

# SIS-319.009: U.S.-Israel Relations

**Instructor:** Dr. Guy Ziv  
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**Office:** EQB 100B  
(The Old SIS Building)

**Meeting Time:** MON 2:35 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.  
**Classroom:** SIS 102  
**Office Hours:** WED 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.,  
TH 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
& by appointment

## Overview

This course explores the evolution of U.S. relations with Israel, from pre-1948 American Zionism to President Truman's controversial decision to recognize the Jewish state in 1948 to America's role as Israel's greatest supporter in the world today. Along the way, we will examine key milestones in U.S.-Israel relations, including President Truman's controversial decision to buck the U.S. foreign policy establishment and formally recognize the state of Israel; the wartime American airlift in 1973; the U.S. role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, from Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy to the two Camp David summits and beyond; and the U.S. role in providing military, economic, and diplomatic aid to the Jewish state. We will analyze throughout how a combination of sentimental, domestic political, and strategic factors have led to the formation of a wholly unique bilateral relationship characterized at once by both tight bonds and inherent tensions.

## Course Objectives

This course aims to provide you with an in-depth understanding of major themes, historical events, and personalities in American-Israeli relations. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the nature of America's "special relationship" with Israel; U.S. arms sales and foreign aid to Israel; the roles of the "Israel lobby," the Christian Right, and public opinion; and U.S. mediation efforts in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. You will become familiar with the key players and issues, as well as with the complexities of U.S. diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. We will utilize theoretical, case-based, and active-learning approaches as we explore these issues in detail.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be:

1. Thoroughly familiar with the key issues and themes in U.S.-Israel relations.
2. Able to identify seminal events, their implications, and the personalities associated with them.
3. Able to better understand America's complex role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking.
4. Able to critically assess the nature of America's "special relationship" with Israel.

## Required Readings

- William B. Quandt, *Peace Process*, Third Edition (Washington, D.C. and Berkeley: The Brookings Institution Press and the University of California Press, 2005).
- Articles will be accessible on Blackboard under "Content."
- You are also expected to regularly monitor news coverage on U.S.-Israel relations – for example, by reading *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/>) and *Haaretz* (<http://www.haaretz.com/>).

## Academic Integrity Code Statement

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

## Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www.prepared.american.edu](http://www.prepared.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

## Laptop Policy

Any potential benefits derived from using a laptop in this class are outweighed by the potential distractions – to you, to fellow students, and to the professor. You are asked, therefore, to refrain from using a laptop in SIS-319.

## Criteria for Evaluation

- Class Participation: 20%
- Short Reflection Paper: 15%
- Midterm: 25%
- Group Presentation: 10%
- Final Exam (In-Class): 30%

## Grading Scale

A 94-100%	A- 90-93%	B+ 87-89%
B 84-86%	B- 80-83%	C+ 77-79%
C 74-76%	C- 70-73%	D 69-60%
F 59% and below		

## Class Participation

You are required to attend class regularly and on time; come prepared having done the assigned readings; and participate actively in class discussions. To do well in the participation component of the class, you are expected to develop arguments that engage the readings for that week and not just express your opinion. **Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade** unless these absences are excused by official documentation, such as a physician's note. Please keep in mind that we meet only once a week, so it is important that you do your best to make it to each and every session (and on time). If, however, you are going to miss a class for whatever reason, please provide 24 hours notice, in writing.

## **Midterm**

The midterm, which will cover the material from the first half of the course, is scheduled to take place on **Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup>**. To do well, be sure to keep up with the assigned readings and take good notes in class.

## **Short Reflection Paper**

You are expected to submit a 2-3 page, double-spaced analysis (12-point, Times New Roman font) of *one* of the first four sets of readings (Weeks of 1/23 – 2/13). Specifically, you are to consult at least *two* of the articles and/or book chapters assigned for this class, *excluding* any links to various websites. Please do not exceed three pages. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to (a) synthesize the common theme(s) and (b) think critically about these pieces. The analysis is due at the start of class on **Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**. Please make sure you have printed it out *and* stapled it before handing it in. Do not submit your paper electronically. Also, make sure you number your pages and that your name, class info, and date are at the top of the first page. Please choose an appropriate title for your paper as well. You do not need a cover sheet for this assignment, nor do you need a bibliography, however, you should be sure to refer to the specific readings you are analyzing.

