ABSTRACT

This class is an exploration of the emergence of Jewish nationalism in the late nineteenth century, and of Zionism more specifically, as one possible course of action to bring a solution to the long standing problem of Jewish emancipation in Europe. Why and how did this new understanding of Jewish identity appear and what options were presented by different political factions, forming multiple strands of discourse? Of particular importance in this context will be the proposals made by Theodor Herzl and the concrete situation of Jews in the Russian Empire. Once Jewish immigration to Palestine is set into motion in the late nineteenth century, a series of historical events both in Europe and in the Middle East will affect the course of Zionism, such as World War I, the Balfour Declaration, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, European colonialism and the British mandate over Palestine. Of particular importance in this respect as defining moments of World Jewish history are the rise of Nazi Germany, World War II and the Holocaust. Different waves of Jewish immigration from different parts of Europe will also affect the evolution of Zionism in the first half of the twentieth century. As these circumstances unfold, a Jewish state appears in 1948, which radically alters the evolution of Zionism. Students will study the social, economic and geostrategic forces that shaped modern Israel, including various military conflicts and the massive influx of Jews from different countries. Of particular importance will be the Six Day and Yom Kippur wars, the conflict with surrounding Arab states, plus recent attempts at a peaceful solution up to the Oslo accord of 1993. The class will end with an analysis of the basic features of Israeli society at the turn of the century and of its major political institutions.
OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

• Introduce the notion of modernity in history and in particular its impact on peripheral populations and regions, leading to new notions of nationalism, ethnic identity and social advancement.
• Familiarize the students with the dominant aspects of contemporary Jewish history through the study of the Zionist movement in Europe and the Middle East.
• Discuss the emergence of a Jewish State in the context of post-modern nationalism and decolonization, and the consequences of this historical development.
• Develop a better grasp of Israeli history in the period after 1948 and of the evolution of this society in the context of a long standing conflict with the Arab states and the Palestinian population.
• Gain a serious understanding of the political forces at play in the Middle East in the twentieth century with regards to Arab nationalism and the political forces shaping modern Arab countries.
• Approach the major historical events of the twentieth century through the prism of human rights legislation and the protection of cultural minorities.

BREAKDOWN OF MARKS

• Outline of research project for final paper: 20 % (due in class, February 8).
• Mid-term in class exam: 30 % (in class, March 7).
• Final paper: 50 % (due in class, April 11).

The final paper is a personal research project based on primary and secondary sources. Papers should be between 15 and 20 pages, bibliography included, and are due in class on April 5. An outline of the final paper must be submitted in class on February 9, having between 4 and 5 pages, including a list of documentary resources and a bibliography.

REQUIRED READINGS (books in bold available at the University bookstore).

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

- Benjamin Nathan, *Beyond the Pale, the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 2004, 424 p.

REFERENCE BOOKS TO BE CONSULTED (available at the reserve, Morisset Library). There exists a great number of works and studies on Judaism and Jewish history in the twentieth century. The following titles are suggestions for further readings and for developing a broader knowledge.

**On Judaism in general**

- *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Detroit, Macmillan Reference USA, 2007, on line at Morisset Library, University of Ottawa

**On the history of Jews in the Russian Empire and in Europe**


On the Holocaust


On the history of Jews in Palestine and Israel


Personal narratives of the Middle East conflict

COURSE PLAN

WEEK 1 – January 11 and 13 – Jewish emancipation in the Modern World

Course objectives and type of discussions to be had in class during the semester / Research project and participation / Evaluation criteria for the students / Syllabus content / Oral presentation at mid semester and at the end of the course / Religious definition of Judaism, of Jewish identity and of anti-Semitism / Why do we begin with the history of Judaism in France?

WEEK 2 – January 18 and 20 – The emergence of Zionism

Assimilation vs Jewish nationalism / the emergence of the notion of Zionism in Central Europe in the late nineteenth century / Theodor Herzl and the first Zionist Congress of 1897. The various forms of Zionism and how they are linked to broader ideological currents.


- Please read the texts by Leo Pinsker, Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, p. 178-242.

