their interreligious and intercultural relations, while presenting the findings to the public.

Research Groups Supported by the Center

- A group studying the relationship between Jews and Christians during the early post-Christian centuries. The group comprises thirteen researchers from the Open University and other academic institutions. Five meetings have taken place so far.
- A group studying "The Setting of Boundaries – Defining Identity in a Multi-Religious and Multi-Cultural Environment." The group comprises seven researchers from the Open University and other academic institutions. Five meetings have taken place.

Diwan Workshops – Presenting and Discussing Research and Meeting with Veteran Researchers

- **Prof. Yaron Tsur**, "Networks of Wealthy Jews in the Ottoman World – the Crisis in Egypt, 1768-1772"
- **Prof. Mark Cohen**, "Muslim Attitudes Towards Jews – Then and Now"
- **Dr. Ella Almagor**, "*Kitab al-i'tibar* – Autobiography of a Muslim Intellectual in the Period of the Crusades"
- **Prof. Mustafa Kabha**, "The Contribution of Christians and Jews to the National Culture in Modern Egypt"

International Conferences

- "Jews, Christians, Muslims: Mutual Images" – International conference to launch the Center, held at the Open University Campus in Raanana.
- "Tradition and Transition in Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture," at the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths in Cambridge, UK.

Abstracts of selected studies conducted with the support of the Center are described below:

- **Prof. Haggai Erlich**, "Christianity, Islam – Ethiopia, exile and interreligious"
The first encounter of Christianity and Islam was in Ethiopia, where Judaism had already been present since ancient times. This paper addresses the ways in which the three religions conceptualized one another from earliest times, bearing in mind Ethiopia's historical context. The debate focuses on some of this diversity, directs the dialectic that arose between interreligious attitudes and illustrates some concrete cases from the Middle Ages and the present day.
- **Dr. Avishai Ben-Dror**, "Imagery and reality with regard to the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Harar in the late 19th century"
The study examines the walled town of Harar in the Horn of Africa which, during the period in question, was an interreligious and intercultural center for four societies: Muslims – both occupiers and occupied, Europeans, and Christian Ethiopians. The dialogue between local and external – i.e. Egyptian, European and Ethiopian – influences is highlighted as the main catalyst that resulted in the different identities of native city residents and the evolution of its multi-cultural character. The paper likewise looks at the roles played by agents of local culture – Muslim merchants and Amharic Ethiopian soldiers – in the process of formulating local identity, and suggests that these were of greater significance than religious affiliation.
- **Prof. Mustafa Kabha**, "The fall of the Arab-Muslim state in Spain and the evolution of its themes in Arab-Muslim historiography throughout the generations"
This study focuses on the Arab-Muslim state in Spain up to its demise in 1492 and the ways in which it was presented in Muslim-Arab historiography over many generations. It also includes an analysis of the commentary of various writers on the events within the historical context of their writing, and examines how the internal causes of failure were presented and the weight attributed to the process of *Reconquista* – the religious "reconquest" by Christians. The paper questions whether this process was perceived as a "religious war" or Christian anti-Islam Crusade, or as a national-ethnic war against Semitic Arabs in Spain and the European continent in general.
- **Prof. Ora Limor**, "Christians, Jews and Muslims in Early Medieval Jerusalem: *The Story of the Lord's Shroud*"
The Story of the Lord's Shroud, as recorded by Saint Admonán of Iona in the seventh decade of the 7th century, provides a dramatic illustration of the new social order in Jerusalem following the Muslim occupation, when the city's Christians, Muslims and Jews once again became joint subjects of occupation. The legendary images of Jews and Muslims in the tale provide an illustration of Christian religious imagery in Europe at the time.

