Course Description
This course aims to discuss the status of democracy and human rights in Israel. The first two classes will concisely present the basic laws and political structure of Israel. Following this short introduction, we shall examine more closely several aspects of the Israeli political system, including the freedom of religion, minority rights, the right of return, social and economic rights (vis-à-vis the changes transpiring in Israel in this context), security and human rights and several others. The method and readings of the course will include both readings from Israel studies and from political theory. The aim is to acquaint the students with both sufficient knowledge about Israel, and with critical normative tools that would enable reflection about Israel.

Class Policies:
Maintaining an environment conducive to civil discourse and the free exchange of ideas is vital to the learning process, particularly since we will be engaging issues that are often controversial and which students may have strong personal opinions about. So I expect students to act in a respectful, civil, tolerant and collegial manner. I consider this absolutely fundamental and ask you to adhere to the following classroom policies:
- no shouts, uncalled remarks, or prolonged speeches.
- no prolonged private conversations
- turn off cell phones and pagers
- please do not get up in the middle of class unless it is necessary. This is not only disruptive but shows a lack of respect for others in the class
- please be on time for class.

Late Exams and Incompletes: Late exams / papers will not be accepted
Course Requirements
There will be one 'take home' exam (20%, week 5), one paper (20%, around the 12 pages limit), one final exam (40%), and 2 journal entries (20%) - which are short - 2 pages critical notes referring to the course readings (10% each). Items in the reading list marked with * are not eligible for journal entries.
Except for the final exam, all requirements should be typed (font 12, double spaced).
I expect students to read the requested readings from week to week, and to participate in the classroom in an adequate fashion. Classroom participation may be counted for class grade in some cases (in cases of classroom conduct which is either excellent or below expected standards).

The students might be interested in current events in Israel, for which the English version of Haaretz daily is a good source:  http://www.haaretz.com/
A good online source for social and economic issues (including raw data) in Israel is: http://www.adva.org/default.asp?lang=en
Another good online source for information about Israel is: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/index.html

Required Book.

Course Readings.

Week 1: Introduction to Israel (history, society and political system).
  1. Israel, introduction.
  2. Israel, Introduction part 2

Week 2: Democracy and Rights.
  1. Democracy.
  2. Rights.
Week 3: Democracy, Rights and Security.

Week 4: Religious Freedom


Week 6: Same Sex Couples and Rights in Israel.


Week 7: The Law of Return.


3. Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, “Democratic Norms, Diasporas, and Israel’s Law of Return”. Article can be viewed at:
http://www.ajc.org/site/apps/nl/content3.asp?c=ijITI2PHKoG&b=846567&ct=875523

Please also refer to the exact phrasing of the law of return at:
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/Other_Law_Law_of_Return.html
And:
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/return.html

Week 8: Minority Rights (1)


Week 9: Minority Rights (2)


**Week 10: Israel and Democracy.**


Please also refer to the following: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org) the essay about Israel.