

**POLS378H1**

**The Israeli -Palestinian Conflict - Course Syllabus, Fall 2024**

**Contact Information:**

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**Office hours:** Mondays at 5 p.m., Fridays 3 p.m. **by appointment;** Via **Zoom**

**Course description and Goals**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most intractable and multifaceted protracted conflicts in modern times with flare-ups of violence between its various actors continuing to claim lives and to threaten wider war. This course will survey the main political junctions in the conflict and will connect them to their reincarnations in contemporary times. We will study all of this, exploring the conflict's many layers and relating it to broader International Relations and sociological concepts from the emergence of the conflict's political fault lines during Ottoman times through the establishment of a Jewish state and its continued modern-day development. The course will include cultural products relating to both societies, including movies, clips, songs and forms of art and cultural representations.

**By the end of this course students will be able to:**

- Develop an understanding about the origins of the conflict and the processes that led to the creation of Israel in 1948 and the Palestinian "Nakba".
- Reflect on the symbols (monuments, songs, literature, film, language) of Israeli and Palestinian nationalism to understand conflict and culture production.
- Develop your critical thinking by engaging in a comparative analysis of a news article about a current event.
- Survey and analyze the different solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the way they ignore or correspond with the needs of each community.
- Grasp the intricacies of complex issues and convey their depth clearly.

## Assignments

Weekly participation in discussion: students are expected to come to class every week having read and critically reflected on the required readings before class. This is not a lecture course; discussion is primarily student-generated and based on weekly readings. Your participation grade will be based on the quality and relevance to course questions of your weekly participation, the extent to which your class contributions move the discussion forward, and the quality of your facilitation as presentation leaders. The participation grade will reflect preparedness for class, attentiveness, and contributions to class discussion. The class is a seminar where the instructor's primary role is to facilitate discussion rather than present information. I will work to ensure that everyone participates in the discussion on a regular basis.

### Short response essay due before each class and no later than **October 15:**

In this assignment you are asked to turn in a **short response essay (850-1200 words)** using both the required and recommended materials. You can choose any of the weeks (2-7) until **October 15** but must submit your response **BEFORE** class time in the week you chose. For example, if you chose to focus your response on the assigned and recommend readings of week 3, your submission must be in before class time of week 3.

You are given guiding questions but need to make sure you focus your response on an issue and reflect on it critically, do not provide simple summaries. You are allowed to draw on more relevant external materials but must consult the ones listed. If you find in your mini research viewpoints that were not mentioned or narratives that offer more insight on the topic, please include them.

### Second response paper due no later than **November 5.**

Your second response paper needs to provide a critical analysis based on the videos in the [Ask Project](#). Focus on a theme or themes covered in **4** separate videos, preferably, 2 directed at each population. Your goal for each paper should be to critically address an interesting controversy or insight that arises. The paper should not simply summarize the videos, but look at how facts are presented, discussed, and how narratives are formed and cemented on each side. Your reflection should integrate the readings and relevant issues we learned in class. You should pick a subject or question that can be covered in a short response (**1000** words). Finally send a suggestion to a question you would like Cory Gill to ask either Israelis, Palestinians, or both. Please link the videos you chose.

### **Final paper: Narratives Analysis – due December 6 (Friday) by 12 p.m.**

The goal of this assignment is to explore and assess competing narratives and interpretations of a current event as it is represented across different media outlets. While most news events that are related to the conflict (such as: use of violence, military action, demonstrations, settlement construction, negotiations, etc.) have some objective concrete features, media sources that align with competing national or political groups and ideologies will describe and interpret them in profoundly different ways. In this assignment you are required to explore these divergent interpretations of an event that is related to the conflict by comparing and contrasting these different perspectives. For instance, you can examine reports on an IDF raid in the West Bank or a Hamas rocket attack on Israel by analyzing how the event was reported by diverse media outlets such as: The Hamas news agency, the official Palestinians press, liberal Israeli media,

nationalist Israeli media, Arab media, or international news sources. Consult a list of media outlets in the course module.

**Instructions:**

1. Choose one current event that is related to the conflict that took place over the last Year (2024) that has reporting that represents competing perspectives of the event and email me your case for approval.

For the paper itself:

2. Write a short description of the event (1 page).

3. Locate at **least four reports** from various news sources that represent divergent interpretations and narratives of the event you chose. You are encouraged to refer to the list of news sources and blogs that appear Quercus though you are welcome to use other sources.