- **Dr. Ishay Landa:** "Anti-Dionysus: A Judeo-Christian critique of the Nietzschean space"

In *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche's madman proclaims the death of God, and in its wake the cruelty of existence underlying life in a post religious age. The space left behind by the lack of God corresponds to the inhumanity of a capitalist society, where the weak are left unprotected. Nietzsche fiercely attacked the Judeo Christian tradition, which he identified with slave morality and social solidarity and hoped that the post-religious era would produce a playful hunting ground for the strong. The paper illustrates the commentaries of philosophers and writers writing within the Judeo-Christian tradition, whether Christians, Jews, or atheists, on this Nietzschean agenda.

- **Dr. Ophir Münz-Manor:** "Poetry and visual art in synagogues and churches in late antiquity"

The study addresses the connection between Jewish and Christian liturgical poetry in late ancient times, and between the mosaics that adorned the floors of synagogues and churches, depicting that poetry. The paper highlights examples illustrating the link between the cosmos and prayer houses, and examines Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac poetry written for the Hanukkah festival and for the inauguration of a new church. This comparative examination illustrates how poets and mosaicists (Jews and Christians alike) shared a single cultural-religious approach that was not influenced by their religious identity. At the same time, the artists were clearly attempting to respond to the ideological and liturgical demands of their communities.

- **Prof. Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman:** "Polygamy: family life in Yemen and its transformation in Eretz Israel"

The study presents polygamy in the Yemenite Jewish community as a phenomenon based on legal, social and cultural values compatible with the Muslim environment. It goes on to discuss the tension created among Yemenite immigrants in the early days of Israel, a modern society with values that censured and prohibited polygamy. Also highlighted are the transformations that occurred after immigration, in the light of objections by immigrant women to polygamy and their use of civil and legal means against men; the recruitment of civil bodies, in particular women's organizations, to the struggle against polygamy; laws of the State and how they were implemented.

Research Grants Awarded by External Funds

In the past year 78 applications were submitted for external research grants – an increase of 30% over the previous year. Of the 17 research projects undertaken by OUI faculty that received financing from external funds in 2011-2012, six were awarded grants from the Israel Science Foundation. Total income from external grants in 2011-12 was 19% higher than in the previous year. This is the first year that financial recruitment from external sources exceeded the research budget allocated by OUI sources.

Grants from the Israel Science Foundation

- **Dr. Denis Charbit**, Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication (with Prof. Ruth Amossy, Tel Aviv University) for research on "Delegitimization of Israel: The Political and Rhetorical Uses of 'formula' in France"
- **Prof. Aviva Halamish**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, for research on "1934 – Profile of a Year: Toward an Integrative History of the Yishuv"
- **Dr. Levi Spectre**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, for research on "Knowledge Without Closure: A Study of Epistemic Closure principles, Evidence, Rationality, and Non-Probabilistic Reasoning"
- **Dr. Inbal Ofer**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, for research on "Measuring the Immeasurable: Social Movements and Changes in the Conceptual Understanding and Practices of Citizenship"
- **Dr. Menachem Katz**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, for research on "Talmud Yerushalmi Tractate Kiddushin: Critical Commentary and Studies in the Editorial Process"
- **Prof. Haggai Erlich**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, for research on "Ethiopia, Israel, and the Middle East – Old Legacies and Modern Relations"

