This course is a political, social, and cultural history of modern Israel from the origins of Zionism in the late nineteenth century to the present. It aims to provide students with a deeper grasp of the personalities, events, forces, and structures that have shaped modern Israel. Emphasis will be placed on the development of historical understanding through close engagement with major debates pertaining to the subject of the course. We will explore debates in Israel’s history, like those between different streams of Zionism, or between proponents and opponents of a written constitution, or between conflicting visions of Israel as a “Jewish” state. We will also explore debates among historians and sociologists of Israel/Palestine, such as the debate over the 1948 war, or over whether Zionism should be considered a colonial movement. Some of the debates we will study involve issues that were once fiercely contested but now appear more or less settled; most—like the debate over the compatibility of Israel’s “Jewish” and “democratic” self-definition—remain timely and relevant.

Learning Objectives

This course has several learning objectives that will serve as the basis for assessment. Students will be evaluated on their ability to:

- **Demonstrate** a grasp of the history of Israel that goes beyond the surface of events to explain underlying ideas, controversies, patterns, and structures.

- **Reason** historically, e.g. by thinking contextually and concretely, avoiding unwarranted generalizations and anachronisms, perceiving change and continuity over time, considering how historians with divergent orientations (political, social, intellectual) might approach and explain the same historical phenomenon differently, appreciating complexity, periodizing, etc.

- **Imagine** themselves into the point of view of some of the groups and individuals we will encounter in our course, showing an ability to “see” things from different perspectives and to present these perspectives in a way that is nuanced, concrete, and historically plausible.

- **Argue** positions on some of the major debates in Israeli historiography, in class discussions and in particular in the formal in-class debates. (See “Requirements”)

- **Analyze** both primary and secondary literature (historiography) critically, e.g. by attending to things like context, structure, and argument, distinguishing thesis from supporting evidence, considering alternative explanations for given data, discerning possible authorial biases, etc.

- **Work** collaboratively, as part of a debating team.
Requirements:

- **Preparation and Participation** (15%). This class will combine both lecture and discussion. I encourage everyone to come to class prepared to contribute in a constructive manner, by posing and responding to questions, making comments, sharing insights, asking me to clarify something I have said, and just in general demonstrating a high level of engagement. The reading will typically average between 100-150 pages per week. Attendance is mandatory. Three or more unexcused absences—or repeated lateness to class—will reduce your grade for attendance and participation. *NB:* your grade for attendance and participation will be based on both attendance *and* participation. Exemplary attendance alone is no guarantee of a top mark in this category.

- **Debate** (20%). Every student must participate in one of the formal in-class debates that will be held this semester. I explain this requirement in great detail in a separate handout that will be distributed the first day of class and posted on Blackboard. The first debate is scheduled for the fourth week of classes; the last debate will take place at our second-to-last meeting.

- **Midterm Exam** (15%). A 75-minute midterm exam will be administered in class on Thursday, **March 6**.

- **Term Paper** (25%). A 3,000-word research paper is required of all students. The paper will be due in class on Thursday, **April 10**. Your grade will be reduced by one-third for every 24-hour period it is late. Extensions will be offered only in true cases of medical or family emergency. I explain this requirement further in a handout that will be distributed by the end of the first month of class.

- **Final Exam** (25%). A two-hour final exam will be administered in class on a date to be determined by the registrar.

- The unauthorized use of laptops, smartphones, tablets, or any other form of electronic technology during class is strictly prohibited and will negatively affect your Attendance and Participation grade.

- Academic dishonesty, be it plagiarism or cheating on an exam, is a serious university offense. While you are allowed, even expected at times (e.g. in the debates and on the research paper), to assimilate the work and ideas of others, you must give credit to your sources when appropriate. Furthermore, unless you make clear that you are quoting someone (which should be done sparingly in any case), you need to use language that is incontrovertibly your own. I will be available to answer any questions you might have about the nuances of how and when to cite, but know from the outset that I am obliged to report suspected cases of plagiarism and cheating. Be sure to familiarize yourselves with both the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) and the GW Code of Academic Integrity, which can be found at [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html).

- In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, students with special needs must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 994-8250.

Readings:
The following readings have been placed on reserve at Gelman Library and should be available for purchase at the GW Bookstore:

• Itamar Rabinovich & Jehuda Reinharz (eds), *Israel in the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Brandeis UP, 2007) [IME]
• *Donna Rosenthal, The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (Free Press, 2008)

In the list of assignments for each class below, you will also find readings that are posted on Blackboard under Electronic Reserve [ER], or that can be found on the Gelman Library online index of Electronic Journals [EJ], or that are available online as a Gelman Library Electronic Book [EB].

