

AA *Alternative* Academy

Fall 2019-2020 Catalogue
Beirut, Lebanon

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Alternative Academy

Fall Semester Catalogue

What is the Alternative Academy?

The Alternative Academy (AA) is a joint initiative by Lebanon Support¹, part of its Civil Society Incubator², and JIBAL³. It aims to make scientific knowledge available to the larger public, in line with the belief in open access to information and lifelong learning. The AA is a multi-disciplinary scientific space for critical thinking, discussion, and learning. It offers a wide range of courses, from social and political sciences to natural and environmental sciences, as well as practical workshops and activities, across four main thematics: Environment, cities, & public spaces; social change & social justice; organisations, structures, & strategies; and life skills. Courses within the AA are interactive and aim to foster critical thinking, as well as real-life applications.

In this catalogue, you can find the list of courses offered for the fall semester, from October 2019 to January 2020, with their descriptions, and details.

The AA is an independent, self sustainable programme, that only receives logistical support from Eedama⁴, a social enterprise delivering Learning Experiences in the field of environmental sustainability in the UAE and Lebanon.

A Tailored Fee System

The AA team has devised a tailored fee system, so as to keep the academy accessible to everyone. As such, fees are as per the below:

- **A standard fee.**
- **A reduced fee**, only available to a few participants with limited financial means and discussed upon the request of participants.
- **A solidarity fee**, optional for anyone who has the economic means and ability to pay a higher rate, making it possible to offer this course for a reduced rate to participants with limited economic means.

Please note that the price of each course includes all its sessions, and payments should be made in cash one week ahead of the course at Lebanon Support's office on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 4pm⁵.

1 <https://lebanon-support.org/>

2 <https://csincubator.lebanon-support.org/>

3 <http://www.jibal.org/>

4 <https://eedama.org/>

5 In case cash payment is not possible, please contact us in order to discuss the other possibilities

Registering to a course

Fill the form online at this link:

- <https://forms.gle/Bji4YRWGQzsN1RtYA>

We will respond to you shortly after we receive your application to confirm your participation. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to email us:

- alternativeacademy@jibal.org

Where do the courses take place?

Courses will take place either at Lebanon Support's offices or in Mansion, where Jibal's office is located. The location is mentioned in each course description.

- Lebanon Support's offices are on the 3rd floor of the Scala building, Furn El Chebbak, Damascus Road (<https://lebanon-support.org/contact>). Lebanon Support is on Google Map.
- Mansion is located in Zoqaq El Blatt, Abdul Kader street, next to the Modern University of Business and Science. Mansion is an old house, its entrance door is a bit hidden, it is a metallic door. Mansion is on Google Map.

In some specific cases, the location might change, participants will be duly informed.

The semester at a glance

<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Date</i>
Switch Perspectives: New Approaches to Media Production, Journalism and Storytelling	Ms. Angela Saade Ms. Jenny Gustafson Mr. Ibrahim Nehme	October 25 & 26
Anthropological Perspectives on Applied Research	Dr Muzna al Masri Ms. Zeina Abla	Every Thursday, for six consecutive weeks starting Thursday November 7 until Thursday December 12.
Thinking in the era of Fake News	Dr. Samah Karaki	November 12
Neuroplasticity: How stress and experience rewire the brain	Dr. Samah Karaki	December 17 & 19
Understanding and nurturing children: A neuroscience perspective	Dr. Samah Karaki	December 20 & 21
Introduction to Permaculture	Ms. Rita Khawand - SOILS	November 16, 30 & December 7
First Steps towards Sustainability in Architecture	Mr. Eliesh - ODDD	Every Wednesday starting October 30th till December 4
Introduction to Entomology: Discover the World of Insects	Mr. Wael Yammine - SOILS	December 9 & 10
Organizational Development and Change	Dr. Pierre el Haddad	November 9, 23 & December 14th

Dates: October 25 - 26
Time: 9:30 am to 5:00 pm
Number of sessions: 2 full days
Language: English
Location: Mansion

Switch Perspectives: New Approaches to Media Production, Journalism & Storytelling

