



Celebrating WOMEN IN SCIENCE

We are happy and proud to continue our unique tradition of marking the International Day Women's Day at the Hebrew University. We dedicate this day to celebrating the impressive achievements of our female faculty members, which are especially impressive given the challenges of the past year.

This year, we worked with the academic units to curate a list of noteworthy female **researchers across fields, please welcome the winners of excellence for 2022!**

May your excellence and success continue in the years to come!

Dr. Dina Schneidman

Rachel and Selim Benin School of Computer Science



Photo by Nir Friedman

For the last two years, Dina has been leading a series of studies that have deepened our understanding of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and potential cheap and effective neutralization methods that employ nano-antibodies. Her research combines machine learning with computational-structural biological methods that Dina herself developed. The study was part of an international collaboration that included researchers from the University of Pittsburgh. Dina and her colleagues identified nano-antibodies that neutralized the coronavirus in animals and were effective against the Delta variant, among others. These fascinating findings appeared in the prestigious Nature Communications journal, where Dina outlined three different mechanisms by which the nano-antibodies neutralize the virus, stop it from infecting additional cells, and thus prevent the onset of COVID-19. Dina and her colleagues conducted a structural analysis of the nano-antibodies, which revealed vital information and opened the door to future vaccines and treatments – which may be effective against existing and future variants!

Prof. Maya Tamir

Faculty of Social Sciences, Psychology Department



Photo by Liron Moldovan

Maya is a pioneer in the field of the regulation of emotions. Her research focuses on how people want to feel and why, and how to harness emotions for individuals' self-benefit. Her research is replete with empirical evidence showing that emotions are central to decision-making, ethical considerations, and other cognitive processes. She work addresses questions about the distinction between emotions and cognition, especially in light of proof that emotions can be cognitively beneficial.

Maya recently ended a successful term as head of the psychology department. She has significantly contributed to both the department and faculty. In addition, during the latest Board of Governors, Maya was awarded the Klatchy Prize for the Advancement of the Frontiers of Science.

Prof. Ruth HaCohen (Pinczower)

Faculty of Humanities Musicology Department



Photo by Hadass Parush Flash90

Ruth has conducted research into a wide range of topics relating to Western and Jewish music. She focuses on music's role in designing and reflecting broad cultural and political processes and contexts. Ruth works a lot on the contribution of music to the history of emotions, questions of music and religion, society, and politics, and Jewish music. Her seminal book, The Music Libel Against the Jews, won the Otto Kinkeldey Award from the American Musicological Society, as well as the Polonsky Prize for Creativity and Originality in the Humanistic Disciplines.

Ruth is a paragon of academic leadership and public activity. She is the Artur Rubinstein Professor of Musicology, has served on the National Library of Israel's Board of Directors since 2018, and has been a member of the Van Leer Institute's Board of Governors since 2016.

Ruth was awarded the 2022 Rothschild Prize in the Humanities. In 2017 she was named an honorary member in the American Association of Musicological Society, "for her outstanding achievements in musicology."

Dr. Rana Eseed

Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare



Photo by Bruno Charbit

Rana researches the role of religion in the study of social phenomenon, both on the personal-family level and on the community-political level. She delves into the role of religion in the formation of social-religious organizations, in juvenile delinquency, in mothers of young children, in the interface between social workers and their clients, and more. Her findings have been published in the leading academic social work and social policy journals. In addition, she conducts historical research into social organization and the welfare state. She's currently exploring the welfare system that served the Palestinian population pre-1948 – a topic that has been entirely overlooked in the literature. Her findings will contribute to our understanding of the welfare state, then and now.

Alongside her research, Rana dedicates her time to promoting higher educational to minorities and, in particular, to Palestinians. As a student, she ran the Hebrew University's Unit for Equal Opportunities for Arab Students. Today, she continues these efforts, in terms of both social activities and her research.

Rana is a young faculty member who was hired immediately upon returning from her post-doctoral studies abroad. She has faced numerous challenges: Doing a post-doc alone with a small baby, career challenges faced by many young women, and being an Israeli Muslim.

Prof. Keren Weinshall

Faculty of Law



Photo by Nati Shohat Flash90

Keren is an innovative young researcher, whose creative and interdisciplinary approach has contributed to her reputation in Israel and abroad. She uses clever, empirical methods to examine judicial rulings and the activity of legal institutions. Her findings have been published in leading journals, including the Journal of Empirical Legal Studies and PNAS.

Keren, along with Prof. Lee Epstein, has developed the first public, big data database of nearly 50,000 rulings delivered by the Israeli Supreme Court. She was named a member of the Israeli Young Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has received many awards, including the Cheshin Award for Academic Excellence in the Field of Law and the Gorny Prize for a Young Researcher in Public Law.

