

MA course:

Global Refugee Crisis: What is at Stake?

Together with the Center for German and European Studies (CGES) at Berkeley the HCGES conducted a three weeks MA course on the global refugee crisis. The course was conducted by Prof. Beverley Crawford Ames (UC Berkeley) and Katharina Konarek (University of Haifa).

Prof. Crawford Ames is holding a PhD in Political Science from University of California Berkeley. She was a DAAD Professor at the Free University of Berlin, Visiting Professor at Bocconi University and chairing the CGES at Berkeley. Her fields of interests are international relations, international political economy and economics and security. **Katharina Konarek** is conducting a Joint PhD at the University of Haifa and the Bundeswehr University of Munich research about the role of the German political foundations in German Foreign Policy.

The course took place from May 12th until 28th at the University of Haifa, being taught in 6 sessions plus 3 field trips and further extra-curricular activities. It provided the students with an overview of the global crisis, the crisis from the perspective of the refugees themselves, the impact in Israel, Europe and Germany, the causes and possible solutions. The course was attend by 20 students, among them 7 DAAD fellowship holders from the US, Germany, China, South Korea and South Africa, 4 HCGES MA students and 9 students from other international MA programs (e.g. Child Development, Peace and Conflict Studies, National Security Studies) at the University of Haifa.

The first session gave an overview on the definition of terms, discussing also the historical framework and international legal issues, and spotting regions and crises producing refugees. Guest lecturer and lawyer **Dr. Itamar Mann** from the University of Haifa gave an introduction on the legal situation of refugees from Eritrea and Sudan in Israel.

Session two examined the refugees themselves, addressing the questions “Why refugees do not fly?”. It focused on the conditions in the home countries, the escapes and the problems at the asylum-granting countries. During this session guest speaker **Maria Jamal**, Co-Founder of the NGO Humanity Crews, shared her experience working with mainly Syrian refugees on the Greek island Lesbos.

The third session focused on the asylum-granting countries discussing how the influx of asylum seekers become a crisis, looking at the weakness of EU institutions and EU asylum policy, analysing the rise of xenophobic nationalism and the radical right. The two guest lecturers - sociologist **Adi Hercowitz-Amir** and Minerva-PhD Candidate **Nurit McBride** - pointed out a) the Israeli policy towards asylum seekers and b) the legal and administrative challenges in refugee crisis management for developing states e.g. in Africa.

Session four examined the causes for the crisis namely conflict and climate. It discussed theories of conflicts from social psychology as well as evolutionary theories, religious exceptionalism and constructivist theory. Guest speaker

Gamar Adam, refugee from Sudan in Israel, shared his personal life story and provided deep insights looks into the conflict in Dafur and the dangerous escape through Libya, Egypt and Sinai.

Session five focused on the civil war in Syria as a case study. It discussed the “necessary conditions” in the history of imperialism, nationalism and authoritarianism as a setting for the current crisis.

The last session analysed possible solutions and conclusions of the course differing between short-time responses to the humanitarian crisis, medium-term solutions to the integration of refugees in the host countries and long-term solutions addressing the root of the refugee problem: conflict and climate. During the last session the students also presented their group works on a) refugees in Israel, b) Syrian Civil War, c) the asylum seekers policy of Hungary and Bulgaria, d) possible solutions.

In addition to the six sessions 3 field trips were conducted. On the first field trip the students visited the refugee hub in the south of Tel Aviv. They spoke to refugees at the Eritrean Women Community Center and had dinner organized by the project “Kitchen talks” – an Israeli NGO where refugee cook and explain their traditional food. The second field trip took place during the fifth session, heading to the north of Israel, to the Golan Heights. The students visited the border to Syria, received a briefing Israeli IDF soldier **Lotan Boker** on the current situation in Syria. They also met with **Dr. Taiseer Merei**, Director of Golan for Development, in Majd Al Shams and got introduced to the Druze community in Israel and Syria. On the third field trip the students visited the grave of Ben Gurion in the Negev desert, did a short hike there visiting a Bedouin camp and visiting the Israeli refugee detention facility Holot. There they had the opportunity to speak to the detained asylum seekers getting to know more about the difficult escape through the Negev desert.

Besides the six sessions and the three field trips the HCGES screened also two movies dealing with the topic of refugees: The Oscar nominated documentaries “**The White Helmets**” on the Syrian Civil Rescue workers and “**Watani - My homeland**” on the refuge of a Syrian family from Aleppo through Turkey to Germany.