Sociology of Gender is the study of how maleness and femaleness have been assigned meaning in society with implications for personal identity, sexuality, family, work, religion, and virtually all aspects of social and personal life. Like most other industrialized countries, one can identify instances of gender discrimination and complex gender relations in Israel. Yet, some of the unique features of Israel, such as the centrality of military service, a militaristic culture, the dominance of the Jewish tradition, pronatalism (high fertility rates) and the importance of the family (among others) make the understanding of gender relations in Israel both important and interesting. The course takes a feminist and sociological perspective to study these issues, and others.

Course Requirements:

The class is discussion-based; you read and evaluate scholarly works and discuss them with each other in class. You are asked to read the required materials before each class! I expect you to know what the papers are about and come up with at least two questions/comments on each of the readings. I may ask each student to offer his/her thoughts on each reading. Please come prepared. (Participation in class discussion = 20%).

1. There is no final paper for this course. Rather, you will submit two types of short papers. A) three (3) literature review short papers (up to 4 double-spaced pages each). B) one (1) “her-story” paper (See below).

2. The three literature review papers will analyze the readings for a specific week. Please let me know in advance for which weeks you plan to submit your papers. Each paper will discuss the readings on a specific issue and each will be worth 20%, for a total of 60%. These papers will include a short description of two of the readings for that week: What do they have in common? How are they different from one another? How do they complement each other? I expect you to move
beyond a pure description and to be able to integrate the two. This part should demonstrate your understanding of the main points of each of the papers. It should not cover each and every point it makes, but you are expected to be able to answer questions about the papers and discuss them in class in more details (up to two and a half pages). The other part of each of these papers would use the readings to analyze a recent event. Find a recent newspaper/news website article discussing an issue relevant for the understanding of the week’s reading and discuss it using the arguments developed in the readings. Relevant websites in English are: Jerusalem Post jpost.com; Yediot Ahronot: ynetnews.com; Times of Israel timesofisrael.com; Haaretz haaretz.com. Does the article described go hand in hand with the readings? Does it shed a new light upon the readings’ arguments? (1 1/2 pages).

The goal of these short papers is threefold: 1. Demonstrate your understanding of the readings. 2. Help you get a better and more updated sense of gender in Israel today. 3. Enhance class discussions. During class I will ask each student who submit a paper that week, to discuss the main arguments of the papers and present the case she was analyzing. The papers should be submitted no later than Sunday night (midnight) prior to our class. I strongly encourage you not to wait to the last moment to write the paper and come talk to me about the media item you are about to discuss during my office hours.

3. “Her-Story” paper - For the fourth short paper you are asked to provide a gendered critic of the mainstream (masculine) way Israeli history is often portrayed. Choose one of the episodes of the “Tkuma”, a TV series about the history of Israel (Will be Available at Neilson Library). As you will note this series takes history to be about “His-Story.” Using course and other materials you are requested to identify the ways in which the narrative can be seen as masculine and offer an alternative view. If you were the director of this series, what other questions would you ask? What other facts and story would you include which are not there due to the common exclusion of women and gender issues from the mainstream historical narrative. An excellent paper would not only identify the masculine point of view characterizing the story as it is told, but offer specific alternative stories and questions one may include, based on your readings. You should explain why the introduction of these stories makes the original narrative less masculine. This paper is due May 2. (20%).

Week 1, January 24    Course and Self Introduction

Week 2, January 29, 31 Gender, Feminism and Masculinities: General Sociological Perspectives
What is a “gendered perspective” and why is it important?

Required


Elective


**Week 3 February 5, 7 Gender and Zionism in the Pre-state Era**

Many of the gender related contracts, institutions and myths which have characterized Israeli gender relations, evolved in the pre state days of the new Israeli political entity, under the Ottoman and British Empires (1880's -1948). This period is known as the *Yishuv* period. The Readings for this week depict these critical first days of Israeli Society and the structuration of the country's most fundamental political, economic and cultural gender institutions.

