



Shalom Home: The Israel House

Serach Ramu, Program Director

Overview of the Program

The Shalom Home will provide an introduction to different aspects of Israeli culture, history and language. Participants in this program will have a unique learning experience in which the Israeli culture will be explored through a variety of activities, such as film screenings (in Hebrew with English subtitles), discussions about various aspects of Israel, guest lectures, group meals (cooking Middle Eastern cuisine), excursions, holiday observances, and Hebrew Club. The residential component of the Shalom Home is open to all UVM students regardless of their prior knowledge of Hebrew and/or Israeli culture although having studied in one of these areas is desired. The only requirement is a genuine interest in Israeli and Hebrew culture.

Regardless of the religious identities and/or levels of observance of the students involved, Israel, the Jewish religion, and Jewish history present a unique wealth of knowledge that can be applied to any number of pursuits, be it enriched understanding of religion as a whole, an alternate view of history, or sociological comparisons based on a complex and intriguing society. I feel that there will be something to gain for anyone interested in putting in the effort. Students who choose to live in the Shalom home will be required to participate in many learning events, some of which will be Jewish holidays, which are part of a Jewish learning tradition, and how its history has been preserved so well. Students should feel comfortable to be at any place religiously, and will be accommodated according to their concerns. Everyone will feel respected. Most importantly though, we are here to learn and to have fun while doing so!

Learning Objectives

1. Israeli Culture and History

Action Steps

* I hope to create an environment that will be very positive, motivating and active. One of the key things I will do to strengthen this is through holding bi-weekly meetings where we will be learning about various aspects of Israel and Israeli history. We will use texts (Bible, History books, Historical Fiction, Jewish mystical texts, short stories and poetry from different periods of Israeli/Jewish history) in meetings and discuss them. At these meetings we will have cultural tea parties with Middle Eastern style tea.

* We will also prepare Middle Eastern/Jewish cuisine for some meetings, especially on holidays where we will be celebrating them to better understand the social context of the Israeli/Jewish holidays.

* Learning Israeli dance

* Working on a community art project having to do with Israel such as a tapestry of Israeli landscape, or a depiction of the Western Wall, or mezuzah making

* Working with UVM Hillel to bring the popular Israeli band "Idan Reichel's project" to Burlington

2. Basic Hebrew Conversation

Action Steps

* We will be continuing with the already existing Hebrew Club where we will have weekly learning with a local Israeli –Rachel Jacobs. She will be speaking to us in Hebrew and teaching us basic conversational skills. Participation will not be mandatory but highly encouraged. We think that the Hebrew language is an important part in both learning about Israel, and in being part of the Global Village.

* More advanced participants in our program will be encouraged to help out with the University tutoring program and at local Hebrew schools affiliated with the area synagogues.

* We will watch Hebrew films as another approach to learning the language.

* We will also encourage community members to speak Hebrew to whatever extent they can within the Shalom Home.

* We will listen to Israeli radio, both in Hebrew and English.

* We will also incorporate some Hebrew songs into our weekly meetings from time to time.

3. Better Understanding of Israel in the Context of the Present World

Action Steps

* This year's Shalom Home was, in my opinion, a huge success and my main goal is to keep it as active and exciting as it has been with the hope of only increasing the overall experience to its maximum potential. I have many ideas with which to accomplish this.

* I will specifically focus on understanding the State of Israel as a Spiritual home for the Jews, the ways in which the founding of Israel has determined the character (politically, socially, and religiously) of the present day state, present day politics, such as the Palestinian /Israeli conflict and its history and various points of view, and the Israeli opinion on different politicians and parties, and their views surrounding many of Israel's wars.

* Panel discussion with the Middle Eastern Department on a prevalent issue.

* We will be having monthly film viewings relating to a variety of issues Israel faces in today's world.

* We will also be hosting a speaker series in which we hope to bring 2 or 3 speakers throughout the year.