SYNOPSIS:

This course is open to people wanting to get a better understanding of stereotypes and power dynamics in the context of journalism and media, and find ways to do more just and equitable reporting and writing. During those two days, participants get the opportunity to locate and understand stereotypes and power dynamics, reflect on their own perspectives and positions of privilege and/or oppression, look critically at media production, and, through workshops on pitching and creative writing, explore new ways of writing and telling stories. The course will take place during 2 sessions and will tackle the following topics:

- ***Why rethink how we do journalism?***

We will look at recent examples of media coverage of migration, including news stories, photography and analytical pieces, in order to open up for a discussion of what kind of media coverage we see today, and how we can find ways to make it more diverse, just and reflecting different perspectives.

- ***Stereotypes and how to avoid single stories:***

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." (Adichie). We will introduce the concepts of stereotypes and power dynamics, and a reflection on how the stories we produce can be used to empower and humanize instead of dispossessing and malign.

- ***Journalistic perspectives:***

Participants will get the opportunity to use concepts and ideas on stereotypes and 'single stories' and look at their own previous journalistic production. We also look more concretely and practically at our own work how it can become better, discussing things like: how do we find people to interview, how do we search for new ideas and research stories, how do we write about issues – all of this taking into account diversity and the deconstruction of stereotypes.

Switch Perspectives: New Approaches to Media Production, Journalism & Storytelling

- ***Creative Writing:***

We will learn about creative nonfiction, a form of journalism that emerged in the 60s in the US and later spread and became popular in the rest of the world. Here students will learn more about the genre, discover various techniques, and get inspired by great writing. In addition, you will do a lot of writing and rewriting. Students can start new pieces or bring with them existing unfinished work, which they can develop and fine-tune in class.

- ***Pitching:***

Participants will practice how to pitch great stories to magazine or newspaper editors. The editorial process often begins with a pitch, and a great pitch often takes a lot of research and development. We will discover what makes a winning pitch and students will be encouraged to find a unique story and design a solid pitch.

- ***Power Dynamics and Media:***

We will build on what has been discussed before and continue to develop the concepts of privileges and power dynamics. It will enable the students to better situate themselves as authors and producers of knowledge, and the impact on the audience. Through specific tools, the participants will be able to reflect on previous work they did and build more critical thinking when it comes to social justice and recognition of minorities.

- ***Sharing productions and articles:***

During the two sessions, the students will work on productions and articles that would enable them to use the learning directly in a concrete way. This session will serve to share the different productions and reflect on the approach used.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course is open to journalists, people working in NGO on communication, persons working with media, writers, film makers, bloggers, social media influencers and people who make podcasts and radio shows.

PRICE

Solidarity: \$220

Standard: \$160

Reduced: \$110.

Switch Perspectives: New Approaches to Media Production, Journalism & Storytelling

MEET THE TRAINERS:

Jenny Gustafson

Is a journalist/writer and political scientist who has been in Lebanon since 2009 and reported from many parts of the Middle East, South Asia and Central America, including Bangladesh, Honduras, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Libya, Algeria and Saudi Arabia. Her work often focuses on migration and development, and has been featured in, among others, The Guardian, Foreign Policy and Al Jazeera. She is one of the co-founders of Mashallah News, and has been co-editing the platform since it was founded in 2010. Jenny speaks Arabic, English and Swedish.

Ibrahim Nehme

is the founder and editor-in-chief of The Outpost magazine. His work in exploring the possibilities of journalism and storytelling has been of international success, with The Outpost being referred to as 'a successor to the Economist' by The Guardian and harvesting top awards in print, journalism and cultural action. He founded Radio Mansion, a community radio experiment that was launched in Beirut in June 2018. He is also the founding creative director of 'a Dance Mag', a global dance publication based in Beirut. He is interested in building storytelling platforms that challenge mainstream cultural discourses and create space for alternative narratives to break through. Ibrahim has over 12 years of writing, editing and journalistic experience. He occasionally gives talks on how creative storytelling can lead to social transformation.

