Zionism, Israel and the Modern World

Dr. David Mendelsson

JS 214

Mondays and Wednesdays: 3:30 – 4:50 p.m.
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Course Description

This course will begin with an examination of the Zionist idea; its common denominators and variegated factions. Due consideration will be given to the late-nineteenth century European context in order to appreciate the socio-economic, political and cultural factors that impacted upon the Zionist movement. The course will explore how competing visions for the Jewish state responded to the realities of Palestine; its local Arab population, Ottoman rulers and existing Jewish population. Following the First World War a new set of circumstances emerged for the Arab and Jewish populations particularly as European powers discussed their respective desiderata for the area. The class will discuss the McMahon-Hussein correspondence, the Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour Declaration in order to appreciate whether Palestine was "a twice promised land." Following further Jewish migration to Palestine, land purchase and other nation-building activities, the Arabs of Palestine rebelled first in 1920-1, again in 1929 and later initiated a Revolt that spanned three years from 1936-9. The class will examine the various British attempts to restore law and order and placate the ambitions of the Arab national movement whilst at the same time not giving the appearance of abandoning its commitments to the Zionist movement. The course will study the Peel Commission partition plan (1937) and the reactions of the Zionists, Palestinian Arabs and emerging Arab states. Why in 1939 did Britain withdraw from partition and recommend serious limitations on Jewish immigration and land purchase as well as the establishment of a single Palestine state? The course will discuss Arab and Zionist approaches towards the Allied war effort as well as their respective attitudes towards the future of the territory in a post-war settlement. Following the end of hostilities, the Zionist endeavor for statehood reached a zenith initially by diplomacy and thereafter combined with violence against the Mandate authority. The course explains the various claims as to why the British left Palestine, the recommendations of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine and its majority proposal for the partition of the territory. Students will learn of the first Arab-Israeli war, the refugee crisis and the Rhodes armistice agreements. Students will be introduced to the writings of the New Historians and their critics.

At this half way point the course will turn its attention to internal and external dilemmas that faced and indeed continue to face the Israeli state. The schism
surrounding religious – secular relations will be studied both in its manifestation in the early years of statehood as well in ensuing years. The claim that Israel adopted a position of consociational politics in this arena will be examined. A further field of study will be the approach of the hegemonic Labor movement towards the Mizrachi-Oriental immigrations of the 1950s and early 1960s. Expressions of alienation and discrimination will be explored as will the claim that the ethnic gap remains "real" and not only symbolic in contemporary Israel. The course will proceed to examine other competing voices in Israeli society including those of its Arab citizens. It will ask whether existing tensions can be accommodated by a reaffirmation of the Jewish-democratic characterization of the state or whether alternative paradigms might be considered.

The various expressions of the Israel-Arab conflict will be given due consideration as well as the efforts at peace making, particularly those with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians. The failure of the negotiations at Camp David in 2000 will be addressed as well as the second intifada. It is hoped that there will be sufficient time to ponder the outcomes of the war in Gaza and the Israeli national elections of February 2009.

**Required Course books:**
Students should purchase:
Itamar Rabinovich, and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *Israel in the Middle East* (Brandeis, Hanover: 2008).

**Class Requirements:**

*Attendance and Participation:* Much of our time will be devoted to class discussion. In order to achieve thoughtful and meaningful conversations it will be incumbent on all of us to undertake the necessary preparation by completing the readings as indicated in the syllabus. Please note that participation is an important factor in your final grade; more than two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of that portion of your grade.

*Writing Assignments:* During the course of the semester there will be four written assignments, 3 pages each, on topics that emerge from class discussions on the reading. The dates when these are due are listed below. A full description of the assignments will be handed out in class.

*Examination:* There will be a mid-term and final examination. These will be based upon material found in the readings, discussions, and lectures. Each exam will be divided into two parts; section A will involve long essay answers and section B will involve single paragraph answers dealing with key concepts.

