

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL- **UPDATED SYLLABUS**

IRE215

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 13:30-14:30

Class meeting time: Thursdays, 10:00-11:40



Course Description

The impact of Israel on regional and international politics is disproportional to its geographical size and demographic base. This interdisciplinary course provides students with an extensive introduction to politics and society in Israel. The course presents Israel from multiple perspectives: political, social, cultural and economic while focusing on politics and society. The analysis presented is also multileveled, considering various social and ethnic groups as well as the nation. We will carefully examine the most pending issues and challenges the Israeli society is currently facing alongside central ongoing debates in Israeli politics. Students will thus be exposed to interdisciplinary cutting-edge academic research on the country.

The course consists of three parts. The first part establishes the historical and political background against which contemporary Israeli politics plays out. The second part of the course is dedicated to exploring state-building and Israel's first years. The third part of the course focuses on contemporary Israeli challenges such as social cleavages (along political, religious, ethnic, and national lines) and political debates of inclusion/exclusion.

Topics addressed during the course include Israel's political history, the Arab/Israeli and Israeli/Palestinian conflicts (as well as their influence on Israeli politics and society), ethnic, religious and further subgroups comprising the Israeli society (Arabs, Druze, Bedouins, Oriental

¹ You are **always welcome** to contact the lecturer via email! When you do, please be sure to include your **name** and the **title of the course**.

and Ashkenazi Jews, Jews from Ethiopia, immigrants from the former Soviet Union, etc.), national identity as a product of subcultures, Zionism and post-Zionism, (lack of) separation of religion and state and its political and social implications, the Israeli Defense Force as a melting pot and contemporary challenges.

Course Objectives

Students will graduate from this course with a better acquaintance with Israeli history, society, politics, and would develop a comprehensive understanding of this fascinating country.

Upon completion of the course, students would be able to:

- Describe and understand important topics in Israeli history and understand their effect on ongoing processes in Israel;
- Demonstrate an understanding of Zionist historiography and its manifestations in contemporary Israeli society;
- Critically analyse the conceptual and empirical debates surrounding Zionism, the structures of the Jewish state and the relationship between democracy, religion, ethnicity and nationalism in contemporary Israel;
- Describe and understand the complexity of Israeli politics and society;
- Identify and describe current trends in Israeli politics and society;
- Discuss the challenges Israel is facing from various points of view: economic, political, social, international relations, conflicts etc.;
- Place the contemporary debates surrounding Israeli politics and society within a regional and international context;

Prerequisites

Proficiency in English to an academic standard. Background in the history and politics of the Middle East is helpful, but not required.

Grades

This is a fail/pass course. A passing grade will be given to students based on:

1. The quality of a mid-term essay
2. Final paper submitted at the end of the semester

***** A passing grade requires the successful completion of BOTH assignments.**

Mid-term Essay

Students are expected to pay attention to ongoing news concerning Israeli society and politics during the course. For the midterm essay, students are required to locate a relevant news item/commentary (published in English during the course) focusing on a relevant topic (Israeli politics/society). Online sources for suitable context include the following (students are welcome to pursue other online/offline sources):

<https://www.haaretz.com>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com>

<https://www.ynetnews.com/>

<https://www.jpost.com>

<https://www.foxnews.com>

<https://www.thejc.com>

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com>

<http://english.pnn.ps>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/country/israel.html>

<http://www.arabnews.com>

Essays (2,000-2,500 words) will be submitted in couples. They will constitute a short analysis, critic or response to the chosen news article/commentary. Essays will provide **basic information concerning the media outlet** (ownership, political orientation, etc.), **introduce the topic** addressed by the commentary and **review further information** necessary to understand the issue discussed. Against the backdrop of knowledge gained in the course and further independent research carried out by the students, an **original input** will be added (do you agree with the author's description of the issue and conclusion? Is the commentary misleading/lacking further important information? Does the conclusion follow the described facts? Is the information credible?). Critical responses are welcome alongside comparisons with the Czech Republic/your home country (if relevant to the topic). Further information concerning the essay would be given in class.

Mid-term essays will be graded according to the following category scale: "check plus" exceeds expectations; "check" satisfies expectations; "check minus" falls short of expectations but is minimally satisfactory; and 'F', either not acceptable or no submission.

