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**Prof. Yael Zerubavel Explores Changing Views of the Desert in Zionist and Israeli Culture:
Public Lecture at Rutgers-New Brunswick, Sept. 12**

NEW BRUNSWICK/PISCATAWAY, N.J. – Yael Zerubavel, professor emerita of Jewish studies and history and founding director of the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers, will return to campus to discuss her new book *Desert in the Promised Land* at a public talk on Sept. 12. Using slide images and drawing on a wide range of literary, artistic, and folkloric sources, Zerubavel will explore the multiple meanings of the desert as both a geographic region in Israel and a symbolic landscape in Zionist and Israeli culture. In examining the changing views of the desert from the early twentieth century to the present, she will shed light on romantic and mythical associations, settlement and security issues, and environmental concerns.

The lecture, “Desert in the Promised Land: Nature, Settlement, and the Politics of Space,” will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Douglass Student Center, 100 George Street, New Brunswick. The talk is free and open to the public and free parking is available on campus with vehicle registration. Sponsored by the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life, the talk is the Ruth and Alvin Rockoff Annual Program. Advance registration is requested - email rsvpBildner@sas.rutgers.edu or register online on the Bildner Center website: BildnerCenter.Rutgers.edu.

Zerubavel is a leading expert in the areas of collective memory, Israeli culture, war and trauma, and symbolic landscapes. She is also the author of the the award-winning *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*.

The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life connects the university with the community through public lectures, symposia, Jewish communal initiatives, cultural events, and teacher training.