Angela Saade

is a co-founder of Jibal, and also of the French NGO Tabadol, both working on how to build an intercultural and diverse societies with equity and social justice at the centre. She has developed several projects, including trainings for youth, teachers and journalists on topics related to stereotypes, power dynamics and migration. Throughout the 10 years of work on these topics, she has developed a hands-on experience that enabled her to build strong knowledge and approaches for training and reflecting. Angela also worked as a technical advisor for the youth program of the Lebanese NGO Mouvement Social. She holds a master degree in applied anthropology and in Engineering. She has experienced exile on a personal level, when she left with her family during the Lebanese war, and when she migrated to France for her studies. This has put her in a first hand position to analyse subject of migration and power dynamics in relation to it.



Dates: Every Thursday, 7th Nov- 12th Dec
Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm/
5:00-6:00 (non mandatory reading time)
Number of sessions: **6 sessions**
Language: **Arabic & English**
(Knowledge of both languages is necessary)
Location: **Mansion**

Anthropological Perspectives on Applied Research

SYNOPSIS:

The course introduces Anthropology as a discipline, and the ways in which it can be of use to researchers and practitioners in Lebanon today. The six-session course will cover the following topics:

- ***What is anthropology and how can an anthropological perspective influence the way we do research:***

A field still in limited use in Lebanon, the tools and skills of anthropology could enable us to complex questions of today's societies. The course will introduce what key anthropology concepts like '**cultural relativism**', '**reflexivity**', and '**ethnography**' mean and the ways in which these can be helpful for us as researchers and practitioners.

- ***Research design:***

Beyond data collection methods, the course will allow participants to think of questions relate to research design more broadly, including deciding what topics we research, who implements the research, how is it funded and by whom, which research participants are involved, how do we handle our data and what do we do with our findings.

- ***Ethical considerations in research:***

We will familiarize ourselves with widely used codes of ethics, as well as think together of contentious ethical issues, particularly in relation to doing research in the region today.

- ***Research in Lebanon:***

Navigating and overwhelming (and sometimes unreliable) data on Lebanon, the course will introduce some of the main sources of information in and on Lebanon, their reliability and the politics behind some of the data. The Students will be invited to design research projects that they are interested to conduct (or to rethink some they have recently conducted) and to think critically with fellow students in ways in which an anthropological perspective could be useful, ethical considerations, sources of data, etc. We will not cover research/data collection methods, but rather think of the macro considerations related to research.

Anthropological Perspectives on Applied Research

The course will have several required readings, especially for the second and third weeks, so please plan to ensure you have enough time to do the readings. If interested, we can arrange for silent reading time right before class, in the same venue where classes are held to help us all detach from everyday duties and spend time reading.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course is open to practitioners and students in engaging with the theoretical and ethical aspects of implementing research activities. Participants need to have taken part in or designed research activities, including needs assessments, monitoring and evaluation activities, student research projects, or media investigation, among others.

PRICE

Solidarity: \$210

Standard: \$150

Reduced: \$ 90

MEET THE TRAINERS:



Muzna Al-Masri

holds a PhD in Anthropology from Goldsmiths, University of London and an MA in conflict transformation and Peacebuilding from the Eastern Mennonite University. She currently is a researcher and a consultant for several UN and international organizations, and her most recent research reports include analysis of the conflict context in various Lebanese regions, examining the linkages between social cohesion and humanitarian intervention. Her research interests include political anthropology, elite politics and formation, everyday political practice, conflict and violence, and anthropology of sports. She has taught at AUB and Goldsmiths, University of London and is cofounder of the Ethnography and Knowledge Production in the Arab Region working group. Email: muznamasri@gmail.com



Zeina Abla

has 20 years of research and consultancy experience in Lebanon and the Arab region. She works on development subjects, focusing on gender, labour issues, conflict sensitivity analysis, the global development agendas and aid effectiveness. Previously, she did economic research in the banking sector. Zeina has a Masters in Development Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and has taught at LAU. Email: zeinaabla@hotmail.com

