Palestine 1948: Myth, Memory and Historiography
University of Maryland Syllabus (August-October 2014)

Tel Aviv University
International Program
Fall Semester, Monday 14:15-19:30

University of Maryland
(UMD Monday-Wednesday 9:00 – 10:50 am)

TAU: Dr. Anat Stern, anat.stern@mail.huji.ac.il
Office Hours: By appointment
UMD: Dr. Daniel Zisenwine, dzisenwine@gmail.com
Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description: The 1948 first Arab-Israeli war still provokes multi-dimensional debates, both in the academic and public circles. In the Palestinian and Arab collective memory, the war is engraved as the Nakba – the catastrophe, while Israel celebrates it as its day of Independence. For both communities it is the formative event of their National history. In recent decades, Israel’s “New Historians”, alongside other researchers, contributed to changes in the way Historians, and even the Israeli public, see their past. In this course we will attempt to provide the students with basic knowledge and analytical tools to search for historical facts and to decipher narratives and memories.

Note: This course will follow the UMD academic calendar. The class will begin Sept. 3. From mid-October to December students will meet (virtually) in their Monday class with their TAU counterparts, and Wednesday on their own with Prof. Zisenwine.

Aims: The course will explore the historical background of the Jewish and Palestinian communities during the first half of the twentieth century. It will discuss the current
that lead to the war and discuss the eruption of the first stage of fighting, the “civil war” of “inter-communal war” (December 1947- May 1948), and later on the Arab armies’ invasion of May 1948 and the second stage of inter-state war, until the ceasefire agreements on 1949. We will examine both national narratives, and the debate around the New Historians, while trying to realize the often complex and ambiguous “truth”.

**Grading:**

Active participation in class 10%
Quizzes 10%
Mid Term Exam 30%
Short Term Paper 20%
Final Paper 30%

**Requirements for the UMD sessions (apart from the joint sessions with Tel Aviv University):**

These sessions will provide vital background material to the joint sessions with Tel Aviv University students. Students will need to gain good familiarity with the topic through class lectures and discussions. Active participation is encouraged and will be graded (see above). Several short quizzes on the class readings will be given during this period, along with an in-class midterm exam that will cover these background sessions. This exam will consist of several essay questions on the course themes. In addition, students will submit a short term paper and a longer final paper that will already cover topics and themes taught together with TAU.

**Book Purchase – Recommended for this part of the course:**


**Internet research guidelines:** It is hard to overestimate the importance of the internet, or its contribution, to the build up of contemporary knowledge of the world
around us. Albeit it needs to be used wisely. This means that one must be selective and careful when relating to internet-based sources, identifying and distinguishing opinions from facts, and journalism from academics. Most importantly, one should make clear reference to internet sources, allowing the reader the opportunity to consult these resources as and if required. Please also note that the ‘world-wide web’ – www – exists in many languages. Many sources about Israel in English, for instance, will be aimed at tourists or readers living primarily in English-speaking regions of the world. Sources might differ when reading them in other languages. Use the internet critically. You can never be too safe, so do ensure both the reader and yourself that you know well what your internet sources are.

University of Maryland Syllabus (September-October):
(Note: Some of the readings below will be suggested readings, not required.)

Week 1: Introduction and Preliminary Discussion


Lawrence Silberstein, New perspectives on Israeli History; The Early years of the State (New York University Press, 1991), pp. 3-23.

Week 2: The Origins of Jewish Nationalism


Anthony D. Smith, Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism (----), pp. 3-21.

**Week 3: Arabs and Jews in Ottoman Palestine**

Israel Kolatt, "The Organization of the Jewish Population of Palestine and the Development of its Political Consciousness before World War I", in Moshe Maoz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 311-245.


**Week 4: Post World War I Settlements**


**Week 5: The Emergence of Palestinian Nationalism**


**Week 6: British Policy in Palestine**


**Week 7: Towards a Jewish State**


Week 8: The Arab Revolt
Kimmerling and Migdal, pp. 51-63; 96-123.

Week 9: The End of the British Mandate:
Steven Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 16-44.

**Joint Sessions with Tel Aviv University Students**

**Book Purchases – Recommended**


**October 27th, 2014**

1. **Historical Background I: Palestine in the 19th century and the emergence of Zionism; Palestine under the British Mandate**


2. **Historical Background II:**


**October 29, 2014**

3. The British decision to withdraw from Palestine; UNSCOP and its mission

   Background on UNSCOP and parts of its report:
   


**November 3, 2014**

4. UN partition resolution, 29 November 1947: Jews, Arabs and the International arena


**November 5, 2014**

5. The first stage of the war – “the civil war” or “the inter-communal war”.


**November 10, 2014**

6. Turning points in the “civil war”: The Hagana moves to the offensive; Nachshon Operation; IZL, Lehi and Deir Yassin.


**November 12, 2014**

7. Fighting in Mixed cities. The Fall of Haifa – a Case Study and a comparison to Jaffa


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Grading:
Active participation in class 20%
Class presentation 30%
Seminar paper 50%
**Requirements:** Class meetings will consist on group discussions based on reading assignments. Each student will be responsible for reading the weekly materials: come prepared to talk about the question motivating the author, the central argument, the type of evidence used, and how the piece fits into the array of other readings. Additionally, once during the course, each student will be responsible to present and lead a short discussion about certain articles in class. The presentation must be submitted in paper form and in addition to the presentation include questions for discussion and student's critique of the reading material (1 paragraph).

During the second half of the course, each student will undertake a study of a topic related to the 1948 War. The (10-15 pages) paper can present an Arab, Jewish and international perspective or any combination of the three. Comparative and interdisciplinary studies are also welcome. The students will submit a proposal for a final paper with a clear research question and initial bibliography by XXXXX. Final paper will be submitted by the last session.

**Book Purchase – Recommended**


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Lectures and Reading Material

October 27, 2014

1. Historical Background I: Palestine in the 19th century and the emergence of Zionism; Palestine under the British Mandate


2. Historical Background II:


November 3, 2014

3. The British decision to withdraw from Palestine; UNSCOP and its mission

Background on UNSCOP and parts of its report:

http://www.mideastweb.org/unscop1947.htm


**November 10, 2014**

4. UN partition resolution, 29 November 1947: Jews, Arabs and the International arena


**November 12, 2014**

5. The first stage of the war – “the civil war” or “the inter-communal war”.


6. Turning points in the “civil war”: The Hagana moves to the offensive; Nachshon Operation; IZL, Lehi and Deir Yassin.


November 17, 2014

7. Fighting in Mixed cities. The Fall of Haifa – a Case Study and a comparison to Jaffa


November 19, 2014

Submit research question and bibliography

8. The formal birth of Israel- Israeli Declaration of Independence: the debate before declaration; decision making and meaning to the future. Change in society.


November 24, 2014

9. Jewish and Palestinian-Arab military forces balance and power relationship


December 1, 2014

10. The Inter-state war – May 15 onwards: The Arab invasion to Palestine; the aims of the invaders; the role of the Arab league; inter-Arab relations.


11. Egypt and Palestine, 1948: memories versus history

12. The Ten Days battles: Conquest of Nazareth, and What happened in Lydda and Ramla?

13. The Truces, Count Brnadotte’s plan and assassination; the second truce and “All Palestine Government”: Why a Palestinian State did not emerge in 1948. Post-second truce: Hiram and Youv operations.
December 22nd, 2014

15. Ethnic cleansing or self-defense? The debate over the Refugee Problem


December 29th, 2014

16. Conclusion: What really happened?
