Seminar goal and main topics:
Israeli citizens and academics and journalists in Israel and abroad feel and argue that Israeli democracy is flawed. Some observers even maintain that Israeli democracy is in the midst of a crisis. Most of these observers share the view that Israeli politics is at a crossroads. The purpose of this seminar is to examine in depth these and similar arguments about the situation of Israeli democracy, political culture and its structural and institutional characteristics, all of which are very different from the American system.

In this vein, the seminar will deal with the following issues: The roots of the Israeli political system — that is, the main characteristics of the political system and politics during the Yishuv (the Jewish Community in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel) period; the politics and development of the Israeli political system during three distinct periods from 1948 until the beginning of the 21st century; socialization processes and the impacts of the Israel social structure (the class structure, religious-secular, and Jewish-Israeli Palestinian relations) on current Israeli politics; the main characteristics of current Israeli political culture — values, ethics and behavioral patterns; ideological controversies and conflicts; the main institutional characteristics of the current Israeli political system — leadership, elites, elections, parties, the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), the Executive branch, the Bureaucracy, the Judiciary, Local-Government, and the Israeli “Security Network”; the main changes that have occurred as a result of the 2006 elections; civil-society and politics; is Israel an ethnic-democracy?; the major threats and challenges facing the Israeli political system and politics at the present crossroads.

Seminar requirements:
- Regular attendance in the seminar’s meetings and participation in its discussions (20% of the final grade);
- Regular readings of all required bibliographical items and optional reading of the recommended items. All books can be found in the library.
- Mid-term short research paper (topics will be given by me). Submission of this paper in mid October (20% of the final grade);
- Presentation in class of the main issues of the final seminar paper (the selection of the seminar paper’s topic and research questions will be done in a personal meeting with me).
- Submission of seminar paper beginning of December (60% of the final grade).

Reading assignments:
The main required readings are from the following three textbooks that can be purchased in Duke Textbook Store:
As noted above, I have added many recommended books and articles that may help in writing your two papers.

Office hours:
Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 in room 408 Perkins Library. I can be reached at tel. 660-430, or at msgabi@huji.ac.il

Topics and Reading assignments:

I. Introduction

Required reading:

II. The Political System and Politics During the Yishuv Period and their Impact on Israeli Politics.

Required reading:
1. Dowty, chapters 2-3.

Recommended readings:

III. The Impacts of the Israeli Social Structure on Politics

Required Readings:
2. Dowty, chapter 7 and 8.

Recommended readings:

IV. Israeli Politics and Political System During Three Distinct Periods

Required readings:
1. Dowty, chapters 4 and 6.
2. Arian, chapter 3.
3. Ami Pedahzur, chapter 2.

Recommended readings:

V. Israeli Political Culture and Ideological Controversies

Required readings:
1. Arian, chapters 8, 12.
2. Dowty, chapters 6, 8.

Recommended Readings:

VI-VII. The Main Institutional Characteristics of the Political System

Required readings:
1. Arian, chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11.

Recommended readings:
1. Mahler,
2. Garfinkel,
3. Stein,

VIII. Civil-Military Relations.

Required readings:
1. Dowty, chapter 5.

Recommended readings:
IX. Is Israel an Ethnic-Democracy?:

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

X-XI. Major Threats and Challenges Facing the Israeli Political System and Politics.
Required readings:
1. Pedahzur, chapters Introduction, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5.

Recommended reading:

XII-XIV. Presentations in Class by Participants

Additional Recommended Reading: