Oryan Hass: Effectively Communicating the Case for Israel

In today’s politically charged and media-dominated environment, a good lawyer must also be a polished communicator. Oryan Hass, a student in Bar-Ilan’s Program for Honors Scholars, is poised to be an expert in both. The program encourages its scholars to take courses in multiple departments and Hass has taken full advantage of the opportunity, studying law as her major while completing a parallel certificate in communication studies.

Her law program has encompassed a number of important specializations: criminal prosecution; intellectual property and litigation; as well as corporate law, anti-trust and mergers. She will be beginning an internship this summer at Meitar Liquornik Geva & Leshem Brandwein, Israel’s leading international law firm.

Her communication classes have been equally stimulating. “The studies are not just theoretical,” she says. “It’s all hands-on and it gives you very good experience.” To wit, one of her internships allowed her to serve as a field writer with BIU alumni Yaron Deckel, considered by many to be Israel’s top political reporter and commentator, and the host of a highly rated daily radio talk show. Hass has also joined news reporting teams at Israel’s Channel 2 television station.

She has certainly impressed her professors.

“Oryan is a gift to those around her,” says Dr. Adi Ayal. “Her liveliness and curiosity are both striking and contagious. In class, this translates to deep conversations and open debates, always bringing up new ideas and critiquing existing ones. She is the kind of delightful challenge that teachers yearn for.”

Hass did an internship for her law degree where she worked with a public defense attorney. “I always said I would never work with the ‘bad guys,'” she says, “but it was actually a very inspiring experience. I told the lawyer ‘I don’t want to read these files’ [about the accused criminal]. But she insisted and I realized that the cases are much more complicated and nuanced than you’d think.”

Hass describes how BIU has allowed her to open up to experiences she never dreamed of. She’s taken courses in Jewish Studies, for example, and participated in a student exchange program in Italy where she found herself “explaining all about Israel, the army, terror, as well as religious topics” to her peers who, she was shocked to learn, “didn’t understand anything about Israel…and didn’t even care.” As a result, Hass says she “found it very important to convey our messages; to share our convictions and stimulate discussion.”

That may be the key to her calling. After all, there is ample room for a master communicator and attorney who can effectively make the case for Israel – whether in the courtroom or the halls of diplomacy.

Bar-Ilan’s Program for Honors Scholars, launched in 2008, targets the most promising young scholars – those scoring in the top one percentile in their psychometric and matriculation exams. Currently, more than 90 handpicked students studying in diverse academic fields are being nurtured with free tuition, a monthly stipend, a personal mentor, and attendance at high-level seminars. The Program aims to cultivate cadres of top-notch scientists and academicians who will contribute to Israel’s advancement.