

**27 ORGANIZATIONS WRITE TO UC PRESIDENT NAPOLITANO AND PROVOST DORR
RE: UC IRVINE INDOCTRINATION COURSE**

May 6, 2015

VIA EMAIL

Dear President Napolitano and Provost Dorr,

Last Fall, after several of our organizations wrote to you expressing our concern about instructors on UC campuses who promote anti-Israel propaganda and boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) campaigns in their classrooms, you sent us assurances that the Regents Policy on Course Content, which prohibits misuse of the classroom for political indoctrination, applies to both graduate student instructors and faculty, and you called on UC Chancellors to enforce this important policy.

However, we are gravely concerned about a course being given at UC Riverside this academic quarter, which we believe is being used for political indoctrination rather than education. Even more troubling is that when our organizations and members of the public have expressed their legitimate concerns to UCR administrators, they have been unwilling to acknowledge these clear violations of UC policy, let alone address them.

The one-credit course, entitled “Palestine & Israel: Settler-Colonialism and Apartheid,” is being taught at UCR by Tina Matar, an undergraduate student who is the head of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). Matar was an author and proponent of the extremely contentious anti-Israel divestment resolution passed by the UCR student senate last April, as well as the leader of a very recent SJP campaign to have an Israeli product, Sabra humus, removed from campus cafeterias. Matar’s class [syllabus](#), reproduced below, strongly suggests that her affiliation with the anti-Zionist SJP group formed the ideological basis for her course curriculum, which was developed under the mentorship of the SJP’s faculty advisor, UCR English Professor David Lloyd, who is also a BDS leader and [founder](#) of the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel.

In addition, a preliminary analysis of Matar’s syllabus by [Verity Educate](#) a non-partisan, non-profit organization that provides scholarly analysis of the factual accuracy and objectivity of educational material, demonstrated that “the core academic and educational values of knowledge acquisition and critical thinking have been hijacked by a particular strain of political action, and specifically by a particular politically oriented activist organization.” Verity Educate’s analysis includes the following:

- The material presented to students in this course reflects a singular interpretation of the “Palestine-Israel conflict.” Nearly every text presents Israel as an “occupying” power and deems it morally repugnant and guilty of “settler-colonialism.” No other competing interpretations, arguments, or views are presented through the readings over the course of the semester.
- The course evidences a complete lack of historical information about the “Palestine-Israel conflict.” Despite the stated learning objective, “develop a historical understanding of the conflict in the Middle East,” the course material fails to offer a single work of history that even relates historical events in a chronological format.
- A majority of the texts actively promote a particular political position vis-à-vis the “Palestine-Israel conflict,” specifically the dissolution of the State of Israel and its replacement with a unitary “democratic” state composed of Arabs and non-Arabs...These texts essentially engage in propaganda efforts by presenting students with political agendas and promoting the adoption of a particular conclusion under the guise of exploring other topics.

- The most prevalent theme of the textual material for this course is that of activism. Many works contain prescriptions for activism.

(Verity Educate's full preliminary analysis of the syllabus is attached to this email).

For all of the reasons outlined above, there is little doubt that Matar is using her classroom to politically indoctrinate her students, in flagrant violation of the Regents Policy on Course Content. Understandably, this course has evoked enormous public concern and numerous calls for UCR Chancellor Wilcox to enforce the Regents Policy on Course Content in this case of blatant political indoctrination. Chancellor Wilcox, however, has not even acknowledged the Regents Policy.

After 20 of our organizations sent the Chancellor [a letter](#) summarizing our grave concerns about both Matar's course and the curricular review process which approved it, he did not acknowledge receipt of our letter. And when hundreds of our members and supporters wrote to the Chancellor expressing their outrage that a course which so clearly engages in political indoctrination is allowed to be taught at UCR, he sent the same email to each correspondent, which read in relevant part: "The syllabus for the course was reviewed by a faculty committee which determined that the course meets University of California standards."