Dates: **November 12**
Time: **6:00 pm - 8:00 pm**
Number of sessions: **1 session**
Language: **English**
Location: **Lebanon Support office**

Thinking in the Era of Fake News

SYNOPSIS:

Media might make us more vulnerable to misinformation but the interesting aspect is that they are actually exposing our pre-existing vulnerabilities. There's nothing new about the confirmation bias that arises in social media: we are already wired to filter and share information in a biased way. The course is designed to enable participants to recognize the cognitive biases that influence their ideas, opinions and real life behavior. It will also dive into the psychological impact of media on our sense of belonging and on the cognitive science research that is questioning the interaction between our on and offline social behaviors.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

A keen interest in Brain Science and Media and Knowledge Sharing

PRICE

Solidarity: \$35

Standard: \$25

Reduced: \$15

MEET THE TRAINERS:



Samah Karaki

After 10 years of research in the field of learning and stress-related behaviors, she co-founded in 2014 the Social Brain Institute translating knowledge from many different disciplines including cognitive neuroscience, education and psychology into innovative approaches. Today, SBI is developing programs using our understanding of the human brain to improve organizational culture, leadership and eco-citizenship striving to contribute in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Samah holds a master 1 degree in ecology and evolution, a master's degree in cognitive neuroscience and a PhD in Neuroscience. Email: Samahkaraki@gmail.com

Dates: 17-19 December
Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Number of sessions: 2 sessions
Language: English
Location: Lebanon Support office

Neuroplasticity: How Stress and Experience Rewire the Brain

SYNOPSIS:

Understanding the basic neurobiology of emotions can reduce threat responses and improve our self and social awareness. This course follows a multi-disciplinary approach born out of decades of scientific research. It combines the fields of cognitive social and affective neuroscience to come up with insights in our complex human nature. Participants will recognize the underlying patterns that govern our lives and that of those around us and leverage this knowledge to fast track their growth. It explores how we can we create, maintain, and continuously improve the neural architecture supportive of change with a focus on the power of neuroplasticity and learning as a perpetual quest.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

A keen interest in Brain Science, Developing and Changing Habits, New Habits, Mental Flexibility

PRICE:

Solidarity: \$70

Standard: \$50

Reduced: \$30

MEET THE TRAINERS:



Samah Karaki

After 10 years of research in the field of learning and stress-related behaviors, she co-founded in 2014 the Social Brain Institute translating knowledge from many different disciplines including cognitive neuroscience, education and psychology into innovative approaches. Today, SBI is developing programs using our understanding of the human brain to improve organizational culture, leadership and eco-citizenship striving to contribute in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Samah holds a master 1 degree in ecology and evolution, a master's degree in cognitive neuroscience and a PhD in Neuroscience. Email: Samahkaraki@gmail.com

Dates: 20-21 December
Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Number of sessions: 2 sessions
Language: English & Arabic
Location: Lebanon Support office

Understanding and Nurturing Children: A Neuroscience Perspective

SYNOPSIS:

There is a growing energy behind linking education and neuroscience in an effort to improve learning and parenting practices. The course explores the key insights from developmental, cognitive, affective and social neuroscience that could lead to an educational transformation and explore the extent to which these new scientific insights can inform our approach to education and parenting. The course will allow participants to understand how to cultivate healthy emotional and intellectual development so that children can lead balanced connected lives.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

A keen interest in Brain Science, and Education and Parenting

PRICE:

Solidarity: \$70

Standard: \$50

Reduced: \$30

MEET THE TRAINERS:



Samah Karaki

After 10 years of research in the field of learning and stress-related behaviors, she co-founded in 2014 the Social Brain Institute translating knowledge from many different disciplines including cognitive neuroscience, education and psychology into innovative approaches. Today, SBi is developing programs using our understanding of the human brain to improve organizational culture, leadership and eco-citizenship striving to contribute in the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Samah holds a master 1 degree in ecology and evolution, a master's degree in cognitive neuroscience and a PhD in Neuroscience. Email: Samahkaraki@gmail.com

Dates: 16th & 30th Nov, 7th Dec
Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Number of sessions: 3 sessions
Language: English & Arabic
Location: Mansion, Zkak el Blat

