

**Saint Louis University**  
**Department of Modern and Classical Languages**  
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Office hours:M,W,F, 2:30-3:30 & by appointment

**HIST 393 05/MLNG 320 01H//THEO393 01/THEO 393 01H**  
**Israeli Culture: From the Birth of Zionism to the 21<sup>st</sup> century**  
Fall term 2010, M,W,F, 1:10-2:00, RH 217

**Pre-requisites:**

**Students must have junior standing or permission from the instructor.**

**Description and Objectives of the Course:**

This course will introduce students to Israel, its culture and people, from the birth of Zionism in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe and the idea of the ingathering of the Jewish people, to the creation of the State of Israel and to the present. Through literature (fiction and non-fiction), historical documents, music and films, the course will expose students to some of the most important issues of Israeli society, such as the conflicts between religious and secular Israelis, Palestinians and Israelis, the Christian minority, as well as the search for peace and dialogue among many sectors of contemporary Israeli society, issues of gender, popular culture and the aspirations of young Israelis.

**Required textbooks:**

- *I am a Palestinian Christian*, by Mitri Raheb (Fortress Press 1995)
- *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, by Arthur Herzberg (Jewish Publication Society, 1997)
- *Shared Histories. A Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue*, eds. Paul Scham, Walid Salem, Benjamin Pogrund (Left Coast Press, 2005)

**Recommended books (students are not obligated to purchase these books as the selections to be discussed in class will be put on reserve)**

- *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement*, by S. Ilan Troen (Yale University Press, 2003)
- *The Plough Woman. Records of the Pioneer Women of Palestine*, eds. Mark A. Raider & Miriam B. Raither-Roth (Brandeis University Press, 2002)

**Other required readings on reserve at Pius Library (see calendar for specific details)**

- O'Mahony, Anthony. "The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: A Historical and Political Survey," 1-29
- Ravitzky, Aviezer. "A Jewish and Democratic State – A Normative Perspective"
- Selections from: *Torat Eretz Yisrael* and *Lights of Orot*
- Selections from: *The Plow Woman*
- Selections from: *Jews in Israel. Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns* (Rebhun and Waxman)
- Selections from: *Imagining Zion* (I. Troen)

- Modern Hebrew Literature (Alter)

**Grading:**

Attendance and participation (10%)  
 One page evaluation of films (x 2= 10%)  
 Two essays (40%)  
 Mid-term exam and final exam (40%)

**Grading Scale:**

93-100 A	77-79 C+
90- 92 A-	73-76 C
87- 89 B+	70-72 C-
83- 86 B	65- 69 D
80- 82 B-	0 - 64 F
	AF Failure due to excessive absence.

**Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. To be excused for missing a class, students need to bring a written note from someone (a physician, for example) explaining the reason for their absence. More than two unexcused absences will affect the final grade for attendance and participation. More than six unexcused absences (two weeks of classes) could result in a grade of AF (failure due to excessive absence).

**Academic Honesty:**

See [www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/academichonesty.html](http://www.slu.edu/colleges/AS/academichonesty.html) for the College of Arts and Science official policy.

**Disability Notice:**

Students who believe that, due to the presence of a disability, they may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this, or any other, class at Saint Louis University are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885, or by visiting by the Student Success Center, Suite 331. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. I am only able to support student accommodation requests upon receipt of an approved letter from Disability Services. I will gladly speak with approved students after registration with Disability Services.

**Changes to the Syllabus:**

This syllabus is subject to minor changes. If changes are made, they will be announced in class. Students who have to miss a class are responsible for talking to the instructor during her office hours (not just before or after class) to find out what they have missed.

**Cell phones, laptops and other electronic media**

Please, make sure that your cell phone is turned off during class.

You are allowed to use a laptop but only for class content. Do not use your laptop for any other unrelated purpose. No text messaging and no electronic media please.

## Calendar of Classes – Fall 2010

### Week One (August 23, 25, 27)

Introduction to the course

Topics: 19<sup>th</sup> Century European Jewry

The birth of modern Zionism (1) The Forerunners

Readings:

- Arthur Hertzberg, “Introduction”, in *The Zionist Idea*, pp 15-32 (Recommended)
- “Rabbi Yehudah Alkalai 1798-1878”, in *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 102-107
- (Fiction): Shem and Japheth on the Train, by Mendele Mocher Sforim, in *Modern Hebrew Literature*, ed. Robert Alter, pp 15-38\*\*

Recommended Book in Pius library: *Picturesque Palestine Sinai and Egypt*, Vol. I (O’Size DS 107 W73 1880, 4 vols.).

### Week Two (August 30, Sept 1, 3)

Topics: Are the Jews a Nation?

Political and cultural Zionisms

The Rebirth of the Hebrew Language

Readings:

- *The Zionist Idea*, Intro., pp 32-40 (Recommended)
- “Eliezer ben-Yehudah”, in *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 159-165
- “Theodor Herzl” in *The Zionist Idea*, pp 199-231

Film 1: *The Wordmaker* (1991, about Eliezer Ben-Yehuda)

### Week Three (Sept 6, 8, 10) Mo 6, Labor Day, no classes, Fri 10 no class (Lieberman)

(2 page evaluation of film *The Wordmaker*)

Topics: Political and cultural Zionisms, continuation

The Yishuv in Palestine

Readings:

- “Ahad Ha-am,” in *The Zionist idea*, 249-277
- “The way out,” by Y.H. Brenner, in *Modern Hebrew Literature*, pp 141-157\*\*
- “The sermon,” by Haim Hazaz, in *Modern Hebrew Literature*, pp 271-287\*\*  
(short report on main theme)

