

# AMBASSADORS LECTURE SERIES

## MEET OUR AMBASSADORS



**Yuval Ben-Bassat**

Professor

Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies  
*Faculty of the Humanities*

### **Field of Research:**

The Ottoman Empire, environmental issues in the Middle East

### **SHORT BIO**

I currently serve as a professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. Having earned my degree from the University of Chicago in 2007, I later assumed the role of visiting professor at the University of California at Berkeley from 2014 to 2016. Joining the University of Haifa in 2007, my tenure here has been marked by various leadership roles. For the past five years, I have held the position of Vice Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities, preceded by a five-year term as the head of my department.

My research focuses on the late Ottoman period in the Levant and contemporary environmental issues in the Middle East. I have authored two books, "Petitioning the Sultan" (2013) and the recent "Late Ottoman Gaza" (2024, co-authored with Prof. Johann Buessow), alongside scholarly articles. Currently, I am part of a team investigating ancient orchards (*bustanim*) in Israel's southern coastal plain, aiming to conserve resilient crops and document this disappearing heritage.

In my free time, I love traveling around the world with my wife and two daughters, capturing moments and places through photography.

### **FUNDRAISING NEEDS**

My aim is to set up an annual honors program for 15 outstanding BA students from diverse backgrounds in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. The program will focus on environmental issues and the climate crisis in the Middle East. In addition to the intensive study of Middle Eastern languages, culture and history, the curriculum will also include practical training, the development of academic skills, involvement in the community, field trips and independent learning. The program will facilitate cooperation with universities, institutions and organizations across the Middle East on key topics at the focus of international concerns today, and will allow these students to acquire a toolbox that will serve them later in their careers and give them a cutting edge in the job market. This program meshes perfectly with the research agenda and social goals of the University of Haifa.