

Curriculum Vitae

KENNETH R. SEESKIN**Personal**

Born: March 6, 1947
 Married; two children
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Academic Training

B.A.	Northwestern Univ., 1968 (Highest Distinction)
M.Phil.	Yale University, 1971
Ph.D.	Yale University, 1972

Employment

Assistant Professor, Northwestern 1972-78
 Associate Professor, Northwestern, 1978-1988
 Professor, 1988
 Chair, Dept. of Philosophy, 1981-1997, 2005-8
 Director, Jewish Studies Program, 1987-1993, 2008-09
 Director, Center for the Writing Arts, 1996-2002
 Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization, 2009-
 Chair, Dept. of Religious Studies, 2010-2014, 2015-2017

Honors and Awards

Phi Beta Kappa
 Danforth Fellow 1968-1972
 Tew Prize in the Humanities, Yale, 1969
 Cooper Prize in Greek Philosophy, Yale, 1972
 Arts and Sciences Award for Outstanding Teaching, 1975
 Arts and Sciences Commencement Speaker, 1990
 E. Leroy Hall Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1992
 Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence, 1995-
 1998
 Koldyke Teaching Professor, 2000-2002
 Shier Distinguished Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies, University of
 Toronto, 2001
 Koret Jewish Book Award, 2001
 John Evans Professor, 2005-8
Choice Award for Outstanding Book in the Humanities, 2006
 Philip M. and Ethel Klutznick Professor of Jewish Civilization, 2009 -
 National Jewish Book Award (with Judith Baskin), 2010
 Princeton Advisory Council for Program in Judaic Studies, 2014-18

Books Intended for Scholarly Audiences

Jewish Messianic Thoughts in an Age of Despair. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Co-Editor, Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Culture, and Religion. Cambridge University Press, 2010. Winner National Jewish Book Award.

Co-Editor, Violenza: La Politica e Il Sacro. Reggio Emilia, Italia: Editizioni Diabasis, 2009.

Editor, Cambridge Companion to Maimonides. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Maimonides on the Origin of the World. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Choice Award for Outstanding Book in the Humanities, 2006

Autonomy in Jewish Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Searching for a Distant God: The Legacy of Maimonides. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Winner: Koret Jewish Book Award, 2001.

Jewish Philosophy in a Secular Age. Albany: SUNY Press, 1990.

Dialogue and Discovery: A Study in Socratic Method. Albany: SUNY Press, 1987.

Books Intended for General Audiences

Thinking about the Prophets: A Philosopher Reads the Bible, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2020.

Thinking about the Torah: A Philosopher Reads the Bible, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 2016.

No Other Gods: The Modern Struggle Against Idolatry. West Orange, N.J.: Behrman House, 1995.

Maimonides: A Guide for Today's Perplexed. West Orange, N.J.: Behrman House, 1991. Hebrew translation: HaRambam: Moreh Derekh Le-Nevukhei Zemanenu. Haifa University Press, 2000.

Articles and Chapters in Anthologies:

1. "Many-Valued Logic and Future Contingencies," Logique et Analyse 56 (1971): 759-73.

2. Some Remarks on Truth and Bivalence," Logique et Analyse 65-66 (1974): 101-109.

3. Platonism, Mysticism, and Madness," The Monist 59 (1976): 576-86.

4. "Courage and Knowledge: A Perspective on the Socratic Paradox," Southern Journal of Philosophy 14 (1976): 511-21.

5. "Moral Necessity," New Scholasticism 51 (1977): 90-101.

