



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
Washington, D.C. Spring 2009

His 343-001
History of Israel

Professor Yoram Peri

Class meetings: Wednesday 11:20-2:00 p.m. SIS 15
Office hours: Battelle-Tompkins T13 on Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 p.m. and by appointment
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Course objectives

In December 2008, Israel reacted to Hezbollah shelling of civilian towns with an attack on Gaza strip. This was the 11th war since the state was established in 1948, 11 wars in 61 years. Wars have marked major milestones in Israeli history. The state was born out of a war, and waves of violence have occurred since the beginning of the Zionist settlement of Palestine at the turn of the 18th century. Yet the Zionist dream was to put an end to the lack of security of Jews suffered for almost two millennia. One hundred years after the creation of that national movement, and in spite of many great achievements, security, peace, and "normalization" for the Jews is still to be desired.

This is an introductory course to the history of modern Israel and it will review that history from the inception of Zionism to the present days. It will start with the foundation of the Zionist movement in Europe, as well as the foundation of Jewish autonomy in Palestine; continue with the creation of an independent state and will pinpoint critical events and major themes of the state's first 60 years, up to the war with Hamas in 2008.

This course aims to give students familiarity with the main characteristics of Israel's history, with the different interpretations and narratives of that history, as well as with issues that pertain to the historiography of this troubled region. A special focus will be put on the actors and forces that dominated the scene.

Methods of Instruction:

The course will be taught through lectures, discussions, students' presentations, guest speakers and films. I encourage you to ask questions and raise issues. We have flexibility in our schedule and can take time to discuss issues you may raise.

Course requirements:

1. Class attendance is mandatory and students are expected to actively participate in class.
2. You should read the material assigned for a date before that class.
3. During each meeting a group of four students will present a portrait of a major Israeli political leader, followed by a class discussion. Within two weeks of the discussion, each student will submit a paper on the topic. (See details in the next page).
4. The final exam (on Wednesday May 6, at 11:20 p.m.) will be a written comprehensive exam covering the course material.

Evaluation Criteria and Percentage of Grade

Class participation 20%
 Class presentation 10%
 The Paper 25%
 Final Exam 45%

Stay informed!

We will begin each one of our meetings, time permitting, with a discussion of current events in Israel in historical perspective. Therefore, students are required to stay informed of the latest events and issues. I will gladly receive emails from you before our meetings with requests to deal with any particular topic.

Sources for extensive coverage include: the *New York Times*; Israeli dailies: *Ha'aretz* (leans left) (www.haaretz.com) and the *Jerusalem Post* (leans right) (www.jpost.com); *Jerusalem Report* (Internet) (www.jrep.com); Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (www.jmcc.org). Knowledge of current developments, especially events relating to material covered in the course, will influence the participation grade.

The Paper

In each of our meetings a group four students will present a portrait of a major Israeli political leader. This portrait should be based on his/her biography as well as an autobiography and books written by this person. In our first two meetings we will establish the groups and choose the figures. Following the presentation and the discussion in class, each student will present an independent work on that person. It should contain 4-5 pages (up to 1,500 words). The presentations and the papers should describe the leader's biography, his/her role in Israel's history, main achievements as well as faults, etc. The group should also lead a discussion on a major dilemma that this person represents in Israel's history.

We will further discuss the details of this assignment in our first meeting on Jan. 14.