* I also have some specific ideas for joint programs within the Global Village such as: discussing Ethiopian Jewry and issues surrounding this topic with the Africa House as well as possibly doing a holiday party with them during the month of December, discussing the causation and effects of various immigrations from Russia to Israel with the Russia House, watching the movie "Walk on Water" (movie about Israeli assassins attempting to punish ex-Nazis in Germany) with the German House, and a movie of their picking, cultural cuisine night with any house that would like, having an Israeli poetry discussion and reading with Inkpot, discussions with China house on Buddhism and Judaism, specifically on topics from the book "The Jew and the Lotus" on the inter-dialogue between the Dalai Lama and an assortment of Rabbis, and many other ideas that may arise.

Community Service

The Shalom Home plans on taking on one community service project. We will choose a project, probably either environmental or humanitarian in nature, with an organization such as Magen David Adom (The Israeli Red Cross) or the Jewish National Fund.

Plans for Interactions with other L/L programs

I would like to do programming with the German, Russian, and African houses as well as the Inkpot community. I would also like to do programming with the Music Appreciation house and the DANCE house. I would like to do movie screenings and cultural food events with different houses and programs.



About the Global Village

This program is part of the Global Village Residential Learning Community (RLC). For UVM students interested in exploring other cultures, studying abroad, or pursuing lives and careers in an increasingly interconnected world, the Global Village may be just the place for you! Drawing on the resources of the Living/Learning Center and its dynamic network of student- and faculty-led programs, the community of learners that make up the Global Village will be engaged in coursework, lectures, concerts, exhibits, faculty and peer mentoring, social connections with international students, group meals, and trips that:

- Explore the many connections among language, art and culture at regional, national, and international scales.
- Share disciplinary expertise within an environment that values a holistic approach to “living and learning.”
- Encourage formal and informal contacts among students, faculty, and staff within the Global Village, the Living/Learning Center, the other Residential Learning Communities, and the university as a whole.
- Aim to be a complement to existing international and cross-cultural programs at UVM.
- “Think globally and act locally” by outreach to the international community at UVM and within the greater Burlington area.

More information about the Global Village RLC can be found at:
<http://www.uvm.edu/globalvillage>

GRS 095/096: The Global Village Seminar

GRS 095/096: The Global Village Seminar is a largely self-paced, one-credit course designed to help you get the most out of your experience as a citizen of the Global Village Residential Learning Community. All new Global Village residents **must** enroll in GRS 095 for one credit during the fall semester or GRS 096 for the spring semester. (Returning Global Village

students who have not yet satisfactorily completed the class must enroll in GRS 095 during the fall semester.) This course will be graded on a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” basis. The course will be partly comprised of a series of “Common Hour” community gatherings held on Thursday afternoons. The primary purpose of the Common Hour meetings is to build a stronger sense of community among the members of the many Global Village houses and programs. As well, the Common Hour gatherings will help Global Village citizens build a common knowledge and skill set, including such topics as intercultural communication, globalization, etc. A variety of program offerings will take place during Common Hour meetings, such as special guest lectures, interactive dialogue and social gatherings. During weeks when the Common Hours are not held, you are expected to participate in one educational event or activity with a global cultural theme. We’ll provide you with a list of suggested events and activities, or you can identify other events/activities with a global cultural theme; you choose which ones you wish to attend.

We’ll provide you with a Global Village Passport; use it to keep track of your activities and explorations. In addition to documenting participation in Common Hours and the educational events/activities, you will need to do reflective writing in the form of five short journal entries on the cultural/educational events that you participated in, along with a lengthier essay looking back on your most meaningful experience of the semester within the Global Village.

Returning Global Village students are also invited (but not required) to enroll in GRS 095 during the fall semester. Enrollment in GRS 096 for one credit during the spring semester is optional and encouraged for all students.

If you anticipate a problem with fulfilling this course expectation (such as if you will already be enrolled in 18 credits), please contact Prof. Joseph Acquisto, Faculty Director of the Global Village, at Joseph.Acquisto@uvm.edu

For more details about this course, visit:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~gvrlc/passport/GRS095096.pdf>