Students are required to email the lecturer a copy of their chosen commentary by 12.03.2020 for approval. Essays are to be uploaded to IS (pdf format, including your name and student number) by 15.05.2020. As it was supposed to be a mid-term task and in order to avoid a significant workload at the end of the semester, I would encourage you to finish and submit the essay until the end of April.

Final paper

At the end of the semester, students will submit a **research paper** dedicate to a specific aspect of Israeli society and politics that was **NOT** directly addressed in class. The research paper will be limited to 10 pages (Times new Roman size 12, double space including footnotes, excluding references). Students may choose their topics according to their personal interests but are required to coordinate the topics with the lecturer (via email) by **23.04.2020**. The final paper will be further discussed in the final session of the course. Submission date is: **26.06.2020** using IS (similarly to the mid-term essay). Topic may include (but are not limited to) social and political dimensions of the IDF, religion and state in Israel: modernity vs. tradition, Israel and its Diasporas, minorities in Israel: political representation and social inclusion/exclusion, a comparison between an aspect of Israel's politics/society and your home country, etc.

General Notes

This course is taught in English with all readings and discussions in this language. Don't worry if English is not your native language- minor linguistic errors will not affect the assessment of your work. However, **you should be able to clearly communicate your ideas and arguments in English (academic level)**. Your active participation in class is particularly valued.

Important Deadlines:

- Midterm essays' topics lock-in (via email) => 12.03.2020
- Midterm essays' submission (via IS) => 15.05.2020
- End-term papers' topic lock-in (via email) => 23.04.2020
- End-term papers' submission (via IS) => 26.06.2020

Course Plan

Session 1, 20.02.2020: General Introduction and Course Overview

Course's general framework: Structure, goals, requirements etc. General introduction to the course' topic => why should we study Israeli politics, society and history?

Assigned Reading

Israel's country profile, timeline and leaders (BBC News)

Part I: Ideological, Historical, Social and Political Background

Session 2, 27.02.2020: Introduction to Israel

Facts and figures, preliminary information concerning: Israeli political parties and institutions, representation & government, the judiciary, the people of Israel, education system, economy, army, historical turning points.

Assigned Reading

Adelman, J. (2008). The rise of Israel: a history of a revolutionary state. Routledge, pp. 3-26.

Further Reading

The Economist. 2006. "Israel: Who's a Citizen?" 18 May.

Reich, B. (2008). A brief history of Israel. Infobase Publishing (only read the Introduction)

Seliktar, Ofira. "The Israeli Economy," in Contemporary Israel: Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Security Challenges, ed. Robert O. Freedman, pp. 159-172.

Session 3, 05.03.2020: From Mandate to Statehood

A state 'in the making' => The creation of political institutions, a Jewish society, and the birth of the state

Assigned Reading

Shapira, A. (2012). Israel: A History. Brendeis University Press, chapters 3, 5, 6.

Further Reading

Shindler Colin (2008), A History of Modern Israel, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1, pp. 10-37.

Alon Kadish and Avraham Sela, "Myths and Historiography of the 1948 Palestine War Revisited: The Case of Lydda", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 617-634.

Shlaim, Avi. 2001. "Israel and the Arab coalition in 1948," *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, edited by Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Session 4, 12.03.2020: Nation-building 1948-1967

War of independence and mass immigration, North-African immigration wave, challenges of nation-building, Israel as a “melting pot”, from socialism to capitalism, counter culture and political upheaval.

Assigned Reading

Anita Shapira, *Israel – A History*, Brandeis University Press, 2012, chapters 7, 9, 10

Further Reading

Avi Bareli, "'Mamlakhtiyut', capitalism and socialism during the 1950s in Israel", *Journal of Israeli History* 26, 2 (2007), pp. 201-227

Alan Dowty, *Israel's First Decade: Building a Civic State*, in: Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas (eds.), *Israel: The First Decade of Independence*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 31-50.

Session 5, 19.03.2020: ‘Between the Wars’ 1967-2000

The Six days war (1967), the Israeli Arab conflict after the 1967 war, the Yom Kippur war (1973), Israeli society and politics after the Yom Kippur war.