Clearly, neither Chancellor Wilcox nor the faculty committee which reviewed Matar's course referred to the Regents Policy on Course Content in evaluating the course's worthiness to be offered for credit at UCR. As a result, the individuals charged with upholding the university's rigorous academic standards determined that a course filled with blatant political propaganda and unbridled calls to political action, taught by an undergraduate activist, "meets University of California standards." This is truly an embarrassment for anyone who holds a degree from the University of California.

In light of your previous willingness to affirm the importance of the Regents Policy on Course Content and its application to all classroom instruction at the University of California, we ask that you take the following two steps:

- **Issue a clear statement about whether the UCR course "Palestine & Israel: Settler-Colonialism and Apartheid" violates the Regents Policy on Course Content, and what must be done if it is found to be in violation of University policy.**
- **Issue clear guidelines to all UC Chancellors and academic senate leaders about how to enforce the Regents Policy on Course Content.**

We believe that without your guidance, unbridled political expression in UC classrooms will continue to corrupt the University's academic mission by compromising the quality of teaching, limiting the access of students to vital information about topics of global importance and violating their fundamental right to be educated and not indoctrinated. In addition, instructors who are permitted to use their classrooms as bully-pulpits for engaging in politically-motivated and directed speech targeting particular individuals or groups for demonization or delegitimization can't help but create a hostile and discriminatory environment for many UC students.

Thank you for in advance for your attention to this serious matter. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

The following 27 organizations:

Accuracy in Academia
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity (AEPi)
AMCHA Initiative
American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists
Americans for Peace and Tolerance
BEAR: Bias Education, Advocacy & Resources
Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law
Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA)
CUFI on Campus
David Horowitz Freedom Center
Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET)
Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel
Iranian American Jewish Federation
Israeli-American Council (IAC)
Middle East Political and Information Network (MEPIN)
National Conference on Jewish Affairs
Proclaiming Justice to the Nations
Scholars for Peace in the Middle East
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs
Students and Parents Against Campus Anti-Semitism
The Israel Christian Nexus
The Israel Group
The Lawfare Project
Training and Education About the Middle East (T.E.A.M.)
Verity Educate
Zionist Organization of America

Cc: Board of Regents
UC Chancellors
California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson
California Senator Carol Liu, Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Education
California Assembly Member Jose Medina, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Higher Education
California Assembly Member Shirley Weber, Chair of the Select Committee on Campus Climate
California State Senator Marty Block, Chair of Legislative Jewish Caucus

Palestine & Israel: Settler- Colonialism and Apartheid
1 unit
Spring 2015

Facilitator:

Tina Matar tmata001@ucr.edu

Faculty Sponsor

David Lloyd david.lloyd@ucr.edu

Location & Time

TBD

Plan for Working with Faculty Mentor:

Professor David Lloyd is the faculty advisor for the student group, Students for Justice in Palestine. He has been working very closely with us for the last two years and has been in constant communication with not only me, but the other students as well. We have had a number of face-to-face meetings throughout the year about forming a class like this, but the number of meetings will again increase now that we have more concrete details and ideas in place. During the quarter that I will be teaching, we will meet at least once a week to discuss the topics and course work. The number of units for winter quarter preparation of 190 credit would be 2 units. The readings we plan to do vary and are attached to this sheet with the syllabus.

Course Description:

This course is about the history of Palestine viewed through contemporary literature and media from before the creation of Israel to today. We will be discussing the side of the conflict that you don't hear on mainstream media. The stories of the Palestinian people and their struggles don't get mentioned, and this class is made to discuss that. This is a unique class on campus because there is not a class that teaches the wide range of topics that will be discussed in class. Not only will this class teach the students the other side of the conflict that they never hear, but it will also allow them to find ways to take part and listen to personal testimonials from people that have lived/ currently live through it.

Course Requirements

- Attend all classes
- Complete write-ups every week
- Participate in class discussions
- Final presentation
- Attend event

Assignments

All assignments must be submitted by the specified due date. All assignments will be announced on a week by week basis during class. Note: this class is not academically challenging nor deeply time-consuming, but the assignments are meant to provoke some thought into the subject.

Below is a brief description of assignments types. Fine details regarding every assignment will be provided with ample time for students to prepare later on in the course.

