

A Psycho-social history of the Israeli-Arab conflict

Course number:

Fall 2014 – Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies

Julia Chaitin, Ph.D.

Class hours and location: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11:00 in Mezes Hall 1.202

Office location: CLA room 4.414

Office hours: Tuesdays 11:00-12:30 and Thursdays 11:00pm – 12:00pm

No prerequisites required

Website for class: I will post notices and occasionally materials on the Canvas website or via emails directly to you. Make sure to visit the website at least twice a week.

Course description:

This course will look at political-historical events in the Israeli-Arab conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and conflicts between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel, from a psycho-social perspective. We will review and analyze important socio-political events that have impacted populations of the region using the lenses of social psychology. We will read personal narratives of people who lived through these events and focus on concepts/theories that connect their perceptions of these events. Specifically, we will look at: understandings of “self” and “other”; xenophobia, ethnocentrism, inter-group conflicts, stereotyping, de-individuation and dehumanization, “us vs. them” mentality, chosen traumas, emotions connected to conflict; group identity, conformity, obedience, reference and opposition groups, groupthink and collective narratives and memory.

Events to be studied will be drawn from the following: the beginning of Modern Jewish settlement in Palestine (the first *aliyot* - Jewish immigration to Israel), the Balfour Declaration, Arab uprisings during the 1920s/1930s, the formation of paramilitary groups in the *Yishuv* (pre-State Israel), the Partition Plan and the 1948 War (War of Independence for the Jews, *al Naqba* for the Palestinians), the Holocaust and its effect on Statehood and immigration from post-war

Europe, creation of the Palestinian refugee issue, waves of *aliyot* during the 1940s-1950s from Arab countries, the military government of the Palestinian population in Israel, the Arab-Israeli wars, the Israeli occupation after the War of 1967, Yom Kippur War (1973), the First Lebanese war, the Palestinian *intifadas* (uprisings), the Oslo Peace Process, suicide-bomber terror attacks, the second Lebanese War, and the ongoing war on the Gaza-Sderot front.

During the course, you will be reading the histories of different events as well as short essays which present psycho-social concepts and theories connected to conflict, in general, and especially as it relates to the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict. In this way, you will understand what happened between the peoples as well as learning different psycho-social ways to understand the meaning of these events for the Israelis and for the Arabs and Palestinians.

The class will combine lectures with group discussions and activities. We will often work with personal stories of people who have lived through the different events. I will provide you with their stories.

Academic/learning goals for the course

By the end of the semester, the students will:

- a. Be familiar with many main political-historical events in the Arab-Israeli/Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- b. Be familiar with the ways in which Israeli and Palestinian narrate personal experiences connected to these political events.
- c. Understand central psycho-social concepts/theories connected to conflict between groups, in general, and the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict in specific
- d. Be able to use these concepts to analyze narrative interviews with Palestinians and Israelis and a film on the topic.

Requirements of the course:

1. Participation: While no points will be given for this, it is expected and mandatory that all students will come prepared to class, after having read the materials for each session, and

be active participants in the group discussions and activities. I reserve the right to mark down for students who do not fulfill this requirement.

2. One short paper (5-6 pages – 1700-2000 words) that undertakes an analysis of one political-historical event connected to the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict from a social psychological perspective. The paper will be based on academic materials presented and discussed in the course. The paper will be due 6-7 weeks into the course.
3. One short paper (5 -6 pages – 1700-2000 words) that undertakes a social-psychological analysis of one of two Israeli films: either (a) *Waltz with Bashir* or (b) *Precious Life*. The paper will incorporate concepts/theories presented and discussed in the course. The paper will be due 10 - 11 weeks into the course.
4. One personal reflection paper: of one political event in recent Israeli-Palestinian history. This paper will be 2-3 pages in length (about 800-1000 words). Each student will pick a topic and reflect on the meaning it has for him/her, based on materials and ideas discussed in class. The paper will be due about week 13.
5. A final paper of 10 – 12 pages (this can be undertaken in pairs) that analyzes interviews with Israelis and Palestinians who have suffered deep losses due to the conflict between the peoples. Links to interviews will be provided by the instructor. The paper will combine presentation of the political-historical event, summary of two interviews (one Israeli, one Palestinian/Arab) and an analysis of the event and the interviews using concepts/theories discussed in the course. The paper will be due by the last class session.

