

History of Modern Israel

Fall 2010

Tue. & Thr. 12:45pm-2:pm

Instructor: Ofer Ashkenazi

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Office Hours:

Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12pm, 943 Heller Hall. I strongly encourage you to come and speak to me during my office hours. If you cannot see me during those hours, please let me know by email and we can arrange another time for an appointment.

This course narrates the main events in the history of Zionism and the state of Israel, emphasizing the ways in which these events were imagined by the people who experienced and remembered them. This emphasis will provide a nuanced image of contested topics, such as the Arab-Jewish conflict; the tensions between religious and secular Jews; and the relationships between Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, Russian, Ethiopian, and Arab citizens of Israel's multicultural society. The discussion of historic events will be based on Israeli cultural imagery: newsreels, political posters, television shows, films, popular music, etc. The primary goal of the course is to become acquainted with the people and culture behind the headlines, and to encourage discussions about current developments in Israel on the basis of informed opinion.

Course Assignments

1. Current Events Journal (20%):

Students will write one short essay (1-2 double-spaced typed page) per week (starting on Sept. 16, ending on Dec. 9) based on the news from Israel. Essays should examine at least two sources for any story (please see a list of online Israeli/Palestinian news sources in the appendix below and on the class web-site, <http://moodle.umn.edu>). Entries should consist of two parts: a summary of the issue reported or the reading and a few sentences of reaction (questions, analysis). Please bring the journals to class for use as the basis for discussions of current issues, which will take place roughly once a week. **Journals will be collected and graded twice during the semester, on October 26 and December 14.**

2. Midterm (35%): A 3-4 double spaced typed page (font 12) take-home essay. The essay is based on required readings and class discussions. **Midterms should be submitted electronically, via email, on October 26, by 4:30pm.**

3. Final (45%): The exam will consist of two parts, multiple choice identifications (10%) and a 4-5 double spaced typed page take-home essay (35%). The ID section will be done in class on the day that the

essays are due, **December 14, 4:30pm**. The essay is based on required readings and class discussion. See the appended grading criteria.

4. Extra credit: while there is no formal component for engaging in discussions in class and in attending office hours, I will take such participation into account in determining your final grade. For example, if you have a B+, I may decide to award you an A-.

Class Program

You should read **all items marked as 'documents,'** as well as at least one other item assigned for each session.

Required Texts (can be purchased in the UMN University Bookstore):

- Bernard Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism*
- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*
- Amos Oz, *In Israel*

Class Reader: the reader is posted on the class website (<https://moodle.umn.edu>). You can find the readings also in the library website (under 'courses'). **All readings not from the required texts are in the Reader.**

Sept. 7: Course Introduction

Sept. 9: No Class

Sept. 14: Jews, Palestinians and the Land of Israel

- Bernard Avishai, "Introduction," *The Tragedy of Zionism*, 15-21
- Efraim Karsh, "Rewriting Israel's History," *Rethinking the Middle-East*, 169-185
- Edward Said, "Palestine and the Liberal west," *The Question of Palestine*, 15-36
- Tom Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem*, 1-8

Documents:

- Benjamin Netanyahu, *Foreign Policy Speech at Bar-Ilan University* (June 14, 2009)
- *The Palestinian National Charter*, July 1968
- "Manifesto," BILU, *Jew in the Modern World*, 421

Sept. 16: Incredible Visions, Improbable Success: The Zionist Movement To 1917

- Amos Elon, "Burning Bridges," and "Creating the Mood," *Herzl*, 162-186, 221-247
- Tom Segev, "A Contract with Jewry," *One Palestine, Complete*, 33-56
- Bernard Avishai, "Political Zionism," *The Tragedy of Zionism*, 22-45

Documents:

- *The Balfour Declaration*
- Herzl, "Solution for the Jewish Question," 533-538

Sept.21: Utopian Zionism: Second and Third Aliyot

- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 249-269
- Gideon Shimoni, "Labor Zionism," *The Zionist Ideology*, 189-205, 221-232.

