

Hebrew/Jewish Studies 356
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Professor Rachel Feldhay Brenner
brenner@wisc.edu

Zionism in Thought, Culture, and Literature: From Inception to the State

Course Description

Modern Zionism has transformed the Jewish world; it has also had a profound and irreversible impact on the international community at large. This course intends to explore the intellectual roots of the movement and its complex ethical, political, and sociological evolution. Our investigation will focus on the movement's ideological diversity as represented by Zionist thinkers and as reflected in the fictional and documentary literature of the time. While both Zionist men and women thinkers/ideologues/writers will be discussed, proper attention will be paid to the egalitarian tenet of Zionism as reflected in women's contributions to Zionist ideology and culture.

At the heart of modern Zionism emerges a paradox. While declaring itself revolutionary, Zionism is inseparable from the theological concept of the Promised Land that shaped the long history of the Diaspora. We shall trace the origins of the Zionist idea in biblical times and explore the motif of longing for Zion in the Jewish Law (*halakha*), mysticism (*kabbalah*), liturgy, medieval literary representations, and finally in the modern, political revision of Zion.

Our discussion of the Enlightenment and the subsequent emancipation of European Jews will show the dramatic change of the image of the Jew in Gentile society. For a brief historical moment it seemed that the memory of Zion had transformed into a vestige of cultural-religious tradition. However, the faith of the Jews in full emancipation and social acceptance was consistently shattered by continuing pogroms, blood libels and discrimination as well as by the rise of nationalist movements in Europe. The recognition of Jewish helplessness by some *maskilim* [enlightened Jews] created a powerful need for self-empowerment, which engendered the desire to actualize the centuries-old dream of return to Zion.

The precursors of modern Zionism sought to reconcile the idea of the national return to the Land with, on the one hand, European secularism, liberalism and socialist universalism and, on the other hand, with the rabbinic injunctions of passive waiting for the Messiah. This ambivalent position foretells the ideological diversity that characterizes Jewish modern nationalism. As our study demonstrates, the evolution of modern Zionist thought presents a fascinating amalgam of diverging concepts and projections of Jewish national future. The Zionist thinkers and men/women of letters envisioned Zion in many ways: a purely political entity, a cultural center of the Jewish people in the Diaspora, a Jewish state grounded in the socialist ideal, the site of revitalizing reconnection with nature, a militant state, and the locus of messianic redemption. These orientations and their sometimes difficult, even hostile co-existence will be examined with special emphasis on the issue of the Arab population in Palestine. We shall demonstrate the role which the Zionist ideology played in the rise of Arab nationalism and, subsequently, in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It is important to realize, however, that modern Zionism should not be exclusively identified with Zion. The Zionist idea has been enormously important to the world Jewry, especially to the American Jewish community. The concluding segment of the course will focus on the American perception of Zionism and on the extent to which the Zionist idea has shaped and defined American Jewish identity.

Course Requirements:

Instruction starts **exactly at 8:50**. Students are expected to be in class **on time**. I will be in class fifteen minutes before class-time to answer questions and discuss ideas

Class attendance is mandatory.

In case of absence, it is your responsibility to cover the material you have missed. Make sure that you have a reliable classmate who can give you all the information. Please do not expect me to answer questions on classes you did not attend.

Students are expected to read assigned texts carefully. There will be unannounced quizzes on the material for the particular class.

Although the class is large, discussions of subject of study are important. Students are encouraged to ask questions raise issues, make comments, and ask for clarifications of points that may not be clear. **All questions are important, as they always benefit the rest of the class.** Students are also encouraged to propose brief presentations pertaining to the course of study. These may be accounts of significant personal experiences, analyses of differing points of view, examinations of texts etc., Interested students should talk to me about the presentation they wish to make.

Make sure that your email address is properly registered, as I will be occasionally using it for collective announcements.

Please note: There will be no classes on Feb. 24 and April 25 and 28.

Instead students will attend two evening lectures:

Mr. David Horovitz, the editor of *The Jerusalem Report*, will discuss the ongoing conflict in the Middle East on Feb. 5th, at 7:30, Hillel, 611 Langdon Street.

Prof. Nili Gold will discuss the poetry of Jehuda Amichai, on Monday, May 5th, at 7:00, Memorial Union.

Students will be expected to write brief reports on these lectures.

Grading:

Two lecture reports – 15%

Unannounced Quizzes – 20%

Mid-term examination- 25%

Final examination – 40% (May 11th at 7:25 pm)

There will be a bonus grade of 5% for consistent effort at participation and a 3% bonus grade for a class presentation.

Required Texts:

*Arthur Hertzberg, ed. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Atheneum, 1986).

*Photocopied chapters from David J. Goldberg: *The Promised Land: A History of Zionist Thought* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996) available at the University Book Store.

*Photocopied Packet (**P**) available at Bob's Copy Shop, 1314 West Johnson.

Background Reading

*Joyce Antler, "The Dream of a Jewish Homeland," in *The Journey Home: Jewish Women and the American Century* (New York: The Free Press, 1997): 98-136.

*Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993)

*----- *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project 1914-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

*Michael Brown, *The Israeli-American Connection: Its Roots in the Yishuv, 1914-1945* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1996)

*Martin Buber, *On Zion: The History of an Idea* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, the 1997 edition)

*Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1986)

*Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993)

* Yosef Salmon, *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2002).

*Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966)

*Gershon Shfir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996)

*David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: California UP, 1966)

*Robert Wistrich & David Ohana, *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London: Frank Cass, 1995)

*Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)

Syllabus

Wed. Jan. 22 Introduction

I. Biblical Zionism

Frid. Jan. 24 Harry Orlinsky, "The Biblical Concept of Israel: Cornerstone of the Covenant Between God and Israel," P 6-25.

Mon. Jan.27 Orlinski (contd); Psalms, 137, 126. P 26.

II. The Land of Israel in the Pre-Modern Period

Wed. Jan. 29 Shalom Rosenberg, "The Link to the Land of Israel in Jewish Thought: A Class of Perspectives," P 29-44.

Frid. Jan. 31 Rosenberg (contd); Yehuda Halevi, Poems, P 45-47; Maimonides, "The Epistle to Yemen," P 48-50.

Mon. Feb. 3 Halevi and Maimonides (contd); summary and review.

III. The Modern Period: Enlightenment, Emancipation and the Jews

Wed. Feb. 5 Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, "Introduction," 22-32; "The Emancipation of the Jews of France," (P) 51; "Letter of a Citizen to His Fellow Jews," P 53-55. (Horvitz lecture)

Frid. Feb. 7 Robert M. Seltzer, "Enlightenment," P 57-58; "Search for Light and Right: An Epistle to Moses Mendelssohn," P 61-63;

Mon. Feb 10 Moses Mendelssohn, "Judaism Is the Cornerstone of Christianity," P 65-66; "Judaism as Revealed Legislation," P 67-68

IV. Eastern Europe: Haskalah

Wed. Feb.12 Howard Sachar, "The Rise of Jewish Nationalism," P 69-76.

Frid. Feb. 14 Judah Leib Gordon, "Awake My People!" P 91. Hayyim Nachman Bialik, "Surely the People is Grass," P 101; Sha'ul Tchernichovsky, "Before the Statue of Apollo," P 103

- Mon. Feb.17 Mendele Mokher Sefarim, "Burned Out," P 77-82.
 Sarah Hamer-Jacklyn, "My Mother's Dream," P 83-89.
 Yosef Hayyim Brenner, "Travel Notes," P 93-100.

V. Harbingers and Founders of Modern Zionism

- Wed. Feb.19 Hertzberg, "Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, (103-107); "Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer,"(108-114) "Moses Hess," (117-139)
- Frid. Feb. 21 Hertzberg, "Leo Pinsker," (179-198)
- Mon. Feb. 24 no class
- Wed. Feb. 26 Hertzberg, "Herzl," (204-231); "Dreyfus," P 105-8.
- Frid. Feb. 28 Hertzberg, "Herzl," (contd);
 Goldberg, "Herzl - Paying Court to the Powerful"
 (57-74).
- Mon. M 3 Herzberg, "Nordau," (233-241);
 Goldberg, "Achad Ha-Am - Zionism for the Elect," (92-113)
- Wed. M 5 Achad Ha-Am (cond); Herzberg, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem,"
 (262-269); "The Wrong Way," P 109-113.
- Frid. M. 7 Summary and Review
- Mon. M. 10 **Mid-term exam**

VI. Transformations of the Jewish Image: Zionist Perspectives

"Religion of Labour:"

- Wed. M. 12 Goldberg, "A. D. Gordon - The Religion of Labour," (137-146); Hertzberg, "A. D. Gordon," (369-379);
- Frid. M. 14 Hayyim Nachman Bialik, "To a Bird," P 115.
 Techiah Liberson, "Those First Years, P 117-118; Deborah Dayan, "My Coming to Palestine," P 119-121; Judith Edelman, "In the War Years," P 123-125.

Spring Recess

“Hebrew Humanism” and Religious Zionism

Mon.M. 24 Goldberg, “Recognizing the Arab Problem,” (158-173);

Wed. M. 26 **Guest Lecture**

Frid. M 28 Hertzberg, “Martin Buber: Hebrew Humanism,” (451-453; 457-463).

Mon. M. 31 Martin Buber, *The Land of Two People* P 127-130;

Wed. Apr. 2 Hertzberg, “Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook,” (417-431)

Revival of Hebrew

Frid. Apr. 4 Avineri, “Eliezer Ben Yehuda,” P 131-133; Judah Leib Gordon “For Whom do I Toil?” P 135; Rachel Katzenelson, “From Language to Language,” P 137-142.

“New Muscle-Jews:”

Mon. April 7 Max Nordau, “Jewry of Muscle,” P 143; Goldberg, “Vladimir Jabotinsky - From Liberalism to Fascism” (173-186);

Mon. Apr. 9 Vladimir Jabotinsky, “What the Zionist-Revisionists Want,” P 145-147; Yitzhak Lamdan, “A Prayer for Masadah,” P 149.

“The Jewish Revolution”

Frid. Apr. 11 Rachel Katzenelson, “A Word to the Legionaries,” P 151-152; Manya Shochat, “The Collective,” P 153-156; “‘The Worker’s Wife’: A Public Trial,” P 157-159.

Mon. Apr. 14 Hertzberg, “Ben Gurion,” (605-619); “On the Arab Question,” P 161-165.

Wed. Apr.16 Goldberg, “David Ben Gurion - From Class to Nation,” (205-216); Tchernichovski, “Credo,” P 103; Goldberg, “Ben-Gurion - The Primacy of the State,” (217-233);

Frid. Apr.18 Excerpts from Golda Meir, *This is Our Strength: Selected Papers of Golda Meir*. P 167-184.

Mon. Apr. 21 Hannah Senesh, Excerpts from her *Diary* and Selected Poems P 193-227.

Wed.Apr.23 Summary and review

Frid. April 25 and Mon. April 28 - no classes

VII. American Zionism

Wed. Apr. 30 Hertzberg, Richard James Horatio Gottheil, "The Aims of Zionism" (494-496);
Solomon Schechter, "Zionism: A Statement," (503-513).

Frid. May 2 Hertzberg Louis Dembitz Brendais, "The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It,"
(515-523); Mordecai Kaplan, "The Future of the American Jew" (535-544).

Mon. May 5 Henrietta Szold, "Selected Letters," P 227-255.
(Gold lecture)

Wed. May 7 "The Birth of Hadassah," P 255; "The First Eighty-Five Years," (Hadassah
Magazine) P 257-267.

Frid. May 9 review

Heb/Jewish Studies #356

Name _____

**Lecture Report --- Prof. Nili Gold, "Love and War in the Poetry of Yehuda Amichai,"
May 5th at 7:00, Memorial Union**

The report should be about two pages long (double spaced)

Date of submission: Wed. May 7th

In your report you need to consider the following points:

1. Main ideas of the lecture
2. How were the ideas presented/substantiated
3. Did the lecture connect in any way to our course of study?
4. Your opinion about the lecture

Quiz #1

Name _____

Explain the following terms in the context of Rosenberg's essay in the space provided:

1. Metropolis

2. The Divine Presence

3. Habitation, immigration, settlement

4. The oaths

5. Jerusalem's daughters

Bonus question:

Two main concepts/ideas we discussed in our last class:

1. _____

2. _____

Heb/Jewish Studies #356

Name _____

Quiz #2

Explain the following terms in the space provided:

2. Emancipation

3. communal autonomy

4. conversion of the Jews

5. Civic oath

6. "modern" messianism

—

Two main ideas discussed in our last class:

1 _____

2 _____

Heb/Jewish Studies #356**Quiz #3**

Answer the questions in the space provided:

