

# **Israeli Politics and Society**

**Government 237**

**Fall 2003**

**Monday and Wednesday, 2.30-3.55 p.m.  
Hubbard Conference Room, West**

**Professor Dov Waxman**

**Office: Room 205, Hubbard Hall (opposite Gov. Dept. Coordinator's office)**

**Office Tel: 725-3736**

**Email: [dwaxman@bowdoin.edu](mailto:dwaxman@bowdoin.edu)**

**Class Email: [gov237@bowdoin.edu](mailto:gov237@bowdoin.edu)**

**Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 4.30-6pm or by appointment**

## **Course Description:**

This course examines some of the issues currently facing Israeli society and the ongoing debates in Israeli politics. The course is organized into three parts. Part one will establish the historical and political background against which the divisions and debates to be examined play out. Part two will then focus on the major cleavages in Israeli society—along ethnic, religious and national lines. Finally, part three will explore the debates over Zionism and post-Zionism, the Jewish and democratic nature of the state, the future of the West Bank and Gaza and the peace process, and the definition of Israeli national identity. Although this course is not about the Arab-Israeli or Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, the influence of these conflicts upon Israeli society and political culture will be addressed. The course assumes no prior knowledge of Israel.

## **Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to introduce students to contemporary Israeli politics and society. It aims to acquaint students with the major issues and debates in Israeli politics and society, and to provide them with a knowledge of Israel's history and political system.

## **Course Texts (available for purchase in the textbook annex):**

Alan Dowty, *The Jewish State: A Century Later*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Adam Garfinkle, *Politics and Society in Modern Israel*, second edition. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000.

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

## **Requirements:**

**Attendance:** You must attend all classes and if for a valid reason (such as a documented medical problem or other emergency) you cannot do so you must inform me ahead of time during my office hours, by telephone, or by e-mail. Class attendance is recorded, and students with more than four unexcused absences will have their final grade lowered.

**Participation:** You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings as well as current events concerning Israel. Questions, discussion and debate during class are strongly encouraged.

**Keeping Informed:** You are expected to keep informed of current events in Israel. *Ha'aretz*, Israel's leading daily newspaper, has an English edition available for free on the internet ([www.haaretzdaily.com](http://www.haaretzdaily.com)). You can also register for free access to *The Jerusalem Post*, Israel's oldest English-language daily newspaper ([www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com)).

**Midterm Exam:** The in-class mid-term exam will consist of short-answer questions (multiple choice, true/false, identification) and essay questions based upon the topics we have covered up to that point.

**Research Paper:** You choose a subject to research and write about, making sure that you formulate an appropriate question and/or issue to address in your paper. You will need to clear the subject with me in advance by providing me with a written paragraph about the subject of your paper and a list of at least five potential scholarly sources (i.e., scholarly books and articles in academic journals). The paper should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages with appropriate citation. It will be due on the last day of class (Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>). Late papers will receive a grade penalty.

## **Grading:**

Participation: 10%

Class Debate: 10%

Midterm Exam: 30%

Research Paper: 50%

## **Letter Grading System:**

90-100% = A

85-89% = A-

80-84% = B+

75-79% = B

70-74% = B-

65-69% = C+

60-64% = C

55-59% = C-

50-54% = D

0-49% = F

I reserve the right to make adjustments to this system, especially to take into account the overall performance of the class or individual cases where a student has demonstrated substantial improvement across the semester.

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS:**

### **Week 1 (Sept 8, 10) Course Overview and Introduction**

- Garfinkle, ch.1
- Michael N. Barnett, “The politics of uniqueness: the status of the Israeli case,” in Michael N. Barnett, ed., *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 3-17

## **Part I. Historical and Political Background**

### **Week 2 (Sept 15, 17) Jewish History: From Ancient Israel to the State of Israel**

- Garfinkle, ch.2
- Peretz and Doron, ch.1, pp. 11-45
- Dowty, chs.2, 3

**Film screening: “Is Jerusalem Burning?”**

### **Week 3 (Sept 22, 24) Society and State Formation**

- Garfinkle, ch.3
- Dowty, ch.4

### **Week 4 (Sept 29, Oct 1) Parties, the Electoral System and State Institutions**

- Garfinkle, ch.5
- Peretz and Doron, chs.3, 4, 6

### **Week 5 (Oct 6, 8) Defense and Foreign Policy**

- Garfinkle, ch.6
- Dowty, ch.5

- Clive Jones and Emma C. Murphy, “A place among the nations,” in *Israel: Challenges to Identity, Democracy and the State* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 91-122