4. Describe and explain the differences between these reports and interpretations. (2 pages).

5. What we can learn about the conflict more broadly through the analysis of these competing viewpoints? (1-2 pages)

6. Your paper should be **no longer than 5 pages, single-spaced, 12-point font**. Please include a reference list and links to the articles you used.

\*All assignments carry a 5% per day late penalty. They will not be graded more than a week after the deadline.

**Course Grade Breakdown**

Class participation - **15%**

3 Discussion Reflections/comments – **5%**

Short response paper in the first 7 weeks – **20%**

Short response The Ask Project– **25%**

Group assignment movie coordinated response- **5%**

Final paper - **30%**

**Class Schedule: Tuesdays, 4-6 p.m.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Week 1, September 3	Introduction and syllabus overview	Please read the syllabus and assigned readings
Week 2, September 10	The Rise of Zionism and Arab Nationalism	
Week 3, September 17	Zionism and the Selection of Palestine	
Week 4, September 24	Life under the British Mandate to Palestine	
Week 5, October 1	From Partition to Independence/Nakba and the Birth of the Refugee Problem	
Week 6, October 8	Israel and the conflict with the Arab world	
Week 7, October 15	The Palestinian Movement and Its Leadership	<b>Last day to submit first response paper</b>
Week 8, October 22	The Oslo Accords	
<b>Reading Week 9, October 29</b>	<b>Reading Week - No Class</b>	<b>No Class</b>
Week 10, November 5	The Second Intifada, Disengagement and The Gaza Wars	<b>Second response paper is due</b>
Week 11, November 12	One State, Two States, Confederation, Containment, the Status Quo	<b>Watch a movie from the list (The Conflict in Palestinian and Israeli Culture)</b>
Week 12, November 19	October 7 and the Gaza war	
Week 13, November 26	Final discussion	<b>Final paper is due Dec 6</b>

**The course has two required textbooks:**

**Caplan, Neil.** The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories. John Wiley & Sons, 2019. Second Edition

**Gelvin, James L.** The Israel-Palestine conflict: One hundred years of war. Cambridge University Press, **2021.** Fourth Edition

## **Class schedule and reading assignments**

### **Week 1: Introduction to the course and syllabus overview**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019. **pp.3-16**

Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: One hundred years of war*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. **pp.1-14**

### **Week 2: The Rise of Zionism and Arab Nationalism**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

#### **Chapter 2 pp.17-33**

Gelvin, "Cultures of Nationalism," *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, **Chapter 2: 15-35, 40-45.**

#### *Recommended*

Penslar, Derek J. "Herzl and the Palestinian Arabs: Myth and Counter-Myth." *Journal of Israeli History* 24, no. 1 (2005): 65-77.

### **Week 3: Zionism and the Selection of Palestine**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

#### **Chapter 3: pp.45-56**

Gelvin, "Cultures of Nationalism," *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, **Chapter 3: 49-79**

#### *Recommended*

##### *The Arab vision*

Dawisha, Adeed. "Arab nationalism in the twentieth century." In *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton University Press, 2016. **Chapter 4**

Jabotinsky, Vladimir Ze'ev. "The Iron Wall." (1923).

#### [The Iron Wall](#)

Kimmerling, Baruch. *The Palestinian people: A history*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

#### **Chapter 1**

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity (New York: Columbia University Press 1998) pp. 145-177 or 96-117*

Guiding prompt for this week's response: compare the different explanations that explore the roots of Palestinian nationalism.

### **Week 4: Life under the British Mandate to Palestine**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

#### **Chapters 4 and 5.**

**Gelvin, "Cultures of Nationalism," *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, chapter 4 World War 1 and the Palestine Mandate, chapter 5 the Great Revolt pp. 110-123.**

*Recommended*

1913 Seeds of Conflict

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3e6CN9uMIU>

Original documents: TEXT OF THE FAISAL-WEIZMANN AGREEMENT (3 January 1919)

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-207006/>

The Peel Commission

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/text-of-the-peel-commission-report>

Guiding prompt: What was (were) the principal cause(s) of interwar tensions? How so? What was the Peel Commission, and what did its members identify as the cause of unrest in spring 1936? What solutions did the members propose to attenuate tensions in Palestinian Mandate?