Assigned Reading

Anita Shapira, *Israel – A History*, Brandeis University Press, 2012, chapters 13, 14, 16

Neuberger, Benyamin. 1989. “Israel’s Democracy and Comparative Politics.” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 1: 67–75.

Further Reading

Ben-Porat, G., Levy, Y., Mizrahi, S., Naor, A., & Tzfadia, E. (2008). *Israel since 1980*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-41

Peleg, Ilan. 2000. Chapter 4 (“Israel as a Liberal Democracy: Civil Rights in the Jewish State”), p. 63–80. In Laura Zittrain Eisenberg and Neil Caplan, eds., *Review Essays in Israel Studies: Books on Israel, Volume V*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Part II: Contemporary Israeli Politics

Session 6, 26.03.2020: Israeli Democracy and Politics

Israeli political system; government, parliament and the court, Religion and Politics (Church and state), Liberal vs. Ethnic Conceptions of Democracy, Citizenship and Nation.

Assigned Reading

Neuberger, Benyamin. 1989. “Israel’s Democracy and Comparative Politics.” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 1: 67–75.

Mahler, G. S. (2016). *Politics and government in Israel: the maturation of a modern state*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 4-7.

Further Reading

Anita Shapira, <i>Israel – A History</i> , Brandeis University Press, 2012, chapters 17, 18.
Jones, C., & Murphy, E. C. (2005). <i>Israel: Challenges to identity, democracy and the state</i> . Routledge. Chapter 2
Bagno-Moldavski O. (2015) “The effect of religiosity on political attitudes in Israel” <i>Politics and Religion</i> .
Ben-Porat, G., Levy, Y., Mizrahi, S., Naor, A., & Tzfadia, E. (2008). <i>Israel since 1980</i> . Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-41
Anita Shapira, <i>Israel – A History</i> , Brandeis University Press, 2012, chapters 17

No session on 02.04.2020 => Mid-term Essays Submission Deadline

Session 7, 09.04.2020: Foreign Policy and International Relations Part I

Narrated presentation

Foreign Policy => Israeli foreign policy makers, goals, open/secret diplomacy, Israeli diplomatic missions abroad and status of relations with other countries.

Regional and International Strategic Relations => The ‘Periphery Doctrine’- a success story? Recent developments (e.g. the Arab Spring, War in Syria, Iran’s nuclear deal), new dynamic dimensions in Israeli strategic and security policies (The Mediterranean: Anti-Islamist and Economic Strategic Depth, East Africa and Central Asia, the Arab Core, The Eurasian powers, the Palestinian issue), Israel’s newfound strategic partners.

Western Attitudes Towards Israel

Assigned Reading

Jones, C., & Murphy, E. C. (2005). *Israel: Challenges to identity, democracy and the state*. Routledge. Chapter 4

Further Reading

Mahler, G. S. (2016). *Politics and government in Israel: the maturation of a modern state*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 9.

Rawidowicz, S. (1998). *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity: Essays on the "ever-dying People"* (Vol. 26). UPNE.

Session 8, 16.04.2020: Foreign Policy and International Relations Part II

Zoom session

Israel and the US => Why are they close allied? US policy towards the Middle east: past and

present)

Israel and the EU => The Barcelona process

Israel and the Jewish Diaspora

Assigned Reading

Ben-Rafael, E., Liwerant, J. B., & Gorny, Y. (Eds.). (2014). Reconsidering Israel-diaspora relations. Brill. Chapter 5.

Further Reading

Habib, J. (2004). *Israel, diaspora, and the routes of national belonging*. University of Toronto Press.

Part III: Contemporary Israeli Society

Session 9, 23.04.2020: Immigration and Minority Politics

The Ethiopian Jews, foreign workers, illegal immigrants. Social and civil rights and channels of political influence, The Druze, and the Bedouins, history, politics, patterns of incorporation in Israel.

Assigned Reading

Adelman, J. (2008). *The rise of Israel: a history of a revolutionary state*. Routledge. Chapter 13.

Ephraim Ya'ar, "Continuity and Change in Israeli Society: The Test of The Melting Pot" *Israel Studies*, 10(2) 2005, pp. 91-128.

