



# International Legal Career Boost

Each year, a group of talented and motivated graduates of LL.B./JD programs worldwide gather at the Tel Aviv University Buchmann Faculty of Law (TAU Law) to take part in the concentrated, 10-month Parasol Foundation International LL.M. Program. The program offers several tracks of specialization, such as global governance and human rights, law and technology, and law and business, alongside

courses on contemporary issues in Israeli law and society.

What attracts young jurists, some already with remarkable legal careers, to the program, and what doors does it open for them upon graduation? As a representative sample, we bring the story of four of last year's graduates: Yue from Shanghai, who came armed with

little prior knowledge about Israel but with great curiosity about Israeli innovation and business opportunities in the country; Matias from Argentina, who made aliya in preparation for the program; Luiza from São Paulo, who followed her keen interest in high-tech; and Diana from Germany, who, after participating in three Maccabiah games, was eager to get to know Israel better.



**Yue Gao** (25) began working immediately after her graduation from the 2015-2016 class of the Parasol Foundation International LL.M. Program, at the China Desk of Fischer Behar Chen Well Orion & Co., one of Israel's leading law firms. Before her studies in Israel, she had internship experiences at an American NGO operating in China, and at a Shanghai law firm

**What made you apply to the International LL.M. Program at TAU Law?**

"Many Chinese law students choose to study for a second Master's degree outside of China, to become better acquainted with Western legal systems, and with the international business world and its practices, and to better prepare for their professional career. Some stay abroad, but most return to China, because of the many opportunities and the great demand in China for people with that kind of knowledge. Israel is known in China for its innovation and creativity, and as the start-up nation. I found out about the Parasol Foundation International LL.M. Program at TAU Law when I was studying for my Master's degree in Shanghai at the Jiao Tong University, one of the leading Chinese universities. There is a student exchange program between Jiao Tong and TAU Law. I did some research and found out that TAU Law and its International LL.M. Program are considered to be

very good. It is also quite unique and different from the usual and familiar destinations for Chinese law students: the US, Australia, and the UK."

**How is it different?**

"For most Chinese, Israel is a mysterious place. When I announced my intention to come here, some of my classmates in China wondered whether it is an Arab country, being in the Middle East... As I collected more information about Israel I was even more eager to come, because of its many complexities and because of my desire to judge for myself rather than to rely on international media. Also, US colleagues from my internship in Shanghai encouraged me and considered it to be a good experience."

**How did your family respond to your decision to study in Israel?**

"They are like me. They said 'go and explore.' I also got a scholarship from the Parasol Foundation, the sponsor of the International LL.M Program,

which considerably relieved me and my family from financial worries during my studies here."

**What was your experience when you arrived?**

"Of course, Tel Aviv is a modern city, not very different from Shanghai. The program itself is very diversified, with classmates from all over the world, and the discussions are likewise very international, with everyone voicing their opinion about what it is like in their country in comparison with the state of affairs in Israel. The faculty are amazing and I enjoyed the discussions with them and learned a lot in the process. The Dean, for example, taught us the very first course, "Introduction to Israeli Law," and he was extremely knowledgeable, answering every small question with a lecture! We also took field trips, for example, to the Supreme Court, where we met one of the Justices. In fact, it is not only a legal program, but also a window onto Israeli culture and society."

**Indeed, how do you find Israeli culture?**

"I think that Israelis are more open to different opinions, more willing to take up challenges, and they do not conceal their feelings. They say what they really feel. China is more conservative in this sense."

**Could you tell us a bit about your current position in one of Israel's largest law firms?**

"It is well known that in Israel the legal services market is extremely competitive, and it's not less so for a foreigner like myself. Meanwhile, the most attractive aspect of my work is that it is much needed by the practice and by the market, and that it is very helpful for both Israeli companies and entrepreneurs, as well as for Chinese business people and investors. I think that I do something that contributes to the development of the business relations between the two countries. It is valuable work for me, and I'm greatly honored to be part of it."