Sept.23: The Emergence of Modern Hebrew Culture

- Bernard Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism*, 45-66
- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 202-223
- A.B. Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew*, 65-92
- Motti Regev, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*, 71-89
- Yael Zrubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 84-95

Sept.28: "The Passions of the Pioneers": Jewry of Muscles and the Cult of Labor

- David Biale, "Zionism as an Erotic Revolution," *People of the Body*, 283-308.
- Tod Presner, *Muscular Judaism*, 65-105
- Haim Kaufman, "Jewish Sport in the Diaspora, Yishuv and Israel," 147-158
- Anat Helman, "Sports on Shabbath," 41-64

Documents:

- Max Nordau, "The Jewry of the Muscle," *The Jew in the Modern World*, 547-548

Sept.30: Alternative Visions: Bi-Nationalism, Revisionism and Messianic Zionism

- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 295-327
- Gideon Shimoni, "Jewish Rights in the Brit-Shalom Tradition," *The Zionist Ideology*, 372-378
- Gideon Shimoni, "Revisionist Zionism," and "National-Religious Zionism," *The Zionist Ideology*, 236-267, 145-165.
- Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall, Israel and the Arab World*, 11-16
- Nurith Gerz, "Social Myths in Literary and Political Texts," *Poetics Today*, 4:4 (1986): 621-639

Documents:

- *Albert Einstein's Proposal for the Jews and Arabs of Palestine*
- Jabotinsky, "What does the Zionist Revolutionism Want?" (594-597)

Oct. 5: The British Mandate and the Formation of the Zionist Ethos

- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 102-126
- Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 219-221, 234-257
- Gregory S. Mahler, "The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate Period," *Politics and Government in Israel*, 23-34, 41-42 (tables)

Documents:

- The British *White Papers*, 1922, 1939 (excerpts)

Oct. 7: The Struggle for a Jewish State – WWII to November 1947

- Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, 447-511
- Bernard Avishai, "Independence or Colonialism?" *The Tragedy of Zionism*, 135-172
- Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million*, 97-122

Oct. 12: War of Independence/Naqba (1)

- Benny Morris, “The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem,” 42-55

Documents:

- *UN Resolution 181*, November 1949
- *The Declaration of Israel’s Independence*

Oct. 14: War of Independence/Naqba (2)**Read Both:**

- Avi Shlaim, “The Debate about 1948,” *Making Israel*, 124-146
- Efraim Karsh, “The Palestinian Right of Return,” *Rethinking the Middle-East*, 155-168

Documents:

- Chaim Weizmann, “The Farewell Speech” (1946)
- David Ben Gurion, “We Must Win this War!” (January 1948)

Oct. 19. Israel’s Policy towards its Neighbors and its Arab Citizens, 1948-1967

- Avi Shlaim, *Iron Wall*, 143-185
- Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis*, 43-67

Documents:

- A. B. Yehoshua, “Facing the Forests,” in Robert Alter, *Modern Hebrew Literature*, 357-392

Oct.21: Building a State: ‘Who is Jewish?’, Massive Aliyah and the Fundamentals of Israeli Politics

- Bernard Avishai, *The Tragedy of Zionism*, 184-231
- Sternhell, Zeev, “Epilogue: From the State-in-the-Making to the Nation-State,” *The Founding Myths of Israel*, 318-345
- Tom Segev, “Between Veterans and Newcomers,” *First Israelis*, 155-194
- Gregory S. Mahler, “Political Parties and Interest Groups,” *Politics and Government in Israel*, 171-192

Oct.26: Film: *Sallah Shabati******Midterm Exam Due*******Oct. 28: Eichmann in Jerusalem: Israel, Germany and the Holocaust before 1967**

- Tom Segev, “Trial,” *The Seventh Million*, 345-366

Documents:

- Menachem Begin’s Speech, January 7, 1952

Nov. 2: The Three-minute War and the Twenty-Five Year War: 1967 and 1973 in Retrospect

- Michael Oren, “The Six Day War,” in Mordecai Bar-On (eds.), *A Never-Ending Conflict*, 135-146
- Benny Morris, “The October War, 1973,” *Righteous Victims* (Vintage, 2001), 387-398
- Tom Segev, “New Land,” *1967*, 419-437

Documents:

- *UN Resolution 242*, November 1967

- *The Khartoum Resolution*, September 1967
- Efraim Kishon, *Unfair to Goliath*, 43-52

Nov. 4: The Likkud Revolution (1): Crisis of Leadership, Crisis of Ideology

- Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford UP, 1991), 35-51, 61-105

Nov.9: The Likkud Revolution (2): The Generation of 1968

- Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel*, 27-73, 87-123

Nov.11: Popular Culture in Crisis: the dismantling of the Zionist Ethos in the 1980s(?)

