The Judaic Studies Department presents

Dr. Ruth R. Wisse

What's So Funny about Jewish Humor?

Tuesday, June 12, 2012
Lunch: 12:00 pm, Lecture: 1:00 pm
University Pavilion, President's Board Room 620

Philosophers and physicians routinely extol the therapeutic virtues of laughter, and Yiddish is often associated with humor. In fact, Jews take such pride in their sense of humor that some of them laugh at the very mention of Yiddish, and believe that the language is innately funny. What accounts for this association, and if laughter is medicine—is there such a thing as an overdose?

Ruth R. Wisse is Martin Peretz Professor of Yiddish Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature at Harvard University, and a former director of its Center for Jewish Studies. Her works on Jewish literature include The Schlemiel as Modern Hero; A Little Love in Big Manhattan: Two Yiddish Poets; I. L Peretz and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture; and The Modern Jewish Canon: A Journey through Literature and Culture, for which she received the National Jewish Book Award for Scholarship.

Wisse is also the author of two political studies If I Am Not for Myself: the Liberal Betrayal of the Jews and Jews and Power. She writes for major journals such as Commentary, The Wall Street Journal, The Jewish Review of Books, and Prooftexts. Among her awards is the National Medal for the Humanities and the National Foundation for Jewish Culture Award for Scholarship.

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All lectures are held at Taft House at Stratford Heights 2625 Clifton Ave. unless otherwise noted.
For questions, please call 556-0675.
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