6. "The Comedy of the Gods in the Iliad," Philosophy and Literature 1 (1977): 395-406.
7. "Is Existence a Perfection?--A Case Study in the Philosophy of Leibniz," Idealistic Studies 8 (1978): 124-35.
8. "Formalization and Platonic Scholarship," Metaphilosophy 9 (1978): 242-51.
9. "Leibniz and Transcendental Idealism," Man and World 11 (1978): 96-106.
10. "Genuine Appeals to Conscience," Journal of Value Inquiry 12 (1978): 96-106.
11. "Never Speculate, Never Explain: The State of Contemporary Philosophy," The American Scholar 49 (1979-80): 19-33.
12. "The Reality of Radical Evil," Judaism 28 (1980): 440-53.
13. "Is the Apology of Socrates a Parody?" Philosophy and Literature 6 (1982): 94-105.
14. "The Perfection of God and the Presence of Evil," Judaism 31 (1982): 202-10.
15. "Socratic Philosophy and the Dialogue Form," Philosophy and Literature 8 (1984):181-94.
16. "Job and the Problem of Evil," Philosophy and Literature 11 (1987): 226-41. Reprinted in The Jewish Philosophy Reader, edited by Frank, Leaman, and Manekin. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 66-73, Jewish Philosophy Past and Present, edited by Frank and Segal. New York: Routledge, 166-173.
17. "Meno 86c-89a: A Mathematical Image of Philosophic Inquiry," in Brian Hendly, ed. Plato, Time, and Education: Essays in Honor of Robert S. Brumbaugh, edited by B. Hendly. Albany: SUNY Press, 1987, pp. 25-42.
18. "What Philosophy Can and Cannot Say about Evil," in Echoes from the Holocaust. Edited by Rosenberg and Myers. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988) pp. 91-104. Reprinted in A Holocaust Reader, edited by Michael Morgan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
19. "Coming to Terms with Failure: A Philosophical Dilemma," in Writing and the Holocaust, edited by Berel Lang. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), pp. 110-21. Reprinted in A Holocaust Reader, edited by Michael Morgan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
20. "Jewish Philosophy in the 1980's," Modern Judaism 11 (1991), pp. 157-72.
21. "Poverty and Sincerity in the Apology," Philosophy and Literature 16 (1992): 128-33.
22. "The Rational Theology of Steven S. Schwarzschild," Modern Judaism 12 (1992): 277-86.
23. "Vlastos on Elenchus and Mathematics," Ancient Philosophy 13 (1993): 37-53.
24. "Jewish neo-Kantianism: Hermann Cohen," in Routledge History of Jewish Philosophy, edited by D. Frank and O. Leaman, ed. History of Jewish Philosophy. London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 786-98.
25. "Maimonides' Conception of Philosophy," in Leo Strauss and Judaism, edited by David Novak. Lanham, MY.: 1996, pp. 87-110.

26. "How to Read Religion of Reason," Introduction to the Second English edition of Hermann Cohen's Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 21-42.
27. "Holiness as a Moral Ideal," Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy 5 (1996): 191-203.
28. "Of Dialogues and Seeds," Philosophy and Literature 21 (1977): 167-78.
29. "Maimonides and Neo-Platonism," in The Perennial Tradition of NeoPlatonism. Edited by John Cleary. Leuven: University Press, 1977, pp. 458-68.
30. "Maimonides and Aquinas on Creation," Medioevo: Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale 23 (1997): 453-472.
31. "Jewish Philosophy in the Wake of Mendelssohn and Kant," in Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2000.
32. "Sanctity and Silence: The Religious Significance of Maimonides' Negative Theology," American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly 76 (2002): 7-24.
33. "Maimonides' Sense of History," Journal of Jewish History 2004 (18): 129-145.
34. "Modern Jewish Philosophy" Oxford Guide to Modern Judaism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 303-313.
35. "Recent Work on Spinoza," Jewish Quarterly Review, forthcoming
36. "Moses ben Maimon," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/maimonides/>), 9,500 words.
37. "The God of the Philosophers," Jewish Studies Quarterly 13 (2006) No. 3: 205-214.
38. "Ethics, Authority, and Autonomy," The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 192-208.
39. "Plato and the Origin of Mental Health," International Journal of Law and Psychiatry 31 (2008), 487-94.
40. "The Greek Background to Jewish Philosophy," Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 19-38.
41. "Reason as a Paradigm in Jewish Thought," forthcoming in Cambridge History of Jewish Philosophy: The Modern Era. Edited by Kavka, Novak, and Braiterman, forthcoming 2012.
42. "Miracles in Jewish Philosophy," in The Cambridge Companion to Miracles. Edited by Graham Twelftree. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 254-270.
43. "Judaism and the Idea of the Future," Judaic sources and Western thought: Jerusalem's enduring presence, edited by Jonathan Jacobs. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 49-70.
44. Maimonides Appropriation of Aristotle's Ethics" The Reception of Aristotle's Ethics, edited by Jon Miller. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 107-124.