Introduction to Permaculture

SYNOPSIS:

While permaculture is gaining popularity in Lebanon, especially within circles of people interested in self sufficiency and healthy living, it's still an ambiguous concept to many. This 3-session course aims to introduce participants to the history, principles and design methodology of permaculture in an interactive way.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Permaculture is a holistic design approach that works with nature to help people provide their needs in an efficient way. This course gives participants a taste of the permaculture design process, through theoretical introductions followed by exercises and activities in which we try to apply some steps of the design methodology on an actual site. It gives an idea about what to expect in a full 72 hr Permaculture Design Course.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: *Open to anyone with an interest in learning more about permaculture. No prerequisites.*

PRICE: *Solidarity: \$105 , Standard: \$75, Reduced: \$45*

SESSION 1: Permaculture history, Ethics and principles , Mediterranean permaculture sites

SESSION 2: Design process overview, Base map, Site survey (activity: observing sun/shade, Questionnaire for site users.

SESSION 3: Information analysis, Defining main functions, systems and elements, Input / Output analysis game, Placement of elements: zoning game.

MEET THE TRAINERS: *Rita Khawand*



Rita is the co-founder of SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon. A little under a decade ago, after a career in the cultural sector as a performer, project coordinator, and fundraising officer in Lebanon and Euro-Mediterranean countries, Rita embarked on a personal and professional transition journey to a lifestyle grounded in permaculture (permanent culture / agriculture), working closely with municipalities, organizations, and individuals to raise awareness of sustainability issues and promote best practices. She studied with the late Patrick Whitefield (UK), as well as with Daniel Halsey (US). In 2014, she partnered with like-minded friends to establish SOILS in her native village of Saidoun (Jezzine caza), and has managed the organization ever since, promoting viable local solutions to global problems linked to development in rural areas, ecosystem conservation, and sustainable agriculture. She has organized the first internationally recognized Permaculture Design Course (PDC) in Lebanon over three consecutive years. She has also facilitated numerous workshops and training in agro-ecology, waste sorting, beekeeping, and composting.

Dates: Every Wednesday, 30th Oct - 4th Dec

Time: 6.15pm-8.15pm

Number of sessions: 6 sessions

Language: English

Location: Mansion

First Steps Towards Sustainability in Architecture

SYNOPSIS:

This seminar introduces the philosophies, theories, and key concepts underpinning the principles of sustainable development and sustainability in relation to the built environment within the natural world. Together we shall address the occupant comfort, active and passive solutions, natural lighting, construction materials and an understanding of the main sustainable rating systems.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is open to everyone who is interested in sustainability and architecture. Together we shall understand the criteria that makes our house/ building/ apartment/ city sustainable. The seminar is a combination of different learning techniques (analyzing documentaries, keyword research, discovery and understanding, guided visits, lectures and interactive exercises) incubated during the class hours associated to a learning by doing project.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course is open to everyone who is willing to learn, share, contribute and experiment. No previous background is required, an interest in the topic is a must.

PRICE:

Solidarity: \$210

Standard: \$150

Reduced: \$90

MEET THE TRAINERS: **Eliesh**

Eliesh is an architect, a sustainable development consultant on urban and Bldg level, a university instructor, an activist and a performer philosopher. He is a founding member of the NGO ODDD, a UNESCO GAP on ESD PN4 (Empowering youth). During the taught classes at university or ODDD activities with the community, he opted the interactive concrete art approach as tool to learn experiment and develop the contributors' competencies. His art, work and interventions focus on sustainable transformation covering the different SDGs and the GCED philosophy.

Dates: 9 & 10 December
Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Language: English & Arabic
Location: Lebanon Support office

Introduction to Entomology: Discover The World of Insects

SYNOPSIS:

Insects are the oldest creatures on Earth. They survived the cretaceous era and the nuclear war. To understand the evolution of insects we need to study them through what's known as entomology science. In this introductory course we will discover

Insect anatomy: What insects look like from the outside and the inside

General classification of insects: the classification and diversity of the insect kingdom.

