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When There Are No Books – How Universities in Palestine Teach in the Absence of Textbooks

Textbooks are a mainstay of university education around the world. However, not all universities have the luxury of ordering their textbooks directly. In the occupied state of Palestine, the Israeli Ministry of Education must first approve all textbooks that are requested by universities. Textbooks, according to the Ministry, may not be directly mailed to locations within the occupied state. Since the Ministry may disqualify textbooks containing “perceived prejudices and stereotypes,” universities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip find themselves with no textbooks, journals, databases or unfettered access to wi-fi to use in their classrooms. This paper explores the ways in which university professors have developed ways to meet the curricular need of their students in the forced absence of books.