45. "Divinity and Contingency: A Historical Perspective," Archivio Di Filosofia 80 (2012): 33-40.
46. "Maimonides on Creation," Jewish Philosophy: Perspectives and Retrospectives, edited by R. Jospe and D. Schwartz. Academic Studies Press: Brighton, MA.: 2012, 185-199.
47. "La Religione e il bene comune," La guerra dei simbolie, edited by Alberto Palese, Lugano EUPRESS, 21-8.
48. "Messianism: A Brief History of a Complicated Idea," TEORIA Rivista di filosofia 33 (2013), 9-18.
49. "Monotheism at Bay: The Gods of Maimonides and Spinoza" Spinoza and Medieval Jewish Philosophy, edited by Steven Nadler, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 108-127.
50. "A Plea for Transcendence," Jewish Philosophy for the Twenty First Century, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuels and Aaron Hughes, Leiden: Brill, 410-427.
51. "Maimonides and the Idea of a Deflationary Messiah," Messianism, edited by Michael Morgan and Steven Weitzman, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015, 93-107.
52. "Il messianismo," Il pensiero ebraico nel Novecento, edited by Adriano Fabris, Roma: Carocci editore ApA, 2015, 251-260.
53. "What the Hebrew Bible Can/Cannot Teaching Us about God," in Imagining the Jewish God, edited by Leonard Kaplan and Ken Koltun-Fromm. Lanham, MY.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016, 63-85.
54. "Speedily in Our Time," Jewish Philosophy Past and Present, edited by Frank and Segal. New York: Routledge, 2017, 217-225.
55. "No One Can See My Face and Live," in Negative Theology as Jewish Modernity, edited by Michael Fagenblat. Indiana University Press, 2017, pp. 48-61.
56. "What the Guide of the Perplexed is Really About," in Interpreting Maimonides, edited by Charles Manekin and Daniel Davies. Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 65-84.
57. "From Maimonides to Spinoza: Three Versions of an Intellectual Transition," in The Oxford Handbook to Spinoza, edited by Michael Della Rocca. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 45-62.
58. "Moses Maimonides," in The History of Evil in the Medieval Age, edited by Andrew Pinsent. London: Routledge, 2018, 107-120.
59. Shlomo Pines and the Rediscovery of Maimonides in Contemporary Philosophy," in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed in Translation, edited by Sern, Robinson, and Shemesh. University of Chicago Press, 2019, 385-401.

60. "Can there be a Positive Theology?" in The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Theology, edited by Steven Kepnes. Cambridge University Press, 2020, 375-391.

On-Line Publications

1. "Why the Hebrew Bible is to Easy/Difficult to Interpret." 2018. <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/opeds/2018/01/see428026>
2. "When Did the Bible Become Monotheistic?" TheTorah.com (2019). <https://thetorah.com/article/when-did-the-bible-become-monotheistic>
3. "The Tabernacle: A Concession to Human Religious Needs?" TheTorah.com (2020). <https://thetorah.com/article/the-tabernacle-a-concession-to-human-religious-needs>
4. "Prophecy and Legislation After Moses" TheTorah.com (2020). <https://thetorah.com/article/prophecy-and-legislation-after-moses>
5. "The Prophetic View of Morality." 2020. <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/prophetic-view-morality>
6. "Commentary: Why We Need it and the Price We Pay for Having it." 2020. <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/commentary-why-we-need-it-and-price-we-pay-having-it>
7. "What Did the People Hear at Mount Sinai?" TheTorah.com (2021). <https://thetorah.com/article/what-did-the-people-hear-at-mount-sinai>

Reviews and Notes

1. Review of Plato by J.C.B.Gosling, Journal of Philosophy 72 (1975): 221-24 (with R. E. Allen).
2. Review of Aristotle's Posterior Analytics by Hippocrates G. Apostle, Apeiron 17 (1983): 70-72.
3. Review of Plato and Heidegger by H. G. Wolz, Journal of the History of Philosophy 21 (1983): 556-57.
4. Review of Musings on the Meno by J. E. Thomas, Ancient Philosophy 3 (1983): 216-19.
5. Review of The Philosopher in Plato's Statesman by Mitchell Miller, Ancient Philosophy 4 (1984): 234-37.
6. "Reply to Nadler," Philosophy and Literature 9 (1985): 201-2.
7. Review of Evil and the Morality of God, by R. Schulweis, Judaism 35 (1986): 117-19.
8. Review of Socratic Education in Plato's Early Dialogues, by H. Teloh, Review of Metaphysics.

