

**POL 129:
The Arab-Israeli Conflict**

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Course Description:

This course focuses on the causes, course, and implications of the Arab-Israeli conflict from World War I to the present. It examines the history of the conflict, comparing the conflicting narratives of the Palestinians, the Arab States, and Israel. It explores the politics of force over the course of the conflict, as well as the diplomacy of the conflict. It examines the relationships among Arabs and Israelis, as well as inter-Arab relations and the relations between the rivals and external powers. The course offers a window into the interrelations between domestic forces—political, economic, social—and the international relations of Israel and the Arabs. Finally, it examines the ramifications of the conflict for the rivals and for the international system writ large. Topics covered in the course include the following:

1. **History**

- Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine under the Ottoman Empire
- World War I and its aftermath
- The rise of the Palestinian national movement and the Zionist organization in the interwar era
- World War II and the Palestinian-Jewish struggle, 1945-47
- The Naqba and the War of Independence—conflicting narratives
- The evolution of the conflict in the post-independence era
- The Sinai War and its aftermath
- Inter-Arab politics and the Palestinians, 1949-1967
- The Six Day War and its aftermath: Israeli policy in the occupied territory
- The War of Attrition, the Palestinian challenge, and the Yom Kippur/Ramadan War
- The rise of the peace process—from step-by-step diplomacy to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty
- The Lebanon War
- The First Intifada
- The Gulf War and the Madrid Process
- The Oslo Accords and Israeli-Arab negotiations
- The collapse of the Oslo Process and the Al Aqsa Intifada
- Israeli unilateralism in the occupied territories
- Palestinian politics during the Intifada

2. **The Politics of the A-I conflict**

- Jewish, Palestinian, Arab nationalist roots of the conflict
- State building and the A-I conflict
- Inter-Arab relations and the A-I Conflict

- The two-way effects of domestic politics and the A-I conflict
 - The global system and the A-I conflict, effects and implications
3. **Strategic Aspects of the A-I Conflict**
- From war to war. Large scale confrontations in the A-I conflict. Causes of the A-I wars and their implications
 - Low Intensity A-I Conflicts. Guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and mass uprisings in the A-I conflict
 - Weapons of Mass Destruction and the A-I conflict
 - The prospects of arms control and disarmament in the Middle East
4. **Diplomacy and Peacemaking in the A-I Conflict**
- Arab and Jewish diplomacy in the pre-1948 period
 - Early attempts at A-I settlement: The Za'im initiative, the Israeli-Jordanian dialogue, Israeli-Egyptian secret negotiations
 - Arab, Israeli, and superpower diplomacy in the post-1967 era
 - The Kissinger step-by-step diplomacy
 - The Sadat initiative and the Camp David 1978 accords
 - The diplomacy of stalemate in the 1980s
 - The Madrid conference and the multilateral track
 - The making and unmaking of Oslo
 - Lessons from the diplomatic record of the A-I conflict
5. **Social and Economic Aspects of the A-I Conflict**
- The social and economic structure of Palestinian society: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under Arab regimes, Israeli-Palestinians, and the Palestinians under Israeli occupation
 - The social and economic structure of Israel and its relationship to the A-I conflict
 - Social and economic motivations for peace in Israel and the Arab world
 - Social and economic impediments of peace in Israel and the Arab world
 - The effects of the A-I conflict on the political economy of the Middle East
6. **The Arab-Israeli Conflict and the International System**
- How the changes in the international system affected the course of the Arab-Israeli conflict: Theory and history
 - The implications of the A-I conflict for regional security in the Middle East
 - Effect of the A-I conflicts on other regional and international systems
 - Non A-I conflicts in the Middle East and their relationship to systemic conflicts

Course Requirements:

1. Midterm examination: 30% of the final grade
2. Term Paper: 8-10 double spaced pages on a topic selected from a list: 30% of final grade.

3. Cumulative final examination: 40% of final grade.

Textbooks:

Rashid Khalidi 1998. *Palestinian Identity*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Zeev Maoz 2006. *Defending the Holy Land: A Critical Analysis of Israel's Security and Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Dennis Ross 2005. *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Avi Shlaim 2001. *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Recommended Reading:

Howard M. Sachar 1996. *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: A. A. Knopf (2nd Revised Edition).

Benny Morris 2001. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*.

Ilan Pappé 2006. *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2nd Edition).

Edward W. Said 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage Books (2nd Edition).

Alan Dershowitz 2003. *The Case for Israel*. New York: Wiley & Sons.