### Week Four (Sept 13, 15, 17)

Topics: The Yishuv in Palestine

Readings:

- “Chapter 1, Covenantal Communities” and “Chapter 3, The Economic Basis...,” by S. Ilan Troen, in *Imagining Zion*, pp 3-14 and pp 42-61\*\*

Film 2 (in class): Clips from *Land of Promise* (Judah Leman, 1935, about Zionist settlers)

### Week Five (Sept 20, 22, 24) (Essay 1)

Topics: Pioneer women and Gender in the Yishuv period

(Please, note that all readings in the following list are very brief and from the book *The Plough Woman*)\*\*

- “Identities in the Making”, by Miriam Raider-Roth, pp lix-lxxii

- Dvorah Dayan, pp 34-37
- Rahel Zisle[-Levkovich], pp 213-224
- B.B. (Ein Harod), pp 47-62
- Sarah Chizhik, pp 187-192
- Rahel Yanait [Ben-Zvi], pp 109-115

Recommended reading from *The Plough Woman*, the “Glosaries of terms and places” at the end of book (one copy of the book is on reserve)

**Week Six (Sept 27, 29, Oct 1)** Mr. Harold Karabell (visiting speaker)

Topics: 1947 The Founding of the State of Israel  
Building a nation & Building a culture

Readings:

- “The Science and Politics of National Development”, by S. Ilan Troen, in *Imagining Zion*, pp163-183\*\*
- Declaration of Israel’s Independence, 1 page hand out
- Amos’ Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darknes*, pp 343-375 and chapter 51\*\*

Recommended reading from *A Tale of love and Darkness*, pp 311-387 (one copy of the book is on reserve)

Film 3 (in class): Clips from the film *Salla Shabbati*

Film 4: *Wooden Gun*, dir. Ilan Moshenson

**Week Seven (Oct 4, 6, 8)** Film Review 2: *The Wooden Gun*, dir. Ilan Moshenson

Topic: The Holocaust and its impact on Israeli society

Readings:

- History, Memory, and Identity Perceptions of the Holocaust in Israel, by Dalia Ofer, chap 17<sup>th</sup> in *Jews of Israel. Contemporary Social and Cultural Patters*, pp 394-417\*\*

**Week Eight (Oct 11, 13, 15)** Midterm exam on Friday 15

Topic: Constructing an Israeli/Zionist culture through songs and music

Readings:

- “Information on Israeli Songs,” 3 pp hand-out
- Song Lyrics (on line): Havah Nagila, Hineh Ma Tov, and others

**Week Nine (18, 20, 22) Monday 18, fall break, no classes**

Topics: Religious responses to the State of Israel (1) Relig. Zionism, (2) Anti-Zionism

Readings:

- “Status Quo Agreements,” 2 pp. hand-out
- “Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook: 1865-1935”, in *The Zionist Idea*, pp 417-431
- *Torat Eretz Yisrael: The Teaching of Ha Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook*, by D. Samson, short selections

**Week Ten (Oct 25, 27, 29)**

Topics: Religious responses, cont.

The Christian minority in Israel

Readings:

- “The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: A Historical and Political Survey,” by Anthony O’Mahony, 1-29\*\*
- *I am a Palestinian Christian* by Mitri Raheb

**Week Eleven (Nov 1, 3, 5)**

Topic: The religious and secular divide in Israeli society

Readings:

- *I am a Palestinian Christian*
- “A Jewish and Democratic State – A Normative Perspective,” by Aviezer Ravitzky, in *The State of Israel*, pp 263-280 \*\*

**Week Twelve (Nov 8, 10, 12)**

Topic: The Arab-Jewish Divide

Readings:

- *Shared Histories. A Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue*, Intro.1-13
- “The beginnings of Jewish settlement and Zionism, to World War I,” by Ran Aaronsohn, in *Shared Histories*, pp 62-67
- “The pre-history of Palestinian nationalism,” by Issam Nassar, in *Shared Histories*, pp 68-73

**Week Thirteen (Nov 15, 17, 19)**

Topics: The Arab-Jewish Divide, continuation

The Palestinian ‘catastrophe’, The *nakba*

Readings:

- “Israeli historiography of the 1948 War,” by Avraham Sela, In *Shared Histories*, pp 205-219
- “The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem in 1947-1948,” by Adel H. Yahya, in *Shared Histories*, pp 220-227
- The Palestinian People’s Appeal on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of The Nakba,” by Mahmoud Darwish, 3 pp hand-out

**Week Fourteen (Nov 22, 24, 26) Wed.-Fri 24-26 No classes**

Topic: Islamic Fundamentalism

Readings:

- “The Palestinian National Charter,” 1 p hand-out
- Al-Quds University document
- “The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas),” 2 pp hand-out

**Week Fifteen (Nov 29, Dec 1, 3) (Essay 2)**

Topics: Contemporary Israeli culture

Songs of protest, from the right and the left

Concluding thoughts on Israel

Readings:

- “Israel from Bumper to Bumper,” 2 pp hand-out
- “NY Times Sticker Song”, 2 pp hand-out

- Song Lyrics (on line): Zeh Hayah Beity, Shir L'Shalom, Chag Gadya

**Week Sixteen (Dec 6)**

- “Israel into the Twenty-First Century”, by S. Ilan Troen, in *Imagining Zion*, pp.281-292

Film 6: Clips from the film *Israel Rocks!*

**Final Exam: Friday, December 10, 12:00-1:50 p.m.**