

We, former students of Professor Gershon Hundert z"l, will forever treasure our memories of his classroom. Despite his impressive (or potentially intimidating) academic reputation, his lectures were incredibly engaging and even humorous. He started every class with the quip, "Any questions?", as an indication of his want for his students to be curious and skeptical of the information we received. Another one of his favourite routines was to begin introductory classes by recounting the story of Jewish Khazaria, only to tell us after we had all written it down, that it was all total bubkes (nonsense).

In any of his courses, there were two constants: a complete and genuine shock that rarely any students spoke Polish, or Hebrew, or Yiddish (and the list could go on), and a reminder to read the Bible—"Don't wait for the movie!"

His sense of humour was also apparent in his syllabi, which contained various jokes sure to raise students' eyebrows, or even his comments on papers. Most iconic was the line that prefaced a list of term paper topic ideas for his 200-level courses: "For those with impoverished imaginations." Perhaps he was simply being blunt, but he often left seemingly playful feedback such as "Ugh," "Not adequate," or, best of all, "This is not a history paper!" Paradoxically, these comical comments actually galvanized many of us to work even harder.

But anyone who learned from Prof. Hundert can attest that his classes were hardly a joke. His courses were invariably rigorous, yet he was the kind of instructor that inspired students to *want* to read the assigned material and understand the subject matter.

Above all, he embodied what it meant to be a positivist historian. He actively urged his students to love nuance and to look for balanced, text-based explanations for past events. He did not want students to merely repeat what was already known and he strongly discouraged us from trying to fit historical details into a prefabricated ideological formula. This commitment to source-based historiography is something he lived by in his many books and a powerful philosophy that influenced generations of his students.

May his memory live on in his works and those of everyone who he shaped with his wise words and tempered teachings.

*Baruch Dayan ha-Emet.*