

Israel: Society and Policy Development

Past, Present and a Projection into the Future

702.4133

Syllabus Proposal – Introductory Course for MA Students

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There will be 13 classes and 3 Field Study Days (possibility of one or two days in Jerusalem)

- **The Ancient period thru the Diaspora (3 classes)**
- **The Development of Zionism (1880s) and the Israeli State as Jewish and Democratic until 2000 (4 classes)**
- **From 2000 (2nd Intifada or Low Intensity Conflict and Second Lebanon War) to the Present (6 classes)**

Bibliography will be developed/attached upon approval of the subject matter.

3 Field Study days appear after the syllabus.

From the Ancient Period and thru the Diaspora

Sacred Beginnings - Israelites/Jewish People, the Covenant and the connection to the Land of Israel. Emphasis on the national memory (Hebrew Scriptures or Old Testament) and comparison with the historical-archeological record. Review thru the ancient period culminating with Roman destruction of Judea, Jerusalem and the Temple.

Jewish Diaspora Survival in the Christian and Muslim Worlds - The inferior social, legal and economic status of Jewish communities in Christian Europe first as determined by the Byzantines and later by the Catholic Church, Protestants and the rising nation state.

Islamic attitudes towards the Jewish People as determined by the Koran and traditions from Babylonia to North Africa and Yemen, Jewish communities live a "protected" yet servitude or "dhimmi" existence under Islamic rule and the Charter of Omar.

Under both Christendom and Islam - a mix of persecution and tolerance, all at the discretion of the host leadership.

The "Messianic idea and redemption" in the Jewish understanding lead to hope for a better future. How do we define "Messianism"?

Enlightenment Dilemmas – Over two hundred years ago Western Europe offered equal rights for equal obligations. Everything to the Jew as an individual – nothing as a "People." Joining the emerging nation state and confronting the Napoleonic offer of equality in return for primary loyalty to France – Jewish identity was reduced to "religion." Development of the "liberal democratic Diaspora" option represented by America.

Eastern Europe and the Czar – Great centers of Jewish learning - Enlightenment hopes dashed.

Jews and the Russian Revolution – the universalist/utopian response and ultimate failure.

Europe's declared "Jewish Problem" – What to do with the Jews?

Development of Zionism, Democracy and the Israeli State

Modern Jewish Nationalism/Zionism – Jews and the "secular" nationalist idea in the ancient homeland. From Herzl's "Jewish State" to the Laborites, National Religious and Revisionist movements. Development of the Jewish community or "Yishuv" under the British administered Palestine Mandate. Solving the "Jewish Problem"

Clash over Palestine/Land of Israel – Arab Muslim and specifically Palestinian Arab perspectives on Zionism and "Jewish national redemption." Both the Islamic and secular Arab nationalist perspectives reject Jewish claims to Palestine whether for theological or national, cultural and demographic reasons. The clash between rising Palestinian Arab nationalism and the Zionist movement begins after WWI. Attempted Partition Plan compromise of 1947, the 1948 War and results.

Identity and the Institutionalization of the Israeli State – The Jewish State is established in the shadow of the Holocaust, survives the 1948 War but to succeed one must "win the war and win the peace." Defense and foreign policy, immigrant absorption from Europe and the Middle East and economic development (including population dispersal) from 1948 to 1967. What is the place of Israeli Arabs? Defining the bond with Diaspora Jewry – can they be "Zionists?" Can the State of Israel be Jewish and Democratic?

Existential Issues Rise to the Fore – Labor domination and replacement by the Likud in 1977. The 1973 Yom Kippur War and peace with Egypt changes Israel's strategic outlook. From 1977 – 2000 and despite Jewish demographic and economic growth (in particular hi-tech) combined with military success the Israeli State remains an outsider in the world arena. The Oslo two-state solution initiative leads to questions of success/failure and lack of Israeli integration into the Middle East. Rise of the settlement movement and haredi political power. The redefinition of Israeli Arabs as "Palestinian Arabs with Israeli citizenship" challenges traditional Israeli politics and identity. Can the Arab community in Israel serve as "the" bridge between Israel's Jewish population and the Arab World?

From 2000 to the Present – Topics for Investigation

Political System – How does Israel's political system work (or maybe malfunction)? Using parliamentary procedure and elections based on proportional representation there are some 15 political parties represented in the Knesset at any given time. How are coalitions formed and why the shifting alliances? What ideologies/theologies unite or divide the different blocs (right, left, center, religious, Arab) and how can stable governing coalitions be formed? Can we reform the system or are there vested interests in keeping everything the way it is? A glimpse into the future and what appears to be continued domination by right-religious coalitions and interests. Illustration of trends in Israeli politics and policy development since the turn of the century.