## **Group Presentation**

During the last month of the course, you will be placed in a group; together, you will produce a one-page (single-spaced), double-sided paper on a given issue that will be assigned to you a few weeks in advance. Each group will present its findings to the rest of the class on **Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**.

## **Final Exam**

The final exam will be comprehensive. If you attend class regularly, keep up with the readings, and take good notes, you will likely do well. The exam will be held on **Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:35 p.m.**

# Outline of Topics

1. **Monday, 1/23: Introduction**
  - Introductions and Overview of Course Objectives, Topics and Expectations
  - A Brief Survey of U.S.-Israel Relations
  
2. **Monday, 1/30: Pre-1948 American Zionism**
  - Zionists vs. Assimilationists
  - American Jewish Zionism
  - American Christian Zionism

### **Readings:**

- Mark A. Raider, *The Emergence of American Zionism* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), Ch. 1.
- Walter Russell Mead, "The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (July/August 2008), pp. 28-46.
- Timothy P. Weber, "How Evangelicals Became Israel's Best Friend," *Christianity Today*, Vol. 42, No. 11 (October 5, 1998), pp. 38-49.

3. **Monday, 2/6: Recognition of the State of Israel (1948)**
  - The 1947 UN Partition Plan
  - Truman's Controversial Decision

**Readings:**

- The Truman Library on Truman's Recognition of Israel:  
[http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/israel/large/index.php](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/israel/large/index.php)
- Lawrence Davidson, "Truman the Politician and the Establishment of Israel," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (Summer 2010), pp. 28-42.
- Michael Ottolenghi, "Harry Truman's Recognition of Israel," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (December 2004), pp. 963-988.

**4. Monday, 2/13: The Great Powers and the Middle East Arms Race in the 1950s**

- The U.S. Arms Embargo vs. French Arms
- The Suez Crisis

**Readings:**

- Avi Shlaim, "Israel, the Great Powers, and the Middle East Crisis of 1958," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May 1999).
- Guy Ziv, "Shimon Peres and the French-Israeli Alliance, 1954-1959," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 2010), pp. 406-429.
- The Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission on the Suez Crisis:  
<http://www.eisenhowermemorial.org/stories/Suez.htm>
- Exchange of Letters Between Eisenhower and Ben-Gurion Over Suez Crisis:  
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign+Relations/Israels+Foreign+Relations+sinc+1947/1947-1974/9+Exchange+of+Letters+-+Eisenhower+-+Ben-Gurion+-+7-8.htm>
- Recommended: Isaac Alteras, *Eisenhower and Israel: U.S.-Israeli Relations, 1953-1960* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

**5. Monday, 2/20: The Deepening of a Special Relationship in the 1960s & 1970s**

- Major Arms Sales to Israel
- The 1967 War and the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership
- The 1973 Yom Kippur War and the U.S. Airlift
- **Short Reflection Paper Due Today.**

**Readings:**

- Quandt book, Ch. 1-4.
- Douglas Little, "The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (November 1993), pp. 563-585.
- Noam Kochavi, "Joining the Conservative Brotherhood: Israel, President Nixon, and the Political Consolidation of the 'Special Relationship,' 1969-73," *Cold War History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (November 2008), pp. 449-480.
- Recommended: Abraham Ben-Zvi, *Decade of Transition: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Origins of the American-Israeli Alliance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
- Recommended: Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

**6. Monday, 2/27: Shuttle Diplomacy and Camp David**

- Kissinger's Step-by-Step Approach
- Disengagement Agreements
- Camp David Accords

**Readings:**

- Quandt book, Ch. 5-7.
- Shibley Telhami, "The Camp David Accords: A Case of International Bargaining," *Institute for the Study of Diplomacy* (1992), pp. 1-45.

**7. Monday, 3/5: Madrid and Oslo**

- The Madrid Peace Conference
- The Oslo Process
- **Midterm**

**Readings:**

- Quandt book, Ch. 8-11.
- Melissa Boyle Mahle, "A Political-Security Analysis of the Failed Oslo Process," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 79-96.