9. Review of The Virtue of Faith by Robert Adams, Ethics 99 (1988): 184-85
10. Review of Lectures and Essays, by Jacob Klein, Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie 71 (1989): 250-52.
11. "Telling the Artist from the Art," Sh'ma 20 (1990): 60-62.
12. Review of Philosopher Kings by C.D.C. Reeve, Nous 26 (1992): 140-43.
13. Review of The Art of Plato, by R. B. Rutherford, Journal of the History of Philosophy 35 (1997): 457-58.
14. Review of Philosophical Religions from Plato to Spinoza: Reason, Religion, and Autonomy, by Carlos Fraenkel, Journal of the History of Philosophy (2014): 171-2.
15. Review of Aaron Hughes, Rethinking Jewish Philosophy, Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews
16. Review of Moshe Halbertal, Maimonides: Life and Thought, British Journal for the History of Philosophy 22 (2014): 843-845.
17. Review of Alfred Ivry, Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed: A Philosophical Guide, Journal of the History of Philosophy 55 (1917): 345-346.

Representative Papers and Addresses

1. Comment on Joseph Owens' "Form as Cause of Being," Marquette University, 1978.
2. Chair, "The pursuit of Misreadings," International Association for Philosophy and Literature, Evanston, 1982.
3. "Hypothetical reasoning at Meno 86c-87c," American Philosophical Association, Los Angeles, Cal., 1984.
4. "Spinoza on Miracles," American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Ga., 1986.
5. "Virtue and Mathematics in the Meno," University of Kentucky, 1990.
6. "Maimonides' Conception of Philosophy," University of Toronto, 1991.
7. "The Rational Theology of Steven S. Schwarzschild," Washington University (St. Louis), 1991.
8. "Maimonides' Conception of Philosophy," University of Virginia, 1993.
9. "The Paradox of Monotheism," University of Georgia, 1994.
10. "Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Philosophy," Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, MA., 1995.
11. "Jewish Philosophy--A Persuasive Definition," American Philosophical Association, New York, N.Y., 1995.

12. "Searching for God Among the Idols," University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Min., 1997.
13. "Spinoza and Judaism," American Philosophical Association, Philadelphia, PA., 1997.
14. "Hermann Cohen on Idol Worship," University of Zurich, 1998.
15. "Maimonides' Critique of Popular Religion," University of Tennessee, 1998.
16. "Maimonides and Aquinas on Creation," University of Pisa, 1999.
17. "Maimonides on Divine Names," University of Padua, 1999.
18. "Why Idolatry is Alive and Well," University of Kentucky, 1999
19. "Hermann Cohen and the Problem of Autonomy: The Origin of I and Thou," Indiana University, 1999.
20. "Maimonides and Spinoza on Causality" University of Chicago, 2000.
21. "Is Judaism Really Monotheistic?" "The Beginning of the Torah," "Sin and Repentance: A Jewish Perspective," University of Toronto, 2001.
22. "Hermann Cohen and the Jewish-German Symbiosis," University of Sussex, England, 2001.
23. "Author Meets Critics," Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, D.C., 2001.
24. "Ethics and Creation", Vanderbilt University, 2002.
25. "Is the God of the Philosophers a Being than Which No Greater Can Be Conceived?" European Association for Jewish Studies, Amsterdam, 2002.
26. "Is God Totally Unknowable," Washington University (St. Louis), 2003.
27. "Maimonides and Spinoza on the Nature of Causality," University of Toronto, 2003.
28. "What Maimonides Can Teach Us About Bible Interpretation," University of Maryland, 2003.
29. "Maimonides and Spinoza on the Structure of Causality," Marquette University, February 2004.
30. "Maimonides and Hermann Cohen on Messianism," New York University, March 2004.
31. "Maimonides' Doubts About Astronomy," Boston Area Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science, Boston University, November 2004.
32. "Feminism As Seen From the Standpoint of Traditional Philosophy," Association for Jewish Studies, December 2004.
33. "Arguing from Ignorance: Maimonides and Spinoza on God and Contingency," University of Pisa, Italy, December 2005.
34. "Covenant and Social Contract," James Madison Center, Princeton University, February 2006.
35. "Maimonides and Spinoza on God and Contingency," National University of Ireland, April, 2006.

