

Immigration, Ethnicity, and Ethnic Relations in Israel

Graduate-level Seminar (JTSA and HUC-JIR, New York)

Spring 2010

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Content: The course will cover Israel's 60-year history and the present moment in terms of the main immigration waves that shaped its demographic and social structure. Over 90% of the country's population is made of 1,2nd or 3rd generation immigrants from over 70 countries, making Israel an ultimate immigrant society. The course will discuss power relations between the main ethno-cultural communities, changes in the definitions and statuses of Ashkenazi, Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews over recent decades, the role of inter-marriage and common social, political and military institutions in the gradual consolidation of the Israeli nation. Throughout the course, we will discuss the place of Palestinian citizens of Israel on the country's ethno-cultural map. The second part of the course will focus on the two major immigrant communities of the last two decades – Jews from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia – and their relations with the receiving Israeli society.

Format: The seminar is based on readings and their discussions in class. Each time, the professor will present the topic of the day and then students will make presentations of the readings (assigned to specific presenters), followed by discussion. The presenter prepares and distributes a brief 1-2 pp summary of the reading item, including a few comments and questions for discussion.

Evaluation and Final Grades: 20% class presentations and participation in discussions; 20% mid-term bibliography, and 60% final paper of 12-15 pp long (submitted during last class).

Mid-term annotated bibliography should include 4-6 readings not included in the syllabus, i.e. located by the students. It is advisable to select the readings connected by the same broad topic that will be the subject of your final paper. One of the items (of particular quality or interest) should be selected for the general class reading.

Each item should be described according to the following plan: 1) full reference including publisher and year (for a book), Journal year, volume and pages (for an article) 2) type of the reading (book, book chapter, research article, review article, other); 3) if based on specific research, *Participants and Methods; Study Goals/Questions; Main Findings; Discussion*, and students' own comments. Each item's summary should be 1-1.5 page long (spaced 1.5).

Main topics

Israel as an ultimate immigration-based society: A historic overview

Mapping out the lines of diversity/conflict: The Jews and the Arabs

Social stratification along ethno-cultural lines in the Jewish Israel: Ashkenazi vs. Mizrahi; old-timers vs. newcomers; center vs. periphery

The role of Hebrew and other pillars of Israeli identity and nation-building (military service, Zionist ideology, motherhood/familism)

Inter-ethnic marriage as a venue to social integration

The place of Russian/former Soviet Jews on Israel's social and political map: From Ben-Yehuda to Nathan Sheransky and Avigdor Lieberman

The Great Russian Aliyah of the 1990s: Mixed welcome and barriers to integration (labor market, Hebrew, family process, host society's response)

Black Jews and their return to the Holy Land: Between tradition and modernity

Emigration or Yerida? Israelis who make their home elsewhere

A glance into the future: Israel as an "ethnic democracy" and the dilemma of the Law of Return

Readings

Books

Leshem, Elazar and Shuval, Judith T. (Eds.) (1998). *Immigration to Israel: Sociological Perspectives*. NJ: Transaction Publishers Studies of Israeli Society, Vol. VIII.

Rebhun, Uzi, and Waxman, Chaim (eds.) (2004). *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press.

Semyonov, Moshe and Lewin-Epstein, Noah (Eds.) (2004) *Stratification in Israel: Class, Ethnicity and Gender*. NJ: Transaction Publishers, *Studies of Israeli Society*, Vol. X.

Schellekens, Jona and Anson, Jon (Eds.) (2007). *Israel's Destiny: Fertility and Mortality in a Divided Society*. NJ: Transaction Publishers, *Studies of Israeli Society*, Vol. IX.

Remennick, Larissa (2007). *Russian Jews on Three Continents: Identity, Integration, and Conflict*. NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Ben Ezer, Gadi (2002). *The Ethiopian Jewish Exodus: Narratives of the Migration Journey to Israel, 1977-1985*. London: Routledge.

Rouhana, Nadir N. (1997). *Palestinian Citizens in an Ethnic Jewish State*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Articles

Okun, Barbara (2004). Insight into ethnic flux: Marriage patterns among Jews of mixed ancestry in Israel. *Demography*, 41: 173-87 (also chapter 8 in Schekellens & Anson, 2007)

Nagel, Joane (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social Problems*, 41(1): 152-176.

Remennick, Larissa (2004). Language acquisition, ethnicity and social integration among former Soviet immigrants of the 1990s in Israel. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(3): 431-454.

Remennick Larissa (2002). Transnational community in the making: Russian Jewish immigrants of the 1990s in Israel. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28(3): 515-530.

Lustick, Ian S. (2004). *Recent Trends in Emigration from Israel: The Impact of Palestinian Violence*. Association for Israeli Studies paper (2004)
http://www.aisraelstudies.org/2004papers/Lustick_AIS_2004paper_updt.pdf.

Offer, Shira (2004). The Socioeconomic integration of the Ethiopian community in Israel. *International Migration* 42(3): 29-56.