List of Leaders: (others might be added with my approval)

Theodor Herzl
 David Ben-Gurion
 Golda Meir
 Menachem Begin
 Yitzhak Rabin
 Shimon Peres
 Moshe Dayan
 Arik Sharon

Examples of biographies of leaders and books written by them:

Michael Bar-Zohar (1986) *Ben-Gurion: A Biography*. New York: Adama Books.
 Elinor Burkett (2008) *Golda Meir: The Iron Lady of the Middle East*, London.
 Eric Silver (1984) *Begin: The Haunted Prophet*, New York: Random House.
 Yitzhak Rabin (1996) *The Rabin Memoirs*, Berkeley Calif. Stanford University Press.
 Shimon Peres, (1993) *Towards A New Middle East*.
 Benjamin Netanyahu, (1993) *Place Among The Nations*.
 [Many Biographies can be seen at the Library at DS 126.6]

Papers must be typewritten or computer printed in 12 pt. font size. Each paper should include a paper title, the title of the book, your name and the date of submission. This information should be at the top of the first page, or on a separate title page. Either form is acceptable. Each page (except the first) needs to be numbered. References to authors must be cited using a standard citation method.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to abide by the *Academic Integrity Code* of American University (available online at www.american.edu/american/registrar/text/t_aic.html).

Changes to the syllabus The information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Required readings (pages will be specified below)

Colin Shindler (2008) *A History of Modern Israel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and NY, [DS 126.5 S55]

Howard M. Sachar (2007) *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: Knopf. [DS 126.5 s154]

Alan Dowty (1998) *The Jewish State A Century Later*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Itamar Rabinovich and Yehuda Reinharz ed. (2008) *Israel in the Middle East*, Waltham, Brandeis University Press, 2nd edition, (a reader) [DS 126.5]

Recommended:

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak (1989) *Trouble in Utopia: the Overburdened Polity of Israel*. Albany, SUNY Press.

Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, Schocken Books, New York, 2003. [DS 149. L315]

Martin Gilbert ((2008) *Israel, A History*, Harper Perennial, or (1998) Morrow, New York.

Gideon Shimoni (1995) *The Zionist Ideology*, Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press.

Baruch Kimmerling (2001) *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military*. Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press. [DS 113.3 K56]

Calendar, Course Topics and Readings

[Please note: The dates and topics are approximate: some topics may be discussed at greater length, and others may be concentrated. Students are responsible for keeping tabs with the pace of the lectures and readings.]

Most of the reading material is on blackboard or reserved in the library

Week 1: January 14, Course Overview and Introduction

Reading:

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak (1989) *Trouble in Utopia: the Overburdened Polity of Israel*. Albany, SUNY Press. Chapter 1 pp. 1-31. [JQ 1825. P3 H68] [on E-Reserves]

See also the entire book on:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=xVgG53X44QYC&dq=Lissak+and+Horowitz+\(+++\)+Troubles+in+Utopia,&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=I_nmmnwYlj&sig=1qb0x4nMFncoczJezdGGLco3cPI&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPP1,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=xVgG53X44QYC&dq=Lissak+and+Horowitz+(+++)+Troubles+in+Utopia,&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=I_nmmnwYlj&sig=1qb0x4nMFncoczJezdGGLco3cPI&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPP1,M1)

Gregory S. Mahler (2004) *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State* Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield. pp.13-52. [on E-reserves]

Week 2. January 21, The Zionist Dream

Required Reading:

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 1-37 [on E-reserves]

Rabinovich and Reinharz, Reader: [DS 126.5 1784]

3 Herzl, A Solution to the Jewish Question, 1896 (16-21)

4 First Zionist Congress, 1897 (22-24)

7 Balfour Declaration, 1917 (29)

Recommended reading:

Alan Dowty, (1998) pp. 34-60

Shimoni, Gideon, (1995) *The Zionist Ideology*, Brandeis University, University Press of New England, Hanover & London. pp. 3-51 [DS 149. S49 735]

Week 3. January 28 Panel Debate on the Middle East Conflict at SIS Lounge

Week 4. February 4, Zionism: An Assessment of a National Movement Required Reading:

Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, (1972) pp. 589-599: "Conclusion: 13 theses on Zionism" [on E-reserves]

Alan Dowty (1998) pp. 3-18.