**Luiza Rezende** (28) grew up in São Paulo and studied law at the University of São Paulo Law Faculty. After her LL.B. graduation, Luiza started practicing business law, but at the same time discovered a keen interest in technology and digital media. She eventually became partner in a law firm in São Paulo that specializes in the local high-tech industry, and at the same time applied her digital media skills to create a blog on entrepreneurship and technology. Today more than 650,000 people follow her publications on social networks. Luiza moved from Brazil to Europe and from there to Israel. Based on her legal experience and her desire to work in the high-tech market, the TAU International LL.M. track in Law and Technology was a perfect way to get to know Israel and at the same time become integrated into the globally leading Israeli high-tech industry from its legal aspect.



“I contacted the International LL.M. administrative director in June 2015, and inquired about the 2016-2017 class, but she said, why not start already this September? Just send me ASAP all the documents, recommendations, and so on, and I’ll get you in! And so, within two months I found myself living and

studying in Tel Aviv... and I loved every second of it. It’s a very high-quality program, extremely well organized, with fascinating subjects, such as IT law and a privacy workshop — I didn’t study anything of the kind in Brazil. It was both new and unique.”

**Weren’t your parents concerned about you going to Israel?**

“They were. The media in Brazil is generally negatively biased against Israel, picturing it as a war zone. I had been in Israel before, so I was already expecting something positive. With time, they realized that Israel is a very good place for me to be, and that they didn’t need to worry. In addition, Israelis are warm, informal, and welcoming. It’s easy to make friends here, which makes the experience even more fulfilling for anyone coming from abroad.”

**What was especially surprising in your studies here?**

“The Law Faculty of the University of São Paulo is very traditional; when I studied there, we had large classes of more than 100 students. Here, the class was small and socially connected, the

discussions were internationally rich, and the engagement with the material was different. For example, we had to write ‘reaction papers,’ which involve you with the material taught in class throughout the course, rather than having to wait until the final exam. Also, some courses have a 24 hours exam, which is more like writing a paper in a rush, and if you didn’t follow the lessons, you won’t be able to catch up and come up with a good end result.”

**When did you decide to pursue a third degree?**

“In Brazil it is not common for students to study full-time for their Master’s or Ph.D. in law, or even to pursue an academic career without simultaneously practicing law, because the scholarships are extremely low. So being full-time in academia is not something realistic for a Brazilian. But then, in a class, the academic director of the LL.M. Program, Prof. Michael Birnhack, mentioned that there is a highly competitive, fully sponsored European technology-related Ph.D. project, and I thought, why not apply? At the same time I applied to Israeli law firms, relying on my

experience and resume, being a partner in Brazil, and speaking six languages, to open some doors. And then I was accepted to the Ph.D. program.”

“

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**Tell us a bit more about your Ph.D. project.**

“It’s called ‘Privacy and Usability,’ or in short, Privacy & Us. The project involves 13 Ph.D. students in different countries, and meetings are held each time in a different country. The majority of my colleagues in the project are computer scientists or human-computer interaction professionals. Of course, privacy carries with it a clear technical aspect, and being the only lawyer, I get to learn other aspects of this field. The focus of my work is ‘Informed Consent in Privacy,’ and I’m quite passionate about the topic. This Ph.D. is something I wouldn’t have dreamt about in Brazil.”

**What is your long-term goal following the Ph.D.?**

“I’m much interested in working in the field of privacy, in the high-tech industry, or in government. I think that the knowledge and the skills I’m gaining are unique, and privacy is a rapidly growing field, with laws that are likewise changing rapidly. More and more companies are becoming aware of privacy issues, and they will need specialized professionals to help them navigate this landscape.”