Final grades will be determined along the following guidelines:
Participation: 10%
Short papers (four): 10% × 4 = 40%
Mid-term test 25%
Final test. (Students who prefer to write a paper should consult with the professor): 25%

What Do Grades Mean?
An A requires innovation, inspiration, and a superior execution of all the requirements of an assignment.
A B meets all the requirements of an assignment very well.
A C fulfils the requirements of an assignment satisfactorily.
A D meets the bare minimum requirements of an assignment.
An F indicates that one has not met the bare minimum requirements of an assignment. Plagiarism will result in an F.

A = 90%-100%
B+ = 86%-89%
B = 80%-85%
C+ = 76%-70%
C = 70-75%
D = 60%-69%

Please Note: All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Please do not send email attachments. Please remember that you must complete all course requirements in order to pass this class; failure to finish any of the required assignments or examinations will result in a failing grade.

A note about plagiarism: intentional plagiarism of any source is a violation of intellectual property rights and constitutes a break with the USC academic honor code. Please read and be familiar with the University of Southern California’s definition of and policy regarding plagiarism and cheating as described in the University Student Conduct Code. The first of many pages that outline students’ responsibilities and obligations can be found at http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. A very helpful guide for how to avoid plagiarism is available at http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/ug_plag.htm. Intentional plagiarism of any source and cheating of any variety will result in a failing grade for the course. If you do not understand exactly what kind of writing, quoting, citing, or researching constitutes plagiarism, I am happy to explain both how to recognize and how to avoid it. Please ask.

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements (e.g., note- and/or test-taking), please register with USC’s Office of Disabilities Services and Programs contact me within the first two weeks of class. Every effort will be made to accommodate those with registered disabilities.

Please turn off all pagers, cell phones, wireless PDAs and other electronic communication devices before class. When any of your electronic devices (including your cell phone) rings or buzzes or lights up or vibrates, you disturb the class, your classmates, your instructor and the environment of mutually beneficial learning. In addition, you take valuable time away from our class discussion and community. Accordingly, in order to foster a positive environment for learning, please limit your computer activity to note taking or the reading of documents. As you know, it is a privilege to use laptops in the classroom setting; please do not abuse Wi-Fi access.
Course Outline
(* denotes required reading)

1. Monday 10th January

Introduction: Zionism in its Historical Context and the Common Denominators of the Zionist Idea.

2. Wednesday 12th January

Old Yishuv and New Yishuv/Herzl and the Rise of Political Zionism
*Sachar I, pp. 18-64.
*Hertzberg, pp. 204-226 (Herzl).

3. Wednesday 19th January

Zionism as a Secular Jewish Identity
*Hertzberg, pp. 262-269 (Ahad Ha’am), 293-295 (Berdyczewski), 390-395, (Katznelson) 411-414 (Pines).
Shimoni, pp. 269-305.
Distribution of **First** Assignment: Herzl, Ahad Ha'am and the Integrationists to be submitted by Wednesday 2\textsuperscript{nd} February

4. & 5 Monday 24\textsuperscript{th} and Wednesday 26\textsuperscript{th} January

**The Second Aliyah, the Yishuv during World War I and the Balfour Declaration**

Morris, Righteous, 83-97

*Letter from Sir Henry McMahon to the Sharif Hussain, 24.10.1915 in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 11-12, Sykes Picot Agreement, Laqueur and Rubin, p. 13-16,
*Balfour Declaration in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 16.

6. Monday 31\textsuperscript{st} January

**The Mandate for Palestine and the Churchill Memorandum**

*Morris, Righteous, pp. 98-111.
*The Mandate for Palestine in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 30-36.
*Churchill Memorandum in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 25-29.

7. Wednesday 2\textsuperscript{nd} February

**Developments 1929-1931 and the Arab Question in Zionism**

*Morris, Righteous, pp. 111-120.
*MacDonald Letter in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 36-41
*Kaplan I, pp. 319-322 (Jabotinsky), 327-333 (Ben Gurion), 333-340 (Buber).
Distribution of Second Assignment: Compare and contrast two Zionist thinkers and their approach towards the Arabs of Palestine. To be submitted by Wednesday 16th February.