**Film screening: “Kippur”**

**Week 6 (Oct 13) Political Processes and Changes**

- Peretz and Doron, ch.8
- Dowty, ch.6

\*\*\*\*\*MIDTERM EXAM (Wed, Oct 15)\*\*\*\*\*

**Part II. Social Divisions**

**Week 7 (Oct 22) The Ethnic Divide: Ashkenazim and Mizrahim**

- Dowty, ch.7
- Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims,” in Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 39-68
- Sami Shalom Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4 (2000): 51-65
- Henriette Dahan-Kaley, “You’re So Pretty—You Don’t Look Moroccan,” *Israel Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2001): 1-14

**Week 8 (Oct 27, 29) The Religious Divide: Secular and Religious Jews**

- Dowty, ch.8
- Menachem Friedman, “The State of Israel as a Theological Dilemma,” in Baruch Kimmerling, ed., *The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 165-215

- Charles Liebman and Bernard Susser, “Judaism and Jewishness in the Jewish State,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 555 (Jan 1998): 15-25
- Ehud Sprinzak, “Extremism and Violence in Israel: The Crisis of Messianic Politics,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 555 (Jan 1998): 114-126

**Film Screening: “Time of Favor” (Monday, October 27, 7.00-9.00pm)**

**Week 9 (Nov 3, 5)                      The National Divide: Jews and Arabs**

Guest Speaker: Forsan Hussein (The Abraham Fund)

- Joel S. Migdal with Baruch Kimmerling, “The Odd Man Out: Arabs in Israel,” in Joel S. Migdal, *Through the Lens of Israel: Explorations in State and Society* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001), pp. 173-194
- Sammy Smooha, “Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype,” *Israel Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1997): 198-241
- As’ad Ghanem, Nadim Rouhana and Oren Yiftachel, “Questioning ‘Ethnic Democracy’: A Response to Sammy Smooha,” *Israel Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1998): 253-267
- Alan Dowty, “Is Israel Democratic? Substance and Semantics in the ‘Ethnic Democracy’ Debate,” *Israel Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2 (1999): 1-15

**Week 10 (Nov 10, 12)                The Ideological Divide: Zionists and Post-Zionists**

- Yoram Hazony, “The Zionist Idea and its Enemies,” *Commentary*, vol. 101, no. 5 (1996): 30-38
- Ephraim Nimni, “Introduction,” in Ephraim Nimni, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 1-19
- Uri Ram, “From Nation-State to Nation-----State: Nation, History and Identity Struggles in Jewish Israel,” in Nimni, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism*, pp. 20-41
- Ilan Pappé, “The Square Circle: The Struggle of Traditional Zionism,” in Nimni, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism*, pp. 42-62

- Avishai Ehrlich, “Zionism, Anti-Zionism, Post-Zionism,” in Nimni, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism*, pp. 63-97

**Week 11 (Nov 17, 19)      The Political Divide: Hawks and Doves**

- Garfinkle, ch.7
- Dowty, ch.10
- Yaron Ezrahi, “Rubber Bullets,” in *Rubber Bullets: Power and Conscience in Modern Israel* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), pp. 207-234
- Ilan Peleg, “Epilogue: The Peace Process and Israel’s Political Kulturkampf,” in Ilan Peleg, ed., *The Middle East Peace Process: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 237-263

**Week 12 (Friday Nov 21, 24)      The Future of the Peace Process**

Guest Speaker: Ilan Peleg (Department of Government, Lafayette College)

Guest Speaker: Scott Lasensky (Department of Politics, Mount Holyoke College)

**Week 13 (Dec 1, 3)      The Identity Divide: Jews and Israelis**

- Avraham B. Yehoshua, “Separating Religion from National Identity,” *Palestine-Israel Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2002): 94-101
- Boas Evron, “Israel’s Shifting Identity,” *Palestine-Israel Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2002): 102-107
- Myron J. Aronoff and Pierre M. Atlas, “The Peace Process and Competing Challenges to the Dominant Zionist Discourse,” in Ilan Peleg, ed., *The Middle East Peace Process: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, pp. 41-60
- Ian S. Lustick, “Israel as a non-Arab state: The political implications of mass immigration of non-Jews,” *Middle East Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3 (1999): 417-434

**Week 14 (Dec 8, 10)      Conclusion: The Future of Israel**