Contemporary Israeli Society and Politics

Department of Political Science
The Center for Jewish Studies
University of Toronto

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Web Page: Blackboard Website POL300H1-S-LEC0101
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM (or by email appointment)
Time: Wednesday 12:00-2:00 pm
Place: Sidney Smith Hall (SS-2127), 100 St. George Street

Israeli society and politics are two vibrant “communicating vessels” that transform each other, shaping the surface of Israel’s polity. While immigration has been the backbone of this process, since the beginning of the 20th century, it has traditionally been accompanied by external and domestic security considerations as well as the outbreaks of violence. The reality of continuous immigration and endless security challenges has had a defining impact on the political structure, economic production, manpower resources, internal security, relations with other states, and national identity of Israel. This course consists of three parts, each representing one of the founding pillars of the Israeli polity. Part I addresses the dominant ideologies and institutions: Zionism, political institutions, religion and the army. The second part presents the societal pillar. This comprises different population groups, their political representation and the power that they have acquired (or not) to influence domestic politics and, ultimately, national identity discourse. This part introduces discourses on Jews from the Orient (“Mizrahim”), Jews from the FSU (“Russians”), settlers, Jews from Ethiopia, foreign workers, illegal workers and refugees as well as Israeli Palestinian Arabs, Bedouins, and the Druze. The third part of the course introduces the political pillar (national security, the political process, and diaspora-state relations). A brief survey of the political processes will be followed by an overview of the most recent developments, and the options/constraints that the state has in its political repertoire. Then, diaspora-state relations will be discussed to bring together ideological, symbolic and pragmatic elements of Israel’s foreign policy. The course permits students to develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of politics and society in the Middle East, and, specifically, in Israel.

Course requirements:
1. Class attendance is mandatory and students are expected to read the material assigned for a date before that class (the rule does not apply to the first lecture).
2. Each student will write a short (10 pages) research paper, a mid-term Quiz and in-class final exam. The final exam will be a written comprehensive exam covering the course material.
IMPORTANT DEADLINES AND GRADES

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The research topic (approved)</td>
<td>Jan 28th 2015</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term in class quiz</td>
<td>Feb 25th, 2015</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>March 4th, 2015</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final: in-class exam</td>
<td>April 1st, 2015</td>
<td>25</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC ABBREVIATION</th>
<th>DEADLINES</th>
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Part I Institutional Foundations

7.01 Intro to the course, Zionism
14.01 Major Institutions (Political structures, Judiciary, etc.)
21.01 Religion and State: Political Implications
28.01 The Army

Part II Social Foundations (Groups and Politics)

4.02 Russian-speaking Jews, Political impact
11.02 Oriental Jews, Political impact
25.02 Mid-term in class quiz ; Based on required readings
25.02 The Settlers’ political roles and impact
4.03 Arabs, Druze and Bedouins; Jews from Ethiopia, non-Jewish foreign workers, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants.
Channels of Political representation

Part III Political Processes

11.03 Political Processes I: National security (nuclear weapons)
18.03 Political Processes II-III: Non-state actors (diasporas, NGOs), FP goals, challenges and opportunities
25.03 Guest Lecture Consul General Schneeweiss
1.04 IN-CLASS EXAM

RESEARCH PAPER SOURCES:

The research paper (2000 words) should have at least 10 sources, at least 6 of which should be books or papers published in academic peer-reviewed journals. The bibliography is to be annotated: that is, a short summary [not more than three sentences describing the argument made in each of the books/articles] of the argument of each book/article is to be included. Note that in annotating your bibliography it does not suffice to copy the abstract from an article; indeed, to do so constitutes plagiarism.
SOCIETY AND POLITICS

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS:

Students may choose among the topics (below) or propose their own, which has to be approved by the instructor. Deadline for deciding on and getting approval of your own topic: 28th of January. After the deadline the students can only choose from the topics below.

1. The IDF: social and political dimensions
2. Religion and state in modern Israel: modernity and tradition
3. Israeli National Identity: its components, and mechanisms of construction
4. Israel and its Diasporas: the transforming relations
5. Your topic (must be discussed with and approved by the instructor by January 28th)

Turnitin Policy

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.
Submitting your research paper through Turnitin: before the due date students will be given a class ID and a password. You should generate your own account and use it to submit your work. Research papers have to be submitted to turnitin.com before class. Submissions to turnitin.com after class count as late submissions.

Readings:
There is no textbook: readings involve journal articles, online reports or papers, or selected chapters from individual books. Most readings are available on-line.