**Schedule of Classes:**

### I. THE ORIGINS OF ZIONISM AND THE “NEW YISHUV” TO 1917

**T** Jan 14

**Introduction**

**R** Jan 16

**Sources of Modern Jewish Nationalism—The European Context.**

- Shapira, *Israel: A History*, pp. 3-16

**T** Jan 21

**Political Zionism and Its Critics**

- *IME, docs. 2 (“Auto-Emancipation”), 3 (“A Solution the Jewish Question”), 4 (“The Basle Program”), 5 (“The First Zionist Congress”)*
- Shapira, pp. 16-24

**R** Jan 23

**Ottoman Palestine and the Roots of the ‘New Yishuv’**

- *IME, doc. 1 (“Manifesto”)*
- Eran Kaplan and Derek Penslar (eds), *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History*, pp. 3-17, docs. 1 (“Letter of Complaint, etc.”) and 3 (“The Rothschild Administration”)
- Shapira, pp. 27-42

**T** Jan 28

**Socialist-Zionism, the Second Aliyah, and the “Pioneering” Ideal**

- Shapira, pp. 42-62

**R** Jan 30

**The Balfour Declaration and the Creation of the British Mandate**

- *IME, docs. 7 (“Balfour Declaration”), 8 (“Zionist Manifesto”), 9 (“Churchill White Paper”), 10 (“Mandate for Palestine”)*
- Hussein-McMahon Correspondence
  [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/hussmac1.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/hussmac1.html)
II. UNDER THE MANDATE, 1918-1948

T Feb 4  Immigration and Settlement; Yishuv Politics and the Rise of the Left-Right Divide

- Shapira, pp. 103-122

R Feb 6  The Invention of a New Hebrew Culture

- Shapira, pp. 133-152
- Avraham Shlonsky, “Toil” [ER]
- Kaplan and Penslar, pp. 167-170, docs. 20 (“Tel Aviv”), 21 (“Tel Aviv as a Jewish City”), 30 (“How to Spread the Use of Hebrew”), 31 (“Purim Celebrations in Tel Aviv”), 36 (“The Hebrew University”)

T Feb 11  Arab Nationalism, British and Jewish Responses. The One State/Two State Question.

- Shapira, pp. 79-98

R Feb 13  DEBATE: Was pre-State Zionism a Form of Colonialism?


T Feb 18  The Holocaust and the Struggle for Statehood

- Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2001), chap. 11 [ER]

- IME, docs. 15 (“Biltmore Program”), 19 (“Resolution 181”)

R  Feb 20  The War of Independence, 1947-1949: History and Memory

- Shapira, pp. 155-178
- Kaplan and Penslar, pp. 339-343, docs. 57 (“The Silver Platter”), 59 (“Public Opinion during the 1948 War”)
- IME, docs. 22 (Ben-Gurion, The War of Independence, May 1948, Memoir), 26 (“Resolution 194”)

T  Feb 25  DEBATE: Did Israel Pursue a Deliberate Policy of Expelling Arabs in the 1948 War?


III. THE CHALLENGES OF STATEHOOD, 1948-1967

R  Feb 27  From Yishuv to State: The Creation of Israeli Democracy

- Shapira, pp. 179-207

T  Mar 4  The Mass Immigration and the Memory of the Holocaust

- Shapira, pp. 222-270

R  Mar 6  MIDTERM EXAM (75 minutes)

T  Mar 11  SPRING BREAK

R  Mar 13  SPRING BREAK

T  Mar 18  The Politics of Security: Borders, Militarism, and the Sinai War

- Shapira, pp. 271-291
• \textit{IME}, docs. 32 ("The Transformation of the Israeli Army"), 39 ("The Clash with Ben-Gurion over Defense Policies"), 42 ("The Background to the Sinai Campaign")

R \hspace{0.5cm} Mar 20 \hspace{0.5cm} A Tale of Two Wars: The Legacies of 1967 and 1973

• Shapira, pp. 295-354
• \textit{IME}, docs. 65 ("The Land for Peace Principle"), 67 ("The Khartoum Resolutions"), 68 ("Resolution 242"), 69 ("The Palestine National Charter"), 75 ("The Yom Kippur War"), 76 (Agranat Commission), 86 ("Resolution 338")

IV. \hspace{0.5cm} "GREATER ISRAEL OR "LAND FOR PEACE"?"

T \hspace{0.5cm} Mar 25 \hspace{0.5cm} The Occupation and the Rise of the Settlements

• \textit{IME}, docs. 61 ("Administering the WB"), 62 ("The Conflict between Dayan and Sapir"), 80 ("The Ideology of the National Religious Party"), 77 ("Protest Movements"), 81 ("Gush Emunim"), 84 ("Peace Now")
• See \texttt{http://www.btselem.org/maps} for most up-to-date maps of the West Bank, Settlements, and Separation Barrier

R \hspace{0.5cm} Mar 27 \hspace{0.5cm} The Begin Years

• Shapira, pp. 357-390

T \hspace{0.5cm} Apr 1 \hspace{0.5cm} War and Peace in the Age of Intifada and Oslo

• Shapira, pp. 411-449
• \textit{IME}, docs. 117 ("Hamas Covenant"), 118 ("The Madrid Middle East Peace Conference"), 120 ("Speech to the Knesset"), 133 ("Oslo Accords"), 137 ("Oslo II"), 138 ("Amendment to PNC")

R \hspace{0.5cm} Apr 3 \hspace{0.5cm} DEBATE: Were the Palestinians at Fault for the Failure of Camp David in 2000?

