

Israel and the Environment

Stuart Fleischer, Ph.D.

Spring Semester 2021

Instructor Contact Information: sfleischer@wbais.net

Out of Class Availability and Best Ways to Contact - Email preferred to set up meeting

For course times/days and location, please visit the TAU International web site (Study Abroad Course Offerings and Schedules). Please note that all information below is subject to change and/or adjustment as necessary.

Course Description

This course studies the relationship between people and the environment, and the effects of Israeli societies and industries have on the environment. Plant and animal community structure, renewable and non-renewable resources and environmental degradation will be studied along with regional cooperation and problems between Israel and her neighbors. This course provides an introduction for non-biology majors into current problems that Israel faces in maintaining the stability, productivity, and sustainability of its environment. This class will identify relevant environmental issues, explore root causes underlying the problems, and examine how national and international agencies are addressing and assessing potential solutions to these issues.

Course Requirements and Expectations

- *Class starts promptly at 16:30. Tardiness of 30 minutes or more will be counted as an absence unless an email received 30 minutes prior to the start of class. Each unexcused absence will result in a 1% reduction on the final grade.*
- *Weekly reading material should be read before the class.*
- *All assignments dates are fixed and not negotiable (unless prior agreements have been made with me)*
- *There is no alternate date for the midterm or final exam without prior approval from the TAU International main office.*
- *No student may record any classroom activity without express written consent from me. If you have (or think you may have) a disability such that you need to record any classroom activities, you should contact your advisor at Tel Aviv University International to request permission.*
- *Please remain in class even if the instructor is late...I will be there!*

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Learning Outcomes

- to acquire knowledge of ecological concepts as they pertain to environmental problems.
- to gain an awareness and understanding of environmental problems and their causes.
- to learn about the possible solutions to these problems.
- to recognize the importance of the interactions of the political, social, and economic aspects of the environmental issues.

All learning outcomes are focused on Israel and in relation to local geopolitical issues.

Content Covered:

- Ecology food webs and interactions
- Ecosystems in Israel
- Human Impact of Ecosystems from 1st Aliya towards statehood and beyond
- The role of the J.N.F. and Israel Nature Authority
- Environmental impact on Israel's ecosystems through Industry and Agriculture
- Alternative energy sources and resources
- Environmental cooperation between Israel and its neighbors
- Israel and environmental legislation

Evaluation Criteria

Attendance: 10%

Midterm Test: In class 25% (multiple choice)

Final Test: In class 25% (multiple choice)

Short Answer Essay / Research Report / Project 40%

Option #1: Short Essay covering reading material and some class lecture topics. You will be given a list of 20 questions and you will choose 7. Each question answered will be a minimum of 1.5 pages and three resources. This assignment is due one week prior to the final exam. Deliver via email no later than April 27 by 23:00 (Israel Time). The Essay question choices will be sent on March 23rd.

Option #2: Short research paper (**10 page minimum**) on an environmental problem for this course. This can be a group project (1-3 per group). Your group will identify and select an



environmental problem and address possible or actual solutions. The paper should describe the problem in sound ecological terms; present possible solutions in an unbiased fashion; and it must include the social, political and economic interactions that are part of this problem. Deliver via email one week prior to the final exam on April 27, 2021 by 23:00 (Israel time).

Option #3: Hands on project instead of a paper. See the instructor for more information and project approval. Deliver via email one week prior to the final exam on April 27, 2021 by 23:00.

Absence Policy

Each class missed via an unexcused absence will result in 1% being reduced from the course grade. See TAU International Absence Policy below for definition of unexcused.