The Islamic Jihadi Challenge: Hamas and Hezbollah – The 2000-04 Low Intensity Conflict (Second Intifada) and terror attacks against Israel redefined Palestinian Muslim identity more along Islamic Jihadi lines. Hamas overwhelmed Fatah and took the lead in negating possibilities for a two-state solution. Simultaneously the Iranian-Hezbollah alliance continues to dominate Lebanon and tested its military abilities during the 2006 clash (Second Lebanon War) with the

Jewish State. Non-state actors replaced Arab "confrontation states" and forced a reevaluation of the use of military force while often putting civilians on the front lines. Physical survival of the Jewish State questioned.

Israeli Arab Dilemmas – Muslims, Christians, Druze and Bedouins make up Israel's non-Jewish Arabic speaking population making it far from a monolithic group. Who is loyal to the Israeli State and who is not? How is "loyalty" defined? Many of the younger generation describe themselves as "Palestinians with Israeli citizenship" but is one first "Palestinian" or "Arab" or is Islam more often than not the dominant factor in one's identity? Since the 2011 Arab Spring or "Islamic Awakening" is it physically safer and/or economically more worthwhile to live in the Zionist State than the average Arab country? Politically and pragmatically – where does one stand?

The Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox Fundamentalism) – Traditionally a small part of Israel's demographic make-up the Haredim are the fastest growing population in the Jewish sector. Often led by non-Zionist rabbis Jewish religious law (Halacha) is revered and state law seen as lacking. Their political parties (Shas and UTJ) are in the government provided their constituents receive military draft exemptions, stipends for yeshiva (religious) studies instead of seeking employment and need not accept state oversight in their school system. Can the Haredi population be integrated into a secular state and how does this bode for Israel's future?

Settlement Movement in the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) – A study of the ideological-theological foundations of the Messianic fundamentalist "Greater Land of Israel" settlement movement beginning with Rabbi A. Y. Kook, continuing with Rabbi Moshe Levinger in Hebron and the rise of anti-governmental Gush Emunim activism in the 1970s. What began as an "outsider" religious-right extra-parliamentary organization facing down a Labor government became a major force on Israel's domestic front and lead to continual clashes where foreign policy is concerned. Advocating a "one-state" solution since 1977 the settlement movement was and is supported by the right wing Likud led coalitions and is among the most influential institutions in the country. What are the ramifications for the future of Israel and the Jewish People? Two peoples in one state?

Jewish Survival: Where To? - This is the last class. Israel faces schisms between religious (esp. Haredi) and secular Jews, left and right, rich and poor, Jews and Arabs – and that is only the domestic front. Security challenges abound internally and with the Palestinians in the West Bank. Externally Hamas threatens Israel from the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah applies pressure from across the Lebanese border to the north. Israel's Golan front faces the dual threat from the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) and Iranian operatives (who also battle each other) not to mention the direct Iranian nuclear threat.

Should Israel retain the West Bank, the Jewish State may very well become bi-national and redefine the original "Jewish and democratic" Zionist understanding predicated on a Jewish majority.

Will an assimilating World Jewish community continue to identify and support the State of Israel? Will Israel face a form of "Lebanonization" if there is a one-state solution? How will the Jewish State survive the constant tensions and clashes both internally and on its borders?

Field Studies

Akko and Tzfat – Akko was the port city with alternating Christian and Turkish Muslim dominance throughout the centuries while Tzfat's Jewish minority would become a Kabbalistic center beginning in the 16th century.

A modern discussion of Jewish-Arab cooperation in the Galilee (visit Eshchar and Arab al-Naim) against a backdrop of underlying tensions.

Jewish and Christian Jerusalem (one day) – Beginning with an overview from the Haas Promenade and continue to Jaffa Gate to commence our walking tour of the Old City and its environs. We cross over to Mt. Zion to visit King David's Tomb, the Room of the Last Supper and then make our way down to David's City (or Davidson Center) and the Western Wall. Lunch in the Jewish Quarter and over to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. There will be a few minutes for shopping in the Arab Market (time permitting).

Security Tour to Metulla and the Golan Heights – Reviewing Israeli's security challenges. Metulla overviews Lebanon and the Hezbollah held region just to the north. In the Golan Heights there are the Syrian Tel Faher bunkers captured by Israel in 1967, the famous Valley of the Tears (1973) and finally Mt. Bental overlooking the eastern Syrian Golan and the present day battleground between the Islamic State Jihadists and the Iranian supported Assad regime.