**Matias Ludman**, born and raised in Rio Negro, Patagonia, Argentina, studied for his LL.B. at the University of Salvador, Buenos Aires, then started working in the fields of civil and labor law in Buenos Aires. Feeling limited within his professional specialization, Matias started looking for an LL.M. program abroad, to obtain an alternative and more satisfactory legal specialization. Being acquainted with Israel as a past participant in both the Taglit-Birthright (2009) and the Masa (2010) programs, both programs designed to introduce Jewish youths from all over the world to Israel, Matias inquired about the Parasol Foundation International LL.M. and was delighted to find out about the program's law and technology track. In preparation for his application to the program, Matias decided to make *aliya*.



“The LL.M. experience was really amazing and the time just flew by. It was a ten-month program, but it felt like one month. I enjoyed every aspect of it: the perfect combination of courses and the diversity in the class, which I attended with colleagues and professors from China, France, Germany, the US, Canada, Brazil, and the UK.”

**Where there things which you found difficult to adjust to?**

“At first it was difficult because of the method of study, which gives students a great degree of freedom and choices. This is different from the way we study in Argentina, at least at the LL.B. level, where, for example, we have a final oral exam that is a kind of ordeal. In contrast, most of the final exams in the International LL.M. at TAU Law were take-home exams. But in the end, one way or the other, you need to show the results of your learning.”

“As for Israeli culture in general, or should I say, Israel's mix of cultures, although I was familiar with it, it took me a while to get used to Israeli chutzpah... actually now I cannot get rid of it, and between you and me, it's not such a bad tool for a lawyer!”

“In addition, after I finished my LL.B. in Argentina, I began a second LL.B., as an external student, at the University of London, so I got to study common law. Once in Israel, even though I was not familiar with Israeli law, my studies in common law were useful for understanding the Israeli combination of civil law and the inherited common law. In some ways, Israeli law is as unique as Israel itself.”

**What was your impression of the program faculty?**

“In Argentina, being a law professor is not a common career, and most lawyers seek

to become successful professionals while teaching as a hobby — although there has been a change in this perspective in the last years. This is different in Israel, where a career in academia is more developed. As a result, professors at the International LL.M program had a wide and deep international perspective on each subject. They were also quite helpful on a personal level, providing valuable advice regarding the best way to advance my career.”

**When did you decide that despite having made *aliya*, for your career it was best for you to return to Argentina?**

“Despite having relatives and friends in Israel, my girlfriend and I missed our families, and that was a major factor. In addition, it is not easy for someone whose mother tongue is not Hebrew or English to find a job as an international lawyer in Israel. And becoming a lawyer

in Israel requires taking a set of nine exams of the Israeli Bar Association, plus one year of internship, which amounts to a period of another two to three years of studies; I wasn't willing to do that. I therefore decided to return to Argentina and apply for a job in an international field of law, which was my aim prior to the LL.M., and I have accomplished it! Nowadays I work in one of Argentina's largest firms: Marval, O'Farrell & Mairal, in the field of corporate law. I can say that after the International LL.M. my career took 180-degree turn.”

**How is your LL.M. degree perceived in the Argentinian legal practice?**

“There is no such thing in Argentina as an LL.M. in law and technology, and the specialization itself is something unique. At Marval, a firm with over 300 lawyers, only a few specialize in technology! So my degree is considered very valuable locally. It is something huge for me.”





**Diana Roif (29)** first visited Israel when she was 18 years old, as a member of the German Table Tennis Women's Team for the 17th Maccabiah Games (2005). Encouraged by the experience, she participated in the two subsequent Maccabiah games as well. In between, she completed her First State Examination in Law at Heidelberg University (2012), Germany's elite university for law studies. After the Maccabiah in 2013, and in proximity to her completion of the Second State Examination in Law at the Regional Court of Frankfurt (2015), Diana came to the decision to explore her interest in Israel more thoroughly.

"Every time I came to Israel I thought of staying a bit longer and was looking for the right way to do it. I found out about the International LL.M. during the last Maccabiah. But first I wanted to finish my Second State Exam, to be 100% qualified to work as lawyer or as a judge in Germany. Nevertheless, it was clear to me that I wanted to apply for the International LL.M. Not often in my life did I have such a strong feeling that I really had to do something. In this case, I felt it 100% and was very happy to have found this opportunity. It came from the heart."