- **Insect collection:** how to collect insects (proper tools and techniques).
- **Insect conservation:** how to create your own collection of insects and become an amateur entomologist.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course is open to environmental and biodiversity activists / enthusiasts, and to anyone interested in nature and insects. No prerequisites.

PRICE:

Solidarity: \$70

Standard: \$50

Reduced: \$30

MEET THE TRAINERS:



Wael Yammine

Studied agriculture engineering at the Lebanese University, Faculty of Agriculture Sciences. He's currently pursuing his Master's degree in Agriculture, researching the role of bumble bees in agro-ecosystems. Since the first year at university, Wael showed a passion towards the world of insects and started his own insect collection. He's been collaborating with local and international associations working in entomology, such as the Hungarian Museum of Natural History. Wael is also a board member in SOILS Permaculture Association Lebanon, where he's experimenting in hot composting and soil regeneration.

Dates: 9 & 23 Nov, 14 Dec
Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm
Language: English
Number of sessions: 3 sessions
Location: Lebanon Support office

Organizational Development and Change

SYNOPSIS:

This training builds the capacity of organizations to face the increasing complexity, uncertainty, and celerity of change in organizational environments. The objective is to provide participants with the means to effectively anticipate and respond to these challenges. The training includes a practical framework to assess the dynamics of diagnosis, planning, intervention, and sustainability of their organizations. The training also aims to develop the trainees' conceptual and behavioral skills to implement system-wide organization change. The material will be taught from the perspective that trainees are, or will be stakeholders in a sustained and comprehensive organizational development and change in their organizations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Based on interactive teaching methods, this training is divided into three full days. The first day is dedicated to the dynamics of diagnosis and change, the second day introduces socio-economic management tools, the third day concludes with an exercise of strategic development and change.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

This course is adaptable to various levels of organizational development. Basic knowledge about how organizations, companies, or administrations work is needed. In the case of a consequent number of trainees attending, homogeneous groups will be formed while maintaining a commendable diversity.

PRICE:

Solidarity: \$330

Standard: \$240

Reduced: \$115



MEET THE TRAINERS:

Dr. Pierre El Haddad

Assistant professor, Faculty of business and management, Saint Joseph University in Beirut. Organizational development and corporate sustainability consultant. Dedicated for academic work since 2015, I am collaborating with international colleagues to research Organizational Development, Corporate Sustainability, AI implementation, and the intersection between private enterprise and public affairs. My experience includes consulting, university teaching, hosting a live radio show, and manufacturing. Lately an affiliate faculty at George Mason University, United States, and a Humphrey Fellow at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University, NY, my education includes a DBA from Université Jean Moulin Lyon III. My education also includes an MBA in economics and finance, from Notre Dame University, Lebanon, and civil engineering from Université Saint-Joseph, Lebanon.

Spring programme: (Coming soon)

<i>Course Name</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
An Introduction to the Environmental Crisis: Origins, Impacts and Alternatives	Dr. Ounsi el Daif Ms. Nadia Moukaddem Ms. Katherine Shabb Ms. Angela Saade
Rethinking Our Approaches to Aid and Development	Ms. Angela Saade Ms. Helene Servel
Corporate Social Responsibility	Dr. Pierre el Haddad
Design for Change: an Introduction to Visualising Research and Information	Ms. Léa Yammine
A Brief Introduction to the Economics of Post-Civil War Lebanon	Mr. Kevork Baboyan
Claiming the City: An interactive Course to Discover what Shapes your City	Ms. Abir Saksouk Ms. Monica Basbous Ms. Nadine Bekdache
Financial Management for CSOs	Mr. Samer Aoun
Urban Installation: Understanding Beirut public spaces	Mr. Eliesh - ODDD
Self Care & Aromatherapy	Dr. Nicole Boukhalil
Tech 4 Change	Mr. Ali Najjar & Ms. Layal Khatib
Filmmaking for amateurs	Ms. Marie-Jean Malek
Up-cycling Products	Ms. Marie-Jean Malek