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Multi-ethnicity and 'Jewish-ness' in Contemporary Israeli Society

Israeli society is highly diverse. Even within the Jewish Israeli population there are both ethnic divisions and major social gaps. This course focuses on aspects of multi-ethnicity in contemporary Israeli society. We begin by tracing the massive influx of Jews after the establishment of Israel and the passing of the Law of Return (1950) urging Jews from across the globe to Jews to 'return' to Zion. We will analyze how various communities have created (and posed challenges to!) this pluralism : the *Mizrahim* from the 1950s , and Russian and Ethiopian Jews after the 1980s and '90s. Our objective is to examine the sociological, spatial and cultural implications of this demographic composition and how this multi-ethnicity finds articulation in contemporary Israel--in social life, family, film, music and popular culture.

How did ethnicity shape the lives of the *olim chadashim* (new immigrants) to Israel after 1948? How did Jews from Iraq, Morocco, Turkey, India and later Russia and Ethiopia experience migration? What were the struggles for acculturation within Jewish society? How did ethnicity shape access to resources for those who lived in the 'periphery' and what are the long-term effects of this on social mobility? Finally, how are ethnic identities articulated today in language, cuisine, or popular culture and does this multi-ethnicity translate into 'multiculturalism'? These are the central questions we will pose. The course will draw from wide-ranging and multi-disciplinary sources using some of the most current scholarship in conjunction with autobiographical writings, personal narratives, fiction and contemporary Israeli cinema -- a rich resource for understanding the social milieu in Israel.

These discussions will interest students of Middle-eastern Society and Culture/ Migration Studies /Sociology and Multiculturalism who wish to understand the distinct model of multi-ethnicity in Israel. This course is inspired by own exposure to Israel society when I lived in Israel between 2005-8 and lectured at Tel Aviv, Bar-Ilan and Haifa Universities while researching for my recent book : '*Being Indian, Being Israeli: Ethnicity, Migration and Gender in the Jewish Homeland*' (New Delhi: 2009).

Attendance / Grading/ Assessment :

Attendance is expected in all classes. Absence will reflect adversely on your grade. You are expected to do all the assigned readings (and to mull over the contents!) so as to make substantive and thoughtful comments to the discussions. Following will be the broad scheme of assessment:

30% Class participation

20% Short Paper: due Oct 12. (Submit one-para Abstract by Oct 1 via email)

20 % Student presentations : Nov 16. (Topics to be approved by Nov 9)

30 % Student Seminar : Dec 7

Note : Student Presentations/ Seminar cannot be re-scheduled. Absence will adversely affect your grade.

Academic Integrity Code : Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur.

Contact Information: I will be on campus every Tues. and can meet with you after class. Please email me by Sunday evening if you wish to set up an appointment. To discuss papers /presentations, we can set up appointments on other mutually convenient days as well.

Changes to the syllabus The information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Readings : Recommended Books :

-Calvin Goldscheider (2002) *Israel's Changing Society: Population, Ethnicity, and Development*, Westview Press. Boulder, Colorado.

-Ehud Sprinzak and Larry Diamond.(1993) *Israeli Democracy Under Stress*. Boulder,Colorado.

-Alan Dowty (ed.) (2004) *Critical Issues in Israeli Politics*, Westport Connecticut And London: Praeger

-Gregory S. Mahler (2004) *Politics and Government in Israel*, Rowman and Littlefield

-Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman (ed.) (2004) *Jews in Israel, Contemporary social and Cultural Patterns*, Brandeis University Press.

All essays/ articles will be on e-reserves. (unless the web-link is provided in the syllabus.) Please check in advance and ensure that you have access to all the readings in the syllabus.

Contemporary Israeli Films to be viewed for the course : (Please view well in advance. Films will be on Netflix or in the Library)

-Lemon Tree(2008)

-Turn left at the End of the World (2004)

-Noodle (2007)

-The Name my Mother Gave Me(2008)

-Black Over White (2007)

-Ajami (2009)

-Children of the Bible (2009)

-Shiva (2008)

Class Schedule :

7th Sept.

Introduction to Israel .

Course objectives.

Students will be assigned readings ...

·14th Sept. 'The Ingathering'

[5 short articles from: Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), *Israel in the Middle East*. Waltham Massachusetts; Brandeis University Press, 2008 (2nd ed.)].

