Transformative Pedagogy in Occupied Palestine
International Student Discoveries and Awakenings

Shelley Wong, Thuy Tu, and Ilham Nasser

The article reports on international student perspectives concerning transformative pedagogy through their participation in field trips organized by the Palestinian and Arabic Studies Program at Birzeit University. Students visited historic, religious, and contemporary sites including a Bedouin village, mosques, marketplaces, the site where Jesus was baptized, a Palestinian refugee camp, and farms in the Jordan Valley. The field experience component of the Palestinian study abroad program was examined through pilgrimage curriculum, a journey of discovery to historic and sacred sites. Through analysis of interviews with students from Australia, France, Germany, and Japan, three transnational educational researchers analyzed student discoveries, awakenings, and shifting perspectives

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Shelley Wong, Associate Professor Emerita George Mason University, is author of *Dialogic Approaches to TESOL: Where the Ginkgo Tree Grows* and co-editor (with Ilham Nasser & Lawrence N. Berlin) of *Examining Education, Media and Dialogue Under Occupation: The Case of Palestine and Israel* and co-editor (with Elaisa Sánchez Gosnell, Anne Marie Foerster Liu, and Lori Dodson) of *Teachers as Allies: Transformative Practices for Teaching Dreamers and Undocumented Students*.

Thuy Tu is a doctoral candidate in multilingual/multicultural education at George Mason University. Her research interests include inclusive English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) teaching and assessment practices for diverse students, teacher assessment literacy, and critical classroom discourse analysis. She has worked in second and foreign language education for two decades.

Ilham Nasser is the director of Empirical Research in Human Development, part of IIITs Advancing Education in Muslim Societies (AEMS) initiative. She has spent over 25 years in research addressing children's development, teacher education, and professional development and is the author of peer-reviewed books, journal articles, and book chapters.

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to theorize pedagogical features of transformative learning for future educational exchanges for a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world.

Keywords: Palestinian Arabic studies, international students, dialogic pedagogy, field trips, pilgrimage curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

This article describes the journey of four international students from Australia, France, Germany, and Japan enrolled in the Palestinian and Arabic Studies (PAS) program at Birzeit University (BZU), a leading university in the Occupied West Bank near Ramallah, Palestine. BZU is a leading teaching and research institution which is rated within the top 2.7 percent of universities internationally by QS World University Ranking (2019). At BZU, PAS, established two decades ago, is a year-round program offered to international students who want to learn the Arabic language and the Palestinian culture. Students may enter the program in Fall, Spring, or Summer. Through participation in out-of-school field trips, sports and cultural events, and being paired with local conversational speaking partners, international students from different countries, nationalities, and backgrounds are provided opportunities to learn from their BZU Palestinian peers about Palestinian customs and traditions as well as contemporary culture. The four international students studied Colloquial Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic and Palestinian studies courses (see Appendix A) and participated in PAS-sponsored field trips throughout the Occupied West Bank (see Figure 1).

The West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem were occupied by Israel in 1967, after the Six-Day War between Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria (Chomsky & Pappé, 2015). In that war, Israel seized the West Bank from Jordan, Gaza from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria. The geographical area of the West Bank is comprised of a few major towns and cities, such as Ramallah, the commercial hub where the Palestinian Authority is based, the town of Bethlehem, and the ancient cities of Hebron, Nablus, and Jericho. BZU is unique in that it attracted Christian and Muslim faculty and students since its founding as a school for girls in 1924. It was the first private national co-educational secondary school in Palestine and later expanded to post-secondary education as a teacher college. As the first modern university established in the West Bank it became the premier research university in occupied Palestine (Baramki, 2010).

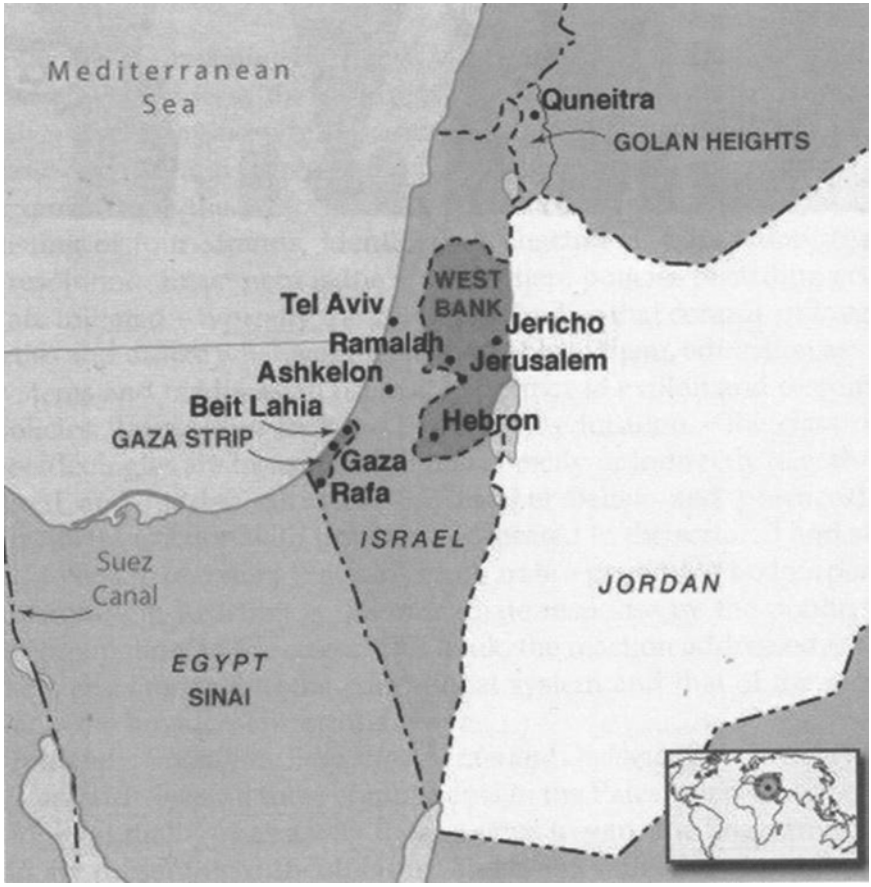

Figure 1. Map of Palestine.

International students who want to enroll in PAS at BZU usually suffer from political complications caused by the Israeli occupation. Although students may be officially accepted by BZU, they cannot obtain student visas from Israel to enter the West Bank of the Jordan River where BZU is located. Travel to the West Bank is controlled by the Israeli government, not the Palestinian Authority. While the Israeli government regularly issues visas and grants scholarships for students to attend Israeli universities, it does not issue visas or scholarships to study at BZU or any other Palestinian universities in Gaza or the West Bank. Students must enter Israel on tourist visas that are authorized to passport holders from Western countries for a maximum of three months and then pass through Israeli checkpoints to enter the West Bank. A three-month tourist visa is not issued automatically to all. For instance, a German student accompanied by her spouse and child

was granted only a one-month visa. After less than a month of study, she left with the intention of renewing her visa to resume her study, but her study at BZU was interrupted because she was not able to return.

Interviews with international students and BZU faculty were conducted at the BZU campus, near Ramallah, as part of a larger ethnographic research project during the 2018–2019 academic year when Shelley Wong was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar (Wong, 2019). As a multilingual/multicultural teacher educator with a specialization in Foreign and Second Language and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), she took an intensive Colloquial Arabic class and was a participant-observer in the PAS sponsored field trips. She also co-taught a graduate course for Palestinian primary and secondary teachers in the Faculty of Education.

The field trips were an important component of the PAS curriculum (see Appendix A) and enabled the students to develop critical perspectives (Kubota & Miller, 2017) through exposure to a wide variety of Palestinian voices. This included local governmental leaders, experts from civil society, and some of the most dispossessed sectors of Palestinian society, including Bedouin villagers who had been driven from their homes (Mihlar, 2011). Of the 68 students who studied during the year, the majority participated in at least one field trip. There were usually 20–35 participants who traveled in a bus or two minivans. The field trips were required for students who took The Palestine Question course, but were optional and not required for those taking Modern Standard Arabic (which included reading and writing) and Colloquial Arabic (which emphasized oral work).