**Week 5: From Partition to Independence/Nakba and the Birth of the Refugee Problem**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

**Chapter 6, pp.105-125**

**Gelvin**, "From The Great Revolt Through the 1948 War," *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, **Chapter 6, 125-152.**

*Recommend:*

Benny Morris, "Revisiting the Palestinian exodus of 1948," in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds), *The War for Palestine* (Cambridge, 2001), 37-59

Morris, Benny, and Morris Benny. *The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem revisited*. No. 18. Cambridge University Press, 2004. **Chapter 3**

Benny Morris an interview -parts 1& 2

<https://youtu.be/YzN3hHEvGdc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcVDZ2zuEyY>

Guiding prompt: explore the relationship between the refugee problem and the development of Palestinian nationalism. Based on the readings and the interview, how does Morris' work contribute to our understanding the displacement of Palestinians and the larger discourse about the conflict?

**Week 6: Israel and the conflict with the Arab world**

**Gelvin**, "The Arab Israeli Conflict," *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, **Chapter 8, 175-207.**

Aly, Abdel Monem Said, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki. *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and peacemaking in the Middle East*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013. **Pp. 130-149, 176-189**

*Recommended:*

Response paper about **One of three topics:**

Egypt and Israel – a “Cold Peace”

Owen, Tom. "COLD PEACE: Attitudes to Israel in Egypt." *Jewish Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2001): 17-20.

Sallam, Moomen, and Ofir Winter. "Egypt and Israel: Forty years in the desert of cold peace." *Strategic Assessment* 20, no. 3 (2017).

Golan Heights – Normalization and Occupation

Ram, Moriel. "Colonial conquests and the politics of normalization: The case of the Golan Heights and Northern Cyprus." *Political Geography* 47 (2015): 21-32.

Rose, Gregory. "Legal considerations concerning recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the golan heights." *Australian International Law Journal* 27 (2020): 185-209.

Munich 1972 and Black September

Singh, Subhash. "Black September: A turning point in the Palestinian national movement." *International Journal of Applied Social Science* 2, no. 5/6 (2015): 135-145.

**Week 7: The Palestinian Movement and Its Leadership**

Caplan, Neil. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: contested histories*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

**Chapter 8, pp.184-191, 205-208**

Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: The Palestinian National Movement Comes of Age*, **chapter 9, pp. 209-242**

*Recommended*

Movie: Waltz with Bashir

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynH68E1GEdc>

<https://www.documentarymania.com/player.php?title=Waltz%20With%20Bashir>

Hamas Charter

[https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/hamas.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp)

Tareq Baconi: Hamas, Explained - UNSETTLED Podcast

<https://www.unsettledpod.com/episodes/2021/5/17/tareq-baconi-hamas-explained>

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How do the foundational principles and goals outlined in the Hamas Charter differ from those in the PLO Charter, and what implications do these differences have for their respective political strategies?
2. In what ways do the historical contexts in which the Hamas and PLO charters were written influence their respective stances on the state of Israel?
3. How do the approaches to armed struggle and resistance against Israel, as articulated in the Hamas Charter and the PLO Charter, reflect the broader ideological differences between the two organizations?

### **Week 8: The Oslo Accords**

Aly, Abdel Monem Said, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki. *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and peacemaking in the Middle East*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013. **Pp. 313-328**

Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: Coming Full Circle: The Era of Oslo*  
**Chapter 10, 244-265**

#### *Recommended*

Hermann, Tamar, and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar. "Divided Yet United: Israeli-Jewish Attitudes toward the Oslo Process." *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 5 (2002): 597–613.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555345>.

Extra resources

Hebron Treaty

<https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-redeploymenthebron97>

### **Week 9 -no class – Reading Week**

#### **Group assignment The Conflict in Palestinian and Israeli Culture**

Watch one movie from the list

#### *Recommended:*

Danjoux, Ilan. "Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." In *Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Manchester University Press, 2018.

Chapters 1, 7.

### **Week 10: The Second Intifada, Disengagement and The Gaza Wars**

Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: Coming Full Circle: The Era of Oslo*. **Chapter 10, 266-276**

Aly, Abdel Monem Said, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki. *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and peacemaking in the Middle East*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013. **Pp. 370-388**

#### *Recommended*

Jaeger, David. A., Esteban F. Klor, Sami H. Miaari, and M. Daniele Paserman. 2014. "Can Militants Use Violence to Win Public Support? Evidence from the Second Intifada." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

Tenenbaum, K., & Eiran, E. (2005). Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza: A brief history. *Negot. J.*, 21, 171.