8 & 9. Monday 7th and Wednesday 9th February

The Partition Plan and the MacDonald White Paper
*Morris, Righteous, pp.138-160
Sachar I, pp. 195-226.
*Selection from the Peel Commission Report in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 41-43.

10 & 11. Monday 14th and Wednesday 16th February

Developments during World War II/The Struggle for the State
Biltmore Program in Laqueur, pp. 77-79.
*Selections from UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in Laqueur, 65-77, Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 61-63.
*Evyatar Friesel, 'On the Myth of the Connection Between the Holocaust and the Creation of Israel,' Israel Affairs 14: 3, 446-466.

12. Wednesday 23rd February

The 1948 War and its Aftermath
*UN General Assembly Resolution 194, Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 89-92.
Sachar I, pp. 315-353.
Israel-Egypt Armistice in Hurewitz, pp. 299-304.
Morris, Righteous, pp. 191-249.
Efraim Karsh, Palestine Betrayed (New Haven, Yale, 2010)

13 & 14. Monday 28th February and Wednesday 2nd March

**Mass Migration**

View Film: The Homecoming (Episode of Tkuma TV series)

Distribution of third Assignment: Compare and Contrast the Smooha article on the Ethnic gap in Israel with the documentary film, The Ingathering. To be submitted by Monday 21st March

15 & 16. Monday 7th and Wednesday 9th March

**The Haredim in Israel**

Either:
Or:
**Shas**


Peter Hirschberg, *The World of Shas* (New York, 1999).


17. Monday 21\(^{st}\) March

**Religion and State**


18. Wednesday 23\(^{rd}\) March

**The Six Day War and its Aftermath**

Sachar I, pp. 615-666.

Gilbert, pp. 67-69, 73-74, 77-78, 81.

* The Khartoum Resolutions in Rabinovich and Reinharz, p.241-2.


* Allon Plan in Rabinovich and Reinharz, p. 257.

19. Monday 28\textsuperscript{th} March

\textbf{The Yom Kippur War}


Distribution of fourth assignment on the issue of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. To be submitted Monday 11\textsuperscript{th} April.

20. Wednesday 30\textsuperscript{th} March

\textbf{Gush Emumim (The Faithful Ones)}


Aviezer Ravitzky, \textit{Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism} (Chicago, 1997): 79-144


21. Monday 4\textsuperscript{th} April

**Arabs in Israel**

Orr Commission; Report on Clashes between the Security Forces and Israeli Citizens in October 2000, pp. 479-484, Rabinovich and Reinharz


22. Wednesday 6\textsuperscript{th} April

**The (First) Lebanon War**

View Film Waltz with Bashir

23 & 24. Monday 11\textsuperscript{th} and Wednesday 13\textsuperscript{th} April

**Peace Process and Current Crisis**


Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 518-521
Morris, Righteous Victims, pp. 611-675.
Sachar, pp. 977-2001

Camp David and After—Continued, Benny Morris, Ehud Barak, Reply by Hussein Agha, Robert Malley, New York Review of Books
Benny Morris, One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009).

25. Monday 18th April

A Changing Israel
Oz Almog, 'The Sabra Genome in the Israeli Mentality,' Tikkun May 2008

26. Wednesday 20th April

Current Debate: Jewish State, Democratic State
*Leon Wieseltier, 'Israel, Palestine and the Return of the Bi-National Fantasy,' The

Benny Morris, *One State, Two States; Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009).


27. Wednesday 27th April

**Review**

**Final Exam – Date to be determined**

**Bibliography**


Rabinovich, Itamar and Reinharz, Jehuda, eds., Israel in the Middle East (Brandeis, Hanover: 2008). (Hereafter Rabinovich and Reinharz)

Rosenthal, Donna The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land (Free Press, NY 2003)


Shimoni, Gideon, The Zionist Ideology (Hanover and London: 1995). (hereafter Shimoni)