

AFRICAN STUDIES AT BEN GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

MA TRACK: AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Course Catalogue
2022-2023

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 Dr. 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.

African Political and Social Thought Dr. Sethunya Mosime - 4 credits

This course aimed at complementing the theory and methods courses, by providing sociological alternatives from the global south as well as social movements that have shaped such thought. The idea of an African Social Thought is both under construction and under attack; it is both a form of resistance and a potentially transformative force. It introduces students to founding and continuing mothers and fathers of African Sociological Thought through a trans-disciplinary that includes sociology, literature, anthropology, political economy and philosophy. It exposes students to ways of making sense that shape ideas and agendas about Africa through encounters with historical and contemporary processes including Imperialism, Colonialism, Nationalism, Apartheid, Liberation struggles, Oppression, attempts at Democracy and good Governance, Human security, Modernisation, Urbanisation, and forms of Discrimination based on Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Religion etc.

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.

Research in Africa: Ethics, Methodologies and Practices Dr. Noa Levy - 2 credits

This course will review trends, methodologies, and ethical considerations in qualitative research in Africa and discuss key political considerations in field research through lenses of power. We will acquire essential tools in qualitative methodologies and employ them during the semester through field practices, reflexive writing, and analysis.

Development Project Management - 2 credits



Topics in Environmental Issues, Sustainability and Conservation **Prof. Yaron Ziv - 2 credits**

In this multi-disciplinary course, we will discuss major challenges facing environmental protection efforts. In doing so, we'll bring together various aspects from three themes: Biological, Physical, and Human.

The Biological theme focuses on the importance of biodiversity and the actions we can take to conserve basic ecosystem functions. For example: reintroducing locally extinct key species and protecting agroecosystems. Clean air and water resources, as elements of the Physical theme, are crucial to maintaining biodiversity and our basic life-support systems. We will explore methods for minimizing air and water pollution and their negative impacts. The Human theme investigates how human development can be sustainable under the current pressures at local, regional, and global scales. Examples include water reuse, green building, and environmentally friendly technologies.

Studying Sustainability - Intensive course at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies - 2 credits

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.

Elective Courses



Considering Sustainable Design Projects in Africa Dr. David Goss - 2 Credits



Sustainable design has become center stage in global discourse, also bringing changes in the modes of production, consumption, and discussion of African creations. In this course we will discuss the development of sustainable design thinking in the global context: the 3R's, the Natural Step, Cradle to Cradle. Considering different design strategies: charitable, networks, and social business. Also design modes, like: fairtrade; recycling and reusing; trash to fashion; secondhand markets; community mobilization; marketing ruralism; health, sex education, hygiene, nutrition; gender; architecture and constructions; urbanism; green washing; gated communities; and eco-tourism.

Knowledge and Power in Colonial Africa Prof. Ruth Ginio - 2 Credits

The course will interrogate the relationship between knowledge and power in colonial contexts. We will examine the ways in which European knowledge was created in African and Asian colonies, with emphasis on the early period of colonial rule. After an introductory discussion of the definitions of knowledge and of the European colonial idea, we will tackle the following questions: Which kinds of knowledge were needed for colonial rule? What is the relation between European perceptions of non-European regions and peoples and colonial knowledge that was formed in the colonies? Who was responsible for gathering knowledge about the colonies? What kinds of contributions did local populations make in the construction of colonial knowledge? In what way did the colonies served as laboratories for the evolution of European ideas, paradigms, ideologies, and theories? Is it possible to decolonize European knowledge? During the course we will focus on several areas of knowledge and will examine them through various case-studies from European-ruled colonies.



Resilience - The Art of Disaster Management and Coping **Prof. Limor Aharonson-Daniel - 2 Credits**

This is an innovative course aiming at teaching and training resilience. Resilience is a necessary capacity in the context of stressful and disaster situations and an essential element in successful emergency management and coping. This course touches upon the internal and external resources and tools necessary for handling stress and emerging with increased strength from such experiences.

The course objectives are to introduce the concept of resilience and its relevance in various arenas and times. To portray the impact of the disaster on individuals, families, communities, organizations, infrastructure and the interfaces between them. To provide students with a broad perspective on the resilient management of disasters and emergency situations.

African Literatures in English: Texts, Contexts, History **Dr. Ruth Wenske Stern - 4 credits**

This course will give an introduction to creative African literatures in English as they have developed over the past century, with a focus on the diversity of genres and traditions that are embedded into Anglophone literatures. Contextualizing creative works within their political, historical, and cultural contexts, we will use literature as a lens through which to explore the specificities of Southern, Western, Eastern, and Northern African traditions. Taking fiction, poetry, and drama as primary texts, the course will introduce key theoretical approaches for analyzing literary works. With a theoretical grounding in Global South epistemologies, we will examine several key themes through which the idea of “Africanness” is negotiated and constructed: orality and orature, communalism (Ubuntu), colonialism and postcolonialism, independence and post-independence, gender, religion and enchantment (animism and Christianity/Islam), as well as formal and informal education. Through this, we will problematize—while also developing methods for—reading literature as an engagement with social and political concerns.

Youth in Africa Dr. 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.


Global Health Policies Dr. Anat Rosenthal - 2 credits

Transformations in the structure of the global health system, as well as a growing interest in the health of people living in developing countries, are the cause of major shifts in global health policy. These shifts are evident in the growing financial investments in global health, as well as in the actions of local, international, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The need to find solutions to health problems in resource-limited settings was faced by many challenges but also resulted in innovative solutions. The course will review the various challenges and shifts in the realm of global health policy by investigating case studies of health services in resource-limited settings. From the global coronavirus pandemic, AIDS care in Kenya to the crisis in health workforce in Bangladesh, the course will focus on the shaping and practice of global health policy, and its impact on health services in resource-limited settings.



Sport and Development: Prospects and Limitations


Dr. 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

Dr. 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.

Black Critical Theory Mr. 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.

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>