Hevda Ben-Israel, “Zionism and European Nationalisms: Comparative Aspects” in *Israel Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2003, p. 91-104,

WEEK 3 – January 25 and 27 – The Situation of Jews in the Russian Empire

The situation of Jews in Eastern Europe and in the Russian Empire leading to the first Aliyah of 1881-1903. / The context presiding over a first Jewish migration to the Middle East / The beginnings of Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine / The Mass migration to the Americas and the Birth of North American Jewry.

Benjamin Nathan, *Beyond the Pale, the Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 2004, 424 p.

WEEK 4 – February 1st and 3rd – First Jewish Migrations to the Middle East

The Second Aliyah and the Russian Revolution of 1905 and 1917 / The founding of Tel-Aviv in 1909 / Consequences of the First World War / The position of the Great European powers in the Middle East following the Sikes-Picot agreement of 1916 / The Balfour declaration of 1917 / The issue of the revival of the Hebrew language / Kibbutzim and moshavim.


• Please read “Two Worlds Collide”, “the Jewish Story” and “the Arab Story”, p. 1-71.

WEEK 5 – February 8 and 10 – The Great Transformation

• Submission: outline of personal project for final paper, in class, 4 to 5 pages.

The Peace treaties and the end of Ottoman rule in Palestine / The interwar years and European colonialism in the Middle East / The British mandate / The emergence of a Jewish society in Palestine / The reaction of the Arab population to increased Jewish immigration / The governance of the yishuv.


WEEK 6 – RECESS – February 15 to 20

WEEK 7 – February 22 to 24 – The Destruction of European Jewry

The situation of Jews in Europe in the interwar period / The third, fourth and fifth aliyot / The Rise of Nazi Germany and the Second World War / The contributions of German and Polish Jewries to the Zionist project before and during the war / Aliyah Beth and clandestine immigration / The Holocaust and its consequences on Zionism.


**WEEK 8 – February 29 and March 2nd – The Birth of the State of Israel**

The end of World War II and massive immigration from Europe / The UN partition plan and the position of the world powers / The conditions surrounding the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the figure of Ben-Gurion / The 1948 War of Independence and its legacy / the Nakba / The political parties in Israel.


**WEEK 9 – March 7 and 9 – Internal Struggles**

- Mid-term exam in class, March 7
  7:00 – 8:30 p.m.


**WEEK 10 – March 14 and 16 – Wars and Peace Treaties**

The Six Day war of 1967 and the Yom Kippur war of 1973 / UN resolution 242 / Geo-strategic considerations following the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt / Soviet Russia and the United States in the Middle East / Decolonisation in Africa and Asia / Demographic trends.


• Please read “The Re-Emergence of the Palestinians” p. 113-137.

WEEK 11 – March 21 and 23 -


• Please read p. 137-149.


• Please read Part 6, “Challenges to the Existing Order”, p. 439-486.

WEEK 12 – March 28 and 30 – The Near Peace

The Oslo Accords of 1993 and the 2000 Camp David Summit / the Second intifada / Social and Economic characteristics of Israel and the Palestine Authority at the turn of the present century / Demographic trends / The multiple segments of Israeli society / The political divisions within Palestinian society.


• Please read “The First Glance at Peace” and “The Fourth Stage of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict”, p. 149-220.

WEEK 13 – April 4 and 6 – Prospects for peace

The situation since the half failure of the peace accords / The cost of the impasse in Israel and in the Palestinian Territory / The future of the Two State solution / Jewish settlements and Jewish colonization / The realignment of the Arab Middle East since the so-called Arab Spring / Political extremism

• Please read “The Impasse that Remains” and “The Perfect Conflict”, p. 220-266


**WEEK 14 – April 11 – The Recent Evolution of Israeli Society**

Ethnic Diversity in Israel, Jewish and Arab / the Effects of Constant Immigration on Israeli Society / Urbanization and Residential Patterns / Religiosity and Secularization / Social Inequality and Gender Roles / Education and Economic Progress.

• Submission of final research project in class, 15 to 20 pages.


  o Please read p. 82-176.