36. "Hope as a Moral Ideal" University of Pisa, November 2006.
37. "Spinoza's Theism," University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, November 2006.
38. "Messianism in an Age of Despair," Georgetown University, March 2007.
39. "What Does Jewish Philosophy Contribute? The Cases of Levinas and Strauss," Association for Jewish Studies, San Diego, December 2006.
40. "Maimonides and Spinoza on God and Contingency," University of Chicago, November 2007.
41. "Is Judaism Really Monotheistic," University of Oregon, February, 2008.
42. Conference organized: "Violence – Political and Sacred," Northwestern, April 2008.
43. "Why Monotheism Is and Ought to be Violent," University of Pisa, October, 2008 and Foundation for Islamic Studies and Human Sciences, Casablanca, December 2008
44. "Maimonides on Creation," Association for Jewish Studies," Washington, D.C., December, 2008.
45. "Possessing the Good Forever: An Analysis of Erotic Love," University of Pisa, March, 2009.
46. "Philosophy as Therapy," International Association of Law and Mental Health," New York City, June, 2009.
48. "Saving the Phenomena in Medieval Astronomy," The Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena, Venice, October, 2009.
49. "To the Utmost of Human Capacity" – Maimonides on Human Nature," Princeton University, November, 2009.
50. "Messianic Thoughts," Humanities Center, University of Wisconsin – Madison, March, 2010.
51. "From Maimonides to Spinoza: Three Versions of an Intellectual Transition," SUNY Buffalo, April, 2010.
52. "What Nature Thinks in Spinoza," Amsterdam Colloquium on Jewish Philosophy, July, 2010.
53. "Maimonides' Vision of the Days of the Messiah -- Restorative or Utopian?" European Association of Jewish Studies, Ravenna, Italy, July, 2010.
54. "Messianic Thoughts in an Age of Despair," Jewish Theological Seminary of America, October, 2010.
55. "Biblical Rebels," University of Pisa, March, 2011.
56. "Religion and the Public Good," University of Lugano, March, 2011.
57. "The Destructiveness of God," Shalem Institute, Jerusalem, 2011.
58. "Maimonides and the Idea of a Deflationary Messiah," Tikvah Institute, Princeton University, May, 2011.

59. "The Self and Evil," International Academy of Law and Mental Health, Humboldt University, Berlin, July, 2012.
60. "The Religious Significance of Negative Theology," Association of Jewish Studies, Washington, D.C., December, 2011.
61. "Divine Activity: A Historical Perspective," Oxford University, April, 2012.
62. "Judaism and the Limits of Science, British Association for Jewish Studies," London, July, 2012.
63. "Is Judaism Really Monotheistic?" Purdue University, October, 2012, University of South Florida, November, 2012, University of Florida, January, 2013.
64. "Why We Should Still Read Hermann Cohen," University of Toronto, September, 2012.
65. "What the Guide of the Perplexed is Really About," University of Florida, January, 2013.
66. "Maimonides and Spinoza: How Two Thinkers with Similar Intuitions Came to Different Conclusions," Association of Jewish Studies, Chicago, December, 2011 and World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July 2013.
67. "Genesis 2:18: 'It is not Good for Man to be Alone,'" Shalem Institute, Jerusalem, July, 2013.
68. "Why Matter was Regarded as Dirty and How Spinoza Tried to Clean It Up," University of Pisa, September, 2013.
69. "Creation and the Argument from Particularity," American Catholic Philosophic Association, Indianapolis, November 2013.
70. Panel on the 50th Anniversary of the Pines translation of the Guide of the Perplexed, Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, December, 2013.
71. "Monotheism as Skepticism," Costelli Institute, Rome, January, 2014.
72. "Pines and the Rediscovery of Maimonides in Contemporary Philosophy," University of Chicago, January, 2014.
73. "Why Jewish Philosophy Must Fight an Uphill Battle," Cambridge University, March 2014.
74. "Messianism: A Brief History of a Complicated Idea," Workshop in Jewish Studies, University of Chicago, April 2015.
75. "Monotheism as Skepticism," British Assoc. for Jewish Studies, Manchester, July 2015.
76. "Theology and its Discontents," Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, December, 2015.
77. "Tsimtsum and the Root of Contingency," Cambridge University, England, June, 2016.
78. "Socrates and the Ti Esti Question," University of Pisa, March 2017.

79. "What the Hebrew Bible Can/Cannot Teach us about God," Chicago Society of Biblical Research, March 2017.

80. "Judaism and Freedom," University of Nuremberg-Erlangen, May, 2017.

81. "What the Guide of the Perplexed is Really About," Association for Jewish Studies, Washington, D.C., December 2017.

82. "The Prophets as Moral Idealists," Association for Jewish Studies, December 2018.

University Service

CAS Promotion and Tenure Committee, 1978-80; Chair, 1978-79.

CAS Budget Committee, 1989-91; 1998-2001.

Program Review Council, 1988-90.

Modern Language Coordinating Committee, Chair, 1989-90.

CAS Strategic Planning Committee, 1990-91.

Search Committee for a Director of Program in African Studies, Chair, 1993.

Committee on Religious Life, 1997.

Committee on Athletics and Recreation, 2000; Chair: 2001--2016