## **Week 11: One State, Two States, Confederation, Containment, the Status Quo**

### The Two State Solution

Rumley, Grant, and Amir Tibon. "The Death and Life of the Two-State Solution: How the Palestinians May Eventually Get Their State." *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 4 (2015): 78–87.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24483819>.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/09/18/two-states-or-one-reappraising-israeli-palestinian-impasse-pub-77269>

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/getting-to-two-state-solution-regional-perspective>

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2015/10/21/podcast-alternatives-to-two-state-solution-for-israeli-palestinian-conflict/>

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ask-the-experts/2021-08-24/two-state-solution-still-viable>

For your discussion response- choose any two authors and the spectrum of opinions and reflect on the viewpoints presented.

### One State Solution

Bashir, Bashir, and Rachel Busbridge. "The politics of decolonisation and bi-nationalism in Israel/Palestine." *Political Studies* 67, no. 2 (2019): 388-405.

Peter Beinert, "I No Longer Believe in a Two-State Solution," *The New York Times* (8 July 2020),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/opinion/israel-annexation-two-state-solution.html>.

Bret Stephens, "The Siren Song of 'One State,'" *The New York Times* (4 August 2020),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/opinion/israel-palestine-one-state-solution.html>.

### Confederation

Scheindlin, Dahlia, and Dov Waxman. "Confederalism: A third way for Israel–Palestine." *The Washington Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2016): 83-94.  
<https://www.alandforall.org/english/?d=ltr>

### The Status Quo

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/fora95&div=77&id=&page=>

## **Group assignment The Conflict in Palestinian and Israeli Culture**

Watch one movie from the list

### *Recommended:*

Danjoux, Ilan. "Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." In *Political cartoons and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Manchester University Press, 2018.  
Chapters 1, 7.

**Week 12: October 7 and its Aftermath**

Margolin, Devorah, and Matthew Levitt. "The Road to October 7: Hamas' Long Game, Clarified." *CTC Sentinel* 16, no. 10 (2023): 1-10.

Lavsky, Hagit. "October 7th, 2023 From The Perspective Of Zionist History: A Crucial Wakeup Alarm." *Israel Studies* 29, no. 1 (2024): 82-88.

Recommended:

Hitman, Gadi. "What Went Wrong? Israeli Misconceptions And the October 2023 Surprise." *Middle East Policy* (2024).

**Podcasts:**

<https://www.vox.com/podcasts/23948960/israel-hamas-palestine-podcasts>

<https://www.samharris.org/podcasts/making-sense-episodes/340-the-bright-line-between-good-and-evil>

<https://thirdnarrative.org/>

**Week 13: Closing discussion**

Aly, Abdel Monem Said, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki. *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and peacemaking in the Middle East*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2013. **Pp. 450-459**

Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine conflict: One hundred years of war*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. **Chapter 10, 264-267**

## Policies & Statements

### Religious Accommodations

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

### Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

### Academic Integrity

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019) (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca) (<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>).

## **Accommodation for Personal Reasons**

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

## **Quercus Info**

This Course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

## **Online Communication**

You are asked to use your **mail.utoronto.ca** email addresses for all course-related communications and expected to check this address regularly. University of Toronto email accounts are more secure and are also governed by the institution's codes of conduct, meaning that the University has recourse to address any inappropriate communications (e.g., racist, aggressive, threatening, harassing, etc.) between students and other students as well as with the instructor. Also, if a student claims to have emailed you an assignment, this can be verified by IT staff if needed. For these reasons, instructors can state that they will only respond to emails received from a mail.utoronto.ca account. In your communications make sure you include attachments when relevant.

## **Mental Health and Well-Being**

Your mental health is important. Throughout university life, there are many experiences that can impact your mental health and well-being. As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>) such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit <https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare> to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available:  
<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

If you're in distress, you can access immediate support: <https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed>

### **Harassment/Discrimination**

Some instructors choose to include syllabus statements directly addressing policies regarding harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment. We have not provided sample text here, as this is best crafted by each instructor, in conversation with colleagues. Helpful documents to consider when thinking through this question include the "[Conflict of Interest and Close Personal Relations](#)" guideline and the policies and guidelines on Workplace Conduct collected at the [Human Resources and Equity website](#).

### **Participation + Conduct in Class**

The Code of Student Conduct and The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, which begins with a compelling call for faculty and students to collectively uphold the "integrity of the teaching and learning relationship." Both Codes can be found at [the Governing Council](#) website.

### **Privacy/FIPPA Statement**

Personal information is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971 and at all times it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Please note that this course requires presentations of one's work to the group. For more information, please refer to <http://www.utoronto.ca/privacy>.