**From a professional legal aspect, what made you so confident in your decision to pursue the International LL.M.?**

"During my first degree, as well as during my 'Referendariat,' I specialized in intellectual property, and it was nice to discover that the program has a special law and technology track. I also contacted the administrative director of the program and asked for contact details of the German alumni and students. I contacted all of them,

and they all praised both the program and this track. Of course, some of them talked to me after just returning from the sunny beaches of Tel Aviv, while I was freezing in Germany, so it also had an impact..."

**Could you give us your perspective of the studies in the program?**

"The method of study is completely different from that in Germany. At TAU it is more open-minded, and you can be more creative and think outside of boxes. In Germany, it is stricter and you have less freedom of choice. You need to fulfil A, B, and C, and nobody stops to ask whether you may actually be interested in D. Maybe it has also to do with the fact that this is a second degree. For whatever reason, I liked it. Also, the mixture of contents in the program was perfect, and so, even if you are interested in a certain specialization, you also have the opportunity to broaden your horizons. The field trips, however, all fell on rainy days... It was particularly funny when we came to see the desert in the south, and some of us had never seen a desert before, and it was pouring!"

**How was the LL.M. class?**

"We came from ten different countries... and were also of different ages. Some have just finished their LL.B., others have had a lot of practical experience, and some were already parents to children. So there was a big variety. In the discussions, everybody contributed from their experience. It is not just a matter of different legal thinking, but often simply of different cultures. You are exposed to new and unfamiliar things, learn from it, and grow."

**And the country itself?**

"The LL.M. gives you a taste of the country and its culture, but I had also table tennis and friends to help me better integrate into local society. It was also table tennis that helped me blend in quickly in Germany, when my family migrated from the Ukraine, when I was 9 years old. The same happened in Israel. I started playing for Maccabi Tel Aviv women's table tennis team, and traveled for the weekend league games to all parts of the country — by the way, I find it incredible how many unique spots the Israeli landscapes has to offer— and so I

had the opportunity to meet new friends and see new places. It made my life here more complete."

**One of the program's courses is about Israeli law. How did you find the Israeli legal system?**

"There are things that I couldn't believe at first, for instance, the absence of a formal constitution, which for me is the proper foundation of a proper democracy. This is one of the unfamiliar things I mentioned."

**When did you decide that you wish to stay in Israel after the completion of the program?**

"In the beginning of the program I didn't know what will happen next, but toward the end I decided to work here as an attorney, and this is what I do, I work as a foreign attorney at Barnea & Co., a firm of about 50 lawyers and some 19 partners. I specialize in commercial law and privacy law, providing legal consultation for high-tech startups and big investors. I like the job... it's a refreshing change after all my studies."

**And where do you see your future?**

"I try to fully live every experience, so now I study Hebrew at the *ulpan* and I even think of taking the Israeli Bar examination! But I don't know where I'll end up in the long term."

**Looking back at the International LL.M., what doors did it open for you?**

"Having the LL.M. is an advantage both on the Israeli and the foreign market. The big law firms in Germany, for example, see the LL.M. degree as an attractive bonus in addition to the First and Second State Examination, especially if you have completed it abroad, and with an exceptional specialization. For me personally, the LL.M. also opened the opportunity of becoming integrated in local Israeli society, both on a professional and a private level."



PARASOL  
FOUNDATION

## The Parasol Foundation: TAU International LL.M. sponsor

The Parasol Foundation is a philanthropic trust established in 2004 in Gibraltar. It is overseen by its principal benefactor, Ruth Parasol, who is considered to be one of the world's wealthiest self-made women today. Following the immense international success of her online gaming company and its IPO on the London Stock exchange, in 2005, Ruth sold her remaining interests and dedicates her time to raising her children, to philanthropy, and to overseeing her international private investment office. For over 10 years, the Parasol Foundation has been supporting communities in Gibraltar, UK, Israel, India, and the United States. To date, the Foundation has committed over £20,000,000 for various educational, health, culture, and heritage initiatives.