Grants from other external funds

- **Prof. Yoav Yair**, Dept. of Natural Sciences, received a grant from the Israel Ministry of Defense for research on "Estimation of Space Weather Hazards to Satellites and Communication System for Solar Cycle 24"
- **Dr. Varda Wasserman**, Dept. of Management and Economics, (with Dr. Michal Frenkel, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) received a grant from the Caesarea Foundation for research on "Religiously Protected Privacy – Integrating Ultra-Orthodox Women into Higher Education and the Workplace"
- **Dr. Noga Sverdlík**, Dept. of Education and Psychology, (with Dr. Eyal Rechter, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) received a grant from the Caesarea Foundation for research on "Decision-Makers' Coping with Program Evaluations: Predicting School Principals' Responses to Evaluations of Their Schools' Climate"
- **Dr. Noam Shental**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, received a grant from the Israel Ministry of Agriculture for research on "Allele Mining for Crop Production under Changing Environments"
- **Dr. Igor Rahinov**, Dept. of Natural Sciences, (with Prof. Sergey Cheskis, Tel Aviv University) received a grant from the Israel Ministry of National Infrastructures for research on "The First Step in Natural Gas Conversion to Liquid Fuel: Partial Oxidation of Methane"
- **Prof. Aviad Heifetz**, Dept. of Management and Economics, (with a research team headed by Prof. Roger Guesnerie, Paris School of Economics) received a grant from the Institute for New Economic Thinking for research on "Expectational Coordination"
- **Dr. Alex Usvyatsov**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, received a grant from the Marie Curie CIG (Career Integration Grant) for research on "Model Theoretic Stability for Banach Spaces"
- **Dr. Nitzza Geri**, Dept. of Management and Economics, received a grant from the Israel Internet Association for research on "Implications of Online Video Use in Distance and Blended Learning on Student Retention and Achievement"
- **Dr. Iris Shagrir**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, (with Prof. Yitzhak Hen, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and Prof. Esther Cohen, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) received a grant from Yad HaNadiv for the project "Catalogue of the Latin and Vernacular Manuscripts in the Israel National Library"
- **Dr. Yachin Epstein**, Dept. of History, Philosophy, and Judaic Studies, (with Dr. Moshe Lavi, University of Haifa) received a grant from the Francois et Nicolas Grandchamp Foundation for research on "Life and Literature in Jewish Communities as Documented in the Cairo Genizah"
- **Dr. Gregory Yom Din**, Dept. of Management and Economics, received a grant from the Israel National Institute for Health Services Research, for research on "Inequity in Access to Health Care in the Periphery"

Two of the studies awarded grants from external funds are briefly described below.

- **Dr. Inbal Ofer**, Measuring the Immeasurable: Social Movements and Changes in the Conceptual Understandings and Practices of Citizenship - A Multidisciplinary Research Workshop

The proposed workshop aims at bringing together researchers from different disciplines (historians, anthropologists, sociologists) who study social movements within different geographical contexts (Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East). We would like to examine the formation, goals, and functioning of such movements over time by employing a multi-disciplinary and comparative perspective.

We invite contributors to the workshop to present papers that deal with the effects of social movements' activism on changing concepts and practices of citizenship and vice versa. Papers that examine the relationship between entities within social movements, and between those entities and other actors (such as political parties, state institutions, professionals engaged in the struggle, etc.) are especially welcomed. By considering different historical case studies we wish to reflect on the conditions that enable social movements to gain momentum and create effective channels of intervention. We also wish to gain a better understanding of when and how changes in public discourse and policy making are consolidated or rejected.

- **Dr. Noam Shental**, Mutation Mining For Crop Production Under Changing Environments

During six of the past nine years, the global production of cereal crops was smaller than consumption as a result of alternative uses in the fuel industry (biofuel), the rising cost of water; drought; and an increasing demand because of higher standards of living. For these reasons grain prices have soared to the highest rates ever recorded, and it has become clear that in order to meet the necessary objective of increasing crop production, as determined by the World Food Organization, there is an urgent need for another green revolution that will improve crop production.

Sorghum bicolor is genetically related to sugarcane, corn, and rice. It is ranked fifth in importance for the global food economy and constitutes a primary source of food in Africa and Asia. Its large harvest of seeds under extremely dry conditions makes it one of the crops with a high likelihood of replacing the traditional crops of corn and wheat, especially in arid regions. The genome of this plant, which was recently sequenced, is simpler than that of wheat, corn, and barley, making it an excellent model system for the identification of genes that can be used to improve the crop's traits.