- Motti Regev, "The Coming of Rock," *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*, 161-190
- Yaron Ezrahi, "My Father, My Son," *Rubber Bullet*, 143-174

Nov. 16: Being Jewish in Israel: Religion and State

- Amos Oz, "Thank God," *In the Land of Israel*, 1-23
- Donna Rosenthal, "Widening Fault Lines between Jews and Jews," *The Israelis*, 173-243

Documents:

- Rabbi Eliezer Shach, The Shfanim Speech

Nov. 18: From Melting Pot to Multicultural Society: Israeli Society after 1989

- Baruch Kimmerling, "Between Hegemony and Dormant *Kulturkampf* in Israel," *Israel Affairs* 4/3 (Spring/Summer 1998)
- Ruth Gavison, "Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the 'Ethnic Democracy' Debate," *Israel Studies* 4/1 (Spring 1999), 44-72.

Nov. 23: The "Oslo Accord" and Rabin's Assassination

- Avishai, *Tragedy of Zionism*, 349-369
- Amnon Rubinstein, "Toward Rabin's Assassination," *From Herzl to Rabin*, 136-158
- David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*, 3 (map), 5-28, 145-160

Documents

- *The Hamas Covenant* (excerpts), August 1988
- Rabin, Ratification of the Oslo Accord in the Israeli Parliament
- Oslo Accord, Declaration of Principles

Nov. 25: Thanksgiving

Nov. 30: The Holocaust and Israel (2)

- Julia Resnik, "'Sites of Memory' of the Holocaust: Shaping National Memory in the Education System in Israel," *Nation and Nationalism*, 9(2), 2003: 297-317

Documents:

- Etgar Keret, "Shoes," in *50 Stories from Israel*, 660-663
- Tom Segev, "Demjanjuk"

Dec. 2: Film: *Operation: Grandma*

Dec. 7: "Hollow Leadership": The Aftermath of Peace and the "Big Bang" of Israeli Politics

- Edward Said, "A Palestinian Versailles," *Progressive* 57: 12 (December 1993): 22-26
- David Bar Illan, "Why a Palestinian State is Still a Mortal Threat," *Commentary* 96:5 (November 1993) 27-31

Documents:

- David Grossmann, "Hollow Leadership," 2006
- "Why We Refuse to Serve in the Israeli Defense Forces," in Joel Beinin and Rebecca L. Stein, *The Struggle for Sovereignty*, 182-186.
- "Israel's Disengagement Plan," *Israeli Foreign Ministry*, 5-13
- Ariel Sharon's Announcement: the Establishment of KADIMA

Dec. 9: The Post-Zionism Debate

Read Both:

- Shlomo Sand, "Preface for the English Edition," *The Invention of the Jewish People* (Verso: London, 2009)
- Meyrav Wurmser, "Can Israel Survive Post-Zionism?," *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1999, pp. 3-13

Dec. 14: Conclusion: The Past and Future of Jewish Nationalism

- Tom Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem*, 11-46 (same as 3)
- Natan Sharansky, "The Political Legacy of Theodor Herzl," *New Essays on Zionism* (Shalem Center, 2006), 101-115.

*****Final Paper Due*****

Addendum 1: News Sources (please see the class website for additional sources)

New York Times: has the best daily foreign news coverage of any American publication. Subscription (free) required to read full articles on-line. Shortened version available at <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Haaretz: Israel's newspaper of record. Has a liberal, left-of-center orientation. Worth reading the op-ed articles. English version can be read on-line: www.haaretzdaily.com/

Jerusalem Post: right-of-center English-language Israeli newspaper. <http://www.jpost.com>

Israel National News (Arutz 7): the voice of the religious settler movement.

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/>

Palestine News Agency: news and analysis from the Palestinian perspective. www.wafa.pna.net

Palestinian Information Center: website for Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement

<http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/hamas/>

Bitterlemons: a joint Palestinian-Israeli website with analysis of current issues. Edited by two important figures in the Palestinian and Israeli security establishments. <http://www.bitterlemons.org/>

Addendum 2: Grading criteria for essays

A: clear and comprehensive treatment of the question written in excellent expository style; work demonstrates that the student is thinking in a creative way and is making an original argument; excellent use of written sources and class discussions

B: good summary of the essential points, written in satisfactory style; arguments reflect readings and class discussions

C: only some essential points, but significant gaps; unclear writing; very partial use of readings and class discussions

D: lacking in central issues; incomprehensible writing; little evidence of familiarity with readings and class discussions

Addendum 3: Grading criteria for journals (10 point basis)

9-10: excellent summary consisting of more than one source with thoughtful analysis of news items

8: adequate summary based on at least one source with little analysis

7: weak summary and/or no analysis

1 point will be deducted for each missing journal entry