

Globalization of Open University Studies

As a distance learning institution, the Open University cultivates a variety of ways of offering learning materials to as wide a public as possible. Advanced technologies enable the OUI to teach students anywhere, and our study materials are available to students worldwide. In fact, hundreds of Israeli students living abroad benefit from this every year.

This year a decision was made to expand the numbers of overseas students and, in particular, to approach those interested in studying subjects related to Israel and the Middle East, to Judaic studies and to religions, and offer a selection of OUI academic courses. Several of these courses will be translated into other languages.

The effort to expand globalization of OUI studies focuses on finding channels to make the University accessible to individuals, universities and interested organizations abroad. We are also seeking collaborative ventures with overseas universities with a view to teaching courses and exchanging information on technological capabilities. Another potential outlet is collaboration via international bodies, to which we offer access to special Open University programs and technological developments designed for distance education, including software to help in the use of English in academic studies.

Academic External Relations

The OUI takes steps to form collaborations with academic institutions abroad. This year, our activities focused on three goals:

- Finding channels to market OUI courses to universities abroad
- Entering into collaboration with overseas universities in a range of areas, such as teaching courses; exchange of academic and administrative personnel; exchange of information on technological capabilities; and the use of study centers to administer exams
- Creating collaborative ventures via international bodies

The first results of the globalization activity of OUI studies are already emerging:

- During the past year, collaborations were formed with INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) in Paris; with the Open University of Catalonia, Spain; with Brazil's São Paulo University; and with ten universities in the former Soviet Union. The agreements enable students at those universities to take OUI courses and offer OUI students the option of taking relevant courses at those universities. They also include research collaboration, with a focus on digital technology; initiating joint conferences and academic programs; the exchange of academic and administrative personnel; and the preparation of MA programs in the framework of Erasmus Mundus, a European program that awards degrees from several universities jointly. The Open University is also in contact with the Open University of Great Britain and with Cambridge University's Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths.
- OUI representatives were invited to deliver keynote lectures at conferences held by prominent international distance learning forums: ICDE, EDEN, SCOP and AAOU.
- Contacts were initiated with Open Universities in Malaysia, Japan and China to market unique OUI-developed programs for the use of English in academic studies.

Russian Language Academic Studies

Project Russia, the Russian-language academic study project, has existed for about 17 years. In its framework, 24 Open University academic courses were translated into Russian, including five advanced courses. All the costs were covered by grants from external funds and thousands of learners in the former Soviet Union taking these courses every year were exempt from tuition. This year, the financial crunch experienced by the funding bodies almost entirely ended support for the project. Consequently, it was decided to reorganize Russian-language studies and determine new criteria for offering them. This was accomplished, and by the end of 2009-2010, Project Russia ended its activity in its previous format and the new asynchronous online teaching format was implemented.

