If there was a connection between geography and the written word, Israel would be a country of continental proportions. A casual survey of your local bookstore, the cable news networks, a university library, or any newspaper will reveal that Americans have a particular fascination with Israel. It is the Jewish State’s myriad struggles – with itself, with its neighbors, and with the international system -- that so capture the imagination. It is these various struggles that provide the thematic road-map for this course. Relying on a thematic approach, rather than a historical one, is intended to give students a clearer understanding of the essential forces that shape Israeli politics and society. It is also intended to provide a foundation upon which students can later build a deeper understanding of Israel’s past, present and future. Although the content of the course shifts back and forth from foreign policy to domestic politics – from external to internal struggles – it is important to remember that Israel is a case where “foreign” and “domestic” tend to be thoroughly and profoundly intermingled.

We will be reading from a wide selection of sources, including classics of intellectual history, like Shlomo Avineri’s *Making of Modern Zionism* (now out of print) and newer, noteworthy works, like Gershom Gorenberg’s *The Accidental Empire*. Alan Dowty’s *The Jewish State* serves as the primary textbook. Along the way, we will also be reading a wide selection of academic writings, primary sources, news articles and popular essays. Guest lecturers and special visitors may join us at the seminar table throughout the semester. Students are expected to be fully involved in the course – through readings, writing assignments, in-class presentations, and participation in discussions. The course is not designed for spectators.

**Course Sections:**
- The Struggle with Nationalism and the Modern World (Zionism – 2 parts)
- The Struggle over State-building (Yishuv and Early Statehood)
- The Struggle for Peace and Security (Origins of Israeli Foreign & Defense Policy)
- The Struggle over Identity (Social, Ethnic, Religious and Political Rifts – 2 parts)
- The Struggle between State and People (Israel-Diaspora Relations)
- The Struggle over “State Expansion” (1967, Settlements and “Greater Israel”)
- The Struggle for Effective Political Institutions (State, Law, Party)
- The Struggle between Praetorians and Politicians (the Role of the Military)
- The Struggle over “State Contraction” (Oslo and the Quest for Permanent Borders)
- The Struggle between Welfare State and Free Market (Political Economy)
- Conclusion: The Struggle for the Future of Israel (‘Solidarity’ vs. ‘Peace’; ‘Jewish’ vs. ‘Democratic’: Compatible or Zero-Sum?)
We will do a few activities each time we meet. First, at the beginning of each class students are expected to turn in reading response papers (250-350 words) based on that week’s readings. The response papers should: answer one or more of the discussion questions circulated the preceding week; or raise additional questions or critiques about the readings. Toward the beginning of each class, we’ll devote some time to discussing current developments in Israel – and link these to the themes examined in the course.

At some class meetings, I will provide a brief background lecture before we spend the bulk of our time on class discussion – which will be initiated each week by a student presentation or debate focused on one of the weekly discussion questions. For the presentations/debates, students are expected to focus on the required readings. However, students should feel free to bring in additional readings, primary sources, documents, and/or audio-visual material. (A schedule will be announced at the beginning of the semester.) The final paper should focus on a controversy or debate associated with one of the sections of the course. The weekly discussion questions can be a guide to potential topics, but students are also free to come up with their own proposal for the assignment. All final projects must be approved by the instructor.

*All writing assignments should follow a uniform format (1.25 inch side margins, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with uniform citations – parenthetical, footnote or endnote).

**Reading Material:**

**Required:**


3. Additional readings – per course syllabus and announcements.

4. Primary sources: most weeks we’ll analyze a memoir, speech, official document, etc.

5. Current affairs – Students are required to regularly follow news reports on Israel -- these could include: *Ha’aretz*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Yediot Aharonot*, *Israel Radio* (English service, caveat aside), *Mideast Mirror*, or *The Jerusalem Report*.

**Strongly Recommended**


**Recommended – additional readings**


**Course Requirements and Grading**

- Final paper 35%
- Reading responses 35%
- Class presentations 15%
- Attendance and participation 15%

**Key Dates:**

- Monday, September 11: first day of class
- Monday, September 18: first reading response due
- Monday, September 25: first student presentation/debate
- Monday, October 2: re-schedule?
- Monday, November 6: deadline for selecting final paper topic
- Monday, November 20: deadline for final paper source list
- Monday, December 4: final Monday meeting
- Friday, December 8: final class meeting
- Monday, December 18: final paper due

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

- *The Struggle with Nationalism and the Modern World (Zionism – 2 parts)*
Week 1 – The Origins of Zionism

Required:
- Avineri – intro, Hess, Pinsker, Alkalai/Kalischer
- Dowty – ch. 3
- Primary Source: Pinsker’s *Auto-Emancipation* (from Hertzberg reader)

Recommended:
- Avineri, ch. 2, 4, 5, 6
- Herzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (reader)

Week 2 – The Zionist Movement

Required:
- Avineri – Ben Yehuda, Herzl, Ahad Ha’am, Borochov, Jabotinsky, Kook, Epilogue
- Morris – pp. 20-26, 37-45
- Primary Source: Jabotinsky’s “Iron Wall” essay

