

Debating Israel's History
Dr. Seidelman

HIST 396A
T/Th 11:00-12:20
Armory 134

Description: Israel's history is hotly contested. Passionate and varied positions exist on terminology, the causes of historical events and the impact of their outcomes. In this course we will critically examine the depiction of Israeli history in art, film and historiography. We will explore the concept of parallel narratives as it can be found in various aspects of Israeli history: leadership, society, institutions and war. The aims of this course are: 1) to further understanding of Israeli history 2) to sharpen critical analysis skills through close readings of historiography, historical documents and non-textual historical representations. We will explore the impact of various methods of depiction while examining the benefits and challenges that ambiguity poses for the student of history.

Teaching Method: The sessions will be comprised of a short lecture which will then be followed by class discussion based on a critical reading of the weekly assignments.

Requirements and Evaluation:

Class attendance and participation: 20%

Weekly responses to readings: 20%

Quiz on terminology: 5%

Class Debates: 30%

Paper: 25%

Reading responses:

- Must not exceed one page
- Identify the central argument / idea of the article
- Discuss ideas/impressions/questions that came to you while doing the reading
- These reading notes are meant to help you prepare for class by allowing you to reflect on the texts discussed.

- Grading: 1, 0.5 or 0

- Must be submitted at the start of every class
- Late submissions will not be read, and will receive a mark of 0
- You may not submit responses for classes that you do not attend – except in cases of excused absences (with a letter from the Emergency Dean or Dean of Students)
- Emailed submissions will not be accepted

Extra Credit Options: Students may attend any lecture or event on campus that has to do with Israel or Palestine and write a one page critical response about the event. Every response submitted is worth one point and a total of five points of extra credit may be accumulated throughout the semester. The deadline for extra credit submissions is **April 24th** at the latest.

Attendance and Missed Class: It is your responsibility to come to class. If, for some reason, you are unable to attend a class it is your responsibility to get a hold of missed lecture notes (and all material discussed in class, including changes made to the syllabus, work assignments and all other announcements) from your classmates.

Reading Material: All reading is mandatory. Course packets containing all of the reading material can be purchased at Notes-n-Quotes, 502 E. John St. Champaign. You must bring the reading packet with you to each class.

Office Hours: By appointment. My office is located in room 105, The Cohen Center for Jewish Life, 503 E. John St.

E-mail: E-mail does not replace office hours nor should you expect long, detailed responses to your questions. If you have a question, raise it in class, during office hours, or during an individual meeting with the instructor. **rds@illinois.edu**

Mobile phones and Computer Policy: No laptops, cell phones, or similar electronic devices are allowed to be used in class.

Disability Policy: If you have a physical or mental disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking or other reasonable modifications, please see me as soon as possible.

Graded Papers: After the final papers are graded they will be in the history department for you to collect. I write detailed comments about your work and the full breakdown of your grade on your paper. I do not send comments or information about grades by email. Moreover, I do not discuss grades until the student has read the comments in his/her paper. After you have read the comments I would be happy to meet with you to discuss any questions you may have.

Week 1:

Jan. 17 (T): Introduction.

Jan. 19 (Th): Parallel Narratives, the Challenges of Memory and Historiography

Charles Rosenberg. "Disease in History: Frames and Framers." *Milbank Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1989):

Week 2:

Jan. 24 (T): Background on Israeli History.

Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Eds.). *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*. 2nd Edition. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008. 'Introduction', p.1-7.

Jan. 26 (Th): Background on Israeli History

Week 3:

Jan. 31 (T): Quiz

Quiz on terminology and dates

Feb. 2 (Th): Leadership: Ben-Gurion and Begin

Shlomo Avineri. *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*. New York: Basic Books Inc., 1981. Chapter 17.

Week 4:

Feb. 7 (T): Leadership: Ben-Gurion and Begin

Tuvia Friling, S. Ilan Troen. 'Proclaiming Independence: Five Days in May from Ben-Gurion's Diary'. *Israel Studies*, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 1998, pp. 170-194

Feb. 9 (Th): Leadership: Ben-Gurion and Begin

Menahem Begin. *The Revolt*. Tel Aviv: Steimatzky's Agency Ltd., 1951. Chapter XI, 'The Altalena Affair'.

Week 5:

Feb. 14 (T): No class: Instructor at Conference.

