NEW WORLDS

• By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

ONLINE PHYSICS COURSES MAKE A ‘BIG BANG’

An “evolution” is taking place at Bar-Ilan University’s physics department, with a new program offering three online courses in mechanics, waves and mathematical methods for physicists. They have become such a hit that five additional courses were introduced when the year’s second semester began in mid-March. In total, there are eight courses and two preparatory courses required for acceptance into the department.

“Our mechanics course has been the most popular of all,” said deputy department chairman Dr. Yossi Ben-Zion, who initiated the online courses with chairman Prof. Michael Rosenbluh.

“Nearly 1,000 viewers have watched the course since its debut three months ago, and hundreds have viewed each of the others.” They can be accessed at www.youtube.com/channel/UC-Ogivyu0TtP1Y2clXZtSjw/playlists.

To film the online classes, a high-quality camera is affixed to a permanent location in the classroom, and the lecturer is fitted with a microphone. The session is then edited and posted on YouTube. All of the courses are open to students and the general public.

The online courses have played a particularly meaningful role in the lives of students who are forced to miss class for a variety of reasons, including IDF reserve duty, maternity leave or illness. Bar-Ilan said that in addition to being taught in the classroom, all BA courses in the department will become available online within the next three years. The department also hopes to launch online courses in English next year. Eventually, they may also be broadcast live.