Course Schedule: February – May 2021

February 23: First Class

March 23: Midterm Exam (in class)

March 23: Essay Questions released

April 27: Paper/Essay/Project due

May 4: Final Exam (in class)

**April 13 class will end at 18:00. (Erev Yom Hazikron - Memorial Day)*

Course Readings and/or Required Materials

A) Weekly Reading List: Pollution in a Promised Land (online link in the Moodle Course)

Week 2: Reclaiming a homeland (pages 19-21, 28-34)

Week 3: Palestine's Environment: (pages 35-47,63-68)

Week 4: The Forest's Many Shades of Green: (pages 69-85)

Week 5: The Emergence of an Israeli Environmental Movement: (pages 113-120, 145-148)

Week 6: The Quality and Quantity of Israel's Water Resources: (Pages 209-215, 225-229)

Week 7: Israel's Urban Environment: (pages 243-246, 268-271)

Week 8: Toward a Sustainable Future: (pages 405-420)



B) Weekly Reading List: Between Ruin and Restoration – An Environmental History of Israel (online link in Moodle Course)

Week 2: The Environment in Palestine and Late Ottoman Period (1798-1918); Ruth Kark and Noam Levin. Pages 1-24

Week 3: Human Impact on Wildlife in Israel Since the Nineteenth Century; Yoram Yom-Tov. Pages 53-76

Week 6: Agricultural Roots of Israel's Water Crisis; Hillel Shuval (Moodle Site – Reading Materials)

Instructor Biography

Dr. Stuart Fleischer has been teaching in the International Program since 1992. He spent one year in 1984-85 as a student on the same program that he now teaches in. Originally from Tennessee, Dr. Fleischer made Aliya in 1990. Dr. Fleischer received his Masters, Specialist and Ph.D. from Florida State University in Science Education. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology from The University of Tennessee / Knoxville. Along with lecturing at TAU, Stuart has been a high school and middle school science educator at the Walworth Barbour American International School in Israel for the past 30 years. Stuart specializes in developing citizen science projects in Israel and internationally as well.

TAU International Academic Guidelines

Students may only attend classes which they are officially registered for. No auditing of courses is permitted. Students are responsible for reading and adhering to all policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#) at all times. Below is a summary of some of these relevant policies and procedures.

Learning Accommodations

In accordance to University guidelines, TAU International may be able to accommodate students with learning disabilities or accommodation requests if these requests are also honored at the student's home university or home school. To be considered, students must submit official documentation from their home school or university (if not in English, a notarized official copy translated into English is required) to TAU International in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs and how these are accommodated at the home school or university. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs or accommodations they may have. **Without official documentation from the home school submitted on or before the first day of courses, TAU will not be able to honor accommodation support.**

With supporting documentation and by following the correct procedure as outlined above, TAU International and its faculty will do the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible. However, we cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU. For example, TAU is usually not able to offer note-taking services in

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English, private testing rooms, or advance viewing of classroom presentations, exams, or assignments.

It may be an option to provide a student with additional tutoring or support outside the classroom as needed. Students should be aware that this additional support cannot be guaranteed and is based on teacher availability in the subject as well as the specific student level. If available, the cost of additional tutoring or support will be the sole responsibility of the student.

In-Class Exams

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. It is also the student's responsibility to clarify exam dates with the professors at the beginning of a course, with the understanding that not all exam dates can be decided up front as it can sometimes depend on the pace of the course and class learning. It is the student responsibility to plan to be present for all courses including the final day of class for this reason. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

TAU International Absence Policy

Attendance is mandatory in all of the courses including Hebrew Ulpan. Faculty can and will take attendance regularly. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified and properly documented absences from classes may be accepted (for example: emergency matter or illness, both of which will require a doctor's note). Such cases of absence should be reported to the faculty immediately and again, a doctor's note is required. Teachers are entitled to treat any lateness or absence without documentation as unexcused. Some of our courses such as Service Learning or the Internship Seminar require more practical in-class work; thus, attendance policies may be stricter in some courses and students then must adhere to the stricter attendance policy as outlined by the faculty/syllabus.

Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence.

Please note that according to official TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU with no due refund.

Grade Appeals

Students are responsible for checking grades once posted or distributed by faculty. The limited grade appeals window and the detailed procedure for appealing a grade – whether a graded assignment, exam or final grade – is outlined clearly in the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#).

