Ethnic and Religious Identities in Israel

Israel is a society that grew largely on the basis of immigrant populations of various backgrounds from Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere. The immigrants brought with them different languages, cultures, and political ideologies. After the state was established, there was some hope that this would result in a national amalgam, but the immigrants interacted with the veteran population and its institutions, and with one another, in a variety of ways that produced its current multicultural texture. The course will discuss the history of immigration, the various policies of immigrant settlement, the way that the social sciences conceptualized and studies immigration, and the ongoing debates about culture and identity. Special attention will be paid to the interaction between identities defined by ethnicity and those growing out of diverse religious experiences and ideologies, including how emerging differences have made an impact upon and are contested within the Israeli public sphere today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A mid-term examination (25%)
A class presentation (25%)
A final exam (40%; graduate students will write a paper in lieu of a final exam)
Participation and attendance (10%)

REQUIRED READINGS

*Articles and chapters in books* (a photocopied Reader is under preparation):


SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ISRAELI SOCIETY:

Israel government statistical yearbook: http://www.cbs.gov.il/ and detailed sites therein
Haaretz daily (English version of Hebrew paper): http://www.haaretzdaily.com/
Jerusalem Post (English language daily): http://www.jpost.com/

Occasional films will be presented in class

CALENDAR, TOPICS AND READINGS
Sept. 3-5 (1) Jewish History after emancipation: religious, ethnic and secular identities; Goldberg, EH chap. 6.

Sept. 10-12 (2) Cultural Variation among Jews: Europe, the Middle East and Elsewhere; Deshen and Zenner

Sept. 17-19 (3) Ethnic and Religious Patterns in the pre-state period; Dolev-Gendelman, Zohar


Oct. 1-3 (5) Forms of settlement and subdued identities in the first generation: Cohen, Sered

Oct. 8-10 (6) Review and Mid-term exam: October 10.

Oct. 15-17 (7) Religion and Identity in the Aftermath of the Six-Day War; Aran, EH chaps. 1-2

Oct. 22-24 (8) Critical Revision in the Study of Israeli society; Bernstein, Lewis, EH chap. 8

Oct. 29-31 (9) Evolving forms of Middle Eastern Religiosity; Bilu and Ben-Ari, EH chap. 3

Nov. 5-7 (10) Developments in the realms between Nationalism and Religion; El-Or, Gabriel, EH chaps. 4-5, 9

Nov. 12-14 (11) Pilgrimage and Travel in Relation to Identity; Levy, Zerubavel, EH chap. 7

Nov. 19 & 26 (12) Immigration from the Soviet Union and its successor states; Altman and Mars

Dec. 3-5 (13) Student presentations

Dec. 10-12 (14) Liberal forms of Jewish Identity & REVIEW; EH chaps. 10-11.