

# Teaching

The Office of the Dean of Academic Studies, headed by the Dean of Academic Studies, Prof. Haim Saadoun, is responsible for all university-wide and interdepartmental issues pertaining to studies at the OUI. The Office of the Dean formulates teaching policies and procedures, as well as rules and regulations that apply to students; tutorial format; procedures for opening new study groups, and the instruction and training of teaching personnel.

Three divisions operate under the auspices of The Dean's Office: The Department for Teaching and Learning, The Department of Academic Counseling, and the Unit for Student Retention. Together, they promote teaching and learning, as well as providing services to students with respect to studying.

During the past year, 5,349 study groups were opened for 742 academic courses. The study groups operated in 67 study centers throughout Israel.

## New Study Programs

- MA in History
- BA in Political Science, with a track in New Media and Political Activism
- BA in Accounting with a division of studies in Economics, with a track in Information Systems or an expanded track in Economics

## New Courses

### History, Philosophy and Judaic Studies

Anti-Semitism, the European Nation-State and the Jews (MA)

Multicultural Approaches in the History of Modern Jewish Thought (MA)

History, Society, and the Social Sciences I (MA)

History, Society and the Social Sciences II (MA)

The Palestinians in the Twentieth Century: Political, Social and Cultural Change (MA)

Muslim Societies on the Shores of the Red Sea: The Challenge of Globalization (MA)

Between Ashkenaz and Sepharad: Cultural History of Provençal Jewry in the Middle Ages (MA)

Introduction to Continental Philosophy in the Twentieth Century

Apostates and Converts: Religious Conversion in Monotheistic Faiths (MA)

Saints and Believers in Islam and Judaism (MA)

### Literature, Language and the Arts

Greek and Roman Art

## Education and Psychology

Typical and Atypical Language Development from Infancy to Adolescence

Qualitative Research in Education (MA)

Psychological Distance and Construal Level (MA)

The Psychology of Negotiations

Language and Aging (MA)

## Management and Economics

Macro-organizational Behavior

Honors Seminar in Management: Gaining Practical Experience in Organizations

## Sociology, Political Science and Communication

Food, Society, and Culture

Society, Politics, and the Economy

Conflict Resolution in International Relations

State in an Age of Globalization: Anthropological Perspectives

From Search Engines to Social Media: Search, Monitoring, and Online Influence Metrics

Training Program of the Knesset

Seminar for Outstanding Students: Sociology, Political Science, Communication

Research Seminar: Politics and Political parties in Europe in the Globalization Era (MA)

Research Seminar: Politics and Economy in a Globalization Era (MA)

Research Seminar: Communication in Democratic Societies (MA)

On Tigers and Dragons: International Relations in East Asia

## **Mathematics and Computer Science**

Final Project in Industrial Engineering

## **Natural and Life Sciences Department**

The Ecology and Behavior of the Arabian Babbler

New Reproductive Technologies: Social and Bio-ethical aspects (MA)

Critical Reading of Articles and Research Planning

## **The Department for Teaching and Learning**

This department is responsible for leading intensive, university-wide latitudinal processes for promoting teaching and learning. For that purpose, it operates in two complementary areas: development of student study skills, and pedagogical development of teaching.

A new website was launched this year to assist in the development of study skills. Students can access clear and useful information about a variety of workshops and instructional sessions, including orientation for new students, frontal and online instructional sessions for improving skills and acquiring tools for active learning, and workshops for writing seminar papers, etc. Likewise, new programs were launched for improving the study skills of Arabic-speaking students, including technological literacy workshops and a mentoring project. A new study skills program was instituted at study centers for Israeli-Ethiopian students.

The updating and modification of teaching methods in order to adapt to contemporary modes of teaching and learning is also evident in the training of new teaching faculty, who now receive personalized instruction sessions. These individual sessions are adapted to the content and needs of each faculty member, and take place at study centers or are delivered by ZOOM, which enables the participation of teaching faculty who are unable to physically attend the workshops.

This year, we introduced Teaching and Learning Day, an annual conference focused on the discussion of topics at the heart of the OUI's mission, in order to support and promote processes of change and renewal in teaching and learning. The Open (Thinking About) Teaching conference,

was a great success and was well-attended, especially by tutors, teaching coordinators, and senior faculty members. The second annual teaching day, Recalculating the Teaching Track (Together), which is now being planned, will focus on creating a learning community of colleagues.

## **Key Courses**

Collaboration between the Office of the Dean of Academic Studies and the Dean of Development and Educational Technology came to fruition in the unique Key Courses project. Intended to provide an optimal response to students at the beginning of their studies, the program focuses on the initial courses chosen most often by new OUI students. After the courses were selected by the academic departments, intensive thinking took place regarding the status of each course. Learning outcomes of each course were redefined, along with the skills required to succeed. At the same time, course websites were restructured in order to suit the remodeled study process, and faculty was trained accordingly. The project, intended to continue for the next two years, has promoted cooperation between the senior faculty and the teaching staff and has created a productive dialogue between the student retention unit, the teaching and learning department, the evaluation department, and the Center for Technology in Distance Education (Shoham).

## **Academic Counseling**

The Department of Academic Counseling serves thousands of students. Due to the special nature of OUI studies, the academic counseling services provided for the students are unique, with a goal of strengthening the counseling-registration-success-retention connection.

Academic counseling is available to students who are in the planning stages of their studies for the semester or the year, to assist in building a study program, while taking into consideration university support systems. Counseling is provided in person, by phone, email, or via distance technologies. Extra attention is offered to special populations, such as candidates for the IDF program, high school students, soldiers, prisoners, Arabic-speaking students, ultra-Orthodox students, and Israeli-Ethiopian students. Faculty members representing all of our departments are available to provide academic advising.

In the past year, 68,000 meetings and advising sessions were conducted with potential and registered students. Studies conducted by the evaluation department have consistently indicated a strong correlation between students receiving regular counseling during their studies, and higher rates of retention and academic success.

## Transfer Tracks

Students may begin their bachelor's degree studies in the flexible framework of the OUI (without psychometric exam scores or a high school diploma required for acceptance). Successful completion of a cluster of courses (in accordance with specific requirements for each study program) allows students to either transfer to another university or complete their degree at the OUI.

This year, two transfer track options were added:

- Department of Talmud and Halakha (the Hebrew University)
- Department of Middle East Studies (Bar-Ilan University)

## New Study Centers and Teaching Institutions

In 2017-2018, in cooperation with community centers for culture, youth, and sport, a new study center was opened in Segev Shalom. New teaching institutions were approved at the Rimon School in Ramat Hasharon, and at Beit Bracha in Jerusalem.

## The Library

In 2017-2018, the library was converted to the Alma system for cloud-based library management. The internet-based system provides a comprehensive solution for all library procedures, such as acquisitions, cataloging, screening, regular and interlibrary lending, digitization, and more. The system provides management services for various kinds of information resources, including printed and electronic materials.

## School for Local Government

The School for Local Government was established in 2013 in collaboration with the Federation of Local Governments in Israel, in order to extend higher education opportunities to local authority employees. Currently, 1,000 students are studying towards bachelor's degrees in the social sciences and humanities, combined with a diploma in local government studies. From Majdal Shams in the north, to Eilat in the south, fifty study groups have been formed. In addition to bachelor's degree studies, seventy students are pursuing master's degrees in government programs and public policy (in the framework of the Interdisciplinary Democracy Studies program). The school's momentum is constantly increasing. This year, 120 students completed the second cycle of the program; 25% with honors.



Photo: Gideon Markowicz

Graduation Ceremony, School for Local Government