• \textit{IME}, docs. 142 ("Clinton Parameters"), 143 ("Evolution of Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations"), 144 ("Sharm-el-Sheikh Finding Committee").
• "Camp David and After: An Exchange (1. An Interview with Ehud Barak)," by Benny Morris, \textit{NYRB} (13 June 2002)
• “Camp David and After: An Exchange (2. A Reply to Ehud Barak),” by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley (13 June 2002)

• “Camp David and After: Continued,” Benny Morris, Ehud Barak, reply by Robert Malley and Hussein Agha (27 June 2002)

V. ENDURING QUESTIONS AND DIVIDES

T Apr 8 Ethnicity and Israeli Identity: Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Russians, and Ethiopians

• Shapira, pp. 391-411, 453-460
• *IME*, docs. 64 (“Black Panthers”), 82 (“A Soviet Intellectual Abroad”), 113 (“Quanderies of an Israeli Minister of Absorption”), 114 (“The Ethiopian Emigration”), 124 (“Aryeh Deri’s Speech”), 127 (“A Russian Immigrant Looks at Israeli (or Jewish?) Culture”), appendix 10
• Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, chaps. 5-8 (recommended)

R Apr 10 Religion, Politics, and Society: Secular, Traditional, Orthodox, and Ultra-Orthodox

• Yehuda Mirsky, “Fathers and Sons,” *The Jewish Review of Books*, Fall 2013 [ER]
• Rosenthal, chaps. 9-11 (recommended)

RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS

T Apr 15 PASSOVER

R Apr 17 The Arab Minority

• *IME*, docs. 51 (“From Israeli Arabs to Israel’s Palestinian Citizens”), 83 (“National Command for the Defense of Arab Lands”), 126 (“Arab Citizens of Palestine”), 130 (“Orr Commission”)
• Rosenthal, chaps. 12-15 (recommended)

T Apr 22 PASSOVER

R Apr 24 DEBATE: Can Israel be Both a “Jewish” and a “Democratic” State?

• “Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty” (1992)
  http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic3_eng.htm
  http://www.azure.org.il/article.php?id=239&page=all

Facing the Future—Israel's Domestic and International Challenges

Syllabus Information for Your Students

To Report an Emergency or Suspicious Activity
Call the University Police Department at 202-994-6111 (Foggy Bottom) or 202-242-6111 (Mount Vernon).

Shelter in Place
Although it is unlikely that we will ever need to shelter in place, it is helpful to know what to do just in case. No matter where you are, the basic steps of shelter in place will generally remain the same.

• If you are inside, stay where you are unless the building you are in is affected. If it is affected, you should evacuate. If you are outdoors, proceed into the closest building or follow instructions from emergency personnel on the scene.
• Locate an interior room to shelter inside. If possible, it should be above ground level and have the fewest number of windows. If sheltering in a room with windows, move away from the windows. If there is a large group of people inside a particular building, several rooms may be necessary.
• Shut and lock all windows (tighter seal) and close exterior doors.
• Turn off air conditioners, heaters, and fans. Close vents to ventilation systems as you are able. (University staff will turn off ventilation as quickly as possible).
• Make a list of the people with you and ask someone to call the list in to UPD so they know where you are sheltering. If only students are present, one of the students should call in the list.
• Await further instructions. If possible, visit Campus Advisories for incident updates (http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu) or call the GW Information Line 202-994-5050.
• Make yourself comfortable and look after one other. You will get word as soon as it is safe to come out.

Evacuation
An evacuation will be considered if the building we are in is affected or we must move to a location of greater safety. We will always evacuate if the fire alarm sounds. In the event of an evacuation, please gather your personal belongings quickly (purse, keys, GWorld card, etc.) and proceed to the nearest exit. (INSERT TWO WAYS OUT OF THE BUILDING HERE). Do not use the elevator. Once you have evacuated the building, proceed to our primary rendezvous location (INSERT PRIMARY INDOOR RENDEZVOUS LOCATION HERE). In the event that this location is unavailable, we will meet at (INSERT SECONDARY INDOOR RENDEZVOUS LOCATION HERE).

Alert DC
Alert DC provides free notification by e-mail or text message during an emergency. Visit Campus Advisories for a link and instructions on how to sign up for alerts pertaining to GW.
Emergency Information

Additional emergency information may be obtained by visiting the Campus Advisories webpage (http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu) or calling the GW Information Line at 202-994-5050.