Summary of requirements

Attendance and Participation	0 points (but mandatory)
First Paper: psycho-social analysis of one political-historical event	25% of the final grade
Second paper: analysis of a film (Waltz with Bashir or Precious Life)	25% of the final grade
Third paper: Personal reflection on one Political-historical event	10% of the final grade

Final paper	40% of the final grade
Total	100%

***Extra credit of 5 pts.** – students will be able to gain up to 5 bonus points for making a short presentation (5 minutes) in class of a personal narrative from a Palestinian or Israeli that ties into one political-historical event. Details about this will come.

Grading policy: All papers and the exam will be graded according to these general criteria. (In addition, each assignment will have particular criteria as well).

- The assignment is turned in on time. An assignment that is not turned in on time and has not received prior permission from me will be marked down 5% for each day it is late – up to 4 days. After that, the grade will be a “0” (Fail)
- The assignment contains all of the required sections and follows the guidelines given.
- It is written in an academically accepted style, including referencing of all sources (e.g. APA style, Chicago style)
- The final class grade will be given in whole letter. Here is the breakdown according to percentages (Plus and minus grading is not used in this course):
 - 90-100 = A
 - 80-89.99 = B
 - 70-79.99 = C
 - 60-69.99 = D
 - 59 and under = Fail

Any student who requires accommodation because of a disability may request it. He or she may be asked to present a note from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities specifying the accommodations needed.

Students in this course are expected not to disrupt the normal progress of the class. Any student who persists in being disruptive will first receive a warning letter from the instructor. If the problem persists, it will be reported to the Dean of Students.

Occupants of buildings on the University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one that you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuating shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instructions of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the UT Police Department or Fire Prevention Services. See other emergency information at www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/.

Class Schedule (there may be changes as we go along but I will let you know
if there are and what they are)

First week:

Thursday - August 28: Welcome and overview of course. Introduction: brief ancient history of the Holy Land – Israel/Palestine.

Second week:

Sept. 2 – 4: Continued brief ancient/distant history of region

Reading for Sept. 2 - <http://www.seetheholyland.net/historical-timeline/> (This is a simplified time line of events from ancient times to the present). Or see this one -

<http://www.holylandsite.com/Timeline%20Periods%20of%20Israel.pdf> (another short overview). These provide a very basic overview and offer some context for the events and understandings we will be discussing in the class.

Reading for Sept. 4 – Bickerton, I. & Klausner, C. (2009) *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. 6th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. **Chapter 2: Palestine during the Mandate**

Chaitin, J. (2011). Peace building in Israel and Palestine: Social psychology and grassroots initiatives. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. **Chapter 2 Psycho-social factors connected to the Arab-Jewish/ Israeli-Palestinian conflicts** (I will post this on the course website)

Third week:

Sept. 9 – 11:

Reading Sept. 9: Bickerton and Klausner. Chapter 3: World War II, Jewish Displaced Persons, and the Partition of Palestine

Reading for Sept. 11:

Bar-Tal, D. (2004a). Psychological dynamics of intractable conflicts. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/psychological-dynamics>

Bar-Tal, D. (2004b). Ethos of conflict. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. (the link to the article appears in the bibliography list of the syllabus)

Fourth week:

Sept. 16-18: Narratives of Holocaust survivors and refugees to Israel.

Readings for Sept. 16: The story of Avraham Shomroni -

<http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=313>

Fifth week:

Sept. 23-25:

Reading for Sept 23 : **Chapter 4. The Proclamation of Israel and the First Arab-Israeli War**

Sept. 25 – Rosh Hashanah. *In class film – attendance is optional.*

Sixth week:

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2: Voices of Palestinians about al Naqba and then The Sixth Day War

Maiese, M. (2003). Causes of disputes and conflicts. G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/underlying-causes>

Readings Sept. 30: Disasters of the War - Jalal Khudiari -
<http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=143>

Reading Oct. 2 - Chapter 6. The Turning Point: June 1967

Seventh week:

Oct. 7-9: Israeli voices and the Yom Kippur War

Reading Oct 7: I will supply the Israeli narratives about the Six Day War

Reading Oct. 9: Chapter 7: Holy Days and Holy War: October 1973

Khaminwa, A.N. (2003). Coexistence. *Beyond Intractability*. G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) .

Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.

<<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/coexistence>>.