Student Presentation: Theodor Herzl

Week 5. February 11, Wars and Territory in Israel's History

Required Reading:

Rabinovich and Reinharz

19 UN Assembly, Resolution 181, 1947 (61-63)

21 Proclamation of the State of Israel, 1948 (72-74)

65 The Land for Peace Principle, 1967 (238-239)

67 Khartoum Resolution, 1967 (241-242)

68 UN Resolution 242, 1967 (242-243)

Baruch Kimmerling (2001) *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*, Berkeley, University of California Press. pp. 1-14.

Recommended reading:

Baruch Kimmerling (2001) *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*, Berkeley, University of California Press. 56-88, 89-111.

Student Presentation: David Ben Gurion

Week 6. February 18, From *the Yishuv* "the state in the way" to Sovereignty

Required Reading:

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity: Palestine under the Mandate*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. pp. 187-213. [DS 126. H671]

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 38-53.

Recommended reading:

Gregory S. Mahler (2004) *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State* Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield. pp.13-52.

Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military*. Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001 (Chapter 2).

Week 7. February 25,

The first decade: State and Nation Building,

Required Reading:

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak (1989) *Trouble in Utopia: the Overburdened Polity of Israel*. Albany, SUNY Press. Chapter 1 pp. 1-31. [JQ 1825. P3 H68] [on E-Reserves]

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 54-77.

Recommended reading:

Alan Dowty (1998) pp. 61-84

Baruch Kimmerling (2001) *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*, Berkeley, University of California Press. pp. 208-228.

Howard M. Sachar (2007) pp. 364-394

Students Presentation: Menachem Begin

Week 8. March 4, 1967 War and its Consequences on Israeli Society

Required Reading:

Alan Dowty (1998) pp. 216-248.

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 123-146.

Howard M. Sachar (2007) pp. 615-666.

Recommended reading:

Tom Segev (2007) *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East*, Hardcover.

Week 9. March 11 Spring brake

Week 10. March 18, The 1977 - The Upheaval

Required Reading:

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 123-174.

Howard M. Sachar (2007) pp. 831-842.

Students Presentation: Golda Meir

**Week 11. March 25,
1980- 2000: The Peace Process**

Required Reading:

Colin Shindler (2008) pp. 227-243.

Recommended reading:

Yaron Ezrahi (1997) *Rubber Bullets*, pp. 77-116.

The Arab Minority in Israel: An Analysis of the "Future Vision" Documents:
(<http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42d75369-d582-4380-8395-d25925b85eaf%7D/ARAB%20MINORITY%20IN%20ISRAEL.PDF>)

Students Presentation: Yitzhak Rabin

**Week 12. April 1,
1995: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Cultural War**

Required Reading:

Yoram Peri (2005) *The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin*, Stanford University Press, Introduction and chapter 1.

Recommended Reading:

Ehud Sprinzak (1999), *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination*, New York: The Free Press. pp. 145-178.

Students Presentation: Moshe Dayan

**Week 13. April 8,
The New Millennium: Israel's Predicament**

Required Reading:

Thomas S. Axworthy, & Mathew Johnson (May 2008) *New State to Sustained Democracy: The Case of Israel*, The center for the study of Democracy, Queens University, Kingston, Canada. pp. 1-80. http://www.queensu.ca/csd/documents/Asper_research_final.08.6.13.pdf

Students Presentation: Shimon Peres

Week 14. April 15,

New Reading of Israeli History: New Historians, Radical Political Scientists.**Required Reading:**

Moshe Lissak, "'Critical' Sociology and 'Establishment' Sociology in the Israeli Academic Community: Ideological Struggles or Academic Discourse?" *Israel Studies* 1 (Spring 1996), pp. 247-294.

Laurence J. Silberstein, *Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israel Culture*. (New York, Routledge, 1999), pp.1-10, 89-127, and 207-209.

Students Presentation: Arik Sharon**Week 15. April 22****Rap-Up****Week 16. April 29****Spring Study day (and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut*).****Week 17. May 6****Final Exam**