As a 68-year old grandmother, Wong was the oldest student in the program (the youngest student was 17 years old). During the year, she frequently compared her struggle learning Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) at the end of her career to her immersion experience of learning Cantonese in Hong Kong as a young Chinese-American heritage language learner. She found that she most identified with the young Palestinian-American heritage language learners who reminded her of her own pilgrimage to China to the ancestral villages of her grandparents with a group of Chinese-American students (Nishio et al., 1973).

LEARNING FROM LIFE

The two Chinese characters that make up the word "student" are the verb "learn" and the character for "life." An important dimension of learning from life is the relationship between text-based and experiential learning. Both are important and they work together meaningfully for

transformative learning to take place. "Learning by doing" is one of four features of dialogic pedagogy, in which students learn in dialogue with their teacher and other voices. The three other inter-related features are (a) learning in community, (b) problem posing, and (c) posing the question "Knowledge for whom?" or "Who does knowledge serve?" to include those who historically have been excluded from education, to challenge and transform economic, social, and political domination (Wong, 2005).

Curriculum researchers use the term "co-curricular" in contrast to "extra-curricular" to emphasize synergistic *connection* between traditional in-class, more formal instructional curriculum, such as course readings, lectures, and assignments, and the out-of-class activities organized by educational institutions such as sports events, debating clubs, performance arts, and field trips. The prefix "co-" means "with," and co-curricular pedagogical theory is a holistic and dialogic approach combining disciplinary curricular content with discovery learning (Bruner, 1961). Dialogic pedagogy occurs in dialogue with multiple perspectives and voices in community with other learners. In contrast, "extra-curricular" may connote the "extra," "extra-ordinary," or special nature of field trips that while organized by the school may not have an explicit or formal relationship to the curriculum (Kariyana et al., 2012).

At BZU, the PAS curriculum drew from both co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects through problem-posing (Freire, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978) that connected in-class learning to the field. Students who studied Arabic and Palestinian studies courses had a co-curricular aspect as the course readings, assignments, and discussions were directly related to the content of the field trips. One of the professors who led the field trips taught Palestinian studies classes (the medium of instruction was English) while another professor taught Arabic language classes. Dialogic curriculum stresses problem-posing in contrast to problem-solving, denoting a complex problem for which there may be multiple solutions, rather than a single "correct" answer. Teaching math facts, asking students to recite short poems or to name the capitals of countries is very different from posing a complex social problem for which there may not be a simple solution, such as how to combat racism or alleviate hunger.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

The purpose of this study was to theorize salient characteristics and dimensions of transformative learning through pilgrimages, journeys to sacred and historic sites that support and promote international education

for a more peaceful, just, and inclusive world in the context of occupied Palestine. John Bunyan's 1678 allegorical *Pilgrim's Progress* is an example of a metaphorical literary journey of the mind or spirit (Bunyan, 1957). Pilgrimage curriculum combines the journey of mind and spirit with actual physical travel, which may be arduous or involve hardship or human suffering. As critical curriculum developers may carefully plan an itinerary to engage students in deeper explorations of a country, they may encounter dilemmas in the selection of sites. This dilemma is particularly acute when the itinerary of a single day begins with "fan pilgrimage," in which students are entertained as spectators or are "fans" of the team, cultural site, or cultural activity, to "dark tourism" in which students witness human suffering including extreme economic or ecological hardship or deprivation (McMorran, 2015). In the study of a geography course in Canada whose aim was to "unsettle" settler perspectives of indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, non-indigenous students reported that field experience and digital storytelling were effective in developing their awareness of "geographies of ignorance" (Castleden et al., 2013). This may involve overcoming and "un-learning" previous misconceptions from the media and school curriculum, such as gendered anti-Muslim stereotypes, white supremacist, and colonial settler ideologies (Peled-Elhanan, 2011).

In the current study, our research questions were

1. What discoveries did the students report concerning their language learning (Colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic)?
2. Did the field trips transform international students' understanding of local Palestinian history, culture, and society? (If so, how, and why? If not, why?)
3. Did international students gain any insights concerning the barriers and the prospects for peace toward a just and more equitable resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

THEORETICAL GROUNDING

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) suggested that pilgrimage to religious and historical sites could be a positive tool to (a) raise awareness of humanity's common heritage, (b) support local development, and (c) build cultural understanding (Griffin & Raj, 2017). However, tourism can also negatively affect local communities through economic, political, and cultural imperialism (Sinclair-Maragh & Gursoy, 2015). Talib Rafai, the Secretary-General of UNWTO, cautioned in a speech in the occupied West Bank in Bethlehem that preservation of religious sites and monuments for tourism and international visitors must

be carefully managed to uphold respect for local Palestinian traditions and religious practices and ensure inclusive development of local communities (Rifai, 2015). Indigenous scholars and American Indian Movement activists have long protested the genocidal history of settler colonial conquest combined with cultural appropriation and broken treaties, separation from families and forced assimilation of children and youth in boarding schools, and erasure of Indigenous languages and cultures (Deloria, 1972).

Cultural appropriation, defined as "falsely claiming rights to or innovation of something as one's own" (Bunyasi & Smith, 2019, p. 58), has been identified as a tool of co-optation that can be used for oppression or liberation. An oppressive example is when racial conservatives in the United States misappropriate Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech to support colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). An example of appropriation for liberation is the historic struggle of Black freedom fighters to appropriate the language of the constitution, "*We* the people," to struggle for the emancipation of all people (Bunyasi & Smith, 2019).

Designing Educational Programs for Transformative Learning

While field trips may support multi-modal sensory learning and students may better remember key concepts from course materials through firsthand experiences, research indicates that not all field trips are successful in promoting student learning (Nabors et al., 2009). In study abroad programs, faculty from diverse disciplines and fields of study (i.e., geography, women and gender studies, theology, engineering, education, health sciences) will often consciously design their curriculum to go beyond a superficial "foods, faces, and fiestas approach which trivializes culture to deeper understandings of history, culture, and society (Ovando & Collier, 1998, p. 106). An important goal in international education is to increase intercultural awareness to enable students to reflect upon their own familiar, taken-for-granted cultural biases, attitudes, and beliefs and to develop an appreciation for the host nation's societal mores, customs, and points of view (Scollon et al., 2010). Desiring that their students go beyond being "tourists" to more active learning from the life stories of local people, faculty may design assignments that encourage students to engage in anthropological and intercultural self-examination of racism, misogyny, and xenophobia (Tinker Sachs et al., 2017).

Through problem-posing (Vygotsky, 1978), students are called on to recognize disquieting and sometimes uncomfortable dilemmas. In a study-abroad program in Mexico for U.S. teacher candidates, a Freireian

Spanish-language school was selected as a site for U.S. teacher candidates because of its emphasis on *convivian*—co-participation with a depth of connection beyond merely being physically present (Kasun & Saavedra, 2016, 688). Pilgrimage curriculum may involve an appreciation of one's positions of marginality as well as privilege, a heightened sense of self, and a greater consciousness of the many prisms with which participant transnational, (trans)gendered, ethnic, religious, ideological, racialized, and class positions and identities intersect and mediate the world (Creese & Blackledge, 2015).

METHODOLOGICAL GROUNDING

> [W]ith all the good intentions, excellent craftsmanship, and even with the reliability and eloquence of a particular story, representing Others is always going to be a complicated and contentious undertaking. (Madison, 2011, p. 4)

As three transnational researchers based in the United States, our commitment was to connect pilgrimage curriculum, critical social theory, and critical pedagogy in our frame of analysis. We have struggled with a methodological question posed by critical ethnographer D. Soyini Madison, "How do we create and maintain a dialogue of collaboration in our research projects between ourselves and Others?" (2011, p. 4). We had a responsibility to be faithful to the life stories of multiple participants: the international students, the Palestinian faculty, staff and students, the Palestinian artisans, architects, craftsmen, farmers, human rights workers, local Bedouin village leaders, and families.

