

Tel Aviv University
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Yearly Course
Two weekly hours

Bureaucracy, Governmentality and Human Rights

Prof. Yehouda Shenhav
TA: Adv. Yael Berda
Guest lecturer: Adv. Michael Sfrad

The course will discuss managerial theory and practice, with an emphasis on control mechanisms that developed in the context of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. We will examine the historical sources of these mechanisms and attempt to situate them within the colonial context, particularly the British and French. We will then demonstrate how the occupation is reflected, within the spaces of sovereignty it creates, in the administrative practices of law enforcement agencies and executive authorities. In addition, we will demonstrate how the occupation creates lawless spaces, where people's lives become exposed to violence or the threat thereof. Simultaneously, we will analyze the political and cultural implications of historical anachronism, relating them to questions of morality and race, politics and sovereignty, and political theology. We will place special emphasis on the relationship between race and bureaucracy and their ties with violence, in all its forms. Through the course, we will familiarize ourselves with the complexity of maintaining human rights, particularly in the unusual yet daily events in which they are most crucial. We will learn to listen to testimonies and stories from the points of view of different actors in the event, and primarily "look over the shoulder" of those working in service of the state, in order to try and understand the mechanisms and the networks of events operating in reality.

Course structure

The course is a seminar combining theory and practice. In addition to Prof. Shenhav's lectures, Adv. Michael Sfrad, the legal advisor of "Yesh Din" will accompany the course as a guest lecturer. Every two weeks, the students will take part in Yesh Din's project of observers of military courts, and in Machsom Watch's project of assistance at the District Coordination Offices in the Palestinian territories. Under the direction of these organizations, the students will be involved in documentation, advocacy and coordination while maintaining a journal documenting their activity. The students will be guided by Adv. Yael Berda, both individually and in groups. Students will receive transportation expenses and a yearly scholarship of NIS 1450.

At the end of the year, each student will submit an article based upon her activities and experiences, with reference to the course's theoretical content. Some of the articles will be collected in a book edited by Prof. Shenhav, Adv. Sfrad and Adv. Berda, in cooperation with the organizations.

Schedule and outline

October 24 – Lecture 1: Introduction of the course, group guidance
Prof. Shenhav, Adv. Sfrad, Adv. Berda

October 31 – Field work

November 7 – Lecture 2: Development of bureaucratic thought, managerial revolution and rationalism as an ideology

November 14 – Field work

November 24 – Legalization of the occupation and international law – Guest lecturer: Michael Sfrad

November 28 – Field work

December 3 – Lecture 3: Bureaucracy and political catastrophes

December 12 – Field work

December 19 – Lecture 4: Sovereignty, governance and power

December 20 – Field work

January 2: Testimony and confession. Guest lecturer: Michal Givoni

January 9 – Field work

January 16 – Field work

February 27 – Lecture 5: Political theology and the state of emergency

March 6 – Lecture 6: Imperialism, colonialism – occupier and occupied: from co-dependency to "exposed life"

March 13 – Field work

March 20 – Field work

March 27 – Racialization and apartheid

April 10 – Field work

April 17 – Lecture 7: The security paradigm

April 24 – Field work

May 8 – Lecture 9: Bureaucracy of the occupation

May 15 – Field work

May 29 – Lecture 10: Globalization of terrorism, disaster management and humanitarian organizations

June 5 – Concluding meeting