

## **IRE215: POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN ISRAEL**

### **Religion and State in Israel + The Israeli Defence Forces**

This week's presentation is dedicated to two different yet related topics. Upon examination of religion and state in Israel, the presentation explores the various Jewish communities of Israel and the political-religious connection. Next, it offers a short review of the relationship between religious Jews and the state of Israel from a political point of view since before the state was established. We will then turn to the examination of the ultra-orthodox sector of the Israeli society and address contemporary challenges faced by the Israeli society concerning religious and state, social cohesion and social disparities.

The second topic addressed by the presentation is the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Starting with a short historical background, we will focus on the characteristics of the IDF, and its role in the Israeli society.

After reading the assigned literature and going over the presentation, please answer the following questions:

1. Characterize the four main Jewish communities of Israel (religious observance+ political orientation). Focus on the ultra-orthodox (family and lifestyle, Haredi politics).
2. What was the agreement made between Zionists and political representatives of the ultra-Orthodox communities (Agudas Israel) before the establishment of the state pertaining to Jewish coexistence? Is the agreement easily amendable?
3. Small orthodox and ultra-orthodox parties in Israel are often significant players in coalition building and party politics, explain.
4. Why did religious parties cause the downfall of the Israeli government in 1976?
5. Is there a separation between religion and state in Israel? Explain using the example of marriage legality.
6. Explain three contemporary challenges the Israeli society is facing.
7. The Israeli defence forces can be categorized as a citizen militia supplemented by career officers and active-duty conscripts, explain.
8. What does 'Tal Law' regulate? Why was it necessary (is it important)? What were the reactions to the law from the various communities in Israel?
9. How does the IDF contribute to nation-building enterprises in Israel?
10. Why can Israel be characterized as an Army Nation?