Dr. Neta Shlezinger

Koret School of Veterinary Medicine, Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment



Neta is a young faculty member, appointed to the Koret School of Veterinary Medicine two years ago. Her interdisciplinary research looks at the pathogenesis of fungi and the reciprocal relationship between pathogenic fungi and the immune system, by deciphering their mechanisms. On one hand, she studies how pathogenic fungi overcome the immune system's defenses and cause disease and, on the other hand, how the immune system recognizes and defends the body from such fungi. Neta has an exceptional number of publications (including an article in Microbial Cell from her doctoral research and an article in Science from her post-doctoral research).

She received numerous prizes attesting to her excellence during her post-doctoral studies at Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York. She has also received a number of competitive grants, and is currently working on an ERC grant proposal. Neta runs a prolific lab, and has created a unique course for graduate students on flow analysis.

Dr. Katy Margulis

School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine



Photo by Yoram Aschheim

Katy is pharmacist and chemist, notable for her groundbreaking research and imaging of drugs within tissue. She began her academic career at the Hebrew University and continued with doctoral studies at the Casali Center for Applied Chemistry on the Edmond J. Safra campus. During her doctoral research, she developed a method for quickly turning low-solubility materials into easily soluble nano-particles.

Katy conducted her post-doctoral studies at Stanford University. There she developed unique imaging methods for exploring physiological processes in living tissue, which she applied to the identification of pathological changes in tissue and developing new therapeutic targets for drugs. She continues to use these methods in her lab, extending their application to the smart development of drug delivery methods by measuring the distribution of drugs within the tissue, tracking its metabolism, and mapping physiological changes that accompany the treatment.

Since joining the faculty of the Hebrew University, Katy has served on the team that established the University's Metabolism Center, which serves many different research units.

Prof. Yifat Prut

Edmond & Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences



Photo by Maxim Dvirstein

Yifat studies the motor system of macaques, showing how communication between numerous parts of the brain underlie their planning and execution of motor activities.

Yifat's studies demonstrate how the "little brain" (cerebellum) is involved in the planning, regulating, learning, and timing of voluntary actions, and attempt to decipher the neural mechanism used to influence the cerebral cortex – in order to develop future treatments for brain damage (e.g. stimulation). Recently she has published in leading academic journals, and just this past year promoted to full professorship. Yifat also sits on various important University committees.

Prof. Nathaly Kravchenko-Balasha

Faculty of Dental Medicine



Photo by Nati Shohat Flash90

Nathaly is a top-notch researcher who joined the Faculty of Dental Medicine's Institute for Biomedical Research six years ago. Since then, she has established a leading research group and been awarded numerous competitive grants and prizes.

Nathaly combines theoretical and experimental approaches to study cancer. One of her main projects is examining the molecular differences between cancer patients or cells within their tumor, and "translating" this difference into quantitative parameters that can predict the cells' reaction to different therapies – enabling doctors to treat their patients with tailor-fit drug combinations.

Nathaly and her research group successfully applied this method in a few types of cancer, including melanoma, lung cancer, breast cancer, and mouth cancer. New of their achievement was duly noted in industry, and led to the establishment of MEDPNC, a company that Nature Research named as one of the top 40 innovative, academia-based companies worldwide.

Prof. Nathalie Balaban

Racah Institute of Physics



Photo by Bruno Charbit

Nathalie is one of the most prominent biophysicists worldwide. Her research focuses on identifying key problems in biological systems, where biophysical approaches can offer added value, and developing experiments that provide precise quantitative information and then applying diverse and effective physical and mathematical analysis. Using this approach, Nathalie has surprised the scientific community time and time again, as she shows that the complex behavior of biological systems (such as bacteria) is often rooted in few-parameter mechanisms that can be expressed as non-linear mathematical equations, which are often typical of complex physical systems.

Nathalie's groundbreaking studies have appeared in the prestigious academic journals, and she had been awarded competitive awards and grants (including two ERC grants). Globally, she is considered a leader in the field of biophysics.

Beyond her academic work, Nathalie dedicates much time to fostering diversity at the Hebrew University. She founded and runs the Teacher-Scholar program, and sits on committees dealing with research, education, and the academic administration of the University.

Prof. Tanya Zion-Waldoks

Seymour Fox School of Education



Photo by Bruno Charbit

Tanya has been teaching at the Hebrew University's Seymour Fox School of Education since 2019. Her research explores the intersection between gender, religion, and politics – with an emphasis on education and social change.

Using qualitative and comparative methods, she studies women who are working to improve the status of women in traditional societies and diverse religious groups (religious, ultra-Orthodox, Muslims, etc.) In addition, she studies gender equity education and women's activism to combat racism in Israel. She has published in leading journals, including an article that was given an award from the Israeli Sociology Society. She earned her doctorate in Gender Studies from Bar-Ilan University, where her research focused on Israeli agunot (women whose husbands refuse to grant a gett).

She conducted post-doctoral studies at Princeton University and the Ben-Gurion Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. These posts were made possible by a number of prestigious research grants, including a Rothschild Fellowship (Yad Hanadiv), the Israel Science Foundation, a Kreitman Fellowship, and a Fellowship from the Israel Institute. She lives in the Negev and is the mother of four children.