

Kenneth Wald

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Overview: Just a few years ago, as Israel prepared to celebrate its 50th anniversary, some scholars were predicting a transformation in its political system. In what some called the Second Republic, Israel was likely to focus less attention on questions of national security and foreign policy and, instead, to devote more energy to coping with domestic issues and governmental reform. The violence that racked the country in the fall of 2000 suggests that this model was premature, that questions of national security will continue to dominate domestic political life for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, Israel still faces a range of contentious domestic issues that will continue to challenge government and society. This course will examine Israel's internal political life, focusing on the contemporary meaning of Zionism and the character of the state, the search for effective and responsive governance, and the management of domestic cleavages over religion, nationality, ethnicity, and gender. Students should be aware this is not a course that deals in great detail with the Arab-Israeli conflict, Middle East wars, foreign policy, nor with Israel's world role. But because these regional and international forces cannot be separated completely from Israel's domestic political life, they are considered insofar as they affect the internal politics of the state.

Prerequisites: Owing to the diversity of students expected to enroll, the course assumes a minimum of background. Some familiarity with the language of comparative politics and the beliefs and customs of Judaism would be helpful. I can suggest appropriate readings for persons concerned about their preparation.

Policies: Class sessions will offer a mix of lecture, discussion, and videos.

Reading assignments will be taken from the following paperback books:

Don Peretz and Gideon Doron. *The Government and Politics of Israel*. 3rd edition. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997.

Adam Garfinkle. *Politics and Society in Modern Israel: Myths and Realities*. 2nd edition. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997.

Alan W. Dowty. *The Jewish State: A Century Later*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

In addition, you will read a number of articles from the *Jerusalem Report*, an English language biweekly magazine. These have been collected in a course pack entitled *Readings from the Jerusalem Report*. This pack is available only from the Florida Bookstore.

Your course grade will be based on two examinations (40% each), which will include both objective and essay questions, and a research paper (20%). The midterm examination is Tuesday, February 27th and the final, which is not cumulative, is scheduled on Wednesday, May 1st from 12:30-2:30 pm. In case of students on the borderline between two grades, I reserve the right to factor in attendance and class participation. The best way to achieve a high grade is to attend class regularly and keep up with the reading. There will be extra credit opportunities for (a) attending specified public lectures outside of class and (b) reporting broken links on the web page for the course.

For those who are interested in following contemporary Israeli politics, the Price Library of Judaica in the Norman Hall Library subscribes to the Friday issue of the *Jerusalem Post* and the biweekly *Jerusalem Report*. You will also find a large number of English language sources on the homepage for this course.

Your research paper will describe and analyze an Israeli political institution. I construe the term "institution" broadly, meaning I would accept formal government institutions like the State Comptroller, Supreme Court or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "informal" political actors such as the Histadrut or Kach, or practices such as the parliamentary vote of no-confidence or the "Status Quo" agreement governing religion and state. You could even choose to study something like the Oslo Accords or a doctrine such as Revisionist Zionism. Whatever institution you select, the paper should examine its history and development, contemporary role, major issues, and importance in Israeli political life. The paper will be graded on the basis of the quality of the research (adequacy, breadth and use of sources) and the exposition (writing, syntax, spelling, etc.). You will need to clear the topic with me in advance. By February 22nd, you will need to provide me (in writing) with a paragraph about the subject of your paper and a list of at least five potential academic sources. Academic sources include scholarly books and articles in academic journals. Long feature articles in major newspapers (e.g., the *New York Times*) or serious magazines, such as *Harper's* or *The Atlantic*, also count. The paper should be typed or printed, follow proper rules of grammar and punctuation, use a consistent method of referencing, and utilize at least 5 sources beyond the assigned reading. (I recommend using the in-text form of citation and either the APA, Turabian or Chicago styles which can be accessed here.) I take a very hard line on plagiarism so you should consult this site from another university to make sure you understand the rules of academic honesty. The paper is due on Thursday, April 19th. Late papers will be penalized at the rate of one grade per day,

i.e., a B+ paper received on Friday becomes a B, a C+ the next day, and so on. I am willing to preview preliminary drafts of the paper and encourage you to submit them.

#### Important Dates:

##### DateEvent

Feb. 1 Class lecture by Prof. Edward Glick on Israeli security concerns  
(public lecture that evening)

Feb. 22 Deadline for turning in paper topic

Feb. 27 Midterm Examination

March 3-10 Spring Break

March 22 Class lecture by Rabbi Amy Levin on Judaism in Israel

March 26 Public lecture by Elie Wiesel

April 7 Passover begins

April 15 Easter

April 19 Research Paper due

May 1 Final Exam

#### Course Schedule:

The dates for subjects are approximate. You should plan to have all the readings completed for a topic by the date we begin class meetings about it.

#### I. Background to Israeli Politics

##### 1. Setting of Israeli Politics(1/8)

Garfinkle, chapter 1

##### 2. History, Zionism and the Creation of Israel (1/11 - 1/23)

Peretz & Doron, chapter 1

Garfinkle, chapter 2

Dowty, chapters 2-3

##### 3. The Early State (1/25)

Garfinkle, chapter 3

Dowty, chapter 4

#### II. Political Institutions and Processes

##### 4. Contemporary Political Culture (1/30-2/6)

Dowty, chapter 1, 5  
Readings, section 1, Halevi to Schoffman  
Class Lecture by Edward Glick on 2/2

5. Mass Politics (2/8-3/1)

Peretz and Doron, chapters 3-5, 8  
Garfinkle, chapter 5  
Dowty, chapter 6  
Midterm on 2/27

6. Governance and the State (3/13-3/15)

Peretz and Doron, chapter 6-7

III. Major Political Divisions

7. Political Cleavages and Conflicts (no lecture)

Peretz, chapter 2, 9  
Garfinkle, chapter 4

8. Religious Differences (3/20-3/29)

Dowty, chapter 8  
Readings, Section 2a, Halevi to Schoffman

9. Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews (4/3-4/12)

Dowty, chapter 7  
Readings, Section 2b, Hirschberg to Goodman  
Readings, Section 2c, Halevi to Gross

10. National Differences - Arabs and Jews (4/17-4/19)

Dowty, chapter 9  
Readings, Section 2d, Kershner to Ezra/Tibi

IV. External Relations

11. Foreign Policy & the Peace Process (4/24)

Garfinkle, chapters 6-7  
Dowty, chapter 10