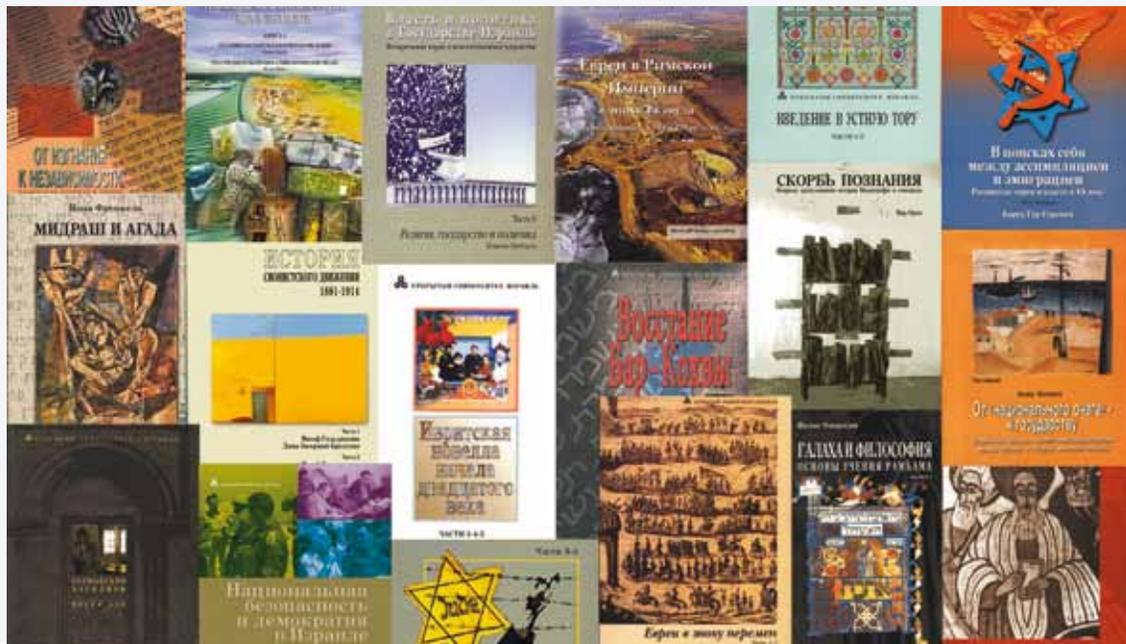
- Coordinators of courses in Russian have moved to the relevant academic departments, where they will function as Russian studies coordinators in the framework of the parallel courses in Hebrew. Assignments and exams for each translated course will be identical in both languages.
- Registration takes place online.
- Students pay tuition. Residents of the former Soviet Union will receive a residence scholarship amounting to about 60% of the tuition fees.
- Each course in the program has its own website, on which e-books are posted.
- All studies will be held on designated websites in a Moodle learning environment.

The 2009-2010 academic year was a year of transition. As a result of disruptions in the project, the number of learners dropped to about 2,000. Studies continued in the previous format, but all assignments and exams were checked in Israel.

The new OUI Russian-language study program was promoted through an online marketing company, with the cooperation of Jewish organizations in former Soviet Union countries and in the US.

Courses translated into Russian

- Jews and Christians in Western Europe
- Jerusalem Throughout the Ages
- Government and Politics in Israel
- The Holocaust: Days of Reckoning
- The Jews of Eastern Europe: History and Culture
- Jews in the Roman Empire (70-220)
- Introduction to Oral Law
- Law and Philosophy: Maimonides
- From Exile to Independence: From the Babylonian Exile to the Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom
- Israel: The First Decade, I
- Israel: The First Decade, II
- Selected Hebrew Short Stories: Early Twentieth Century
- Introduction to Biblical Literature
- History of Zionism: 1881-1914
- Jews in an Era of Transition
- The Archeology of Ancient Israel in the Biblical Period (under development)
- Ashkenazi Hasidism in the History of Jewish Thought
- From 'National Home' to a 'State in the Making': The Jewish Community in Palestine between the World Wars
- Midrash and Aggadah
- National Security and Democracy in Israel ([advanced course](#))
- The Bar Kokhba Revolt ([advanced course](#))
- Ethiopia: Christianity, Islam, Judaism ([advanced course](#))
- Chapters in American Jewish History: 1820-1950 ([advanced course](#))
- The Pain of Knowledge ([advanced course](#))



OUI books translated into other languages

English translations

As part of the globalization drive, we have begun the English translation of a course on Jewish secularism (“Secularism in Modern Jewish Culture and Society”). Two additional courses are slated for translation: “Jewish Identities in an Era of Multiple Modernities” and “Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua: Early Writings.”

Arabic translations

Work is ongoing on an Arabic translation of the three first courses: “The Middle East Between the World Wars,” “Introduction to the Social Sciences,” and “Educational Psychology” (for further details, see Academic Development pp. 10-12). Additional courses are earmarked for translation into Arabic, to be used for studies in Israel and by speakers of Arabic around the world.