



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Ginsburg-Ingberman Overseas Student Program



The MAROM Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice Academic Program

Environmental, Developmental and Israel Studies Track in the Negev Desert

Spring Semester '09

MAROM - an acronym for "*Mercaz Ruchani u'Masorti*" (the center for spirituality and *masoret*/tradition), which is the worldwide organization of Conservative/Masorti students and young adults affiliated with KOACH, the United Synagogue's College Outreach Department.

The Concept

This is a unique track of study in which students interested in environmental studies, development studies and religious studies may pursue these fields in a unique socio-economic and socio-political context: the Negev desert of Israel. The program takes a holistic and comprehensive perspective of the Negev desert, considering ecological, economic, social, demographic and political issues of the region. This is an exceptional opportunity to experience Israel from a perspective of the challenges of developing the Negev; Israel's largest remaining wilderness. In addition to ulpan and academic courses, students will participate in workshops, discussion groups, field trips, volunteering and environmental fieldwork that will introduce them to the sustainable development challenges of Israel's periphery. The program is collaboration between Ben-Gurion University's (BGU) Ginsburg-Ingberman Overseas Study Program (OSP), the *Atid Bamidbar* creative Jewish studies center, in Yeroham, located twenty miles south of Beer-Sheva and MAROM the worldwide organization of Conservative/Masorti students and young adults.

The program offers a "hands-on" Israeli experience by offering a meaningful social encounter in an academic framework in a distinctive desert environment. Students will engage the social, developmental and environmental challenges of David Ben-Gurion's call to address the Negev in the 21st century as the future of the Jewish State. They will receive the tools, training and experience to effectively take on one of Israel's greatest challenge: that of developing the Negev into a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable element of the state and people of Israel.

The Program

MAROM-BGU PROGRAM

Ulpan

The program starts with a six-week winter ulpan on the main BGU campus in Beer-Sheva, from January through mid-February (see dates). The levels range from Aleph (beginners) through Heh (semi-fluent). It carries 6 academic credits. Classes are small (no more than 12) and meet for 4 hours daily. The ulpan includes general interest lectures about Israel, social activities and trips throughout Israel.

The Semester

Students will divide their time between the main BGU campus in Beer-Sheva and the central Negev town of Yeroham. They will live in Yeroham, where they will experience life in a development town and participate in workshops, tours, volunteering and discussion groups at the *Atid Bamidbar* (future in the desert) Jewish study center. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays they will attend classes at the BGU campus with other OSP students. Several *Shabbatonim* are planned throughout the semester.

The Conservative elements

- Shabbat in a Conservative environment and a Kosher kitchen
- The availability of daily student-led egalitarian prayer services
- Weekly sessions with a Masorti-affiliated *madrish*
- Regular *shabbatonim* held at a variety of Conservative/Masorti institutions
- Connection with MAROM Israel
- Masorti/Conservative adoptive families across Israel
- A supportive Conservative staff

The Courses:

- Hebrew language
- An Introduction to the History and Development of the Negev
- Environmental and Natural Resources Policy in Israel and the Middle East
- Action Research Workshop in Yeroham: Environmental Development, Sustainability and Social Justice
- An elective course in OSP

Dates:

Winter 2009

January 7	Group Flight
January 8	Arrival in Israel
January 9-10	Orientation
January 11	Ulpan begins
February 18	Ulpan ends

Spring Semester 2009

February 22	Spring Semester begins
March 9-10	Purim
April 9-15	Spring Vacation
May 28	Spring Semester ends

Cost: \$ 10,500

Application procedure for MAROM-BGU Program: Print out this page, sign and date and add to the regular Overseas Studies application available at www.bgu-osp.org

Name

Date