Class meetings: Wednesday 5:30-8:00 p.m. WATK 05
Office hours: Battelle-Tompkins T13, Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 p.m. and by appointment
Phone: 202 885 3682   E-mail: Yoramp@post.tau.ac.il

Course objectives

This course is an introduction to Israeli society, with the aim of exploring the fundamentals and origin of that society and the changes that have unfolded since its formative years in the 1920's and 1930's up to the beginning of the 21st century. Two major themes will be analyzed: the composition of Israeli society and the dominant myths that affect the collective memory, identity and culture.

Six meetings will be devoted to the six major "tribes" of modern Israel, as well as to other cultural and ethnic groups that comprise Israeli society. The course will also focus on Israel’s changing collective identity, from the early 1950s when the founding fathers and mothers tried to mold a diverse immigrant population into a homogeneous, modern secular Jewish society, to the collapse of the hegemonic Ashkenazi culture and the development of post modern multi-center society with multi-culturalism. In addition, will be give attention to the impact of globalization and the “Americanization” of Israeli culture.

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. Independent Work: Six groups will present in the class six Israeli myths, or cultural motifs. Each student will than write an independent paper on his group's topic. (See below).
4. The final exam (on Wednesday May 6 at 5:30 p.m.) will be a written comprehensive exam covering the course material.

Evaluation Criteria and Percentage of Grade
Class participation 20%
Presentation in the class 10%
Independent paper 25%
Final Exam 45%
Students who wish to have their final exams returned to them should provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

**Stay informed!**
We will begin each one of our meetings, time permitting, with a discussion of current events in Israel. Therefore students are required to stay informed of the latest event 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](http://www.haaretz.com)) and the *Jerusalem Post* (leans right) ([www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com)); *Jerusalem Report* (Internet) ([www.jrep.com](http://www.jrep.com)); Jerusalem Media and Communication Center ([www.jmcc.org](http://www.jmcc.org)). Knowledge of current developments, especially events relating to material covered in the course, will influence the participation grade.

**Paper Assignment**

Papers must be typewritten or computer printed in 12 pt. font size. Each paper, up to 5 pages, 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.

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**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](http://www.american.edu/american/registrar/text/t_aic.html)).

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**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:**

Student who have no knowledge of Israel are advised to start with a basic but good introduction to the topic:


**Recommended:**

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


**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. The student is responsible for keeping tabs with the pace of the lectures and readings.

**Week 1: January 14, Course Overview and Introduction**

**Required Reading:**

Lissak and Horowitz, Troubles in Utopia p. chapter 1. [on E-reserves]


**Recommended reading:**


**Week 2. January 21, Characteristics of Israeli Society**

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**


**Documentary: Tekuma**

**Week 3. January 28,**

**Myths, Collective Identity and memory**

**Required Reading:**

Introduction to independent work. Following this meeting six independent groups up to five students will work on seven themes and present each one for up to 30 minutes. Topics are:
- The Holocaust and its impact on Israeli Society
- The myth of the Sabra,
- Massadah
- The Akedah
- Time Cycle
- Self Identity
- Other Myths

**Examples for reading on National Myths:**


**The Holocaust:**


**The Sabra:**


Yael Zerubavel "The "Mythological Sabra" and Jewish Past: Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities", *Israel Studies* 7(2), 2002, pp. 115-120. 115-144


**Massada:**

**Self identity:**

**The Akedah:**

Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons*, pp. 139-193;


**Week 4. February 4,**

**Israeli society through the Theatre:**
Visit to J Theater at Washington JCC: *The Accident*

**Week 5. February 11,**

**The Six Tribes of Israel: (1) The Ashkenazim**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Students Presentation: The Holocaust**

**Week 6. February 18,**

**The History of Gender (in)equality in Israel**


**Week 7. February 25,**

**The Six Tribes of Israel: (2) The Mizrahim**
Required Reading:

Recommended reading:

The Movie: Salah Shabati

Students Presentation: The Sabra

Week 8. March 4,
The Six Tribes of Israel: (3-4) The Religious groups

Required Reading:


Recommended reading:


Students Presentation: Massadah

Week 9. March 11,
Spring Break

Week 10. March 18,
The Six Tribes of Israel: (5) Russian speaking Israelis

Required Reading:

Recommended reading:


Students Presentation: The Akedah

Week 11, March 25,
Israel's Six Tribes: (6) The Palestinians

Required Reading:
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)


Recommended reading:

The Arabs of Israel after Oslo: Localization of the national struggle, Israel Studies (220) 3(1) pp. 1-44.


Students Presentation: Time Cycle

Week 12, April 1,
Ethiopians, Work immigrants, & others;
From Melting Pot to Multi Culturalism

Required Reading:


Recommended reading:


Students Presentation: Self Identity

Week 13, April 8,
Pessach, No Class
Week 14. April 15,
The Cultural War: Americanization, Globalization; Jerusalem v. Tel-Aviv

Required Reading:


Recommended reading:


Students Presentation: Other Myths

Week 15. April 22,
Wrap up

Required Reading:


Week 16. April 29,
Spring Study Day (and Independence Day Yom Ha'atzma'ut)

Week 17. May 6
Final Exam

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