

**BeNeFri Winter School of Social Anthropology**  
07 - 20 January 2024, Haifa, Israel

# Co-inhabiting Urban Spaces:

## Residential infrastructure, built environment and communal activism in Haifa

This winter school is a practice-oriented teaching unit, in which the students will conduct collaborative field-based research projects. It is organized by the Social Anthropology Unit at the University of Fribourg in collaboration with the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Haifa, and will be open to MA and advanced BA students of anthropology from the Universities of Fribourg, Bern, and Neuchâtel. Students at the University of Haifa will also participate in the school's activities.

Organizers: Dr. Sibylle Lustenberger, Prof. Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi, Prof. Madlen Kobi  
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## Theme and location

Haifa has been a thriving town and administrative center since the nineteenth century and is today Israel's third-largest city. In the early twentieth century, Jews and Palestinians made up roughly equal parts of the city's population, with business relationships, friendship, and dwelling transcending religious borders. Haifa also stands more than any other place for the *nakba* ('catastrophe', in Arabic): 95% of the 70,000 Palestinians living in Haifa were expelled during the 1948 war. Furthermore, expropriation, ruination and renovation of buildings, and more have all continued to strip Haifa of its Palestinian past. Since the 1990s, however, Haifa has regained its status as a city of coexistence and as a cultural and intellectual center for Palestinians in Israel. There are Palestinian restaurants, theaters, and clubs, as well as community initiatives fostering multi-religious dialogue, campaigning against racism, and fighting for social equality. Still, most Jews and Palestinians live separate from each other, with socio-economic differences and essentialist ideas of national differences preventing deeper engagements between the two groups.

The long and multifaceted history of Palestinian presence and displacement has shaped the cityscape over the years and produced a puzzle of neighborhoods that vary greatly in their composition, social dynamics, and appearance. Recent demographic developments, such as the growth of Haifa's ultra-orthodox population, as well as the arrival of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, guest workers from the Philippines and refugees from Eritrea and Sudan, are further transforming these neighborhoods. In this winter school, we will focus on the different realities of life and forms of coexistence in selected neighborhoods: the mixed neighborhood of Hadar, where many projects advocating coexistence take place; Downtown Haifa, with its Palestinian restaurants and clubs; the Jewish business area of Central Carmel; Wadi Salib with its abandoned Ottoman buildings and the neighborhood of Kiryat Shmuel with its growing Jewish Orthodox population. We will explore how different realities of life manifest in and through the infrastructures and materialities of the city, and how residents shape the neighborhoods and their built environment through everyday activities. In doing so, we attempt to render tangible the social dynamics, ambivalences, and tensions that make up today's Haifa.

## Admission and preparation

The winter school is open to MA students and advanced BA students (having completed three semesters) of Social Anthropology at the Universities of Fribourg, Bern, Neuchâtel, and Haifa.

Students from Switzerland will be expected to attend the preparatory BA/MA Seminar “Coexistence, living side-by-side, and displacement – Exploring Haifa’s urban infrastructures and materialities” in the Fall Semester 2023 at the University of Fribourg.

Further, we recommend that students participate in the following courses:

- BA/MA Lecture “Israel/Palästina: Anthropologische Perspektiven auf eine gesplittene Gesellschaft” in the Spring Semester 2023 ([UE-L37.00970](#));
- MA-seminar “Built Communities” in the Spring Semester 2023 ([UE-L37.00971](#));
- Hebrew and/or Arabic language courses.

### Learning Objectives

Participating students will conduct short collaborative field-based research projects to engage with the city’s diverse neighborhoods, their social dynamics, materialities, and the residents’ life-worlds. They will also attend lectures and mentoring sessions with researchers from the University of Haifa and the University of Fribourg.

Participation in the winter school will enable students to:

- Learn, refine, and apply their knowledge on anthropological research methods
- Plan and conduct their own research project in an unfamiliar place
- Analyze the relationship between the built environment and sociocultural, political, and economic processes
- Acquire knowledge on urban life in present-day Israel/Palestine
- Reflect on methodology and their own positionality
- Hone their skills in collaborative work and oral presentations
- Establish contact with anthropologists from different fields and backgrounds.

## Assignments

Students will receive 3 ECTS for their participation in the winter school. They will need to:

- conduct collaborative field-based research projects in small teams,
- present the findings of their research at the Students’ Conference which will take place on 19 January 2024 at Haifa University,
- compile an individual learning portfolio comprising fieldnotes, maps, interview transcripts, and a two-page reflection paper.



## Program

07.01.2024	Arrival in Haifa
08.01.2024	Opening workshop
09.-18.01.2024	Fieldwork
19.01.2024	Students' conference
20.01.2024	Departure

### **Practical issues: travel, accommodation, and insurance**

Participants will organize their own international travel and individual accommodation in Haifa. We encourage students to find accommodation in the neighborhood in which they plan to conduct their research. Airbnb is commonly used in Israel and January is not high tourist season, which makes it possible to find a room or shared apartment in Haifa at a reasonable price. Students will receive assistance and advice with regard to travel and accommodation during the preparatory seminar.

Students are expected to have international travel insurance that covers health issues and accident costs abroad. We encourage students to buy membership with REGA.

### **Costs**

The accommodation and travel costs of the winter school have been estimated at roughly 1,500 CHF per participant. An application for a financial support of the school has been submitted to the University of Fribourg.

If you need further financial assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Sibylle Lustenberger ([sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch](mailto:sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch)).

### **Registration**

Interested students are expected to submit their letters of interest (max. 1 page outlining their interest in social anthropology and in the winter school more specifically) to Dr. Sibylle Lustenberger ([sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch](mailto:sibylle.lustenberger@unifr.ch)) by 1 June 2023. The admitted students will be notified per email by 15 June, after which a brief information meeting will be organized.