

Religion and State in Israel and the Middle East

Theoretical, empirical and comparative aspects

Outline - The State of Israel represents a unique model of the state-religion relationship. On the one hand, since its independence Israel has challenged the dominant idea of separation between religion and state and instead granted the Jewish religion (alongside other minority religions) significant multidimensional recognition in the public and political spheres. On the other hand, the Israeli regime contains some crucial secular elements, including secular public education system, legal code and judiciary system. This course will explore different aspects of the Israeli model of religion and the state, its foundations, theoretical implications and applicability to other societies and religions. The first section will introduce basic theoretical concepts in the study of religion and the state. The second, most substantive section, will discuss the historical development and contemporary characteristics of the state-religion regime in Israel. The third section will be comparative in nature and examine recent political transitions in the Middle East, the role of religion in these transitions, and the ability of the Israeli case to serve as a role model for the state-religion relationships in emerging Arab regimes.

Course Assignments (elaborate details and Q&A about the assignments will be provided in class).

1. **Attendance and active participation in class discussions** – 20/100 (Students are required to read all the reading materials, come prepared to class and take part in class discussions)
2. **Two weekly reviews of reading assignments** (up to 1000 words each) – 30/100 points (15 points each). Each review should contain the following three components:
 - (1) Summary of the articles' main argument and supporting evidence – 40%
 - (2) Critique of the articles (what is missing in the main argument) – 40%
 - (3) Issues for future inquiry – 20%

At least one review shall be submitted and graded before November 1st.

3. **One in-class presentation of reading assignments** (15-20 minutes) – 25/100 This is basically an introduction to the weekly theme, based on the review of the reading assignment. Depending on number of registered students, I may I assign two students to present their reviews in the same week.

4. **Take home final exam** – Exam form will be distributed at the last week of November and should be submitted before the last day of class – 25/100
The final take home exam will contain two parts:
 - (1) Two out of three short questions (25% each), about a key reading (or a comparison of up to three readings), or summary of a subject covered in one of the lectures such as key concepts, case study etc. (up to 500 words each).
 - (2) One out of two essay questions (50%). The essay would require integration of knowledge from reading assignments and lectures and would normally cover a general trend, comparison among cases, etc. (up to 1200 words).

5. **Israel Knowledge Exam** – You will answer a brief multiple answer exam during the first and last sessions, to assess your knowledge of Israel before and after the course. This assignment is obligatory but is not weighted in the course grade.

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

Section 1: Religion and the state – theoretical concepts

Session 1 - Religion, modernization, secularization

- Peter Berger, 1999 "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview" in: Peter Berger (Ed.) *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion in World Politics* (Washington: The Ethics and Public Policy Center), pp. 1-18.
- Jose Casanova, 2006, "Rethinking secularization: A global comparative perspective," *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring-Summer issue pp. 7-22.

Session 2 – Religion and nationalism in the Western world

- Roger Brubaker, 2012, "Religion and nationalism: four approaches," *Nations and Nationalism*, 18: 2–20
- Christian Joppke, 2013, "A Christian identity for the liberal state?" *The British Journal of Sociology*, 64: 597–616.
- Grace Davie, 1999, "Europe: The Exception That Proves the Rule?" in Peter L. Berger (ed.), *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington: The Ethics and Public Policy Center), pp. 65-83.

Session 3 - Religion and nationalism in non-western regimes

- Mark Juergensmeyer, 1995, "The New Religious State," *Comparative Politics*, 27:4. (July), pp. 379-391.
- David Martin, 2014, "Nationalism and religion; collective identity and choice: the 1989 revolutions, Evangelical Revolution in the Global South, revolution in the Arab World," *Nations and Nationalism* 20:1, pp. 1-17.
- Sener Akturk, 2015, "Religion and Nationalism: Contradictions of Islamic Origins and Secular Nation-Building in Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan," *Social Science Quarterly*, 96: 778–806.

Session 4 – Religion and democracy

- Alfred Stepan, 2005, "Religion Democracy and the Twin Tolerations," *Journal of Democracy*, 11:4 (October), 2000, pp. 37-57.
- Aviad Rubin, 2012, "Religious Actors in a Democratic Civil Society: Turkey and Israel Compared", in: Berna Turam (Ed.) *Religious Civil Society in a Secular State: The Two Faces of Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Jurgen Habermas, 2008, "Notes on a post-secular society," *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 25:4, pp. 17-29.

Section 5 – Religion, fundamentalism and violence

- Mark Juergensmeyer, 2008, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, From Christian Militias to Al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press), chapter 6, pp. 212-243.
- Gabriel Almond, Scott Appleby, Emmanuel Sivan, 2003, "Wrestling with the World: Fundamentalist Movements as Emergent Systems," (Chapter 4) in: *Strong Religion: The Rise of Fundamentalisms around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
- Jonathan Fox, 1999, "Do Religious Institutions Support Violence or the Status Quo?" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 22:1, pp. 119–139.

