An Academic Summer Program at the University of Haifa

Abstract

Israel and North America currently constitute the two leading centers of Jewish demography, identity and existence. Broadly speaking, they represent the two major Jewish responses to modernity – Zionism as a form of modern nationalism on the one hand, and integration into a liberal western society and body politic on the other. Their relations respond to this initial divide, while at the same time trying to coalesce a collective notion of Jewish peoplehood, based on culture, identity and a sense of a shared history and fate. The aim of this course is to learn more about the emergence of these two centers, and then explore the past, present and future of their relations.

In recent years, the issue of religion has emerged as a crucial factor in Israel-Diaspora relations, especially in relation to the Jewish center in North America. The historical development of progressive Jewish strands in the United States, together with the fundamental changes in the religious makeup of Jewish society and the perception of the political role of religion in the state of Israel, have led to tension and strife regarding such issues as religious praxis, social identity and the public sphere. Religion with therefore be the main theme through which the relations will be explored, both historically and in relation to current affairs and issues.

Session: July 5, 2020 – July 29, 2020
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Academic Staff:
David Barak-Gorodetsky, PhD

The program will feature a wide range of additional guest speakers relating to the topic.
The course will include a total of 48 hours, 3 academic credits.

Housing: University of Haifa Dorms

Week 1: Israel – an Introduction
• How Israel came to being – the History of Zionism
• Early Israel - The establishment of the State and the first decades
• Contemporary Issues in Israeli society – Social and Economic divides, groups

Week 2: Focal Point - Religion in Israel
• “Above and below”: The secular-religious continuum of Israeli society
• More religious – or less? Israel between secularization and post-secular theory
• Religion and State in Israel – history and

Week 3: American Jewry
• Jewish History in the US – an introduction
• Religious strands in North-American Jewry
• Current affairs in American Judaism

Week 4: Israel-Diaspora Relations
• “From Blaustein Ben-Gurion (1951) to AIPAC and JStreet”– the politics of Israel-Diaspora relations
• “A people divided?”: The concept of Peoplehood and its role in Israel-Diaspora Relations
• “Women of the Wall” and beyond - Religion in Israel Diaspora Relations

Trips and Tours:
The program includes Three day trips (Jerusalem, Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee, Golan Heights) and one weekend trip (Ein-Gedi and Dead Sea). All trips and tours are led by a professional tour guides with appropriate academic qualifications and are held in English.

Program Cost: 3000 $ per student

Acceptance Criteria:
The program is open to qualified high school seniors or students who have completed upper secondary school\high school with the past two years. A minimum high school GPA 80\100, or 3.0 out of 4.0 is required for application.

Each applicant will be asked to submit a letter of recommendation, motivational statement, and Medical forms signed by a doctor, vouching for participant’s health and ability to participate in abroad program

For more information:
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