Eighth week

Oct. 14 – 16: Voices of Israelis about Yom Kippur War and the First Intifada

Reading Oct 14: Long ago I loved the autumn – Anat Marnin-Shacham -

<http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=246>

Reading Oct. 16: Chapter 9: Lebanon and the Intifada

Ninth week

Oct. 21 – 23: Voices from Israelis and Palestinians concerning the Intifada

Maiese, M. (2003b). Moral or value conflicts. In *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H.

Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Reading Oct. 23 – Voices from Palestinians and Israelis – 36 Days after the wedding – Aisheh

Aqtam story - <http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=141>

Not allowed – Mazan Faraj - <http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=217>

Tenth week

Oct. 28 – 30 - The Oslo Peace process and its demise

Reading Oct. 28: **Chapter 10: The Peace of the Brave**

Reading Oct. 30: **Chapter 12: Collapse of the Peace Process**

Eleventh week:

Nov. 4 – 6 – Rabin assassination and Voices from the abyss

Nov. 4 – PM Rabin was assassinated on November 4, 1995. We will talk about the assassination and the impact it had on Israeli society and the peace process

Reading Nov. 4 – Rosenberg, S. (2003). Victimhood. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/victimhood>

Nov. 6 – Life under occupation – With high hopes by Ossama abu Ayash -

<http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=260> and

A chain of change – Robi Damelin - <http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=201>

Twelfth week:

Nov. 11 – 13 – The second Intifada and the Gaza-Sderot Front

Reading Nov. 11 – The Shapira Family (The second Intifada) _

<http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=297>

Reading Nov. 13 - Chaitin, J. (2011). *Peace building in Israel and Palestine: Social psychology and grassroots initiatives*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan – Chapter 7

Thirteenth week:

Nov. 18 – 20 - Voices from Israelis and Palestinians

Readings Nov. 18– Despite all – Dialogue – Niv Sarig -

<http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=305>

Replacing pain with hope – Rami Elhanan -

<http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=415>

Nov. 20:

In the name of Allah – Mohammed Elpaw -

<http://www.theparentscircle.org/Story.aspx?ID=259>

Fourteenth week:

Nov. 25 (Nov. 27th - Thanksgiving)

Life along the Gaza-Sderot border

Reading Nov. 25 – Chaitin, J. (forthcoming). “I need you to listen to what happened to me”:

Personal narratives of social trauma in research and peace-building. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.

Fifteenth week (last week of the semester)

Dec. 2 – 4

Wrap up and summation of course

Paper due by class – Dec. 4th

Bibliography (this list provides examples of resources that will be used):

Adwan, S., & Bar-On, D. (2003). *Learning each other's historical narrative*. Beit Jala, PNA: PRIME.

Bar-Tal, D. (2004a). Psychological dynamics of intractable conflicts. *Beyond Intractability*. In G.

Burgess & H.Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado,

Boulder. <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/psychological-dynamics>

- Bar-Tal, D. (2004b). Ethos of conflict. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/ethos-of-conflict>
- Bar-Tal, D. (2000). *Shared beliefs in a society: Social psychological analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Bickerton, I. & Klausner, C. (2009) *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict. 6th edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Burgess, H. (2003). Enemy images. *Beyond Intractability*. G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/enemy-image>
- Chaitin, J. (forthcoming 2014). "I need you to listen to what happened to me": Personal narratives of social trauma in research and peace-building. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. (I will send you the link to the article)
- Chaitin, J. (2011). *Peace building in Israel and Palestine: Social psychology and grassroots initiatives*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan
- Khaminwa, A.N. (2003). Coexistence. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/coexistence>>.
- Kriesberg, L. (2003). Identity issues. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/identity-issues>
- Maiese, M. (2003a). Causes of disputes and conflicts. In *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/underlying-causes>
- Maiese, M. (2003b). Moral or value conflicts. In *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) . Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/intolerable-moral-differences>
- Nets-Zehngut, R., & Bar-Tal, D. (2007). The intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict and possible pathways to peace. In J. Kuriansky (Ed.), *Beyond bullets and bombs: Grassroots*

peacebuilding between Palestinians and Israelis (pp.3-13). Westport, CT: Praeger (I will provide you with this text)

Rosenberg, S. (2003). Victimhood. *Beyond Intractability*. In G. Burgess & H.Burgess (Eds.) Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder.

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/victimhood>