Data Collection

The four interviews were conducted in March 2019 and varied from 25 minutes to 66 minutes. The interviews took place during midterm exams. A point of departure for the interviews was to ask the students to reflect on their progress as learners of Colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic. This included asking how they had prepared for the exams, what strategies they employed, as well as the essays they had prepared for the Palestinian and Arabic studies courses. Pseudonyms were selected by the students themselves to reflect their national and gendered identities.

Ethical Challenges of Researching Under Occupation

Particularly challenging were the risks posed to international students as well as Palestinian host institution faculty, staff, and students. The

identities of participants had to be safeguarded so as not to jeopardize their future ability to return to Palestine. The previous year, Israeli authorities had denied—or significantly delayed—issuing visas to 15 of the BZU faculty with foreign passports (Kundera, 2018), resulting in undue anxiety and uncertainty for both individual faculty and their students as well as having a dire effect on university leadership in the departments in which the faculty members served. All these 15 international BZU faculty were full-time, and some of them were leading senior researchers and department chairs.

PARTICIPANTS

International students in the PAS program during the 2018–2019 academic year were from elite public and private universities from Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, England, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. In total there were 68 international students registered for classes in the PAS program during the 2018–2019 year.

The two men and two women, Maxime and Bruce and Judith and Satsuki (all pseudonyms), who are featured in this article were from France, Australia, Germany, and Japan. In addition, while other students were interviewed during the 2018–2019 year, these four were selected for inclusion in the study because they agreed to be interviewed concerning their linguistic biographies, their exam results, and their philosophies of language learning as well as their participation in the PAS-sponsored field trips. Three were undergraduates and Judith was a graduate student. Satsuki began her studies in the Fall of 2018 and the other three joined as full-time students in the PAS program during Spring 2019. In the next section we introduce the students and then discuss our research questions.

Student From France

Maxime was studying Colloquial Arabic for the first time. At the Sorbonne in France, his focus was International Relations and Government and he had studied Modern Standard Arabic. This was Maxime's second immersion experience as a language learner. When he was 17 years old, he was a high school exchange student in the United States, living with a family in New Jersey. He characterized himself as a "shy" high school student afraid to make mistakes in English. He preferred to remain silent when he did not know how to express himself. In contrast, when he came

to BZU, he had matured, was sociable, extremely active in class, and took every opportunity to speak Arabic. He engaged in sports in order to meet Palestinians in addition to the conversation partner arranged by the PAS program and sought more opportunities to practice Arabic by exchanging French lessons for Arabic.

Student From Germany

Judith was a graduate student in Social Anthropology. Her research interest was migration and she wanted to learn Arabic to better support refugees. She remembers always being interested in learning Arabic. When she was 16 years old, her first boyfriend was from Iraq. Later, when she entered university, Social Anthropology majors were required to study a non-European language. She studied Arabic with a Palestinian instructor at an Arabic Language Center for two and a half years as an undergraduate and studied Modern Standard Arabic at graduate school in a more intensive program before entering the PAS program. Her years of Arabic language study in Germany provided a foundation for Judith to be an active learner at BZU.

Student From Japan

Satsuki was from a premier Japanese university with an intensive Arabic language program. When she was 13 years old, her middle school English teacher introduced the students to events occurring in Palestine and encouraged them to debate and get involved. Later as a high school student, she had the opportunity to be an exchange student in the U.S. state of Virginia. She lived in the home of a conservative white Christian family. It was a racializing experience. She recalled that a small American child who had never seen an Asian before asked her why she did not look like a human. She was surprised by the comment but did not feel hurt at all. Being much older than the child, she reasoned the child didn't know any better. As an undergraduate at BZU, Satsuki actively pursued a clearly defined career goal in filmmaking. She attended as many film festivals and cultural activities as possible. She aimed to find and distribute films from Palestine and the Middle East to Japanese audiences.

Heritage Learner From Australia

Unlike the other AFL students who were studying Arabic as a third or fourth language, Bruce had never studied a foreign language in school before. As a Political Science major at his university, he was taking a full

load of four courses at BZU: Colloquial Arabic, Standard Modern Arabic, the Palestine Question, and Modern and Contemporary Arabic Thought (See Appendix A for course descriptions). His Palestinian-born mother had taught him the Arabic alphabet at home, but he had never taken any formal Arabic lessons before attending the PAS program. Coming from an isolated rural area in Australia, far away from any Arabic-speaking community, his parents spoke only English to him. The exception was names for food that Bruce knew such as *dawali* (grape leaves), *kuossa mahshi* (stuffed squash), and *betinjaan* (eggplant). He did not know any other categories of vocabulary, explaining, "My mum just speaks English to me."

ANALYSIS: DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY UNDER OCCUPATION

Through the experiential dimension of what has been termed "learning by doing" in pilgrimage curriculum and dialogic pedagogy (Wells, 1999; Wong, 1999, 2005), the overarching research question of this study was to explore what international students discovered through these field experiences. In the following section, we report our findings.

Research Question 1: What Discoveries Did the Students Report Concerning Their Language Learning (Colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic)?

Immersion and Interaction With Local Palestinians

Each of the four international students related unique reflections concerning their individual struggle to be a better Arabic language learner. Judith found that her Arabic language proficiency was so low that it was sometimes painful:

> Here in Palestine, I'm on a basic level. It's hard to have a conversation [with the conversation partner] so I always switch to English. It's so tiring for me. You just say one sentence about the weather and I always feel bad for her—same subjects all the time about the weekend and the weather. I think at a higher level it is easier.

While Judith would switch to English out of fear of boring her conversation partner or being embarrassed that her Arabic was incorrect, Maxime forced himself to communicate in Arabic and overcame the fear of speaking Arabic incorrectly. Maxime was very conscious of the desire to learn from the mistakes he made during his first immersion experience of learning English as a high school student.: "I was [scared]. I was shy. I lost a lot of time. But now I don't care what people think. I just want to talk."

Now as an older and more confident university student, Maxime reflected critically on his first foreign language immersion experience in the United States. In his estimation, he "wasted three months" by spending too much time with Francophone speakers. Subsequently, he realized that he must not be afraid to make mistakes. Rather than being embarrassed by his pronunciation, Maxime had a very different attitude as an Arabic language learner. He made a conscious decision to spend as much time as possible with local Palestinians. Everyday communication with Palestinian students provided him with greater opportunities to use the beginner Colloquial Arabic vocabulary that he learned in class with actual speakers.

Satsuki from Japan also stressed the importance of spending as much time with local Palestinians as possible. Initially, her housing was arranged by the PAS program and she shared an apartment with international student roommates from Japan and Chile with whom she spoke Japanese or English. However, during her second semester in Palestine, she moved to an apartment in Ramallah with Palestinian roommates so that she could have more opportunities to speak Arabic with people who were not connected to the university. She was willing to take on a longer commute and forgo the comforts of an apartment with hot water and a washing machine in order to step outside the bubble of privilege afforded to international students affiliated with the university. This decision brought with it a series of new communicative challenges, including negotiating with a Palestinian landlord to get her to make needed repairs to the apartment. Communication with the landlord was made more complicated because the owner did not live in the West Bank. Satsuki got to know local Palestinian women, who were active in women's human rights and refugee organizations, attending their children's birthday parties. In the intimacy of Palestinian homes where the women baked local Palestinian specialties of their villages, Satsuki was adored by the children, playing with them as a "big sister." She taught them finger-playing and hand-clapping games and frequently brought the children *omiyage* (a Japanese souvenir or hostess gift). Satsuki treasured these out-of-school experiences and relationships with local Palestinian women and children.

