

Israeli Society and Politics

T Th 11:30-12:45, Tarbuton Hall 106

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 2-4pm, Bowden 121 (Prof. Stein's office), or by appointment

The State of Israel was founded in 1948. For Jews, it was the fulfillment of a 2000-year long dream to return to their ancestral homeland of Erets Yisrael. For others, notably the Arab inhabitants known as the Palestinians (named after their land, Palestine), the establishment of a Jewish state was a tragedy. This course, however, will deal very briefly with the dispute between the two parties, also known as the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Although the conflict has undoubtedly shaped Israeli society and its political system, this course will mostly have an inward focus on Israel itself: its political system, international relations, how it functions as a society of immigrants, relationships between secular and religious Jews and between Jews of various ethnic backgrounds, and the role the military plays in Israeli society. We will also look at Israeli culture through music, television, and film.

Previous knowledge about the history of Judaism, Israel, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, or the Middle East is helpful, but not required. Historical and other background will be provided in class, as well as in the readings for most weeks.

Grading:

The maximum number of points you may earn for this course is 1000. Grading will be distributed in the following manner:

Attendance and participation – 100pts

First essay – 200pts

Second essay – 200pts

Final essay – 500pts

Your final grade will be determined by your points balance as of 12/12/11, according to the following key: above 940 points: A; 900-939: A-; 860-899: B+; 820-859: B; 785-819: B-; 760-784: C+; 710-759: C; 690-709: C-; 660-689: D+; 600-659: D; less than 600: F.

You will not receive a final grade lower than what your total number of points is worth according to the key above, but I may decide to give you a higher grade.

Requirements:

1. Attendance – you are expected to show up to all classes. I treat our classes as if they were a personal appointment with each one of you, and expect you to do the same. If you cannot come to class for whatever reason, please e-mail me *in advance* to let me know about it. You will have 3 grace absences for whatever reason during the semester. Your grade will begin to suffer from the 4th absence, and you will automatically receive an F grade for the course once you have reached 8 absences. There are no exceptions to this policy and no “excused” absences that do not count. You are advised to use your grace absences wisely, including for illness. If you believe you have special circumstances that require accommodation beyond these rules, please come see me.
2. Participation – you are expected to do all assigned readings as elaborated in the schedule below, and participate in class discussions that will be based on those readings. This is an obvious prerequisite for serious exchanges. Readings are not only essential to understanding the course material; they also complement the information provided in lectures.

If you don't say anything throughout the semester, come to class late or leave early, don't take notes, use unrelated internet resources while in class, or appear sleepy or hung-over, your participation grade will be affected, and as you can imagine, not positively.

3. First and second essay – you will write two relatively small essays throughout the semester on topics that will be given to you in advance (at least 2 weeks before the deadline). Each essay will be no longer than 1,000 words. The first will be due on Monday, 2/28; the second on Monday, 4/10. All rules of academic writing, including citing sources, will apply. I will give further details in class.
4. Final essay – due on 5/7, this essay will be the equivalent of a minor research paper. It will be based mostly on sources we have covered in class, but also on sources you will find on your own. You will have the option to choose from among two questions I will provide, or come up with your own research question that I approve. Maximum length for this essay: 2000 words. All rules of academic writing will apply. I will give further details in class.

Miscellaneous things you should know:

1. I care a lot about how you write. In fact, how you write is more important to me than what you say. I have a website dedicated to improving college students' writing skills (<http://www.writingmaster.net>). The website has all the information you may need on grammar, style, punctuation, and citing sources. When grading your written work, I will assume you are familiar with the rules described on this website. If you use facebook, I suggest you “like” this site and follow it to receive occasional writing and academic tips.

If you find it useful, feel free to spread the word and share this resource with your friends. It is free to use.

