Course Description:

This goal of this course is to study and explore the power structure and mechanisms of the contemporary Israeli political arena.

The first part of the course (weeks 1-4) will examine how the Israel emerged under a provisional government and developed national institutions; the identity and balance of power between Israel’s various governmental institutions; The basic judicial documents—the Declaration of Independence; the Israeli electoral system; the Social economy policy; and dilemmas in the Israeli political system.

The second part of the course (weeks 5-7) will examine the legislation in Israel; The Procedure, The Strategies and the Basic Laws.

The third part (weeks 8-11) will address sociopolitical aspects of Israel: Israel’s Arab minority; Jewish-Arab relations in Israel; relations between religious and secular Israelis; and the status of women in Israel.

In the last part of the course, Part four (weeks 12-13), we will apply what we have learned by conducting a simulation of Israel’s 2012/13 election.

Students in the course will encounter the complexity, challenges, and difficulties faced by the young democracy of Israel. The mock election will contribute to the students’ understanding and assimilation of Israel’s political system.

The course will be accompanied by readings and discussions of Israeli current events.

Course Objectives:

- Learn the political issues that Israeli society faces today.
- Develop a critical approach to the political debates within Israeli society.
- Follow political issues closely by taking part in a mock election.

Course requirements:

- Active participation in classroom discussions and personal paper – 10%
- Participation in mock election – 20%
- Final paper about one of the topics of the Course (20-25 pages) – 70%

Course Textbook:
Shapira Anita (2012), Israel: A History (The Schusterman Series in Israel Studies), Brandeis University Press

Part One: The Political System

Week 1: The Israeli Politics System – The National Government Institutions

Opening: course orientation, syllabus distribution, and course overview


**Week 2: The Development of the Vision and the legal System in Israel: The Declaration of Independence; The Lack of Constitution.**


**Week 3: Elections and Parties in Israel**

Arian, Asher and Shamir, Michal (Eds.) (2002). *The Elections in Israel - 2001*, The Israel Democracy Institute, Jerusalem


**Sum to Classes 1- 3: Dilemmas in the Israeli Political System and the power structure**


**Week 4: "Social Justice in Israel - Is it a Welfare State?**


Soen Dan, Shechory Mally Ben David Sarah (Eds.) (2012). Minority Groups: Coercion, Discrimination, Exclusion, Deviance and the Quest for Equality, Nova Publisher.


**Part Two: Legislation**

**Week 5: Legislation in Israel: The Procedure**


**Week 6: Negotiation and Strategy in Legislation**


**Week 7: The Basic laws in Israel**


**Part Three: Israel Society**

**Week 8: The Arab Minority in Israel – 1948 to 2012**


**Week 9: Relations between the Jewish Majority and the Arab Minority**


Smooha, Sammy (1997). “Coexistence between Arabs and Jews in Israel: Attitude Change During the Transition to Peace”, Research Report, Department of Sociology, University of Haifa (Mimeographed)
**Week 10: Relations between Religious and Secular in Israel**


**Week 11: Women in Israel**


**11b: Work and Family**


**Part Four: Simulation: Elections in Israel – 2012/3**

**Week 12: Peace and Security Policy**


**Week 13: The Political Debates In Israel.**

The students will examine and present the platforms of the main Israeli political parties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Issue/The Wing</th>
<th>Left Wing/Center</th>
<th>Right Wing</th>
<th>Orthodox Parties</th>
<th>Arab Parties</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Security and Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Labor; Meretz; Center: Yes Atid; Hatnua; Kadima.</td>
<td>Likud- beitenu; The Jewish Home.</td>
<td>United Torah Judaism; Shas.</td>
<td>Hadash; Ta'al-Ra'am; Balad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Socioeconomic Debate</td>
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<td>3. The Religious-Secular Divide</td>
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<td>4. The Status of Women</td>
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<td>5. The Supreme Court's Status</td>
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<td>6. The Arab Minority and Human Rights</td>
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**Week 14: Summary: Mock Israeli Elections – 2012/3**