

# The English Department of Tel Aviv University: A brief survey of an expansive subject



Under the tutelage of its excellent and enthusiastic faculty, students at the English Department of Tel Aviv University receive a top-tier education. Many graduates have gone on to significant academic and professional achievements, both in Israel and abroad /By Dr. Karen Alkalay-Gut/

#### Who are we?

The English Department of Tel Aviv University is dedicated to the teaching of English Literatures. Our emphasis is on English and American Literature but our studies include Canadian, African, and other literatures written in English. The Department offers B.A. and M.A. degrees, and the PhD degree is offered in conjunction with The School of Cultural Studies. Our studies are on an equivalent level of studies at prestigious universities in English speaking countries and we expect our students to achieve this level.

#### Who are our students?

There are approximately four hundred students in the English Department. It is one of the largest independent departments in the Humanities, and seems to be constantly growing, with students from many different cultural and religious backgrounds. As Israel

becomes more and more a part of the world, and English becomes more and more an international language, the demand for a profound understanding of the language and the culture increases, and our graduates find a wide range of

careers to make use of the cultural and linguistic background they acquire in their studies.

A number of our former students and graduates are familiar to the general audiences of Israel, having become

#### A Palestinian-Israeli woman learns to transcend labels

Being a Palestinian-Israeli female student at an Israeli campus is not an easy experience at all. You always feel that your classmates and teachers wonder how exactly you ended up being in the same room with them and you cannot but feel “invisible” - if not a total outsider. Throughout my seven years of studies at different campuses in Israel, I met only two or three teachers who really “saw” me. Karen Alkalay-Gut was one of them. During the time I wrote my MA thesis at the English Department at Tel Aviv University, I felt that I was in a safe space where it was OK to express what I think and feel. Sometimes, it almost felt like home. Today I am a doctoral candidate in the Comparative Literature department at the University of Oregon. In retrospect, I understand that at Tel Aviv University I was taught not to confine myself to labels that were imposed on me. I will always be grateful for that.

*Amal Egeiq is writing her PhD at the University of Oregon*