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with the University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Academic Honesty: Academic integrity is expected and required. Using or providing unauthorized assistance on exams using inadequately acknowledged ideas or words of others in your papers may be grounds for failing this course and disciplinary action.

Stay informed
I will begin each lecture, time permitting, with a brief update on current events in Israel. Therefore students are advised to stay informed of the latest events and issues. I will gladly receive emails from you before our meetings with requests to cover any particular topic. Sources for extensive coverage include but are not limited to Israeli dailies: Ha’aretz (leans left) (www.haaretz.com) and the Jerusalem Post (leans right) (www.jpost.com); Jerusalem Report (Internet) (www.jrep.com); Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (www.jmcc.org), Yedioth Aharonot (ynet.co.il).
PART I FOUNDATIONS OF THE STATE: ZIONISM, INSTITUTIONS, RELIGION, THE ARMY

Week 1  Introduction, Course Outline, Requirements, Theoretical framework; Foundations of Zionism and Israeli Political Culture

This class will cover the main theories of identity formation focusing on Zionism, approaches to national identity and its role in defining the politics of the state.

Readings:

Recommended:

Week 2 Institutions: Political Parties, Judiciary, Educational Streams, the Knesset

Readings:
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**Recommended:**
Aharonson Ron (2000) Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonization in Palestine


**Readings:**
http://www.academia.edu/4134529/Teshuvah_baskets_in_the_Israeli_teshuvah_market

**Recommended:**
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Week 4 The State and Its Army: We’ll discuss the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion set through the relationships between the military, society and the state.

Readings:

Recommended:

PART II ISRAEL’S NATIONAL IDENTITY AS A PRODUCT OF SUBCULTURES

Week 5 State-building and Immigration in Israel; North-African immigration wave (history, video clip)

Readings:
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Recommended:

Week 6 The Russian –Speaking Immigrants from the FSU: Identity through Politics

Readings:

Recommended:
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Week 7 Settlers: People and Politics


Recommended:


Week 8 Small Minorities and Politics: the Ethiopian Jews, foreign workers, illegal immigrants. Social rights and channels of political influence (video-episode)

Readings:


Recommended:


Hertzog Esther (1999) ’Bureaucratic Patronage of Ethiopian Immigrants’ in Israelowitz Richard and Jonathan Friedlander, Transitions: Russians, Ethiopians and Beduins in Israel's Negev Desert Ashgate Publishing


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Willen, Sarah (2007) Towards a Critical Phenomenology of “Illegality”: State Power, Criminalization and Objectivity among Undocumented Migrant Workers in Tel-Aviv, Israel”, International Migration 45(3); 7-38.


Week 9 Non-Jewish Israelis - Palestinian Arabs, the Druze and the Bedouins The Druze. History, politics, patterns of incorporation in Israel. Israelization vs. Palestinization vs. Islamization: identity, politics, schism with Israeli national identity project; Arab political parties. (video episode) class discussion

Readings:


Recommended:


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Week 10 Political Processes I: The Big Game politics, the nuclear weapons and Israeli democracy

Readings:

Recommended:

Week 11 Political Process II: Peace process: dynamics of development This lecture merges with week 12 because of the guest lecture on week 12

Readings:
Source TBA.

Recommended:
http://web.a.ebscohost.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a030e208-f79f-4f68-9ccc-8381a873e0b4%40sessionmgr4003&vid=1&hid=4204&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG1ZQ%3d%3d#db=nlebk&AN=5429
Reich Bernard 03/2002 Israel's Quest for Peace Mediterranean Quarterly, 13(2) pp. 67 - 95
A peace process that is going nowhere; Israel-Palestine The Economist 411.8882 (Apr 12, 2014): (on-line)

Week 12 Political Processes III The non-state actors (Diasporic and non-diasporic organizations). The impact on Israeli democracy

Readings:
Magid Yehuda (2013). Chapter 9 in Golan Galia and Walid Salem (Editors) “Non-State Actors in the Middle East: Factors for Peace and Democracy” pp. 146-165. (portal)
Brent David Harris (2012) Beyond Guilt and Stigma: Changing Attitudes among Israeli Migrants in Canada in International Migration 14. (on-line)

Recommended:
Mearsheimer John J. and Stephen M. Walt (2006). The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy in Middle East Policy (pp 29-87)
Benbassa Esther (2001) The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity Ch11,
Michael Feige (2002) Introduction: Rethinking Israeli Memory and Identity, Israeli Studies, Vol. 7 (2) I-XIV.
Weinberg D 2003 French Jewry in Sol Encel, Leslie Stein Continuity, Commitment, and Survival: Jewish Communities in the Diaspora pp.149-172.