

HIST 396
A History of Israel
Dr. Rhona Seidelman

Description: This course will offer an introduction to modern Israeli history. We will use as our starting point the first Zionist waves of immigration to Palestine in the late 19th Century, and we will carry on into the early decades of the State of Israel. We will explore such themes as: government, politics, migration, the experiences and influences of various population groups, social and cultural institutions and the Israel-Arab conflict. Emphasis will be placed on class discussion, critical thought and rigorous readings of historiographical material. The principle aim of the course is for the student to come away with a familiarity with - and critical understanding of - central dates, terms, events and debates that form a basis of modern Israeli history.

Teaching Method: The sessions will be comprised of a lecture which will then be followed by class discussion based on a critical reading of the weekly assignments.

Requirements and Evaluation:

Class attendance and participation: 17%

Weekly responses to readings: 18%

Response paper on *Beaufort*: 25%

Mid-term exam: 15%

Response paper on *Table for One*: 25%

Weekly reading responses:

- Must not exceed one page
- Identify the central argument / idea of the article
- These reading notes are meant to help you prepare for class by allowing you to reflect on the texts discussed.
- Grading: 1, 0.5 or 0 .
- Must be submitted at the start of every class
- You may not submit responses for classes that you do not attend, unless it is an excused absence (documented illness or Emergency Dean), in which case the response will be due in the next class.
- Late submissions will not be read, and will receive a mark of 0
- You only need to submit 18 responses. That is: you are permitted to miss two responses.
- On days where there are two reading assignments, your one response should engage with the two articles.

Office Hours: My office hours are Thurs. (11:00-12:15), and by appointment. If you are not able to come to my office hours, you are welcome to contact me by e-mail to set up an appointment for an individual meeting. My office is located in room 105, The Cohen Center for Jewish Life, 503 E. John St.

E-mail: E-mail does not replace office hours nor should you expect immediate, long, detailed responses to your questions. If you have a question, raise it in class, during office hours, or during an individual meeting with the instructor.

Attendance and Missed Class: It is your responsibility to come to class. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend a class it is your responsibility to get a hold of missed lecture notes (and all material discussed in class, including changes made to the syllabus, work assignments and all other announcements) from your classmates. The only excused absences are those that have a note from the Emergency Dean.

Mobile phones and Computer Policy: No laptops, cell phones, or similar electronic devices are allowed to be used in class.

Disability Policy: If you have a physical or mental disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking or other reasonable modifications, please see me as soon as possible.

Reading Material: All reading is mandatory. Course packets containing all of the reading material can be purchased at Notes-n-Quotes, 502 E. John St. Champaign. You must bring the reading packet with you to each class.

In addition to the course packets you are required to read:

Ron Leshem. *Beaufort*. New York: Bantam Books, 2009.

Aharon Appelfeld. *A Table for One: Under the Light of Jerusalem*. London: The Toby Press, 2007.

Both of these books can be purchased at the Illini Union Bookstore on Wright St.

Schedule**Week 1:****Aug. 23: Introduction****Aug. 25: Palestine before Zionism**

Gudrun Krämer. *A History of Palestine from the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008. Chapter 3.

Week 2:**Aug. 30: Zionism**

Shlomo Avineri. *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1981. Introduction.

Theodor Herzl. *The Jewish State*. 1896 (excerpts).

Sept. 1: The First and Second Aliyot (1882-1914)

Anita Shapira. *Berl: The Biography of a Socialist Zionist*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Chapter 2.

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‘Bilu Manifesto.’ In: Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.) *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*. 2nd Edition. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008.

Week 3:**Sept. 6: Beaufort paper preparation class.****Sept. 8: World War I and the Third Aliya**

Tom Segev. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000. Chapters 1 & 2.

Submission deadline: papers on Beaufort .

Week 4:**Sept . 13: Visit with author Ron Leshem**

Ron Leshem. *Beaufort*. New York: Bantam Books, 2009.

Sept 15: The Fourth and Fifth Aliyot (1918-1939)

Hagit Lavsky. 'German Zionists and the Emergence of Brit Shalom'. In: Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira. *Essential Papers on Zionism*. New York: NYU Press, 1996. Pp. 648-670.