OVERCOMING INTERNAL BARRIERS

In contrast to Maxime, who stressed the importance of not being afraid to make mistakes as the key to learning Arabic, Judith's philosophy of second language learning stressed the importance of correct usage and

knowledge of grammar. In reflecting on her history as a language learner, Judith valued formal grammar instruction and grammatical explanations. In fact, she was critical of professors who did not provide sufficient grammatical explanations and told her to "relax" and not worry about making mistakes. Judith found that listening comprehension was a huge challenge for her. When asked what strategies she had learned to use to study vocabulary Judith laughed and humbly offered, "I think I am lazy. You need to work on it over and over. I think I need to see it. I remember better. So, when I study at home, I need to see the words to learn them. Very difficult."

Like Judith, a number of students in the program identified as "visual learners" and needed to see the words written down, rather than only hear the words. The professor frequently asked students to focus their attention on his mouth as he modeled pronunciation of vocabulary and reminded them that they would have time to copy the vocabulary (or verb conjugations) from the blackboard later. A typical Colloquial Arabic class began with the teacher asking individual students questions about the weather, what they ate for breakfast, what they did over the weekend. The professor would then introduce a dialogue from the textbook, followed by asking the students to practice asking questions in groups of two or three students. There were students of a variety of backgrounds and skills in the Colloquial Class. A number had studied Arabic previously for as long as two or three years and knew the alphabet and most of the vocabulary. Others were true beginners. Through informal classroom assessment and attention to the individual students' answers to the questions he posed, the professor was able to skillfully modify his questions according to the proficiency of the students. Small classroom size facilitated individualizing instruction.

Learning Arabic Through English

The problem Judith posed about feeling embarrassed that she was making her Palestinian conversational partner discuss "boring" content and reverting to the shared common language for both of them—English—is an interesting phenomenon. While all students made progress in learning Arabic, those who were English-language learners also advanced in English. Because Judith could fall back on English, the desire to communicate meaningfully with her Palestinian conversational partner actually was a barrier to her Arabic language acquisition. In contrast, when her interlocutor did not know any German or English, Judith's only option was to speak Arabic.

English was the medium of instruction for the Palestine Question course as well as Modern Arabic Thought. Course readings, lectures, and discussions were all in English. Native speakers of English such as Bruce and highly proficient English knowers like Judith were clearly at an advantage and had more confidence in reading English articles, writing language papers about the Palestine question, and making oral presentations in English. In contrast, students such as Satsuki whose English was not as proficient were at a disadvantage. PAS faculty and staff indicated that in general—although there were always exceptions—students from Europe, especially the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and the Netherlands, had a higher standard of English proficiency than those from Japan and Korea. PAS language classes were all small—the largest class Wong observed was 15 students and some had only three or four students. The small classroom size was highly conducive to dialogic interaction.

Although Bruce was a beginner who had never taken any Arabic classes previously, he received one of the highest scores in the Colloquial Arabic midterm. He was surprised at this achievement and reflected, "I did work very hard. It benefited me that I had family here." As a heritage language learner in Palestine who lived with his aunt and cousins, he attributed his success to his aunt, who helped him daily with his homework, including using the vocabulary introduced in class to role-play, write dialogues, and practice verb conjugations in context. Areas of difficulty for him were "the sounds" of Arabic and "the way you structure sentences is different. In English, you say the noun and the verb. In Arabic, it's the other way around." Although his accent was "foreign" sounding, his smile, low-key personality, and eagerness to learn made him a star student.

The range in proficiency among Arabic heritage language learners was quite large with a wide assortment of strengths. A few like Bruce had "foreign" (Australian English) sounding accents, while most had Palestinian village accents that resembled their grandparents, emblematic of their national pride and origin. A few who had studied in Arabic language schools or had more frequent visits to live with Arabic-speaking relatives were able to attend undergraduate classes taught in Arabic with English textbooks.

Research Question 2: Did the Field Trips Transform International Students' Understanding of Local Palestinian History, Culture, and Society? (If So, How and Why? If Not, Why?)

Contextualizing and Humanizing Through Local Voices

The PAS program provided unique opportunities for students to learn the culture in context "in situ" by engaging with a wide variety of insider local voices (Geertz, 1983; Halliday & Hasan, 1980). This included visits to local governmental and non-governmental organizations, women's and human rights organizations, as well as artisans and activists (see Appendix B). In linguistic pilgrimage, according to Kenneth Pike (1998) who provided insights into the insider/outsider "emic etic distinction":

> [The] emic road toward conscious knowledge … is an attempt to try to use ordinary people interacting in ordinary conversation as a basic entrance point into philosophical knowledge. It shows how a person can view knowledge at one moment as made up of isolated bits (particles and points); at another moment as life and change (wave); and at another moment as life made up of a system within systems. (p. 148)

Each of the students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to pose questions and gain insights from Palestinians whom they would not be able to meet as ordinary tourists, such as visiting the camp of the Bedouins and hearing from the elders about their life stories and the history of having their camps be demolished, moving, and rebuilding again. The professors from BZU who led the tours and arranged for the Bedouin elders as well as a young Bedouin human rights worker to meet with the students provided a cultural model in the way they greeted our Bedouin hosts with respect and honored their struggles. The camp had no electricity or running water. The children had no school buses and when a child was sick, there was no transportation. The villagers had to borrow a truck to bring a tank of water for all their needs. Having coffee in the tent of the Bedouin villagers and being the recipients of their hospitality was an eye-opening and painful experience for the international students as students swatted flies and experienced thirst in the dry heat. They observed the tattered clothing of the children and lack of proper shoes as they heard about the efforts of the Bedouin farmers. The students saw the dry cement aqueducts that had been built by the farmers as well as the green lush Israeli settlements on the hills above, to which water had been diverted from Palestinian fields. As for Bruce, he also related a transformative shift in insider understanding

"The context of situation here. You can read news articles and read books. But it is only when you are here that you really understand what you read."

Freireian critical dialogic pedagogy is sometimes called participatory and emancipatory (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014) because it stresses the participation of the voices of those who have been historically excluded from education due to oppression. In working with indigenous and peasant communities, Freire began literacy instruction with conversations or dialogue as a reciprocal exchange, beginning with naming the realities and problem-posing the concerns of the community. The curriculum for literacy connected "reading the world" as they read the word (Freire & Macedo, 1987). Literacy instruction was critical in that it connected everyday lives and realities with a collective social investigation of power. Freire's pedagogy connected the power of lived histories of the oppressed themselves to a dialogue of knowledge construction for liberation (Darder, 2017). Being treated with such gracious hospitality in the tent of the Bedouin's was a humbling experience and some students were visibly moved. Back on the bus and debriefing with the professor, a few sang Palestinian songs of solidarity.

When asked what had the most impact on his learning, Bruce said that the first field trip to the Separation Wall had the most impact on him, "When you see the Separation Wall, it cuts between villages and impacts families. We went to a village that was a ghost town. Because of the wall, it is [now] a ghost town."

When Maxime was asked to compare his experience learning Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at his university in France and Palestine, he explained that he had known about what he called "the big story of Palestine" in France. However, Maxime felt that there was a strong contrast between studying in France and studying in Palestine. The experiential dimension was vital to his learning.

The course he took on the Palestinian Question was particularly invaluable to him. He explained:

> Here I learned more about the context and I can feel it. When you are in a university in France, it's only statistics. You can't feel the hurt. You can't feel the weakness. But here, you are more conscious. You are more aware and you can understand more what might be the solution. To be in the country, to feel the atmosphere—you understand more.

Maxime felt that the PAS program was a good program and he particularly valued the field trips as a very important component of his

understanding of Palestinian realities under occupation: "The trips, we can know what is going on. These trips are very helpful. It's better to see how you can solve the problem. This kind of trip is a very good thing."

Encouraging Debate and Addressing Controversial Issues

Freire's critical literacy incorporates the meaning of the Greek adjective "kriticas," or the ability to argue and judge (Luke, 2018). Freire has been called an "early epistemologist of the South" because his view of education was a tool to contest the coloniality of power in Brazilian society. Freire was critical of what he called "banking education"—a colonialistic or paternalistic traditional education in which knowledge (in the service of the powers that be) is "deposited" into the heads of students. Instead, in the relation of teachers and students, there is in Freire's dialogic pedagogy a reciprocal exchange of knowledge. In addition, through critical literacy knowledge production is put to the service of the oppressed by the oppressed and their allies in a community of learners (Vasquez et al., 2019). The Palestinian studies professor who led the class on the Palestine Question and led the field trips encouraged the students to read, bring in various articles and perspectives, engage in dialogue, and debate in class and on the field trips. In fact, students could often be seen continuing to argue and debate in the hallways long after a class was over.

As Maxime explained: "The teacher is very interesting. Of course, he has a point of view. But through these trips, you can ask him questions. For example, 'you said this, but I saw this.' You can debate with him and see if he is right. Even though he has a point of view, you can see for yourself."

Politically, the local BZU students were extremely active and held rallies and forums on campus with different-colored flags to represent their political affiliations. There was quite a wide range of opinions among the international students in the PAS program concerning politics and Palestine. Those that took the Palestinian studies courses tended to be Political Science or Government or Foreign Service aspirants. There were a few journalists. A few evangelical Christians took only language classes, bypassed the field trips entirely, and avoided discussing controversial issues. Other international students were active volunteers with Palestinian human rights organizations, including those assisting in harvesting olives. The graduate students were focused on a wide range of research interests and topics. One was writing her thesis on female circumcision, another was interested in documenting Palestinian family histories of land dispossession, and a third was interested in Palestinian LGBTQ.

Research Question 3: Did International Students Gain Any Insights Concerning the Barriers and the Prospects for Peace Toward a Just and More Equitable Resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?

Reframing and Restructuring

None of the students came to understand the history of Palestine and the barriers as well as prospects for peace with freedom as "blank slates." The journey to understand local realities is a long one and involves "unlearning myths and stereotypes as well as learning."

Each of the students was able to build on what they had learned before coming to BZU. After being introduced to Palestinian culture from her first Palestinian teacher in Germany, Judith read autobiographies that had an impact on her understanding. The curriculum at BZU, in her view, was "more political" than at her university in Germany and dealt with the occupation. She stated, "knowledge is power," explaining that the book of readings for her course on the Palestine Question would be confiscated at the border by Israeli security: "If you take it to the border you will have problems."

When asked about the books that she would recommend to other students, Judith mentioned the autobiography of Edward Said (Said, 2000). A professor of English literature at Columbia University, Said is best known for his path-breaking work *Orientalism* (1978), in which he showed how Western discourses on the Middle East and representations of the Arab as exotic, savage, and barbaric served to justify colonial rule and Western domination.

Learning by Doing

The experiential dimension of witnessing firsthand the brutal violence, inequities, and injustice faced by Palestinians was an awakening for each of the four international students. An important aspect of learning by doing in international education is self-awareness on the part of the participant of one's positions of privilege within global systems of empire and extreme differences in wealth and power.

While living in France, Maxime had thought that the only problem was "the refugee problem," but "when I came here, I saw the [Israeli] settlements and I asked a lot of questions about it." He explained that on road trips to Jericho, Nablus, and the Jordan Valley, the students were able to see the Israeli settlements on the top of the mountains and to see how electric power and the water was controlled for the benefit of the few settlers who had lush farms and resources in abundance (Bennis, 2012).

When the group visited Hebron, the situation was particularly dire because the Israeli military had closed up the downtown area where Palestinians had formerly lived and the main street leading to it to allow the free movement of the settlers from their guarded settlement to the heart of the ancient city (Feuerstein, 2007). The students saw Palestinian houses where the front entrance was boarded up and the residents no longer had access to the street. No longer allowed to use their front doors, residents had to leave and re-enter their homes from windows and climb down fire-escapes to the back alley (Pappé, 2012). BZU faculty and students carrying Palestinian identity cards couldn't pass through these Israeli-only streets and had to meet the international students with the "right" documentation on the other side of the restricted area.

A few of the Palestinian-American students were not able to walk on the street with their European and Asian classmates who were able to "cross over" to the Israeli-only areas. This field trip intensified the experiential impact of "apartheid" on all. Students were confronted with the difference in power and privilege (or lack of it for the Palestinian students and faculty) depending on their nationality and their passports and identity papers privilege. Each student was searched when going through military checkpoints. This was a disorienting and uncomfortable experience. As students went through checkpoints with Israeli military troops and saw the routes that schoolchildren passed through daily to walk to school, they commented that it was very different from reading about the same experience or even seeing a video of an Israeli guard interrogating a Palestinian. Maxime explained, "This is very painful. In France, it is far away. So, you go and buy Israeli products. But here you feel deeply and it's not fake. It's reality."

DISCUSSION: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT DISCOVERIES AND AWAKENINGS

The paradigmatic theme "transformative learning" from Tamashiro's comprehensive review of peace pilgrimages to sites of extreme brutality and inhumane suffering such as the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park commemorating the dropping of the atomic bomb (2018) was selected to frame the insights and awakenings of international students as they traveled to sacred, historical, and contemporary sites in the Palestinian Occupied Territories (2018). We have adapted Tamashiro's model and provided a description of each stage based on our analysis of the interviews (see Table 1). Note that the four stages of transformative learning may proceed in a dialectic (zigzag) or re-iterative fashion, rather than a linear progression.

Table 1. Transformative Learning Through Pilgrimage Curriculum

Transformative Learning	Description
Stage 1 Disorienting dilemma	Safely challenge previously held views/ knowledge through a real time Pilgrimage curriculum to witness the local reality. It may be a traumatic and or an unexpected or dissonant experience. A dilemma creates a state of balance that requires going to the next stage of questioning and deconstruction.
Stage 2 Questioning and deconstruction	Feel and express painful, conflicting, and "unsettling" emotions. Problem pose, question, and deconstruct previously long-held values, identities, or beliefs.
Stage 3 Reframing and restructuring	Shift the perception to consider the possibility that there may be a deeper historical, spiritual, or ethical meaning behind what was witnessed or experienced.
Stage 4 Shifting of consciousness	New integration in thinking becomes a catalyst for transformative learning in self and others.

Note. Adapted from Tamashiro, R. (2018). Planetary consciousness, witnessing the inhuman, and transformative learning: Insights from peace pilgrimage oral histories and autoethnographies. *Religions, 9*(5), 148.

Stage 1: A Disorienting Dilemma

Hearing or observing a traumatic story or being confronted with some dissonant information are examples of what Tamashiro called a "disorienting dilemma." Each of the students was able to identify a dramatic or sharp contrast between a perspective previously held that had hidden, minimized, or even erased the reality of Israeli occupation. On the trip to Hebron, when Palestinian faculty and students were not allowed to enter Shahada and students from Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Mexico were able to walk on the street, the reality of the occupation hit home dramatically. All the participants in the field trip were confronted with the difference in power and privilege between different members of the group, depending on the passports they carried. This critical discovery or "insight" has been described elsewhere in descriptions of transformative learning as an awakening.

Stage 2: Questioning and Deconstructing

Through dialogue with the Palestinian voices they encountered in the field, the learners felt and experienced painful, conflicting, and "unsettling" emotions. The students witnessed the broken windows and shuttered stores and "ghost towns" that had once been bustling marketplaces on the highway that had once taken Palestinians from Jerusalem to the beach. As Palestinian children (as well as older men) in worn and tattered clothes pressed around the students peddling gum and and Palestinian trinkets and souvenirs, students were confronted with their own identities as socioeconomically and politically privileged tourists. Students questioned and deconstructed previously long-held values, identities, and beliefs. An example of "feeling the emotions" was provided by Maxime, who had opportunities to compare what he thought he knew to what he saw in the field when he observed the Israeli settlements. He asked the professor many questions. And this opportunity to ask questions, or to pose problems, afforded him insights.

Problem-Posing

Critical pedagogy encourages students to engage in problem-posing through dialogue (Wong, 1999, 2005). In contrast to what Paolo Freire (2000) called a "banking pedagogy," in which knowledge is "deposited" in students' heads as if they are empty vessels, through problem-posing, students are encouraged to ask questions and to even challenge the professor. Maxime noted with approval and admiration that it was clear that his PAS professor encouraged the students to develop their own analysis and even to argue with him.

The field trips were intentionally designed to expose the students to the best Palestinian food and music; to observe at work and hear from architects, farmers, and craftsmen who made soap, pottery, and blew glass; and to understand their daily struggles to survive under the many restrictions of Israeli occupation. In addition, the professor introduced the students to Palestinian voices from different socioeconomic classes, from local governmental leadership to human rights and women's organization activists who were fighting to obtain power and water for crop irrigation, to end house demolitions, to preserve and restore historic Palestinian monuments, marketplaces, and architecture, and to end the evictions from their homes and lands (see Appendix B).

Stage 3: Reframing and Restructuring

The third stage of transformative learning is to reframe and restructure for a deeper understanding. Through the field trips, students were exposed to a plethora of experiences that required them to respond to a range of information about history and current realities within a full itinerary. For example, on the trip to Salfeet, students were provided with the opportunity to observe the reality of Israeli settlements on the ground. They participated in discussions and mini lectures about agriculture and groundwater issues (Al-Saed & Mimi, 2010), Israeli Industrial zones, and the Apartheid Wall (see Appendix B).

In the problem-posing pilgrimage curriculum, students went from being tourists shopping and tasting Palestinian specialties to witnessing inhumane treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank. They visited the home of a family who refused to move although their family lands had been confiscated and the Apartheid Wall was built around their house, totally isolating the family as an island within the Israeli-controlled area. This witnessing required reframing and restructuring to understand the historical processes that had taken place over decades with Israel's separation policies. They observed "ghost towns," once thriving beach towns as well as towns that were previously suburbs of Jerusalem, where the Palestinian stores, restaurants, and homes had been abandoned when Palestinians with jobs in Jerusalem, due to checkpoints and the closing off of access, were no longer able to travel to Jerusalem to live and work.

In stage three of transformative learning, the students had to restructure their analysis of the Palestinian problem. Satsuki met a Palestinian BZU student who was later kidnapped from the BZU campus by plain-clothes Israeli agents disguised as student reporters. They witnessed the systemic policies that failed to protect Palestinians from continued settler violence and actually provided incentives to Israeli settlers to seize land and divert water and power from Palestinian homes, farms, and shops, leaving Palestinians with insufficient electricity and water to meet their needs. Palestinians in the West Bank were prohibited from building or renovating their properties without permits and were restricted from importing equipment. Having witnessed the stark contrasts between the Bedouin camp with no running water or electricity and the green Israeli settlements on top of the mountains and in the Jordan Valley, all four students reframed and restructured their understanding of Palestinian realities in the West Bank, expressing that what they had witnessed and experienced, coupled with

course readings and discussions, enabled them to reach a deeper historical, spiritual as well as ethical understanding of the Palestinian question.

Stage 4: Shifting of Consciousness

Stage four in transformative learning involves a shift in consciousness. The new integration in thinking becomes a catalyst for further transformative learning in self and others. A socio-emotional framework may involve a commitment to continue to connect to the victims of violence and to transform that victimhood into action. Witness bearing of intense human suffering may involve an awakening to one's own connection with those who have experienced victimhood. This involves a transcendence to a deeper systemic understanding, from "why" to dedicating oneself to become part of the solution. The journey to transformative learning for each of the four students did not occur overnight. Judith's first teacher of Arabic in Germany began to plant seeds beginning with Palestinian food and traditional embroidered clothing and weddings. The process of reading various autobiographies of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and being involved in refugee work in Germany provided a foundation for Judith's deeper and more nuanced political understandings in the PAS program.

At the time of the interviews, all four students showed clear evidence of stages one, two, three, and four. Pilgrimage is a journey. All four students were on their way to a shift in consciousness. There are always zigzags and each person can advance, retreat, reflect, and change. While Bruce, Maxime, Judith, and Satsuki expressed that the injustice and inhumane treatment of Palestinians they had witnessed in their journeys in Palestine had led to a new shift in consciousness, Satsuki most clearly had demonstrated not only a shift in consciousness, but that she had put that understanding into practice.

As a BZU international student, Satsuki volunteered at special events such as concerts, films, and plays produced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as International and Palestinian cultural, educational, and human rights organization activities in Ramallah. For example, the Japanese consulate held a concert of a Japanese rock star who came to express support and solidarity with the people of Gaza. Wearing a kimono, Satsuki assisted as an usher and set up display tables of the various Japanese NGOs with photo exhibits, artifacts, and brochures. This activism was evidence that Satsuki not only was a witness to the occupation but was also a catalyst for change. By taking a public stand in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza, Satsuki was a "worthy witness" (Winn & Ubiles, 2011).

International students in the Occupied West Bank, like other international visitors, are a transient group to a limited degree as they also may face scrutiny going in and out of checkpoints depending on their country of origin as well as their ethnic grouping. For example, a U.S. citizen with an Arabic surname may be more likely than other U.S. citizens to face interrogation and even have possessions confiscated. Nevertheless, international students' privileged status allowed them to rent cars and drive into Jerusalem and go to Nazareth and the Galilee. A group of European students (from Germany and the U.K.) traveled on their own to the Golan Heights, where they toured the Israeli military installations. The Israeli government encourages international tourism at the Israeli military installations. This was in sharp contrast to the Palestinians in occupied Palestine who do not have the freedom to travel to the Golan Heights, to their former homes and towns that have been bulldozed and erased in what is now Israel and Gaza, and have systematically seen their land expropriated (see Figure 2). Many young Palestinians in the West Bank do not know Jerusalem because they have never been allowed to enter. It is also true that the blue of the Mediterranean waters is visible from the BZU campus, but many of the Palestinian students whose parents and grandparents remember going to the beaches do not have freedom to travel there. While the Israeli

Figure 2. Map of Occupation of Palestinian Lands, 1946–2008.

government welcomes Jews from around the world to visit the homeland, Palestinians who fled their homes in what is now within the borders of Israel do not have the right to return to their homes.

EPILOGUE: STUDY ABROAD INTERRUPTED

Satsuki's parents and younger sister came to visit her after her first three months of study in Palestine. She met them in Spain. When they entered the Tel Aviv airport, seeing a family comprised of a middle-aged husband and wife with two daughters, the Israeli immigration authority official became impatient after asking questions—in English—of Satsuki's father, who was not fluent in English. The Israeli uniformed official waved the entire family through and stamped each of their passports with a three-month tourist visa, not noticing that Satsuki had already had one three-month tourist visa stamped on her passport.

During her second semester at BZU, Satsuki again needed to leave Israeli-controlled Palestine to renew her visa. This time, she traveled to Italy, hoping to be stamped with a third three-month tourist visa. However, at the Tel Aviv airport, traveling alone, she no longer had the protection of her family:

> At the immigration, he noticed that I had been here for six months and he asked me, "Why are you here for six months?" I thought it is not good for me to lie. He sent me to another kind of office and told me to wait and another security police came and took my passport and told me to follow him. He asked, "Why are you studying in Palestine?" And I told him everything—[the] truth. He checked every single message on my phone. If he saw an Arabic name, he would ask who it was. After another hour, I repeated what I told to the other guy. Again, I was told, "You need to take a student visa if you study." And I explained, "But you don't issue student visa if [the] student is studying at a Palestinian university—you only issue for Hebrew University! Every year from my school they will never get a visa." The Israeli officer repeated, "It's forbidden to study in Palestine." I explained, "No, it's *not* forbidden. I'm from a government university."

