

# AFRICAN STUDIES AT BEN GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

## MA TRACK: AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Course Catalogue  
2021-2022

אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev



מרכז אפריקה על שם תמר גולן  
באוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב



THE TAMAR GOLAN AFRICA CENTRE  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

# Required courses



## Deconstructing Development: Theory, Practice and Critique Ornit Avidar - 4 Credits

In this course we will examine the evolution of theories and practices in the field of development over time. We will examine the historical processes that first gave birth to the term “development,” and later gave rise to critique of the ideologies and practices associated with it. The course will review both theoretical paradigms and practices supporting development, post-development and critical development studies. We will explore the different intentions and expectations of various stakeholders, and the gaps that emerge between intentions and outcomes. We will see how both failures and successes can give birth to new ideas about progress, sustainability, empowerment and more. The course will raise questions and dilemmas in the field of development for the students to critique and discuss, and provide them with practical tools for implementing and evaluating projects.

## Approaches to Research: Methodology, Practice & Theory Dr. Noa Levy - 2 credits

This course will review current methodologies & theories concerning research practices in the social sciences. Beginning with a critical examination of research as a process of construction of knowledge, we will study a wide variety of methods & practices employed by social scientists' research in the planning & implementation of research. During the first semester, the course is dedicated to a more theoretical approach, and we will review concepts and practices such as reflexivity, positionality and research ethics. Second semester, students will experiment with several research methods, such as interviewing, ethnography, and analysis of various alternative sources. Students will submit reports summarizing and analyzing their experiences with each method.

## Economy, Politics and Society in 20th Century Africa Dr. Ushehwedu Kufakurinani - 4 credits

This course explores the economic and social history of Africa in the 20th century. This covers largely the colonial experience and part of the post-colonial. The course is largely historiographical i.e. it emphasises changing debates and interpretations of Africa's economic past. It underscores the importance of understanding the colonialism, its legacy and how it shapes current economic experiences. It is a course that stresses contexts and meanings and how these are interpreted and re-interpreted by scholarship and affected societies. Using a number of critical themes, the course will pick case studies from various African countries to explore various ideas.

## Project Workshop Prof. Lynn Schler - 4 credits

This course serves as a preparatory workshop for students to undertake community-based projects in a local community in Africa. The course will begin with an introduction to theoretical and practical aspects of community development in African contexts. We will raise epistemological questions regarding the production of knowledge in postcolonial Africa, and then review theoretical and empirical research on questions of community, communalism and community development in Africa. The course will also prepare students for their individual projects. Over the course of the two semesters, students will formulate objectives and goals, study the relevant historical, theoretical, and contextual background for their project, write a literature review, and submit a full project proposal at the end of the course. The third aspect of the course will provide opportunities for seeing and experiencing many of the ideas raised in class in local community development initiatives. We will visit and learn from a range of community and economic development projects in the Negev while getting acquainted with major socio - development issues in the region. Throughout the course, we will try to understand how communities can be the basis for a range of initiatives, and how students can become agents of change within local contexts.



## **Studying Sustainability**

### **Intensive course at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies**

#### **1 credit**

The Arava Institute is a leading environmental and academic institution in the Middle East, working to advance cross-border environmental cooperation in the face of political conflict. It houses academic programs in partnership with Ben Gurion University, research centers, and international cooperation initiatives focusing on a range of environmental concerns and challenges. With a student body comprised of Jordanians, Palestinians, Israelis, and students from around the world, the idea that nature knows no political borders is more than a belief. It is a fact, a curriculum, and a way of life.

During the course we will expose the participants to the concept of “sustainability”, with which they will engage in theory and in practice in the complicated reality of Israel and the Middle East. They will touch on different approaches to sustainability, the particularities of different dimensions of the environmental crisis in Israel (social, economic, political and ecological), key specific challenges in pursuing sustainability in the region and visit some on-the-ground practices aimed to promote a vision of a sustainable future. The participants will have an opportunity to interact with the Arava Institute students. In addition, they will learn about the unique Kibbutz Ketura way of life and its values and practices.

## **Development Project Management - Dr. Aliza Belman Inbal**

### **1 credit**

TBA

# Electives

You must take at least one of the following electives



## Youth in Africa Noa Levy - 2 Credits

Africa is the youngest continent in the world with more than half of its population currently between the ages of 0-24, with over 250 million under the age of 15. While populations around the world are ageing, young people in Africa are shaping the face of the future. In this class, we will discuss various aspects of youth in contemporary Africa. We will learn about how youth are responding to both global and local economic, social and political challenges and opportunities, and the types of constraints they face in attempting to realize their aspirations. We will engage with these themes with regard to a wide range of countries and contexts. We will explore the ways in which young people are taking on leadership roles and forging initiatives within the family, the community and the state.



## A Planet of Slums? Informal Settlements and the Transition to Formality and Planning Dr. Yodan Rofè - 2 credits

This is a research seminar intended to survey the literature on informal settlements as a worldwide phenomenon, and its understanding as both a problem and a solution to the pressures of housing under rapid population growth and urbanization, or in the wake of natural or man-made disasters. The course will also examine the various solutions proposed over time for the transition of informal housing areas over time and the processes of formalizing them and including them in the city. It will examine informal housing in urbanizing and peri-urban areas, and in the aftermath of natural and human-made disasters.

The course is given as a reading seminar. Students have to choose a topic within the wide literature on informal settlements and how to deal with them in the context of rapid urbanization. The students will research it throughout the semester by identifying, reading and reviewing the most significant literature on their chosen topic.