Week 5:**Sept 20:****The Beginning of the Conflict (1918-1939)**

Benny Morris. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. Chapter 3 & 4.

Sept. 22: World War II

Howard Sachar. *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to our Time*. 3rd Edition. New York: Knopf, 2007. Chapter 10.

Screening of documentary 'Pillar of Fire' episode 14

Week 6:**Sept 27: Anticipating Statehood**

Amos Oz. *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. London: Vintage Books, 2005. Chapters 42-45

Sept. 29: No class (Jewish New Year)

Week 7:**Oct. 4: War and Statehood (1947-1948)**

Benny Morris. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. Chapter 5.

Oct. 6: The Palestinian Refugees and Arab Citizens of Israel

Benny Morris. 'The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem'. In: Silberstein, Laurence J. (Ed.). *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*. New York: NY University Press, 1991.

and

Elie Rekhess. 'Initial Israeli Policy Guidelines towards the Arab Minority, 1948-1949'. In: Silberstein, Laurence J. (Ed.). *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*. New York: NY University Press, 1991.

Week 8:**Oct. 11: Exam.****Oct. 13: Mass Immigration (1948-1957)**

'Tel Aviv' in Robert Capa and Irwin Shaw. *Report on Israel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950.

Week 9:**Oct. 18: Nation Building (1948-1960)**

“Who Is a Jew?”—Professor Isaiah Berlin’s Memorandum to the Prime Minister of Israel, 23 January 1959. *Israel Studies*, 13 (3) 2008.

Oct. 20: The Sinai War (1956)

S. Ilan Troen and Moshe Shemesh. *The Suez Sinai Crisis, 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal*. London: Frank Cass, 1990. Chapter 1. Chaim Herzog. *The Suez-Sinai Campaign: Background*

and

Chapter 9. Shimon Peres. ‘The Road to Sèvres: Franco-Israeli Strategic Cooperation’

Week 10:**Oct. 25: Addressing the Holocaust (1948-1961)**

Hanna Yablonka. ‘The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: The Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner, and Eichmann Trials’
Israel Studies - Volume 8, Number 3, Fall 2003, pp. 1-24

In-class screening and discussion:
Witnesses at the Eichmann Trial.
(Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive)

Oct. 27: The ‘Mizrahim’

Sammy Smooha. ‘The mass immigrations to Israel: A comparison of the failure of the Mizrahi immigrants of the 1950s with the success of the Russian immigrants of the 1990s’. *The Journal of Israeli History*. 27 (1), March, 2008. Pp. 1-27.

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David Ben-Gurion. ‘Social and Ethnic Tensions in Wadi Salib. 1959: Memoir’. In: Rabinovich and Reinhartz.

Week 11:**Nov. 1: The Six Day War (1967)**

Time Magazine. ‘Middle East: The Quickest War’ June 16, 1967

Paul Celan ‘Denk Der’ (Think of It)

Nov. 3: Culture and Society

Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi. *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004. Chapters 1 & 7.

Week 12:

Nov. 8: The Yom Kippur War and its Aftermath (1973)

Golda Meir. *My Life*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975. Chapters 14 & 15

Nov. 10: 'The Upheaval' (1977)

Statement to the Knesset by Menachem Begin Nov. 20, 1977

Statement to the Knesset by President Sadat Nov. 20, 1977

Week 13:

Nov. 15: Lebanon and its legacy (1982)

Hillel Halkin. 'The Waltz with Bashir Two Step'. *Commentary*. March 2009.

In class screening: Waltz with Bashir

Nov. 17: After Lebanon / Epilogue

Submission deadline: *A Table for One* papers.

- Thanksgiving Break -

Week 14:

Nov. 29: Appelfeld: Culture and Society

Dec. 1: Appelfeld: People and Religion

Week 15:

Dec. 6: Appelfeld: War

Resources for academic writing

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) : <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Illinois library 'How Do I?' guide for research and writing:

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/how.html>

Plagiarism Policy:

UIUC Department of History, Plagiarism Policy:

<http://www.history.illinois.edu/courses/plagiarism/>