-Josephtal, Giora, 'The Absorption of Immigrants August 1951' (p. 103- 105)

-Marx, Emmanuel, 'The Development Town, 1956-1966: Analysis' (p.158- 164)

-Tzaban, Yair, 'The Quandaries of an Israeli Minister of Absorption, 1989-1994: Memoir' (p.419- 420)

-Bar-Zohar, Michael, 'David Ben-Gurion and the Policy of the Periphery, 1958: Analysis' (p.191- 197)

--David Ben-Gurion, 'Ethnic and Social Tensions in Wadi Salib'. (p.164-67)

(I will also give out additional excerpts / notes for this session)

Reminder : View 'Lemon Tree' for next class (Netflix).

http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CBUQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.netflix.com%2FMovie%2FLemon_Tree%2F70115895&ei=qW1rTO7rA8L58Abypl3OBA&usq=AFQjCNHvr5IL6DY1VHU8e6yNwfOyAVLMDw

·21st Sept. Israel's Social Gaps I : Jews and Arabs

--Sharkansky, Ira, "A Critical Look at Israel's Economic and Social Gaps", In Dowty, Alan (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Israeli Society*. Praeger. 2004. 129-150

--Al-Haj, Majid, "The Status of the Palestinians in Israel: A Double Periphery in an Ethno-National State", In Dowty, Alan (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Israeli Society*. Praeger. 2004. 109-126

Fiction : 'A Room On the Roof ' (From *Apples In the Desert*) Read before class and prepare for discussion.

Discussion: 'Lemon Tree' (2008)

·28th Sept. Israel's Social Gaps II : The Religious Cleavage and Ideologies of 'Jewish-ness'

-Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz. "The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel" . In Uzi Rebhun Uzi Rebhun and Chaim I. Waxman (ed.) (2004) *Jews in Israel, Contemporary social and Cultural Patterns*, Brandeis University Press. pp.265-284.

-'The Ultra-orthodox in the City'. In Elietzer Ben-Rafael and Yochanan Peres. *Is Israel One ? Religion, Nationalism and Multiculturalism Confounded*. Brill: Leiden 2005. Pp. 61-85.

-Do additional web-searches and read about 'Shas' political party. **Additional hand-out also available.**

·5th Oct. Ethnic Cleavages : The Mizrahim

--Henriette Dahan 2001, "You Are So Pretty, You Don't Look Moroccan", *Israeli Studies*, Vol. 6:1-14. (Reprinted, in Ed. Ephraim Nimni. 2003: 168-181. *The Challenge of Post Zionism* London: Zed Press.

-Maina Chawla Singh. *Being Indian, being Israeli* . New Delhi : Manohar , 2009. Introduction pp. 27-64

- Efraim Ben-Zadok, "Oriental Jews in the Development Towns : Ethnicity, Economic Development , Budgets, and Politics". In Efraim Ben-Zadok (ed.)*Local Communities and the Israeli Polity: Conflict of Values and Interests*. Albany : SUNY press, 1993. p. 91-122.

Read article about 'Old Hurt of Iraqi jews : <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/04/israel-new-monument-pays-tribute-to-old-hurt-of-iraqi-jews.html>

Read about the Yemeni jews <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Jews-of-Yemen-The-Yemenite-Jews-in-Israel.html>
<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3541413,00.html>

Short Story : 'Written In Stone" (from *Apples in the Desert*) pp. 99-118. (Read before class and prepare for discussion)

· 12th Oct. Jews of India

Talk by Guest Speaker : "Building Bridges : Indian , Jewish and American Partnerships"

Screening of Film **Salaam Shalom : The Jews of India (50min)** <http://www.filmakers.com/index.php?a=filmDetail&filmID=1045>

Short paper due (3-5 pages including endnotes and biblio.)

· 19th Oct.

Talk at PJC by Dr. Maina Chawla Singh. : "Migration Narratives of Indian Jewish Women".

Note : Class not at scheduled time.Pl check time/ venue of talk at PJC.

Reminder : View Israeli film : 'Black Over White' for next class.

· 26th Oct. Challenges to Pluralism I: Ethiopian Israelis

Basic Information : www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/ejhist.html -

http://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.jewcy.com/files/images/ethiopian_jews.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.jewcy.com/tags/israel_diaspora_relations&h=354&w=360&sz=46&tbnid=mVspTtQbvFzZUM:&tbnh=119&tbnw=121&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dethiopian%2Bjew&hl=en&usq=__90o-oAJwjemQbkiZEK9JsAIPBg=&sa=X&ei=zbpiTJnrC8ScIgf5j5GyCg&ved=0CC8Q9QEwAw

--Steven Kaplan and Hagar Salomon " Ethiopian Jews in Israel " In . Rebhun and Waxman, *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, Brandeis Univ. Press, 2004. pp. 118-148.

--Film : (Subject to availability)

CHILDREN OF THE BIBLE (Director: **Nitza Gonen**. 2009, 53 mins.) Hebrew and Amharic w/English subtitle

The rapper and informal educator, Jeremy "Cool" Habash, exposes us to the complex situations facing Ethiopian-Israeli youth. Jeremy works towards changing the humiliated and depressed image of the Ethiopian community in Israel, both in its own eyes and in the eyes of Israeli society, by bringing members of the Ethiopian community closer to their tradition – the songs, the

meaning of the Ethiopian names, stories about the lives of the Ethiopian community and about the journey that has taken on mythical proportions.