2. Other skills I will assume you have (and if you don't, it will be your responsibility to learn them or to ask for my help with them): searching the library catalog and locating items online and on the shelf, using interlibrary loan (including using worldcat to find items Emory doesn't own), using google books, and using footnotes to document your sources (see the "citing sources" section of writingmaster.net for more on how to use footnotes).
3. I have zero tolerance for academic integrity violations, and especially plagiarism. The rules of how to use sources properly are explained in the website I mentioned above. Not knowing the rules will not exempt you from the need to follow them. Even the slightest suspicion of plagiarism, cheating in the form of copying the work of another student or having someone write an exam for you, or any other violation of academic misconduct (see http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/policy/honor_code.html for more details) will result in an automatic F grade and a report being sent to the Honor Council.
4. Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. Students who have a disability that prevents them from fully demonstrating their academic skills should contact me as soon as possible to discuss arrangements that can ensure full participation and facilitate their learning experience. All information will be held in strict confidence.

Course Schedule:

There is one necessary text you will need to purchase for this course. It is available from the university bookstore or from amazon.com and other similar online stores:

Asher Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005).

In the schedule below, assignments from this book appear as Arian + the relevant page numbers.

Readings from other sources will be available via the course's page on Blackboard (under "Content") in a scanned PDF copy available for view online or download and print. Most of the books mentioned here are available at the library (just look them up in the catalog). If you prefer to read from the books themselves instead of the PDFs, please do so in the library and do not check out the books, so others may have access to them as well.

Reading assignments that appear for each week should be read *in preparation for* that week, with specific per-class instructions given the week before. This includes looking up information about the author of each text, and any other places, organizations, or people mentioned in the text that you have not heard of before. You may use the internet or any other credible source you like to

dig out that information. This knowledge will be naturally assumed when readings are discussed in class.

Week 1-2 (1/19-24-26-31, 2/2): Introduction; a different perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict

(to be read not before 1/26) Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader: a Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 4-9, 11-18, 30-36, 65-77, 81-87, 89-91, 105-116, 135-39, 171-82, 207-15, 222-28, 354-58, 385-400, 413-428, 442-459.

Weeks 3-5 (2/7-9-14-16-21-23): The political and electoral system

Arian, 83-312 (specific pages from that range will be assigned for each class).

Weeks 6 (2/28-3/1): Israel as a society of immigrants

Arian, 19-47.

David Lehmann and Batia Siebzehner, *Remaking of Israeli Judaism: The Challenge of Shas* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2006), pp. 170-202.

Tanya Schwarz, *Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants in Israel: the Homeland Postponed* (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 2001), pp. 41-71, 98-113.

*** 2/28: first essay due by the beginning of class ***

Week 7 (3/6-8): religious-secular contentions

Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak (eds.), *Militarism and Israeli Society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), pp. 14-41, 120-144.

Steven Mazie, *Israel's Higher Law: Religion and Liberal Democracy in the Jewish State* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 189-209.

Week 8 (3/20-22): Israeli Music

Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 137-190.

Week 9 (3/27-29): Education in Israel

Yossi Shavit et. al. "Israel: diversification, expansion, and inequality in higher education" in: *Stratification in Higher Education: A Comparative Study* ed. Yossi Shavit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 39-62.

A collection of articles on education from Haaretz (an Israeli daily newspaper. Available in its English edition at www.haaretz.com and the Hebrew version at www.haaretz.co.il).

Week 10 (4/3-5): Working and living in Israel: healthcare, social security, and labor unions

Shifra Shvarts, *The Workers' Health Fund in Eretz Israel: Kupat Holim* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 1-6, 93-112.

Yinon Cohen et al., "The state of organized labor in Israel," *Journal of Labor Research* 28 (2007), 2: 255-273.

A collection of articles on elective abortions from Israeli media (via Blackboard).

Week 11-12 (4/10-12-17-19): Israel's international relations

A collection of essays from Foreign Policy (and possibly other magazines/journals). We will also watch a few short videos in class and at home.

*** 4/10: second essay due by the beginning of class ***

4/10: deadline to approve your own research question for final papers (if you want to set your own question)

Week 13-14 (4/24-26, 5/1): Israeli comedy and satire

We will watch and discuss videos in class.

*** 5/7: final essay due ***