



# Short Syllabus



## Course Title

From Pythagoras to Google: Social Histories of Knowledge (4 credits)

## Lecturer

Dr. Ori Rotlevy

## Contact details

orotlevy@gmail.com

Office hours by appointment

## Semester

Spring

## Short Description

In our age, that of "the knowledge society", we tend to think of knowledge as being on the web, in a network, rather than merely in the minds of individuals. Yet even before the invention of internet, sociologists and historians used the metaphor of a network to describe the development of knowledge as a result of interactions and transmissions between agents such as institutions, human-beings, and even objects. This provides us with a history that is very different from a still popular conception of the history of knowledge, and specifically of scientific knowledge. It is not a story of individual geniuses such as Aristotle or Newton, but rather a history of knowledge as social. This course will be dedicated to the social factors in the history of knowledge. We will examine several stations in this history, moving from mathematical knowledge in Ancient Greece to the revolution in astronomical knowledge in the Renaissance, from medieval institutions of learning Islamic law to the Scholastics in European universities, from hospitals and prisons in 18th century France to Google today. Thus, the course reveals a history of communities of knowledge, of traditions and multiple revolutions, of habituating and disciplining agents of knowledge, and of the migration of knowledge between continents, cultures and disciplines.

## Final grade components

Minor assignments:

10% - 10 out of 11 brief responses to the readings (3-6 sentences;)

Midterm:

20% - Short midterm paper (2 pages long)

Final requirement:

60% - Final paper (6 pages long)

Participation:

10% - Participation in class or on the Q&A forum on the website

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three unauthorized absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.\*

## Academic Conduct



TEL AVIV אוניברסיטת תל אביב  
UNIVERSITY תל אביב

# Short Syllabus



Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.\*

## Final assignment

Exam dates and submission deadlines are published on the Liberal Arts website. Students requiring an extension for a final paper must submit an Academic Committee Request Form to the Liberal Arts office in advance of the deadline. Late papers will be subject to a point deduction.\*

## Additional requirements

---

\* See Liberal Arts academic handbook for further details