Recently we proposed an efficient approach to finding rare mutations and their carriers within large populations, using the technology of massively parallel sequencing. The approach involves constructing a small number of DNA mixtures from various plants and sequencing them in a manner similar to the sequencing of a single plant. The outcome of sequencing of the collection of mixtures serves later as input for algorithms that provide the genetic sequence of each of the individual plants. The number of mixtures needed in order to locate the mutations and their carriers is smaller than the number of plants by a factor of up to 70, thereby enabling a significant reduction in experimental costs. This study will identify plants that include mutations in genes that may be involved in improved production and resistance to environmental stress, as the first stage in understanding the genetic basis of the crop's traits.

This is a joint study with Dr. Rivka Elbaum and Dr. Eyal Fridman of the Hebrew University Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

Research Grants and Scholarships from the Internal Fund

The Open University places funds at the disposal of researchers to leverage their research projects so they can be submitted to external funds. During the 2011-2012 academic year, 154 applications were submitted to the RA for funding from the internal fund, of which the Steering Committee approved 138 (89.6%).

Appointments and Promotions

- **Dr. Zippy Erlich**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- **Dr. Ronit Bogler**, Dept. of Education and Psychology, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- **Dr. Aviad Bar-Haim**, Dept. of Management and Economics, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- **Dr. Tamir Tassa**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- **Dr. Michael Langberg**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor
- **Prof. Zeev Nutov**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, was promoted to the rank of Full Professor
- **Prof. Aviva Halamish**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, was promoted to the rank of Full Professor
- **Dr. Noam Shental**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, joined the Senior Faculty with the rank of Senior Lecturer
- **Dr. Rica Gonen**, Dept. of Management and Economics, joined the Senior Faculty with the rank of Senior Lecturer
- **Dr. Yoram Kalman**, Dept. of Management and Economics, joined the Senior Faculty with the rank of Senior Lecturer
- **Dr. Igor Rahinov**, Dept. of Natural Sciences, joined the Senior Faculty with the rank of Senior Lecturer
- **Dr. Levi Spectre**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, joined the Senior Faculty with the rank of Lecturer

New Faculty at the Open University

- **Dr. Alex Usvyatsov** joined the Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science
- **Dr. Ina Blau** joined the Dept. of Education and Psychology
- **Dr. Yair Ben Chaim** joined the Dept. of Natural Sciences
- **Prof. Jonathan Granot** joined the Dept. of Natural Sciences
- **Dr. Varda Wasserman** joined the Dept. of Management and Economics
- **Dr. Ido Liviatan** joined the Dept. of Education and Psychology
- **Dr. Adi Amit** joined the Dept. of Management and Economics
- **Dr. Sara Kahn-Nisser** joined the Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication
- **Dr. Orr Karassin** joined the Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication
- **Dr. Ofer Reany** joined the Dept. of Natural Sciences