**\*\*\* Monday, 3/12: Spring Break – NO CLASS \*\*\*****8. Monday, 3/19: Camp David II and Taba: The Clinton Years**

- Camp David II and Taba
- The Second Intifada
- Film: "Elusive Peace: Israel and the Arabs" [Part I]

**Readings:**

- Quandt book, Ch. 12.
- Benny Morris, "Camp David and After: An Exchange (1. An Interview with Ehud Barak)," *The New York Review of Books* (June 13, 2002).
- Robert Malley and Hussein Agha, "Camp David and After: An Exchange (2. A Reply to Ehud Barak)," *The New York Review of Books* (June 13, 2002).
- Robert O. Freedman, "U.S. Policy Toward the Middle East in Clinton's Second Term," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March 1999), pp. 55-79.
- Recommended: Jeremy Pressman, "What Happened at Camp David and Taba," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Autumn 2003), pp. 5-43.
- Recommended: Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

**9. Monday, 3/26: The Road Map and Annapolis: The Bush Years**

- The Road Map
- Annapolis
- Film: "Elusive Peace: Israel and the Arabs" [Part II]

**Readings:**

- Quandt book, Ch. 13.
- Ari Barbalat, "A Friend Like This: Re-Evaluating Bush and Israel," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XV, No. 4 (Winter 2008), pp. 91-111.
- Jeremy Pressman, "The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East," *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Spring 2009), pp. 149-179.

**10. Monday, 4/2: Obama and Israel**

- The Cairo Speech
- Tension Over Settlements

**Readings:**

- Ira Chernus, "Obama's Israel-Palestine Gamble," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (September 16, 2009).
- Rob Malley and Peter Harling, "Beyond Moderates and Militants," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 5 (September/October 2010), pp. 18-29.
- Aaron David Miller, "What Obama Really Thinks About Netanyahu," *CNN* (November 11, 2011). Available on-line: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/10/opinion/miller-obama-netanyahu-open-mike/index.html>

**11. Monday, 4/9: The U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership**

- Strategic Asset or Liability?
- Foreign Aid to Israel

**Readings:**

- Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel Since 1948: A 'Special Relationship'?" *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 231-262.
- Scott Lasensky, "Underwriting Peace in the Middle East: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Limits of Economic Inducements," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 89-105.
- Shibil Siddiqi, "The Divergence of America and Israel," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (July 12, 2010).
- Recommended: "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," CRS Report for Congress, January 2, 2008. Available at [www.fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf](http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf)
- Recommended: Kenneth Organski, *The \$36 Billion Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

**12. Monday, 4/16: The Walt-Mearsheimer Thesis**

- The "Israel Lobby"

**Readings:**

- John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy." Available on-line: <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0040.pdf>
- Mitchell Plitnick, "De-Mystifying American Middle East Policy: A Response to Steven Walt and John Mearsheimer." Available on-line: [http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/talk/blogs/mitchell\\_plitnick/2007/09/demystifying-american-middle-e.php](http://tpmcafe.talkingpointsmemo.com/talk/blogs/mitchell_plitnick/2007/09/demystifying-american-middle-e.php)
- George P. Schultz, "The 'Israel Lobby' Myth," *U.S. News & World Report* (September 9, 2007): <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2007/09/09/the-israel-lobby-myth>
- Dov Waxman, "The Israel Lobbies: A Survey of the Pro-Israel Community in the United States," *Israel Studies Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2010), pp. 5-28.
- Recommended: John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 2007).
- Recommended: Benny Morris, "And Now for Some Facts," *The New Republic*, 234, 17 (2006), pp. 23-29.

**13. Monday, 4/23: The Intersection of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy**

- The Israel Factor in the U.S. Presidential Campaign

**Readings:**

- Mitchell Bard, "Obama and the Partisan Jews," *Sun Sentinel* (December 20, 2011): <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/florida-jewish-journal/opinion/fl-jjps-bard-1221-20111220,0,7900907.story>
- Scott Clement, "Does Israel Matter in 2012?" *Foreign Policy* (December 7, 2011): [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/07/does\\_israel\\_matter\\_in\\_us\\_el](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/07/does_israel_matter_in_us_el)  
[elections](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/07/does_israel_matter_in_us_el)
- Michael A. Cohen, "The Chosen People?" *Foreign Policy* (December 12, 2011): [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/12/the\\_chosen\\_people](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/12/the_chosen_people)
- Read current news stories regarding the Mideast peace process as well as the Israel factor in the presidential campaign.

**14. Monday, 4/30: Group Presentations**

- *Group Presentations and Papers Due*

**Readings:**

- Research for Group Paper and Presentation

**15. Monday, 5/7: Wrap-Up Session**

- Review for Final Exam
- Course Evaluations

**\*\*\* FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:35 p.m. \*\*\***