

JSTU-J 304
Jews, Muslims and Christians in Israel
Professor Daphne Tsimhoni
Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:30-8:00 pm
Class: Ballantine Hall 241

Office place: GB (Goodbody Hall) 312
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:00 pm
Or by appointment
Office phone: 812-855-8923
Email: dtsimhon@indiana.edu

Jews, Muslims and Christians in Israel

Established as the nation state of the Jewish people, Israel has an outstanding ethno-religious socio-cultural diverse population. This course will introduce the students to this diversity and its impact on Israeli politics and society. We will explore the historical origins of this complexity: The religious significance of the Holy Land, the preservation of Ottoman and British mandatory traditions, the 1948 war and the mass immigration to Israel from Europe and the Middle East. We will examine the socio-cultural and religious diversity within the Jewish majority that extends far beyond the common division between western European (Ashkenazim) and Middle Eastern (Mizrahim) and the Palestinian Arab minority that is no less complex and includes Muslims, Christians, Druze and smaller communities.

Based on socio-historical researches and documentaries, we will discuss the following issues: Is the breach between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel bridgeable? Is there a 'demographic issue' in Israel? and if so, what is its impact on Israeli politics? Who are the 'Arab Jews'? Can they form a bridge between Jews and Arabs? Is there an Israeli identity? What are its components?

The course will discuss various approaches to the Israeli society as based on reading, documents, websites and videos that will be shown in class.

Course Requirements:

Two short mid-term papers and a final essay. Specific requirements will be announced in due course. Active participation in class meetings is required.

Grades will be weighed as follows:

Two mid-term papers: 50 percent (25 percent each)

Final essay: 40 percent

Active participation in class: 10 percent

Required Books: To be purchased at the university bookstore. Other reading material will be posted on the web.

Dowty, Alan, *The Jewish State A Century Later*, Berkeley:

University of California Press, 1998

Rosenthal, Donna, *The Israelis, Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land*,

New York: Free Press, 2003

Course outline and reading:

Note: Topics may overlap for more than one week due to film screening and discussion.

I. Introduction: *The Origins of Israel and Israeli Society*

T Jan. 29: Who are the Israelis? The Zionist revolution and Jewish immigration into Palestine during the British mandate; The Zionist ideology, ethnicity and social stratification

Required Reading: Wasserstein, pp. 5-23, 31-39; Dowty, pp. 51-60

Th Jan. 31: Continued

II. *Israeli Society during the First Decades of the State of Israel:*

T Feb. 5: The mass immigration to the state of Israel during the 1950s and 1960s; Building the state's democracy and political institutions; The 'melting pot' ideology, its impact on Israeli society and the making of the Ashkenazi political dominance

Required Reading: Dowty, pp. 61-84; Rosenthal, pp. 97-112; Shafir-Peled, pp. 66-73

Th. Feb. 7: Continued

III. Middle Eastern 'Mizrahi' Jews

T Feb. 12: Ethnicity and social stratification; Who are the 'Arab Jews'? The rise of 'Mizrahi' identity

Required Reading: Dowty, pp. 148-156; Rosenthal, pp. 113-129; Shafir-Peled, pp. 74-95

Th Feb. 14: Continued

IV. *The Arabs in Israel*

T Feb. 19: The origins of the Arabs in Israel; minority rights, inequality in law and practice; Israelization or Palestinazation?

Required Reading: Dowty, pp. 184-215; Rosenthal, pp. 247-277; Optional: op.cit, 278-291

Th Feb. 21: Continued

V. *Minorities within Minority: the Christians and Druze*

T Feb. 26:

The Christians in Israel

Required Reading: Tsimhoni, Christians, pp. 124-152; Rosenthal, pp. 305-323

Th Feb. 28:

The Druze in Israel

Required Reading: Rosenthal, pp 292-304

VI. *The Impact of the 1967 War and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*

T Th Mar. 4:

The rise of messianism and the search for the biblical origins; settlements in the occupied territories and their impact on Israeli society

Dowty, pp. 226-243; Shafir-Peled, pp. 159-183

Th Mar. 6: Continued

March 8-March 16 Spring break

VII. *The Expansion of Religious Ethnicity and its Impact on Israeli Politics*

T Mar. 18

The turn of Middle Eastern Mizrahi Jews to the right wing politics

The rise of the Shas party

The expansion of Ultra-Orthodox parties influence on Israeli politics

Required Reading: Dowty, pp. 159-183; Shafir-Peled, pp. 137-155

Th Mar. 20: Continued

VIII. *The Mass Immigration of the 1990s: The Russians and Ethiopians*

T Mar. 25:

The Russian immigration and absorption in Israel

Required Reading: Ben Rafael, pp. 55-77; Shafir-Peled, pp. 308-323

The Ethiopians in Israel

Required Reading: Rosenthal, pp 148-169

Th Mar. 27: Continued

IX. *Religion, Demography and Nationalism in Israel*

T April 1:

Will Israel retain its Jewish majority? The discourse in Israel on

Demography and Jewish/Israeli nationalism

Required Reading: Wasserstein, pp. 25-30, 167-171

CBS data

Th April 3: Continued

X. *Jewish-Arab relations in Israel*

T April 8:

Required Reading:

Smooha, Ethnicity, pp. 300-319

Th April 10: Continued

XI. *Ethnicity and the struggle for constitutional and human rights*

T April 15:

Required Reading: Shafir-Peled, pp. 260-307

Th April 17: Continued

XII. *Summary:*

T April 22:

Will the State of Israel remain a Jewish democratic state?

Is there an Israeli identity? Israeli nationalism?

Required Reading: Dowty, pp. 249-255

Th April 24: End

Bibliography:

Ben Rafael, Eliezer et.al, *Building a Diaspora, Russian Jews in Israel, Germany and the USA*, Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Shafir, Gershon and Peled, Yoav, *Being Israeli, the Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

Smooha, Sammy, "Ethnicity as a Factor in the Israeli Jews' Attitude toward Arabs,"

pp. 300-319 in *Kulturen und Konflikte im Vergleich: Comparing Cultures and Conflicts: Festschrift für Theodor Hanf*, edited by Peter Molt and Helga Dickow, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007

Tsimhoni, Daphne, "The Christians in Israel: Aspects of Integration and the Search for Identity of a Minority within Minority," in *Middle Eastern Minorities and Diasporas*, Edited by Ma'oz Moshe and Sheffer, Gabriel, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002, pp. 124-152

Wasserstein, Bernard, *Israelis and Palestinians: Why do they fight? Can they stop?* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004

Video Clips to be screened and discussed from the following list:

Lul, (excerpts) - how Israelis accept aliya

Salah Shabati – relations between the Ashkenazi kibbutzim and middle eastern immigrants

Life according to Agfa – the Israeli internal ethnic strife

Wedding in Galilee: the Arab collective memory

The Druze bride – the national dilemma of the Golan heights Druze

Medurat ha-shevet - life and concepts of Israeli settlers in the West bank

A Trumpet in the Wadi – An impossible love between a Russian immigrant and an Arab girl in Haifa