Satsuki had to wait alone in a locked room for two additional hours. When the first Israeli immigration authority returned, he told her, "Here's your visa for one week. You need to book a flight in one week and pack your things." Satsuki related, "I was so shocked, so I didn't say anything." She waited. Then she asked him, "Can you at least give me one month so I can finish my school study?" He did not say anything. And he escorted her out.

Satsuki felt that she had no choice but to leave in one week without finishing the semester. She was afraid if she did not comply that she might be banned from re-entering Israel/occupied Palestine in the future. Some of the students from her university had been banned for ten years and one of her close friends had been banned for life. BZU professors arranged for her to complete the semester by correspondence.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Bruce, Judith, Maxime, and Satsuki all indicated that studying Arabic in Palestine was an eye-opening experience. Future follow-up research is needed to document the impact of the transformative learning they had experienced in Palestine after they returned to their home countries. They had witnessed firsthand both the brutality of the checkpoints and injustices suffered due to the occupation as well as the resiliency, tenacity, and creativity of the Palestinians with whom they engaged in dialogue. Was the shift in perception and reframing of the Palestinian question sustained, and were they able to become a catalyst for transformative learning in others after returning to their home countries?

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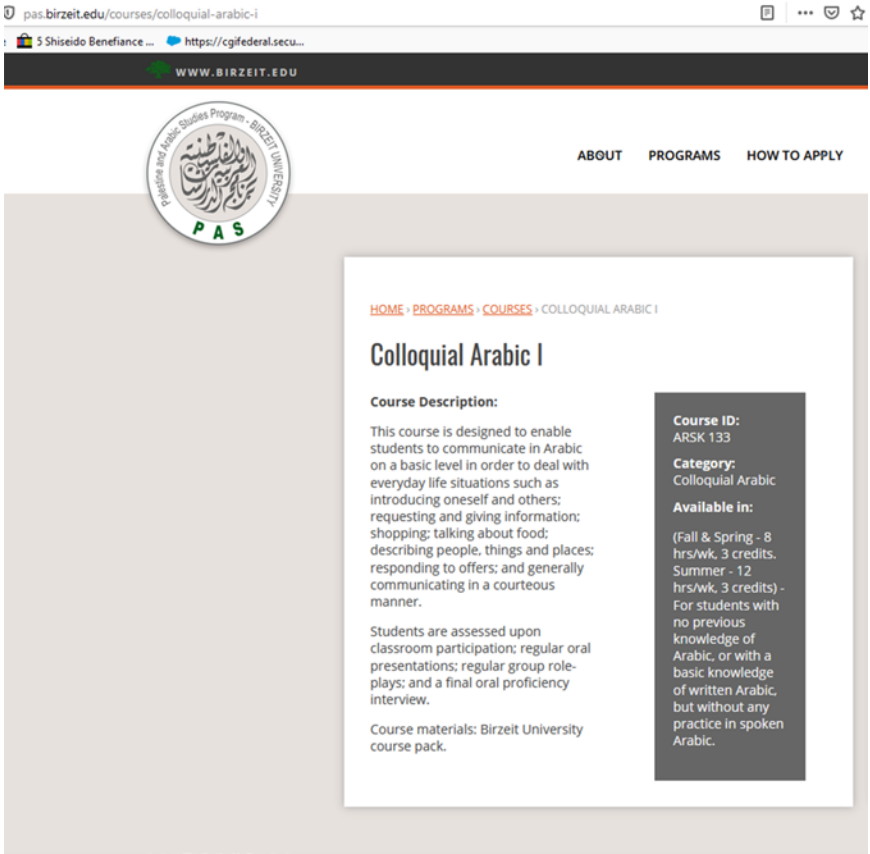
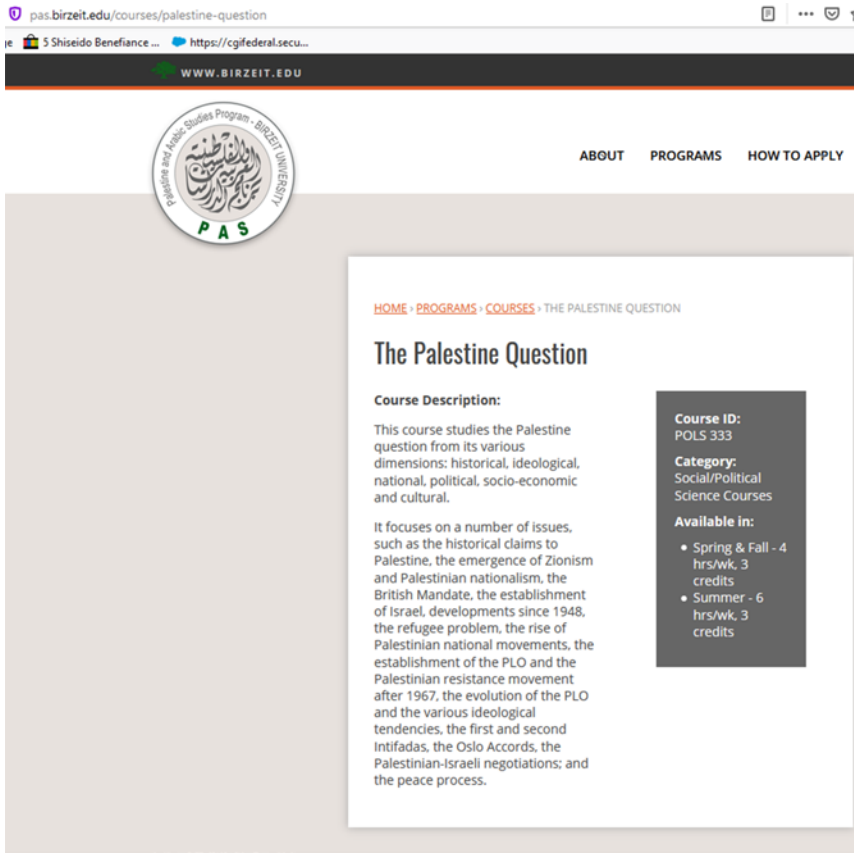
APPENDIX A