Ruth Parasol says: "Our time, success, and fortune are borrowed. You can never give or appreciate enough, but every effort helps. Here, at the Parasol Foundation, we enable change by supporting talented individuals and core centers of health and education, in order to create a better future for the next generation. Through education, cutting-edge technologies, advanced medical treatments, and culture preservation we hope to contribute to a better and brighter future."

## Meet Prof. Michael Birnhack, academic director of the Parasol International LL.M. Program



Photography: Gal Hermoni

**Prof. Birnhack** (J.S.D., NYU School of Law, 2000) is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of intellectual property, privacy law, and information technology law. He also directs the TAU Law S. Horowitz Institute for IP. For the past two years, he has served as academic director of the Parasol Foundation International LL.M. Program. Since last March Michael is also Associate Dean for Research at TAU Law.

Could you explain for whom the program is designed and how one is admitted into it?

"The Parasol Foundation International LL.M considers applications from holders of an LL.B. degree obtained outside of Israel, who have a demonstrated knowledge of English. We evaluate the applicants' academic achievements and professional experience, as well as the recommendations provided. The same criteria, alongside individual needs, also serve us in awarding generous Parasol Foundation scholarships, offered to some of the participants. But we also encourage and assist the applicants we accept to obtain scholarships from other resources, such as the Masa Scholarship for Jewish students, the Asper scholarship for Canadian students, the funding possibilities offered by the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or funding offered in their home countries."

Program graduates have high praise for the curriculum and the method of study, especially the specialization tracks, the combination of courses and field trips, as well as the different methods of evaluation. Could you briefly describe the structure of the program?

"Certainly. It's a 10-month program, which opens with three core courses, designed to eliminate any gaps in the students' prior knowledge and to introduce the students to the Israeli legal system. That being said, it is important to note that the program is theoretical in nature, and is not about

Israeli law. Nevertheless, we believe that it is important for students to know something about the place where they are studying.

After this preliminary phase, which takes place before the beginning of the regular academic year, students can choose courses, seminars, and workshops according to their specialization track, from a large variety offered at TAU Law, in English, including by some 20 to 25 visiting scholars from the best law schools in the world. We also have special activities that are unique for the program students, such as the field trips you mentioned, as well as weekly presentations of contemporary legal issues with special relevance to Israel.

As for the methods of study and evaluation, I think that this is all part of the general Israeli academic approach. It is a relatively young academic tradition, cherry-picking the best of all learning and legal traditions. We have frontal lectures, as is common in the continental tradition, alongside discussion-based courses, following the Socratic method, which is common in the United States. Add to this mixture the Israeli lack of formality, and you arrive at the special way in which we teach, which the students indeed find greatly appealing."

Do students in the program interact extensively with the rest of the Faculty students, including local and exchange students?

"Definitely. The TAU Law Student Exchange Program cooperates with 45

leading law schools from all over the world. All the TAU Law classes that are taught in English thus provide an opportunity to meet different people of different backgrounds, who grew up in different legal systems. I witness how all the students, both local and foreign, are greatly excited by this opportunity and gain a lot from it, because it brings a wide spectrum of perspectives to the discussion. Take freedom of speech, for example, an issue pertinent to the seminar I teach on law and information technology. In the classroom, I meet American students, for whom the First Amendment represents a very clear position on the topic, and I have Chinese students with an alternative view, and many other different perspectives in between. The discussions are truly fascinating. Each class is a wonderful intellectual experience for the students and for myself."

As the academic director of the program, can you describe your interaction with the young but already experienced jurists from all over the world?

"As I mentioned, I enjoy the diversity in class a lot. But it is much more than that. I believe that it takes a certain courage, curiosity, and willingness to explore new things for people to study abroad. These qualities, on top of the high standard we maintain in our application process, guarantee that participants are truly excellent jurists." ■