Recommended:
- Herzberg reader.
- Primary Source: Weizman writings (in Hertzberg reader)

• **The Struggle over State-building (Yishuv and Early Statehood)**

Week 3

Required:
- Avineri – Gordon, Ben Gurion
- Morris – pp. 111-120, 135-144
- Primary Source: Declaration of Independence (May 14, 2006)

Recommended:
- Sternhell, Introduction and Chapter 1 “The Primacy of the Nation: Aaron David Gordon and the Ethos of Nation-Building”


• **The Struggle for Peace and Security (Origins of Israeli Foreign & Defense Policy)**

**Required:**
- Zeev Maoz (2006), ch. 1 pp. 3-23.
- Primary Source: Golda Meir on “The Arabs” in Brecher, p.308-311

**Recommended:**
- Maoz book (see above)
- Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million*, ch. 10-11, on Ben-Gurion’s Germany policy and reparations

• **The Struggle over Identity (Social, Ethnic, Religious and Political Rifts – 2 parts)**

**Required:**
- Dowty: chapters 7-9 “The Communal Split,” “Religion and Politics,” and “Arabs in Israel”
- Asher Arian - on Left-Right divides – p. 413-425 in *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*
- Mazie ch 2. from *Israel’s Higher Law* – can a “Jewish state” also be a liberal democracy?
- Primary Source: Ka’adan case (Supreme Court decision).

**Recommended:**

**Recommended on Israeli Arabs:**
- Eli Rekhess, "The Arabs of Israel After Oslo: Localization of the National Struggle" *Israel Studies* - Volume 7, Number 3, Fall 2002, pp. 1-44.

• The Struggle between State and People (Israel-Diaspora Relations)

Required:
• Brecher: pp. 137-144
• Dov Waxman, “The Jewish Dimension of Israeli Foreign Policy,” Israel Studies Forum, Fall 2003, vol 19:1.1
• Primary Source: Walter Eytan memoir (excerpt) and/or Ben-Gurion-Blaustein correspondence/agreement (1950)

Recommended:
• Scott Lasensky, “Jewish Foreign Policy,” paper delivered at the Association of Israel Studies annual meeting (2005).
• Shlomo Avineri, "Ideology and Israel's Foreign Policy," The Jerusalem Quarterly 37, 1986, pp. 3-13.
• Efraim Inbar, “Jews, Jewishness, and Israel's Foreign Policy,” Jewish Political Studies Review, Vol. 2, No. 3-4 (Fall 1990).
• Shmuel Sandler, "Towards a Conceptual Framework of World Jewish Politics: State, Nation and Diaspora in a Jewish Foreign Policy," in Israel and the Jewish World (forthcoming)
• Abraham H. Foxman, “Is a ‘Second House’ the Answer?,” Haaretz, 14 January 2005 (see related articles on Katsav’s proposal published around this time in The Jerusalem Post, Forward and Ha’aretz and the report of the JPPPI)

• The Struggle over “State Expansion” (1967, Settlements and “Greater Israel”)

Required:
• Amos Elon on Goremberg in NYRB
• Ehud Sprinzak, ch. 5 “From Pioneering to Terrorism: Gush Emunim and the Underground”
• Yoram Peri, pp. 166-169
• Primary Source: Sasson report (2005) on “illegal outposts” – excerpts
Recommended:
- Goremberg book

The Struggle for Effective Political Institutions (State, Law, Party)

Required:
- Arian: chapter 9 “Govt, Knesset and Judiciary”
- Additional articles

Recommended:
- Arian, Politics in Israel (incl. pp. 224-235 on electoral reform)
- Israel Democracy Institute – various publications

The Struggle between Praetorians and Politicians (the Role of the Military) –½ session

Required:
- Dowty, ch. 5 “The Filter of Security”
- Yoram Peri, Generals in the Cabinet Room, – ch. 1, 14, 16
- Haaretz review of Peri (August 2006)
- Peri in Washington Post (August 2006)

Recommended:

The Struggle over State Contraction (Oslo and the Quest for Permanent Borders)

Required:
- Dowty, ch. 10 “The Impact of the West Bank and Gaza”
- Sprinzak, ch. 8 “To Kill a Prime Minister”
- Siegman in NYRB “A Historic Statement” (2001)
Recommended:

- **The Struggle between Welfare State and Free Market (Political Economy)**

Required:
- Arian, ch. 3 on “Political Economy” in *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*
- Shafrir and Peled, ch. 9 “Economic liberalization and peacemaking,” in *Being Israeli ??*
- Primary source: Netanyahu and/or Fischer speeches

Recommended:

- **Conclusion:**

**The Struggle for the Future of Israel: (‘Solidarity’ vs. ‘Peace’; ‘Jewish’ vs. ‘Democratic’: Compatible or Zero-Sum?)**

Required:
- Dov Waxman, “Israel’s Dilemma – Unity or Peace,” *Israel Affairs*, April 2006 (Vol.12, No.2)
- Steven Mazie in NYTimes (March 2006)
- Goremberg *Accidental Empire*, epilogue

Recommended: