

TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS I
Becoming Israel: War, Peace, and the Politics of Israel's Identity
Faculty of Arts and Science, Department of Political Science, Fall 2023
POL 377 H1 F

Olga Talal, PhD

Lectures: Tuesday, 11-1pm
Location: Sydney Smith Hall, 2127
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will focus on Israel's balancing act between two competing objectives, one seeking to fulfill the Zionist vision and entrench "Jewishness" within the state and the other seeking to establish democratic institutions and procedures. Since independence, Israel's official ideology, Zionism, has been shaping the state's economic, political, demographic, and security policies, designed to advance the interests of the Jewish population in Israel. The Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel fall outside the sociological boundaries of the Jewish nation and present a challenge to nation-building. At the same time, Israel's commitment to democratic principles and procedures entails guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of Palestinian Arab citizens. In this course, students will explore the most salient manifestations of the tensions between Israel's commitment to democracy and Zionism, familiarize themselves with the debates about Israel's political regime, institutions, and society, and develop their positions on these divisive debates.

TEXTS:

Online course readings are accessible through Quercus.

FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:

One two-hour lecture per week. Course requirements include quizzes, an essay proposal, a final essay, and a final test.

Quizzes	30%	(3 quizzes, 10% each)
Essay proposal	10%	
Essay	35%	
Final test	25%	

Quizzes (30%) – Students will take three (3) quizzes on course readings and lecture materials. Quiz materials are not cumulative. These are short (10 min) quizzes administered **in class** at the beginning of lectures. The quizzes will present multiple-choice questions and true/false statements.

Essay proposal (10%) – The proposal provides an opportunity to receive feedback and prepare students for writing the final essay. It is the roadmap for developing your final paper, and it

includes several key components: A title, a research question, a topic description (one paragraph), a main argument (one paragraph), a brief literature review (two paragraphs) and a list of academic references (at least seven). The essay proposal should be no longer than 2 pages, not including references, double-spaced, font size 12, and standard margins (1 inch). **Essay proposals are due in class on October 3rd.** Please sign and date your proposal prior to submission.

Research essay (35%) - The research paper should be approximately 10 pages long, double-spaced, with font size 12, and standard margins (1 inch). **The papers are due in class on November 21st.** The penalty for late submission is 5% a day, for a maximum of 7 days after the due date, at which point, late submissions will no longer be accepted, except for medical or personal emergencies and only with proper documentation.

I encourage you to research topics that truly interest you. You may develop one of the topics surveyed in the course, a relevant topic to the course materials not covered in the syllabus, or a case study that explores a topic relevant to the course content. Given your discretion in choosing the topic of the final essay, I strongly recommend you seek my advice on your research focus and additional research materials.

Students are advised to exercise best practices for saving their essay drafts (on personal computers, clouds, external hard drives, etc.) before submitting the essay in class on the due date. The student should keep a copy of the essay until the marked essay is returned and the grade posted. Please sign and date your essay prior to submission.

Final test (25%) – The final test will take place during the last lecture of the term (December 5th). It will include essay questions and draw on materials from course readings and lectures. Late tests will not be administered except for medical or personal emergencies and only with proper documentation.

PREREQUISITES: 1.0 credit in POL/ JPA/ JPF/ JPI/ JPR/ JPS/JRA courses

Plagiarism and *Ouriginal*

According to U of T's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters: "It shall be an offence for a student knowingly: (d) to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism....(e) to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and all cases of plagiarism will be sent to the Dean's Office for appropriate action. For further information on the University of Toronto's policy regarding plagiarism, you may look at <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that

apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before handing in to *Original*. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Students are encouraged to visit during office hours on Tuesdays between 2 and 4 pm. You are also welcome to email the lecturer with **short** questions and requests at olga.talal@utoronto.ca. Please allow up to 2 business days for a response.

Course announcements, readings, and all other information will be posted on Quercus at: <https://idpz.utorauth.utoronto.ca/idp/profile/SAML2/Redirect/SSO?execution=e2s1>

ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:

It is the policy of the University of Toronto to arrange reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Students have a responsibility to alert members of the teaching staff in a timely fashion to upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations or other compulsory activities at these times. If compulsory activities are unavoidable, every reasonable opportunity should be given to the students to make up work that they miss, particularly in courses involving laboratory work. When the scheduling of tests or examinations cannot be avoided, students should be informed of the procedure to be followed to arrange to write at an alternate time.

COURSE READINGS

Introduction (September 12th)

Part I: The State of Israel

Constitutional debates (September 19th)

- Israel's Declaration of independence:
<https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/about/pages/declaration.aspx>
- Rubinstein, Amnon. "Israel" s Partial Constitution: The Basic Laws." *Israel Studies: An Anthology* (Mitchell G. Bard and David Nachmias (Eds). Jewish Virtual Library Publications. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/isdf/text/Rubinstein.html>
- Gavison, Ruth (2003). "Constitutions and Political Reconstructions: Israels Quest for a Constitution." *International Sociology*, 18 (1), pp. 53-70.

Israel's regime (September 26th)

- Smootha, Sammy, "The Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State." *Nations and Nationalism* vol. 8, no. 4 (2002): pp. 475-503.
- Gavison, Ruth, "Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the 'Ethnic Democracy' Debate." *Israel Studies* vol. 4, no. 1 (1999): pp. 44-58.
- Yiftachel, Oren. "'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine." *Constellations* 6, no. 3 (1999): 364-390.

Israel's society (October 3rd) – **ESSAY PROPOSALS ARE DUE IN CLASS**

- Kook, Rebecca B. "Multiculturalism and identity politics." In *Understanding Israel*, pp. 119-133. Routledge, 2018.
- Guy Ben Porat [Multicultural Realities](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-studies-an-anthology-table-of-contents) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-studies-an-anthology-table-of-contents>
- Calvin Goldscheider, *Israeli Society in the Twenty-First Century: Immigration, Inequality, and Religious Conflict*, (Chapter 3 Immigration, Nation-building, and Ethnic Group Formation) Brandies University Press 2015. Pp.38-61.

Part II – Challenges to Israel's Regime

Lack of state-religion separation (October 10th)

- Natan Sachs and Brian Reeves, "Tribes, identity, and individual freedom in Israel", Center for Middle East Policy, the Brookings Institute, March 2017.
https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/cmep_20170331_tribes-of-israel.pdf
- Haklai, Oded. "Religious—Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration: Lessons from Jewish Settlers' Activism in Israel and the West Bank." *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 6 (2007): 713-739.

Palestinian Arabs in Israel (PAI) - rights and status (October 17th)

- Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. *Israel's Palestinians: the conflict within*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Chapter 1 "Palestinians in Israel: Separate and Unequal" pp.19-46.
- Ghanem, Asad (2001). *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000: A Political Study*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 1-30.

PAI Politics (October 24th)

- Rekhess, Elie (2007). "The Evolvement of an Arab-Palestinian National Minority in Israel", *Israel Studies*, Vol. 12 (3), pp. 1-28.
- Haklai, Oded, and Rida Abu Rass. "The fourth phase of Palestinian Arab politics in Israel: The centripetal turn." *Israel Studies* 27, no. 1 (2022): 35-60.

Alternative Regime Visions (October 31st)

- Mada al-Carmel Center for Applied Social Research, *The Haifa Declaration (2007)*, <http://www.mada-research.org/archive/haifaenglish.pdf>.
- National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel (2006)*, <http://www.arab-lac.org/tasawor-mostaqbali-eng.pdf>.
- Adalah—The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, *The Democratic Constitution (2007)*, http://www.adalah.org/eng/democratic_constitution-e.pdf.
- Rekhess, Elie. "The Arab Minority in Israel: An Analysis of the "Future Vision" Documents." *Dorothy and Julius Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations*, The American Jewish Committee, April 2008, pp. 1-39.

Fall Reading Week – No Class (November 7th)

Occupation (November 14th)

- Lustick, Ian S. *Paradigm lost: From two-state solution to one-state reality*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019, Scan Chapter 5, pp.121-149.
- Waxman, Dov, and Ilan Peleg. "The nation-state law and the weakening of Israeli democracy." *Israel Studies* 25, no. 3 (2020): 185-200.

Judicial Reform (November 21st) – FINAL ESSAYS ARE DUE IN CLASS

- TBA

Studying Israel – Course conclusions (November 28th)

- Rebecca Kook, "Between Uniqueness and Exclusion: The Politics of Identity in Israel in Comparative Perspective," in Michael Barnett, ed., *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom* (Albany, New York: SUNY, 1996), 199-225.
- Alexander Yakobson, "Jewish Peoplehood and the Jewish State, How Unique?: A Comparative Survey," *Israel Studies* 13:2 (2008), 1-27.

Final test (December 5th)