Discussion on Film : *Black Over White* (2007) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdAPk45UOYc&feature=related>

2nd Nov. After the 1990s : Challenges to Pluralism II: Russian Israelis

-Zvi Gitelman , "The Russian Revolution in Israel".In Alan Dowty (ed.) (2004) *Critical Issues in Israeli Politics*, Westport Connecticut And London: Praeger (2000). pp. 95-108

-Elazar Leshem and Moshe Sicron , " The Soviet Immigrant Community in Israel" In Gregory S. Mahler (2004) *Politics and Government in Israel*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp. 81-117.

Personal narrative : -Markish, Simon, 'A Soviet Jewish Intellectual Abroad, December 1978' In Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), *Israel in the Middle East*. Waltham Massachusetts; Brandeis University Press, 2008 (2nd ed.). (p. 308-310)

Newspaper article: CLIFFORD J. LEVY .“ [Explorer: Israel With a Russian Accent \(and Pork\)](http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/travel/28explorer.html?emc=eta1)”February 28, 2010
<http://travel.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/travel/28explorer.html?emc=eta1>

OPTIONAL READING -Howard Litwin; Elazar Leshem. "Late-Life Migration Work Status, and Survival: The Case of Older Immigrants from the Soviet Union" . *The International Migration Review*; Winter 2008; 42, 4; P. 903-25.

9th Nov. Theorizing Israel's Social gaps

Sammy Smooha, "Jewish Ethnicity in Israel: Symbolic or Real ?" In Uzi Rebhun and I Waxman (eds.) (p. 47-77).

Elietzer Ben-Rafael and Yochanan Peres.. "Identity , Nationalism , and Multiculturalism" .In *Is Israel One ? Religion, Nationalism and Multiculturalism Confounded*. Brill: Leiden 2005. Pp3-26.

Roselle Tekiner. "Race and the Issue of National Identity in Israel."International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 23, No. 1. (Feb., 1991), pp. 39-55. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-7438%28199102%2923%3A1%3C39%3ARATION%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1>

OPTIONAL READING : Hana Ofek , "Renewal neighborhoods and Israeli Society". In Efraim Ben-Zadok (ed.)*Local Communities and the Israeli Polity: Conflict of Values and Interests*. Albany : SUNY press, 1993. p. 123-53.

16thNov. Articulations of Identity :

Student Multi-media presentations :On the Multi-ethnic Popular Culture in Contemporary Israel (Topics may include Israeli music , dance , rap, food, youth culture , art or any aspect of popular culture which reflects the multi-ethnic diversity in Israeli society. Presentations should be audio-visual using slides/ video clips etc. Duration 8-10 min. Presenters will field questions on their research. Topics to be approved by instructor .)

23rd Nov. Ethnicity and Popular Culture in Contemporary Israel

--Raviv, Yael, "The Hebrew Banana: Local Food and the Performance of Israeli National Identity," *Journal for the Study of Food and Society*, 5 (1), (Summer 2001), pp. 30-35.

-Charles S. Liebman (1997) "Reconceptualizing the Cultural Conflict among Israeli Jews", *Israel Studies*, Vol. 2 (2) 172-189.

--Ezrahi, Yaron, "Globalization and Its Impact on Israel", In Dowty, Alan (Ed.), *Critical Issues in Israeli Society*. Praeger. 2004. 151-165

VIEW FILMS for NEXT CLASS and prepare comments for next session !

Nov 30. Social realism and Israeli Cinema

Discussion of FIVE contemporary Israeli films reflecting ethnic diversity in Israel (Please view before class and make notes. Have at least 3 points to make about how each film deepens our understanding of ethnicity and identity)

-*The Name My Mother Gave Me* (About Ethiopian Israelis)

--***Shiva*** (Seven Days) Israel 2008 -- 103 minutes (About a Mizrahi family in mourning)

Director: Ronit Elkabetz, Shlomi Elkabetz <http://www.israel-catalog.com/product.asp?Product=13213#>

-*Ajami*(2009). (To be viewed before class) : Available on Netflix (<http://www.netflix.com/Movie/Ajami/70120810>)

--***Turn left at the End of the World*** (2004).(About Indian and Moroccan Immigrants in the Negev)

--***Noodle*** (2007) (About Non-Jewish/ Non-Israeli Migrant Workers in Israel)

·7th Dec, Tues LAST CLASS : Wrap-up discussion and Student Seminar .

Students will prepare well-structured 'thought pieces' (1-2 pages) to be presented in class.

Assignment : Research the concept of 'multiculturalism' . Consider United States and Israel as 'immigrant societies' and offer arguments about the success of multiculturalism in both.