Courses

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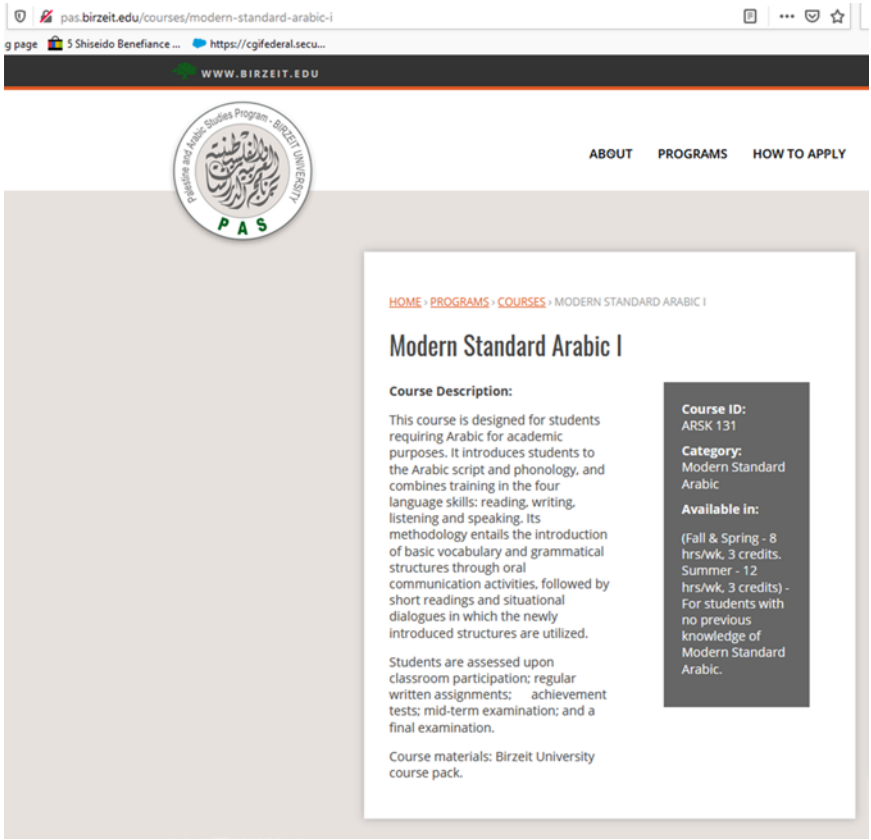
Palestine and Arabic Studies Program - BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY
P A S
ABOUT
PROGRAMS
HOW TO APPLY
HOME › PROGRAMS › COURSES › THE PALESTINE QUESTION
The Palestine Question
Course Description:
This course studies the Palestine question from its various dimensions: historical, ideological, national, political, socio-economic and cultural.
It focuses on a number of issues, such as the historical claims to Palestine, the emergence of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, the British Mandate, the establishment of Israel, developments since 1948, the refugee problem, the rise of Palestinian national movements, the establishment of the PLO and the Palestinian resistance movement after 1967, the evolution of the PLO and the various ideological tendencies, the first and second Intifadas, the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations; and the peace process.
Course ID:
POLS 333
Category:
Social/Political Science Courses
Available in:
• Spring & Fall - 4 hrs/wk, 3 credits
• Summer - 6 hrs/wk, 3 credits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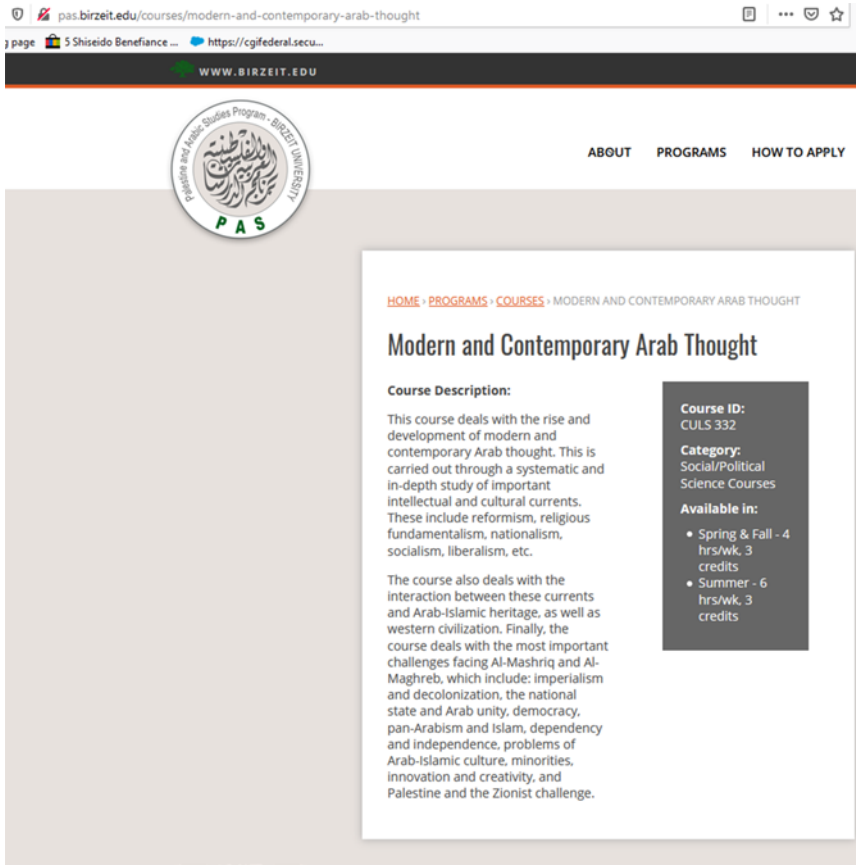
ABOUT
PROGRAMS
HOW TO APPLY
HOME › PROGRAMS › COURSES › MODERN STANDARD ARABIC I
Modern Standard Arabic I
Course Description:
This course is designed for students requiring Arabic for academic purposes. It introduces students to the Arabic script and phonology, and combines training in the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Its methodology entails the introduction of basic vocabulary and grammatical structures through oral communication activities, followed by short readings and situational dialogues in which the newly introduced structures are utilized.
Students are assessed upon classroom participation; regular written assignments; achievement tests; mid-term examination; and a final examination.
Course materials: Birzeit University course pack.
Course ID:
ARSK 131
Category:
Modern Standard Arabic
Available in:
(Fall & Spring - 8 hrs/wk, 3 credits. Summer - 12 hrs/wk, 3 credits) - For students with no previous knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic.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Palestine and Arabic Studies Program - BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY
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ABOUT
PROGRAMS
HOW TO APPLY
HOME › PROGRAMS › COURSES › MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ARAB THOUGHT
Modern and Contemporary Arab Thought
Course Description:
This course deals with the rise and development of modern and contemporary Arab thought. This is carried out through a systematic and in-depth study of important intellectual and cultural currents. These include reformism, religious fundamentalism, nationalism, socialism, liberalism, etc.
The course also deals with the interaction between these currents and Arab-Islamic heritage, as well as western civilization. Finally, the course deals with the most important challenges facing Al-Mashriq and Al-Maghreb, which include: imperialism and decolonization, the national state and Arab unity, democracy, pan-Arabism and Islam, dependency and independence, problems of Arab-Islamic culture, minorities, innovation and creativity, and Palestine and the Zionist challenge.
Course ID:
CULS 332
Category:
Social/Political Science Courses
Available in:
Spring & Fall - 4 hrs/wk, 3 credits
Summer - 6 hrs/wk, 3 credits

APPENDIX B

Itinerary: Salfeet Trip

The trip will include the following:

- Meet with the governor's office where they will give a presentation about the situation in Salfeet governance.
- Visit to Al-Matwi Valley to see the effects of the sewage system from Areal Settlement.
- Visit to the Old City in DeirIsteia.
- Visit to Hani Al-Amer's house behind the Apartheid Wall in Masha Village to see the effect of the settlement on his living conditions.
- Visit to the Abd Al-Qader Abu Naba' cultural center in the town of Al-Zawiya.
- Visit to DeirBallout at the end of the day to have lunch/dinner.
- This trip and these lectures will also complement the topics you have been discussing in class.

Itinerary: NABLUS Trip

The trip will include the following:

- **Cultural Heritage Enrichment Center**, established in 2004, Located in the center of the old city it is within a renovated historic soap factory. Exploring how traditional olive oil soap is made. Showing cultural products and a unique example of a restoration project within a merchant's house complex. (chance to buy traditional soap and other handicrafts)
- **Turkish bath**, Turkish baths in all of Palestine are 38, 10 were built in Nablus. The Al-Shifa' Turkish bath is one of two baths that are still functioning.
- **Nablus BIG BEN, the ancient clock tower and the Governmental Compound of Ottomans in Nablus.** These are located in the central yard of the old city.
- **The historic market place** of the old city, dating back to early Ottoman period, 18th century.
- **Greek Orthodox Church:** this is one of the historic churches of the old city that was also affected by incursion and Israeli offences to the old city.
- **The Kabir Mosque:** originally a Roman Temple that has been transformed into a Byzantine church and later a Crusades, finally as a mosque in the 11th century. Recently restored in 2010.
- **Historic houses** castle-like houses of local governors from Ottoman period.
- **The spice shops**, Sweets: mainly eating the famous traditional Kunafa, and **shopping activity** could also be enjoyed in the market.