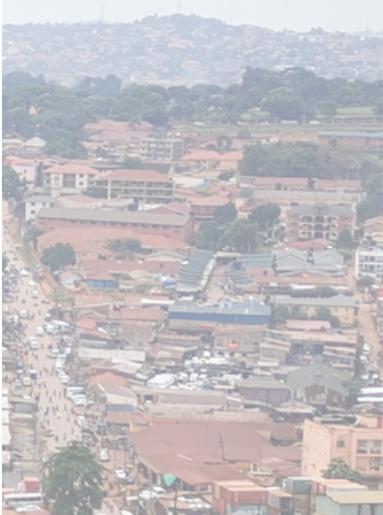
# Electives

You must take at least one of the following electives



## **Sport and Development: prospects and limitations** **Itamar Dubinsky - 2 Credits**

The efforts to harness sport to address socioeconomic ills in Africa have mushroomed throughout the continent since the late 20th century, with governments, international agencies, nonprofit organizations, and entrepreneurs increasingly promoting sport as a tool to deliver development goals. The course will examine these divergent perspectives of the sport-for-development field in Africa by studying the emergence of the field, surveying selected initiatives that have operated during the last three decades, analyzing their successes and failures in delivering their goals, and exploring the methodologies used to assess the ventures' impacts. Doing so will open doors for students who are interesting in engaging with the sport-for-development projects in the continent, and also offer concrete tools to students who seek to implement sporting activities in projects that are not necessarily designed to address sporting goals. As such, the course will appeal to a broad range of students. No prior knowledge or experience in sport is required to complete the course successfully.



## **Liberation Theology in Latin America, Africa, and Palestine** **Leonardo Cohen - 2 credits**

The course presents a global vision of the development of Catholic liberation theology, with particular emphasis on the cases of Latin America, Africa and Palestine. Liberation theology is a synthesis of Christian theology and socio-economic analyses that emphasizes "social concern for the poor and political liberation for oppressed peoples." Beginning in the 1960s after the Second Vatican Council, liberation theology became the political praxis of Latin American theologians and afterwards was developed in other places like Africa and Asia. Throughout the course, the different versions of liberation theology will be presented, from an historical and religious point of view.



## Writing Colonial History in the 21st Century Prof. Ruth Ginio - 4 credits

Although decades have passed since most of the colonies ruled by European powers gained their independence, the debate surrounding the colonial past has not subsided. On the contrary, the colonial legacy continues to generate controversy in societies of both the former colonial powers and the former colonies. In the context of these debates, the writing of colonial history plays a significant role. The study of colonialism has undergone far-reaching changes since it emerged in the 1960s, moving beyond the strict boundaries of the historical discipline, and into other fields such as literature and cultural studies. The seminar will examine the main issues at the heart of the study of colonialism in the early twenty-first century. We will examine the different ways that historians who seek to uncover the voices of colonial subjects can bypass the obstacles inherent in colonial sources: oral history, the use of the micro-historical method, legal sources and more. We will engage with the critiques of non-Western scholars, mainly from India and various countries in Africa, about the ways that colonialism is studied in universities in the West. We will also discuss the connection between writing about the colonial past in Africa and the West, and contemporary protest movements and political debates related to the colonial past.

## Black Critical Theory Danny Admasu - 2 credits

This course will explore the central tenets of Black Critical Race theory, from its origins to current debates and paradigms. We will look at the intersections and divergences between the evolution of black critical thought based in the continent and that of the African diaspora. The course will examine the historical contexts and conflicts within which Black Critical Theory has evolved and changed, including experiences of colonialism, racism, neoliberalism, and globalization. We will draw links between Post-Colonial theory and black critical thought, and focus on articulations such as Afro-Feminism, Pan-Africanism, Afro-Pessimism, and Afrofuturism.



## Global Health Systems

**Nadav Davidovich and Anat Rosental - Intensive summer course  
3-6 credits**

Student will learn about various aspects impacting global health decision making, such as globalization, ethics, migration, and case studies (such as COVID-19, Climate Change, AIDS, and Mental Health). Global health has emerged as an interdisciplinary field incorporating both theory and social involvement, including fields such as medicine, epidemiology, sociology, economics, political sciences, ethics, and more. The course broadens the traditional medical outlook on health, considering environmental and social determinants afflicting one's health; it reckons health to be impacted by ecological factors and examines how class, race, and gender inequalities affect access to health care services.



# Other Electives



## The Politics of Empire in the Middle East Dr. Mansour Nasasra - 2 credits

This course aims to contextualise contemporary debates in IR with a historical overview of colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as providing the conceptual tools to understand the workings of colonial power. It focuses on the changes introduced to Middle Eastern societies by colonialism, the implications of these changes for states in the region after their independence, and more recent socio-political developments often categorised in the region as “neo-colonial” forms of domination.



## Development Economics Dr. Ada Gonzalez-Torres - 2 credits

The objective of the course is for students to learn about central topics in the study of development economics and to introduce them to microeconomic concepts and methods used in empirical economics. The course will consist of lectures and classroom discussions around central topics in development economics research, while also introducing microeconomic concepts and methods used in empirical economics. The focus of the course is on empirical and microeconomic aspects of development, including the life and livelihood of the poor, health, education, etc.

For more courses in taught in English at BGU please go to the following link:

<https://in.bgu.ac.il/en/Global/Pages/General/Courses-in-English---Lists.aspx>

