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David Kamitsuka, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Oberlin College
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Dear Dean Kamitsuka,

We write to express our concerns over recent calls by members of "Mothers Against College Antisemitism" (M.A.C.A.) and others to "reassess the suitability of Professor Berkman" for teaching the course "Jews and Power" at Oberlin. The campaign being waged against Berkman and his course sets a very dangerous precedent that threatens the academic freedom of all members of your faculty. Oberlin's Faculty Guide itself recognizes "the necessity for all members in the College community to have complete freedom in all areas of belief and attitude" (48). We urge you to reaffirm the paramount importance of the academic freedom of scholars and their right to teach and critically explore ideas, and to reject proposals that curtail the freedom of teachers and researchers to engage in legitimate scholarship in their fields. As you are aware, Professor Berkman is a credentialed political scientist: he earned his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, has published in several peer-reviewed scholarly journals, and has presented at conferences in the fields of Jewish studies and political science. It should go without saying that his academic freedom is not subject to the judgement of an outside pressure group, but to Oberlin's faculty guide and its administrative structures alone. Allowing an outside group to determine the agenda of Oberlin's courses strikes at the heart of the very intellectual freedoms Oberlin cherishes.

The Association for Jewish Studies, the largest learned society and professional organization representing Jewish studies scholars worldwide, is dedicated to intellectual and academic freedom and supports its members in the pursuit of those aims. The AJS is committed to the development and strengthening of an institutional and public culture that encourages diverse views, and supports its members' right to articulate scholarly ideas without fear of retribution. We hope your institution will take the necessary steps to protect the academic freedom of all members of your community.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness on this matter,

Laura Leibman, President, Association for Jewish Studies
Helen Kim, VP of Program, Association for Jewish Studies
Laura Lieber, VP of Publications, Association for Jewish Studies
Hartley Lachter, VP of Membership and Outreach, Association for Jewish Studies
Lila Corwin Berman, Secretary/Treasurer, Association for Jewish Studies
Robin Judd, Past President, Association for Jewish Studies