- Short write up (typed): ½ page, (specific details released every week) to respond to assigned reading or video and be prepared to actively participate in class each week.
- Presentation (really short): during the final week of the quarter. Groups of 2-3 will be assigned. Students will work together and present in class (details to come)

Grading

- Attendance and active participation (30%)
- Weekly write-ups (30%)
- Final Presentation (20%)
- Event Attendance (20%)

Attendance & Participation

All classes should be attended. However, if you anticipate an upcoming conflict with reasonable request, please notify the facilitator by email 48 hours beforehand and you may be excused from class upon confirmation. Even though this is an RCourse, active participation, asking questions that are relevant to the subject, and being mindful and respectful of the background and opinions' of your peers is still expected.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the term , participants will be able to:

1. Develop a historical understanding of the conflict in the Middle East.
2. Develop an understand of differing perspectives of the people of the Middle East conflict.
3. Develop an understanding of Palestinian voices through contemporary literature and media.
4. Develop an understanding of students personal relation in the conflict and how it affects them, as well as how to develop the skills to communicate their understanding to others.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to the Palestine

Introductions , Watch: Occupation 101 [2006, Documentary, 90 mins: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0807956/>]

Reading: Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Discussion: An introduction to understanding the occupation of Palestine 1948-present; (Land, Water, Displacement)

Week 2: Settler-Colonialism and Apartheid

Reading: Uri Ram, “The Colonization Perspective in Israeli Sociology”, in Ilan Pappé, *The Israel/Palestine Question*, pp. 53-77 [ARES]. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, pp. 182-217.

Discussion: Understanding how settler-colonialism and apartheid function in Palestine, and the particularities of the Palestinian experience. (Occupation, the wall, checkpoints)

Week 3: Settler-Colonialism and Apartheid Part 2:

Reading: Saree Makdisi’s *Palestine Inside Out* and Neve Gordon’s *Israel’s Occupation*

Discussion on the novel and what we discussed last week on checkpoints, the wall, and occupation.

Week 4: Refugeehood and Exile

Readings: Lindholm Schultz, *The Palestinian Diaspora*, Introduction and Chapter 1 and Steven Salaita, introduction to *Israel's Dead Soul*, pp. 1-11.
David Grossman, *Writing in the Dark* ch.1

Discussion; Guest Speaker to speak about the conditions for Palestinian refugees in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan as well as Palestinian Diaspora transnationally.

Week 5: Love Under Apartheid and Women's Resilience

Watch Omar [2013, film, 96 minutes: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2852406/>]

Reading: Love Under Apartheid Blogs, Al Qaws and Aswat Statements, Lena Meari, *Sumud: A Philosophy of Confronting Interrogation*.

Week 6: Palestinian Youth Movements and Cultural Resilience

Readings: Sunaina Maira, *Jil Oslo: Palestinian hip hop*, *Youth Culture and the Youth Movement Introduction*,

Discussion: watch Palestinian hip hop video's DAM and Shadia Mansour, discuss how artistic expression can become an outlet for cultural resilience, survival and resistance

Watch: *Sling-Shot Hip Hop* [2008, Documentary, 80 mins: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1157718/>]

Week 7: Palestine and the International Community

Reading: Nora Barrows Friedman: *In Our Power: U.S. Students Organize for Justice in Palestine*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Discussion: The role of the UN, ICC, International Law and International Civil society in the supporting the occupation and supporting the struggle against the occupation.

Week 8: Oral History Testimonies:

Discussion: Guest Community Elder to come and discuss the history of the Palestinian struggle and exile, the importance of archiving our histories and Oral history practice.

Watch: *5 Broken Cameras* [2011, Documentary, 94 mins: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2125423/?ref=fn_al_tt_1]

Week 9: Future Possibilities:

Reading: Ali Abunimah, *One Country*, Chapter five and 6.

Reading: Benny Morris, *One State, Two States*, pp. 161-201

Discussion: Outlining possibilities for the future of the struggle and Palestinian people. Considering ways in which the international community can play an ethical, responsible and supportive role in allowing the Palestinian people to achieve full self-determination.

Week 10: Review of course material and presentations