

public
lecture

ROBERT SCHWARTZWALD



The public lecture
will take place on

18

Wednesday
April, 2018
18:00

All guests are requested
to be seated by 18:00

Office of the NaUKMA
Jewish Studies programs

Kyiv, Voloska Street 8/5,
Building 5, basement

A BURDEN UPON THEIR HEADS: HASSIDIM AND QUEBEC'S DEBATE OVER 'REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION' AND *LAÏCITÉ*

Modern Quebec nationalism sees itself as tolerant and largely social-democratic in outlook, yet the arrival of new immigrants from non-Christian countries has led to anxieties over the power of religious fundamentalisms and a demand for the Quebec state to forcefully assert its secular character. There are sharp divisions over what constitute “reasonable accommodations” of religious practices in public life, and a recently proposed law would ban any person wearing a head covering from providing or receiving state services. While it is generally acknowledged that this proposal reveals anxieties over the niqab worn by some Muslim women, other religious groups are implicated, including Montreal’s Hassidic community. We will examine tensions in Outremont, a neighborhood Hassidim share with a largely upper middle-class, francophone population, and the differing notions of secularism and intercultural relations that underlie them.

Robert Schwartzwald is a Professor in the Department of Literatures and Languages of the World at the Université de Montréal, where he directs the Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies and the Master’s program in International Studies. He is a recipient of the Governor General’s International Award for Canadian Studies and a former Editor of the *International Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue internationale d’études canadiennes*.