The 2013 Henry Samuel Levinson Lecture Series speaker is Dr. Marc Lee Raphael. He is the Nathan and Sophia Gumenick Professor of Judaic Studies, Professor of Religious Studies, Director of the Program and the Minor in Judaic Studies at the College of William and Mary. A Reform Rabbi, he was ordained at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. He received his BA and Ph.D. degrees at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Professor Raphael writes about Jews and Judaism in the United States, including philanthropy, culture, politics, and especially religion. His most recent book, The Synagogue in America – A Short History (New York University Press, 2011), is the first of his many scholarly books to have no footnotes. Drawing on archival sources and previous research, it is written for undergraduate students and lay people who have an interest in American religion. The book represents the culmination of many years of research in synagogue archives and attendance at worship services at more than 100 synagogues in every region of the country.

In his Levinson Lecture, Professor Raphael will compare Jewish and American humor and discuss what underlies the best of Jewish humor. He will also tell some great Jewish jokes. His presentation will be educational and enjoyable.

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This is a free public lecture. Parking is available behind the Weatherspoon Auditorium. A reception will follow.