Further Reading

Frantzman, Seth J. (2014). The Politization of History and the Negev Bedouin Land Claims: a review essay on Indigenous (In)justice. *Israel Studies*. 19.1 p48.

Harper, Robin A., and Hani Zubida (2010). "Making Room at the Table: Incorporation of Foreign Workers in Israel." *Policy and Society* 29.4 371-83

Dahan-Kalev, Henriette. "You're So Pretty—You Don't Look Moroccan," *Israel Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2001): 1-14.

Flum Hanoach, and Rachel Gali Cinamon. (2011). Immigration and the interplay among citizenship, identity and career: The case of Ethiopian immigration to Israel. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 78 (3) (JUN): 372-80.

Session 10, 30.04.2020: Arab/Palestinian Israelis

Zoom session

Israel Arabs, Israeli Palestinians Arab political parties, conflict of Identity - Israeli

Arabs/Palestinians, civil rights.
Assigned Reading
Amara, Mohammad. and Schnell, I. (2004) 'Identity repertoires among Arabs in Israel', <i>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</i> , 30(1), 175-193.
Rekheh, "The Evolvement of an Arab–Palestinian National Minority in Israel", <i>Israel Studies</i> , Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2007, pp. 1-28.
Further Reading
Morris, "The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem", Laurence J. Silberstein (ed.), <i>New Perspectives on Israeli history</i> , New York University Press, New York and London, 1991, pp. 42-56.
Scham, Paul, Pogrud, Benjamin and As'ad Ghanem (2013). Introduction to shared narratives-- a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. <i>Israel Studies</i> . 18.2 p1.
Bronner, Ethan. 2012. "Anger and Compassion for Arab Justice Who Stays Silent During Zionist Hymn." <i>The New York Times</i> . 4 March.

Session 11, 07.05.2020: Religion in Israel
Religion in Israel: Ideology, Religion–State relation, the Religious Subcultures: Ultraorthodox and the National Religious Jews, Religious identity in the Jewish State.
Assigned Reading
Sorek, T, Ceobanu, A. M. (2009). Religiosity, National Identity and Legitimacy: Israel as an Extreme Case. <i>Sociological Journal British Sociological Association</i> 43, 3, 477-496.
Shelef (2013). "Democratic inclusion and religious nationalists in Israel," <i>Political Science Quarterly</i> 128(2): 289-316.
Bronner, Ethan. 2010. "Israel Puts Off Crisis Over Conversion Law." <i>The New York Times</i> . 23 July.
Further Reading
Bronner, Ethan. 2009. "A Religious War in Israel's Army." <i>The New York Times</i> . 21 March.
Liebman, Charles S. and Eliezer Don-Yehiya. 1984. "Separation of Religion and State in Israel: A Program or a Slogan?" (Chapter 2), p. 15–30. In <i>Religion and Politics in Israel</i> . Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
<i>A Portrait of Israeli Jews: Beliefs, Observances, and Values among Israeli Jews</i> 2009. Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute and the Avi Chai Foundation.
Lee R. D. 2014 (2010) <i>Religion and politics in the Middle East: identity, ideology, institutions, and attitudes</i> / Boulder: Westview Press. Chapter on Israel

Session 12, 14.05.2020 : Peace in The Middle East?
Zoom session

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process, key events, analysis, forecast.
- Conclusion and highlights, the final paper, feedback
Assigned Reading
Mahler, G. S. (2016). <i>Politics and government in Israel: the maturation of a modern state</i> . Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 11.
Karsh, E. (2014). <i>Peace in the Middle East: The Challenge for Israel</i> . Routledge. Introduction + Chapter 1.
Further Reading
Shapira, A. (2012). <i>Israel: A History</i> . Brandeis University Press, Chapter 19.
Berger M. ASSASSINATION IN ISRAEL; Yitzhak Rabin, 73, an Israeli Soldier Turned Prime Minister and Peacemaker, <i>The New York Times</i> Nov. 5, 1995.
Scham, P., Pogrud, B. and Ghanem A. (2013). Introduction to shared narratives--a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. <i>Israel Studies</i> . 18.2 p1.