Required:


Elective

Weeks 4-5, February 12-19  \textbf{Gender in a Jewish State (Family and Personal Status Law, Religious women and the Struggle over the Public Sphere).}

As a Jewish state, separation of state and church has by and large not characterized Israeli society, the country's political leaders have agreed to subordinate issues of matrimony and personal status to the principles Jewish law and rabbinical courts. The readings of this week discuss the role of religious discourse and institutions in shaping gender relations.

\textbf{Gender in a Jewish state:}


\textbf{Families and Personal Status Law:}


\textbf{Movie - Sentenced To Marriage by Anat Zuria}

\textbf{Religious Women and The Struggle over the Public Sphere:}

El Or, Tamar.1993." Are They Like their Grandmothers : A Paradox of Literacy and Modernity in the Life of Ultraorthodox Jewish Women." \textit{Anthropology and Education Quarterly} 24(1), pp. 61-81.


Feb 21  No Class due to Rally Day

Week 6, February 26, 28  Gender and the Israeli-Arab Conflict – The Role of Military Service in Constructing Israeli Femininity and Masculinity

Two of the unique features of Israeli society are the centrality of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) in shaping social and economic relations, and the fact that there is a mandatory draft of women. The readings for this week ask how the centrality of security concerns and of military experience affect gender relations, identities and inequality in Israel.

Required


Movie - Company Jasmine

Week 7, March 5, 7  Gender and the Israeli-Arab Conflict – Palestinian Women in Israel and the Territories

In Israel:


Hasan, Manar (2002) “The politics of honor: patriarchy, the state and the murder of women in the name of family honor,” Journal of Israeli History, 21 (1-2)

In the Palestinian Authority


Movie – *The Lemon Tree*

**Week 8, March 12, 14**  
**Women in Israel’s politics**

Israel was one of the first countries to offer full suffrage for women and declare its commitment to gender equality in politics, but reality was very different and women have been underrepresented politically both in democratic apparatuses such as the Israeli parliament (Knesset) and cabinet and in social movements. The readings this week look at some of the explanations for this overwhelming gap between ideology and practice.

**Required**


**Week 9, March 19, 21**  
**Spring Recess – No classes**

**Week 10, March 26, 28**  
**Passover (Jewish Holiday) – No Classes**

*Please use the long break to watch your Tkuma episode (for the “her-story” paper) and sketch your ideas for the alternative point of view. Try to look for alternative materials. You are welcome to e-mail me your ideas and ask for my help in finding literature about specific events or processes.*

**Week 11, April 2, 4**  
**The Israeli Welfare State and Gender Contract.**

Being a strong and highly centralist state, the different state apparatuses in Israel affect many of the aspects of gender relations in Israel. We will discuss these state apparatuses in details, starting with a general discussion of the ways in which the state shaped Israeli femininity, and
how the Israeli welfare state have contributed to the way gender is enacted and experience in the country.

Required:


Elective


Week 12, April 9, 11 Gender and the Labor Market

As in all other cases, in Israel too, the road to gender equality goes through economic participation. Today's readings look at gender inequality and segregation in the Israeli labor market.

Required


Elective


Week 13, April 16, 18 Femininity, Masculinity, Health Policy, Local Traditions and Gendered Health

As we have seen in previous classes, state policies contribute much to the gendering of Israeli society and to the construction of femininity, masculinity and gender hierarchies. Today's class will discuss one aspect of this 'contribution,' the shaping of men and women's health and bodies.
We will focus on reproductive policies and their outcomes, but will also mention the role of militarism in shaping the Israeli body.

**Required - Three of the Following**


**Week 14, April 23, 25 Gender and Immigration, and Migration**

Being an Immigrants society, the understanding of the role of immigration in shaping gender relations and hierarchies in Israel is crucial. Today's readings looks at the unique experience of women who immigrated to Israel from different countries of origin (Iraq in the 1950's, FSU and Ethiopia in the 1990's).

**Required**

Aziza Khazzoom, "Orientalism at the Gates: immigration, the east/west divide, and Iraqi Jewish women in Israel in the 1950s" *Signs* 32(1). 2006


**Elective**

Week 15, April 30 – GLBT in Israel


Film: Yossi and Jagger

Week 15, May 2 – Wrap Up and Submission of the “Her-Story” paper.