The Languages of Israel
Fall/Spring 2015
3 hours per week
New York University – Tel Aviv

Instructor: Professor Benjamin Hary
Office Hours: XXX and by appointment

Content: Is Israel a multilingual or a monolingual country? This is a question with which many educators, linguists, politicians and laypeople have been struggling. In this course we will explore several issues of language use and practice in Israel, language ideology and language policy.

We will start by learning the orthographies (spelling systems) of Hebrew and Arabic and practice them through the methodology of Linguistic Landscape. We will tour Tel Aviv-Jaffa and other places and study public signs and their use in Hebrew and Arabic as well as in other languages. We will look at signs, advertisements, instructions, buildings, streets, billboards, etc. This exercise will teach us much about the public space, who controls it and what cultural and political messages it sends us.

We will then study parts of the basic lexicon of Hebrew and Arabic and also review their grammatical structure as well as their historical background—all of this in the larger context of the Semitic language family.

Furthermore, in this course we will review the language policies of Israel. Language policies refer to decisions regarding language use in education and in society in general. Some language policies are explicit, others are not; some are top down, others are bottom-up; yet, policies are always derivatives of the groups that make up political entities (e.g., majority elites, minorities, immigrants, indigenous) interacting with a variety of political, ideological, social and economic factors. We will pay a special attention to the mechanisms used to determine language policies on the ground.

We will also investigate language use in Israel; the practice and ideology behind the use Hebrew as well as of the participating language Arabic (standard and colloquial varieties); the use of English, everybody’s second language in Israel; the use of recent immigration languages, Russian and Amharic as well as previous immigrants (French, Polish, Rumanian, and more); the use and loss of hertigae Jewish languages in Israel, and much more.

Course Objectives:
After taking this course, you will have basic knowledge in
- the orthographies (spelling systems) of Hebrew and Arabic
- the basic vocabulary of Hebrew and Arabic
Required Texts:

Course Requirements:
- No knowledge of any specific language is required. No prerequisites.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive in class on time. Students must complete all assigned readings before the class meeting and be prepared to participate actively in discussions of the readings. They are also expected to attend a few out-of-class activities, and especially two tours. There will be further readings for extra credit.
- Students are required to turn in all written assignments on the dates scheduled. Late work will not be accepted.
- Assignments:
  1) Two short tests.
  2) Three two-page reports on the readings.
  3) An in-class oral presentation (using PowerPoint or the like) on the readings.
  4) A final project (12–18 pages) to be determined with the instructor.

Composition of Final Grade:
- Two-page reports & class participation 25%
- In-class presentation 10%
- Writing project 40%
- Tests 25%

Attendance Policy Statement:
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive
experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students’ semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

During the spring 2014 semester students should adhere to the attendance policy posted on course syllabi and/or student handbooks at their host Global Academic Center. Beginning Fall 2014, at all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade.

**Cell phones** must be turned off before entering the classroom.
**Week 1**
Language practice and policy in Israel
The writing systems of Hebrew and Arabic – I
*Readings:* Spolsky and Shohamy, chapter 1, pp. 1–30; chapter 11, pp. 249–265; Daniels and Bright, pp. 3–72.

**Week 2**
Hebrew as a mother tongue in Israel
The writing systems of Hebrew and Arabic – II
*Readings:* Spolsky and Shohamy, chapter 2, pp. 31–64; Daniels and Bright, pp. 88–107; 139–159; 487–498.

**Week 3**
Hebrew language acquisition; Hebrew as a second language; the *Ulpanim* in Israel
The writing systems of Hebrew and Arabic – III
*Readings:* Spolsky and Shohamy, chapters 3–4, pp. 65–114; Rubin, chapter 1, pp. 1–21.

**Week 4**
Arabic as a participating language in Israel
The writing systems of Hebrew and Arabic – IV
*TOUR:* Linguistic Landscape in Tel Aviv I
*Readings:* Spolsky and Shohamy, chapter 5, pp. 115–137; Daniels and Bright, pp. 559–564; Rogers, pp. 115–144; Ben-Rafael et al., pp. 7–30; Gorter, pp. 1–6.

**Week 5**
Ideology and practice in the teaching of Arabic as a second language in Israel
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the lexicon I

**Week 6**
The languages of earlier immigrations to Israel
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the lexicon II
*Readings:* Spolsky and Shohamy, chapter 8, pp. 187–208; Harshav, pp. 81–166; Adler and Hary 2011.

**Week 7**
The languages of recent immigrations to Israel: Amharic and Russian
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the lexicon III

Week 8
The use of English in Israel: English as everybody’s second language
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the verb system (root and pattern) I

Week 9
The loss and maintenance of Jewish language varieties in Israel: Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish and Yiddish
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the verb system (root and pattern) II
Readings: Spolsky and Shohamy, chapter 9, pp. 209–233; Versteegh, pp. 9–73.

Week 10
The loss and maintenance of Jewish language varieties in Israel: Jewish English and more
The structure of Hebrew and Arabic – the noun system

Week 11
The Tower of Babel: Language use in central station in South Tel Aviv

TOUR: Linguistic landscape in Tel Aviv (south) II
Readings: Sayer 2010 (11 pp); Backhouse (14 pp); Suleiman, pp. 1–57; 218–230; Cenoz and Gorter (13 pp).

Week 12
Language policy in Israel – I
The history of Hebrew and Arabic I
Readings: Shohamy 2006, pp. 1–56; Sáenz-Badillos, pp. 1–49; Ferguson 1959 (15 pp); Rubin, pp. 59–83.

Week 13
Language policy in Israel – II
The history of Hebrew and Arabic II

Week 14
Summary and students’ presentations
Have a Productive Semester
And Good Luck!!!
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


