



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

The Center for Teaching of Jewish Civilization, The
Hebrew University of Jerusalem



ISRAEL INSTITUTE

Israel and the Middle East

An academic workshop

Organized by: The Center for Teaching of Jewish Civilization, The Hebrew
University of Jerusalem

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Jerusalem, September 15-19, 2024

Israel and the Middle East or Israel in the Middle East? Is the state of Israel an integral part of the geographical area in which it resides? How do Israelis understand their place in the region and how are they perceived by their neighbors and particularly by the Palestinians? How do the divisions within Israeli society (ethnic, religious, economic and geographical) relate to its relations with its neighbors?

In leading academic institutions around the world, Israel, Judaism and Hebrew have long been studied as part of the wider regional perspective of Middle East studies. However, the internal discourse in Israel, whether academic, public, political, professional or legal, tends to exhibit a strong dichotomy between “us” (Jews) and “them.” (Arabs). In Israeli academia, Israel, Jewish and Hebrew studies are separated from the departments of the regional study of the Middle East. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak described Israel as a “villa in the jungle”, a rhetoric expression of Israel’s self-perception as a separate and supposedly “more civilized” space from its environs. On the ground, however, in recent decades group and individual identities in Israel and the Middle East altogether are becoming more blurred, dynamic and complex. While Israel’s regional relations are rapidly changing, the understandings of the “self” and the “other” are taking on new forms. The October 7th terrorist attack and the destructive war in Gaza are bound to complicate matters even further.

In order to properly study and teach about the State of Israel, it is vital to combine critical and interdisciplinary scholarship with first-hand experience and encounters. In this five-days Jerusalem-based workshop, scholars and lecturers teaching about Israel in universities around the world are invited to reevaluate Israel’s place in the Middle East. The workshop

will also delve into the social tapestry of Israeli society, contextualizing the main sociological cleavages, points of encounter and understanding alongside the growing polarization between Ashkenazi-Mizrahi, religious-secular, political right and left, and Jewish-Arab societies in contemporary Israel. The workshop will tackle openly and honestly the sensitive and intricate questions of Israeli society and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Intra-Jewish ethnic relations, Jewish-Arab relations, the occupation and more. Combining lectures, conversations with Israeli and Palestinian experts and study tours, we will provide the participating scholars with tools to better understand and subsequently teach Israel's place in the region from a critical perspective within and without the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Academic Coordinator of the workshop: Dr. Eran Tzidkiyahu, www.erantzidkiyahu.com

Call for application

Scholars and lecturers teaching about Israel in universities around the world are invited to apply. Applicants interested in participating in the workshop should send an email including CV, list of academic publications, and a short 1-page letter explaining the importance of the workshop to the applicant's academic and professional development.

The organizers of the workshop will cover the cost of the workshop, including residence, academic program and study tours. The participants should cover the costs of flight tickets to and from Israel by themselves.

Deadline for applying: May 31, 2024

Applicants will be informed of the selection committee's decision by June 15, 2024.

Email for application and further inquiries: jewish.civilization@mail.huji.ac.il