TITLE OF PROJECT: Is this Baby Jewish? Rabbinic Law examines Assisted Reproductive Technologies (Undergraduate)

PROJECT INFORMATION
Rabbi Ben Samuels, Congregation Shaarei Tefillah of Newton, is transforming his recent doctoral dissertation, “How Advances in Science Change Jewish Law and Ethics: Assisted Reproductive Technologies and the Redefinition of Parenthood” into an academic book publication with trade book cross-over appeal. This dissertation investigates the ways scientific and biotechnological advancement impact and change Jewish law and ethics. It analyzes the contemporary Jewish bioethical debate concerning the identification of maternity and paternity in four cases of assisted reproductive technologies (ART): in vitro fertilization, gestational surrogacy, cloning, and mitochondrial replacement therapy. Unprecedented modes of procreation engender new definitions of parenthood, challenging a longstanding Jewish framework of theology, law, and ethics.

Rabbi Samuels is looking for an intern to read the dissertation and assist him in further research and source/fact checking. The work will entail locating contemporary stories and press coverage in non-academic periodicals and news sources and include internet research (50%), library research (20%) and interviews (5%). Other work will include short literature reviews of sociological and medical anthropologic studies; short literature reviews of American legal studies and analyses in family law and reproductive law, and short literature reviews of feminist writings related to the topic within bioethics and gender studies (15%). Fact checking the medical science elements is possible. The intern will also have the opportunity to work collaboratively with Rabbi Samuels (10%).

PROFILE OF APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE
- Cultural fluency with Jewish law, communal custom, and Jewish family/gender dynamics
- Jewish text skills, even if in translation
- Hebrew language skills a plus
- Background in biology a plus, but not a requirement
- Legal research or interest to learn legal research also a plus.
- Excellent research skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Creativity; openness to readings in new disciplines
- Demonstrated initiative.
- Strong organizational skills.