Section 2 – Religion in the State of Israel

Session 6 – The role of religion in the Zionist movement and in the pre-independence era

- Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira, (eds.), 1998, *Zionism and Religion* (Waltham MA: New England University Press) (specific pages TBD – may be replaced to a different reading).
- Eliash Shulamit, 1985, "The Political Role of the Chief Rabbinate of Palestine during the Mandate: Its Character and Nature," *Jewish Social Studies*, 47:1 (winter), pp. 33-50.
- Uriel Abulof, 2014, "The Roles of Religion in National Legitimation: Judaism and Zionism's Elusive Quest for Legitimacy," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 53: 515–533.
- Aviad Rubin, 2013, "The Status of Religion in Emergent Political Regimes: Lessons from Turkey and Israel," *Nations and Nationalism*, 19:3, pp. 493-512.

Session 7 – Institutionalization of religion in post-independence Israel

- Document: The Status Quo Letter – 1947
<http://strangeside.com/israels-status-quo-agreement/>
- Document: Israel's Declaration of Independence – 1948
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>
- Document: The Law of Return – 1950
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/law%20of%20return%205710-1950.aspx>
- Document: Basic Law – Human Dignity and Liberty
https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic3_eng.htm
- Eliezer Don Yehiye, 1999, *Religion and Political Accommodation in Israel*. (Jerusalem: The Floresheimer Institute).
- Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, 1983, "The Dilemma of Reconciling Traditional Culture and Political Needs: Civil Religion in Israel," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 16 (October), pp. 53-65.

- Sammi Smootha, 2002, The Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State, *Nations and Nationalism*, 8:4, pp. 475-303.

Session 8 – Ultra-Orthodox-Haredim – isolation, integration and impact

- Rebecca Kook, Michael Harris and Gideon Doron, 1998, "In the Name of G-D and our Rabbi, *Israel Affairs*, 5:1, pp. 1-18.
- Nissim Leon, 2015, "Rabbi 'Ovadia Yosef, the Shas Party, and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," *The Middle East Journal*, 69:3, pp. 379-395.
- Netanel Fisher, 2016, "The Fundamentalist Dilemma: Lessons from the Israeli Hardei Case," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 48:3, pp. 531-549.

Session 9 – Religious Zionism – from pragmatic partnership to Messianic militancy

- Eliezer Don Yehiye, 1987, Jewish Messianism, Religious Zionism and Israeli Politics: The Impact and Origins of Gush Emunim," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 23(2), pp. 215-234.
- Moshe Hellinger, Isaac Hershkowitz and Bernard Susser, 2016, "The Dialectic between Confrontation and Commitment: Religious-Zionism and the Settlement Project," *Politics and Religion*, 9:4, pp. 843-866.
- Aviad Rubin, 2014, "Bifurcated loyalty and religious actors' behavior in democratic politics: The case of religious Zionism in Israel," *Religion, State and Society* 42:1, pp. 46-65.
- Oded Haklai, 2007, "Religious Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration – Lessons from Jewish Settler's Activism in Israel and the West Bank," *Comparative Political Studies*, 40:6, pp. 713-739.
- Clip: Minister Naphtali Bennett on CNN 28 December 2016
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMpKdK6T5v8>

Session 10 – Religion in Israeli politics – contemporary trends

- Yagil Levy, 2014, "The Theocratization of the Israeli Military," *Armed Forces & Society*, 40:2, pp. 269-294.
- Theodore Sasson, Ephraim Tabory and Dana Selinger-Abutbul, 2010, "Framing Religious Conflict: Popular Israeli Discourse on Religion and State," *Journal of Church and State*, 52:4, pp. 662-685.
- Guy Ben Porat, 2013, Are We There Yet? Religion, Secularization and Liberal Democracy in Israel, *Mediterranean Politics*, 18:2, pp. 242–258.
- David, Lehmann, 2012, "Israel: state management of religion or religious management of the state?" *Citizenship Studies*, 16:8, pp. 1029-1043.
- Document: Basic Law Proposal: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People [http://index.justice.gov.il/StateIdentity/InformationInEnglish/Documents/Basic%20Law%20110911%20\(1\).pdf](http://index.justice.gov.il/StateIdentity/InformationInEnglish/Documents/Basic%20Law%20110911%20(1).pdf)

Section 3 – Religion in the Middle East – lessons from Israel

Session 11 – Religion and State in a changing Middle East

- Vickie Langohr, 2001, "Of Islamists and ballot boxes: Rethinking the relationship between Islamisms and electoral politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33:4, pp. 591-610.
- Mark Tessler and Eleanor Gao, 2005, Gauging Arab Support for Democracy, *Journal of Democracy*, 16:3, pp. 83-97.
- Jillian Schwedler, 2011, "Can Islamists Become Moderates?" Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics*, 63:2, pp. 347-376.

Session 12 – The role of religion in post Arab-Spring emergent regimes

- Aviad Rubin, 2012, "Can Turkey's State-Religion Relationship Serve as a Role Model for Emerging Arab Regimes? – A Critical Assessment," *Contemporary Politics*, 18:4, (December), pp. 367-380.
- Olivier Roy, 2012, "The Transformation of the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy*, 25:3, pp. 5-18.
- Abdou Filali-Ansary, 2016, "Tunisia: Ennahda's New Course," *Journal of Democracy*, 27:4, pp. 99-109.