Feb. 16 (Th): Leadership: Ben-Gurion and Begin, Representation and Memory

David Ben-Gurion Law (1976)

and

Begin Foundation Statement.

and

Udi Lebel. 'Beyond the Pantheon': Bereavement, Memory and the Strategy of De-Legitimization Against Herut. *Israel Studies*, Volume 10, Number 3, 2005.

Week 6:

Feb. 21 (T) Society: Mizrahim

Moshe Shokeid and Moshe Tlamim. 'On the Sin We Did Not Commit in the Research of Oriental Jews'. *Israel Studies*, Volume 6, Number 1, Spring 2001, pp. 15-33.

and

Lea Ben-Dor. 'The Black Panthers'. In: Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Eds.). *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*. 2nd Edition. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008. p.234-237.

In class screening: Salah Shabati.

Feb. 23 (Th): Society: Mizrahim

Henrietta Dahan-Kalev. 'You're So Pretty – You Don't Look Moroccan'. *Israel Studies*. 6 (1), 2001.

Week 7:

Feb. 28 (T): Institutions: Medicine and Public Health

Shifra Shvarts. *Health and Zionism: The Israeli Health Care System, 1948-1960*. Rochester NY: The University of Rochester Press, 2008. Introduction.

March 1 (Th): Institutions: Medicine and Public Health

Laura Ker. 'The Playroom with a Difference'. WIZO booklet, 1954.

and

Wikipedia 'The Ringworm Affair'

In-class screening: 'The Ringworm Children'

Week 8:

March 6 (T): Institutions: Medicine and Public Health

Rhona Seidelman, S. Ilan Troen, Shifra Shvarts. "Healing' the Bodies and Souls of Immigrant Children: The Ringworm and Trachoma Institute, Shaar Haaliya, 1952-1960'. *The Journal of Israeli History*. 29 (2), 2010.

March 8 (Th): Class Debates

Week 9:

March 13 (T): Class Debates

March 15 (Th): Class Debates

- **Spring Break** -

Week 10:

March 27 (T): Institutions: The IDF

Hillel Halkin. 'The Waltz with Bashir Two Step'. *Commentary*. March 2009.

In-class screening: Waltz with Bashir

March 29 (Th): Institutions: The IDF

Moshe Dayan. 'The Transformation of the Israeli Army'. In: Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (Eds.). *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present*. 2nd Edition. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008. p.109-113.

and

Etgar Keret. 'Cocked and Locked'. In: *The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God..* Toby Press, 2004.

Week 11:

April 3 (T): War (1948)

Topics for final papers distributed to class

Benny Morris. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. Chapter 5. p.189 – 259.

April 5 (Th): War (1948)

Benny Morris. 'The New Historiography: Israel Confronts its Past'. *Tikkun*. 3 (6) 1988.

and

Anita Shapira. The Failure of Israel's 'New Historians' to Explain War and Peace: The Past Is Not a Foreign Country. *The New Republic*. 29.11.99

Week 12:

April 10 (T): War (1948)

Excerpts: Amos Oz. *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. London: Vintage Books, 2005.

p. 326-362.

and

Excerpts: Sari Nusseibeh and Anthony David. *Once Upon a Country; A Palestinian Life*. New York: Picador, 2007. p. 38-84.

April 12 (Th): War (1948)

Benny Morris. *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001*. New York: Vintage Books, 2001. Chapter 5. p.180-184.

and

Philip Roth. 'Some New Jewish Stereotypes'. *Reading Myself and Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.

In-class screening: *Exodus*.

Week 13:

April 17 (T): War (1948)

Final monologue in: Amos Gitai. *Kedma*. Kino International. 2002.

and

Haim Hazaz. *The Sermon*. In: Robert Alter (Ed.) *Modern Hebrew Literature*. Behrman House, Inc. 1975.

In-class screening: *Kedma*.

April 19 (Th): War (1948)

In-class discussion on *Kedma* and *Exodus*

Week 14:

April 24 (T): *Papers due*

April 26 (Th): War (1948)

Interview with Ilan Pappé by Greg Dropkin. 13/09/02. from:
<http://www.labournet.net/world/0209/pappe1.html> (accessed Dec.7, 2011)

and

Mordechai Bar-On. 'Cleansing history of its content: Some critical comments on Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*'. *Journal of Israeli History*, 27: 2, 269 — 275

Week 15:

May 2 (T): Parallel Narratives / No Common Ground

'No Common Ground': Joseph Massad and Benny Morris Discuss the Middle East. *History Workshop Journal* 2002. 53(1): 205-216 .

and

Serge Schemann. 'Two States of Being'. *The New York Times*, Dec. 2, 2010.