Doctoral Dissertations Supervised by Open University Senior Faculty Members

- **Michal Ichet** (2008) "Directed Forgetting of Words: Reduced Rehearsal or Response Inhibition?" Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University (Prof. Liat Kishon-Rabin, Tel Aviv University and **Dr. Eran Chajut**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Nadav Appel** (2012) "Rebellion, Innocence and Rock'n'Roll: Resistance and Childlikeness in Pop-Rock Music," Interdisciplinary Studies Unit, Program for Hermeneutics and Cultural Studies, Bar-Ilan University (**Prof. Motti Regev**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Shay Barkan** (2012) "A Comparative Study Between Migrant and Resident Bird Species: Neurobiological, Hormonal and Behavioral Aspects," (Prof. Yoram Yom-Tov, Zoology Dept., Faculty of Life Sciences, Tel Aviv University, **Prof. Anat Barnea**, Dept. of Natural Sciences, The Open University of Israel)
- **Orit Hirt-Ramon** (2010) "The Order of the World – On the Image of the Model Society According to the Maharal of Prague," The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Prof. Israel J. Yuval, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and **Dr. Avriel Bar-Levav**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, The Open University of Israel)
- **Meytal Hans** (2009) "The Influence of a Computer-Based Module of the Moon-Phases Phenomenon on Learning and on Spatial Abilities," Technion – Israel Institute of Technology (Prof. Yael Kali, Technion, and **Prof. Yoav Yair**, the Open University of Israel)
- **Leora Levy** (2012) "A Response Bias Theory of the Emotional Stroop Effect," Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University (Prof. Daniel Algom, Tel Aviv University, Prof. Liat Kishon-Rabin, Tel Aviv University, and **Dr. Eran Chajut**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Tamar Liron** (2012) "Modulation of Erythropoietin Receptor Activity and Function," Tel Aviv University, Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, Sackler Faculty of Medicine (Prof. D. Neuman, Tel Aviv University and **Prof. Miriam Souroujon**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Sergei Kojarski** (2008) "Third-Party Composition of AOP Mechanisms," Northeastern University, USA (**Prof. David H. Lorenz**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Michal Ratson-Abraham** (2012) "Management Control and Workers Resistance Regarding Gaps in Employment Welfare Entitlements," Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Bar-Ilan University (Dr. Orly Benjamin, Bar-Ilan University, and **Dr. Zeev Rosenhek**, The Open University of Israel)
- **Noa Schori** (2011) "The Shadows of the Past: Effects of Historical Group Trauma on Intergroup Conflicts," Tel Aviv University (Prof. Yechiel Klar, Tel Aviv University and **Prof. Sonia Roccas**, The Open University of Israel)

Collaborative Agreements

- Several years ago the Open University and Tel Aviv University jointly signed an agreement to enable OUI faculty members from various scientific and experimental fields to conduct research using the infrastructure available at Tel Aviv University. During the past year, an individual agreement was signed for Dr. Igor Rahinov, a faculty member from the OUI Department of Natural Sciences, who is conducting his research at Tel Aviv University's School of Chemistry. This is in addition to two previous agreements signed in recent years for other senior OUI faculty researchers.
- A similar contract was signed in the past year with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem enabling Dr. Yair Ben Chaim, of the OUI Department of Natural Sciences, to conduct research in the HUJI Department of Neurology.

Honors and Awards

- **Dr. Yuval Eylon**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, was appointed Chairman of the Israeli Philosophical Association
- **Dr. Roni Beer-Marx**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, was awarded a prize from The Nevzlin Center for Russian and East European Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for an outstanding Doctoral thesis
- **Dr. Niv Buchbinder**, Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science, was awarded the Best Paper Award by *Focs* 2011 for "A Polylogarithmic-Competitive Algorithm for the k-Server Problem"
- **Prof. Yoav Yair**, Dept. of Natural Sciences, was appointed the next Chairman of The Israel Center for Learning Technologies
- **Prof. Yagil Levy**, Dept. of Sociology, Political Science and Communication, was awarded the Yitzhak Sadeh Prize for Military Literature for his book *Who Governs the Military*
- **Prof. Hagit Messer-Yaron**, President, The Open University of Israel, was awarded the prize for the Best Paper of 2011 by the IEEE Signal Processing Society for her paper "Rainfall Monitoring Using Cellular Networks" (In the Spotlight)
- **Dr. Inbal Ofer, and Dr. Ishay Landa**, Dept. of History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies, were chosen for membership in the Young Researchers' Forum of 2012, of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Prime Minister's Award for Composers

Hadas Goldschmidt Halfon, of the Dept. of Literature, Language and the Arts, was winner of the 2012 Prime Minister's Award for Composers. In the words of the judges: "Her work is based on a profound knowledge and internalization of mystical forms and textures which are at the very foundation of western classical music. She makes use of them while also placing her personal stamp on them. The musical forms are clear and musical peaks are achieved with lucidity and intelligence. In an especially personal manner, the composer manages to combine a musical language that is not tonal with melodiousness and lyricism. Her body of work is significant and diverse."