

International Encounters Course: Bringing the World to Oranim

In Israel, where social rifts are growing ever larger, it is essential that educators are prepared to model and teach how to engage positively with diversity within Israel and around the world. Oranim International School developed an innovative yearlong academic course to prepare students to facilitate multicultural and international encounters.



The next generation of Israel's educators needs tools to encourage respect, empathy, and authentic dialogue among diverse people within their classroom and outside of it. "International Encounters: Bringing the World to Oranim" is an academic course designed to give students of education from Oranim the tools, knowledge, and practical experience to facilitate international and multicultural educational programs. Oranim International School's Lori Abramson, MAJE, teaches and coordinates the course.

The course includes:

- A weeklong intensive workshop (36 hours) preparing students to serve as facilitators
- Practical experience at the Oranim International School facilitating diverse groups from all over the world (20 hours)
- Professional mentoring
- Opportunities for individual and group reflection

Students have the opportunity to contribute to the wide range of educational programming at Oranim International School, including conducting encounters with Jewish and non-Jewish student groups from all over the world.

Dialogue with the Other

In this course, students acquire and utilize tools for dialogue, encounter, and group facilitation, while developing sensitivity and empathy toward the “other.” They also define and articulate their own positions about a variety of issues that are likely to come up while conducting encounters. Students gain experience facilitating encounters between Israelis and people from all over the world and improve their spoken English.

Pilot Course

The first course was held last year (2017/2018), with 25 students including secular and religious Jews, Arab Christians and Muslims, Bedouins, and Druze. Students enjoyed making friends from backgrounds that were very different than their own, getting to meet young people from all over the world, and gaining tools for facilitating groups.

Students participated in and led a variety of programs of the Oranim International School, such as: meeting with Australian education students from Monash University and accompanying them on a trip to the Arava; facilitating Jewish peoplehood programs for Israeli school students and parents; teaching Hebrew and English to international students in Oranim’s Masa programs; participating in sessions on Jewish-Arab dialogue with students and teachers from around the world; and more.

This year, 19 students are participating in the course. They will facilitate encounters with Birthright groups, accompany delegations of students from abroad, plan and implement a four-day service learning program for American and British teens, teach Hebrew to Masa students, and assist with guest lecturers from abroad.

Transformative Impact on Israeli Education

This course will have a transformative impact on the young educators participating in the course, Oranim International School program participants from all over the world, and, ultimately, the hundreds of children whom the students in the course will educate in the future. Graduates will have the tools to encourage empathy and mutual respect among diverse people within their classrooms and communities.