The course surveys dominant topics in the culture of Israel, beginning with the pre-state period of the British Mandate, and then from 1948 to the present day. Israel's historical and cultural development has proceeded under the shadow of prolonged conflict with the Palestinians and Arab states, and the reading materials and class discussions in this course will refer to the Israeli-Arab conflict both indirectly and directly. Its main focus, however, will be on the spiritual lives, ethical orientations and ongoing cultural life of citizens of Israel – the military and political dispute are part of this cultural complex, but not all of it. Topics to be surveyed include: religious perspectives in Israel and religious-secular relations; the impact of the Holocaust in Israeli culture; minority cultures in Israel; the heritage of Labor Zionism; military culture in Israel; immigration and Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations; post-Zionism and the future of Zionism.

Course requirements: Each student will be required to read one of the major novels listed in the course plan below, and write a paper about the novel. These novels are:

Only Yesterday, S.Y. Agnon
Victoria, Sami Michael
Arabesques, Anton Shammas
Blue Mountain, Meir Shalev

Reading of articles, short stories and other materials listed in the course plan is required of all students.

Each student will write a second paper referring to a film, short readings and discussions on a second topic covered in the class. There will be a final examination.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

* Two papers (40%)
* Final exam (40%)
* Attendance and participation (20%)

Lesson Schedule

Topic 1: Pre-State Israel
Lesson I: "Israel before Israel" – overview of Zionism, modern history of Palestine/Eretz Israel, legacy of British Mandate period, the Holocaust and its impact on Israel


**Novel for this unit** (lessons 1&2): *Only Yesterday*: Agnon

Lesson II: Background to Israel's establishment (continued from lesson I) + the Independence War and its Aftermath
Required Reading: A.B. Yehoshua: "Facing the Forests," in Modern Hebrew Literature
Film clip: "Exodus" film

**Topic 2: Immigration and Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations**
Lesson III : Mass waves of immigration after Israel's establishment
Required reading:
Dowty, Alan, The Jewish State: A Century Later (Berkeley, 2001) chapter 7

**Novel for this unit**: *Victoria*, Sami Michael

Lesson IV: Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations, continued + Film: "Sallah Shabati"

**First Paper Due**

**Topic 3: Judaism and Israeli identity: Religion in Israel**
Lesson V: Secular and Religious Jews in Israel; the rise of Religious Zionism
Required Reading: Dowty, The Jewish State a Century Later, chapter 8

**Topic 4: The Holocaust and Israel**
Lesson VI: Israeli attitudes and responses to the Holocaust: a Survey
Required Reading: Tom Segev, The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust, chapter 6 (The Eichmann Trial), pp. 323-387
Applefeld, Aharon, Badenheim 1939 (short story version) (Syracuse, 2001)

**Topic 5: Minorities in Israel**
Lesson VII: Life in Israel after the Naqba – from military government to the peace process; contemporary issues
Recommended Reading: Abu-Baker, Rabinowitz, Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel (Berkeley, 2005)

**Novel for this Unit**: *Arabesques*: Anton Shammas
**Topic 6: Military Culture in Israel**
Lesson VIII: Life with the military: Is Israeli culture militarist?
Film: Waltz with Bashir

**Second Paper Due**

Lesson IX: the Post-Zionist Debate
Required Reading:
Kabha, Mustafa, "A Palestinian Look at the New Historians and Post-Zionism in Israel," in *Making Israel* 299-319

**Novel for this Unit: Blue Mountain, Meir Shalev**

Lesson X: Post-Zionism, continued; review for final exam