1. What is the idea of “brotherhood” in “Awake My People”?

2. What idea does Apollo represent in “Before the Statue of Apollo?”

3. How does Bialik see the Jewish people in “Surely the People is Grass”?

4. What do you think the title “Burned Out” means?

5. What is in your opinion the main idea in “My Mother’s Dream”?

Two main ideas we discussed in last class:

1. _____

2. _____

Heb/Jewish Studies 356**Quiz #4**

Explain the following ideas in the space provided:

2. Hibbat Zion

3. Judeophobia

4. auto-emancipation

5. historic home

5. Emile Zola

Two main ideas we discussed in last session:

1. _____

2. _____

Heb/Jewish Studies #356

Quiz # 5

Explain the following ideas in space provided:

1. The Second Aliyah

2. The “Hidden Question”

3. Brith Shalom

4. Hebrew humanism

5. The British Mandate

Bonus Question:

Two main ideas that you learned from Prof. Heschel’s lecture:

1.

2.

Heb/Jewish Studies 356**Quiz #6**

Explain the terms in the space provided:

2. A Jewry of muscles

3. The Jewish Legion

4. Joseph Trumpeldor

4. Iron Wall

5. Jewish majority in Palestine

Bonus Question:

Two main ideas we discussed last session:

1. _____

2. _____

Heb/Jewish Studies**Quiz #7**

Explain the terms in the spaces provided

2. The mission of the Jews and the mission of man (Gottlieb)

3. The Galut of the Jewish soul (Schechter)

4. United in action (Brennans)

5. Negators of the Diaspora (Kaplan)

6. Organic Jewish community (Kaplan)

Bonus Question

Two main ideas we discussed last session

1. _____

2. _____

Heb/Jewish Studies #356
Mid-Term Exam:

Explain briefly **SIX** out of the following terms. Explain the context in which they appear.
(30%)

2. “Truth from Eretz Israel” [truth from the land of Israel]
3. False Messiahs
4. The Reform Movement
5. Haskalah
6. The Talmud
7. Babylonian Exile
8. The Divine Presence
9. Judeophobia
10. Chibbat Zion [Lovers of Zion]
11. The Destruction of the Second Temple
12. The Damascus Affair
13. The Pogroms of 1881
14. Dreyfus Affair
14. First Zionist Congress

Discuss **TWO** of the following statements. You must choose **ONE** from each group.
 Discuss the main idea of the statement in the context of the texts we have studied. You must support your discussion with evidence from at least **THREE** texts.

Please write concisely and to the point.

(35% each)

Group A

1. The concept of the Promised Land, the Covenant and the Law are inseparable in the Jewish tradition.
2. Explain the “Three Oaths” and their significance in the life of the Jewish people in Exile.
3. Yea, when the trumpet sounds, when the banner at last is uplifted,
 Then shall the dead arise? The dead awaken and tremble?
 (Bialik, “Surely the People Is Grass”)

Group B

1. The Jewish people is an a-historical people.
2. The Jews shall be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals.
3. “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if not now, when?” - Hillel
 “Help yourselves and God will help you.”
 (Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, the opening (epigraph) and the ending line)

Heb/Jewish Studies #356
Final Exam

Explain briefly **FIVE** of the following terms. Explain the connection in which they appear: **(30%)**

1. The Balfour Declaration
2. Majority
3. The old Yishuv and the Yishuv
4. *Muskeljude*
5. Halutziyut and Mamlachtiyut
6. Exodus (ship)
7. Youth Aliyah
8. Will-to-power
9. Betar
10. Social Darwinism

Discuss briefly **FOUR** of the individuals. Focus on their particular orientation, on the historical context of their orientation, and on the role they played in the evolution of the Zionist program. You must support your discussion with clear factual evidence:

(40%)

1. Martin Buber
2. A. D. Gordon
3. Henrietta Szold
4. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda
5. Rabbi Kook
6. Mordecai Kaplan
7. Solomon Schechter
8. Rabbi Reines

Discuss **ONE** of the following topics in the context of the texts we have studied. You are expected to refer to the lectures, presentations and class discussions, and you must support your discussion with evidence that will show your knowledge of at least **THREE** texts:

(30%)

1. World War I and the period leading to World War II (the 1920s and the 1930s) shaped the economic, political, and social character of the Jewish settlement in Palestine.
2. Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion were most prominent and influential Zionist ideologues and politicians.
 Discuss the Zionist vision each of them represents. What were the ideologies that they

adopted? How did their ideological convictions affect their political programs? In what way(s) did their perspectives clash?