This course examines Israeli politics and government from the establishment of the state in 1948 to contemporary developments, and is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of the Israeli state, patterns of governance and social and political cleavages within civil society with an eye to the peace process. Challenging students to consider the Israeli case in comparative perspective, this course encourages critical thinking and comparison of the theories, institutions and concepts explored as they apply to other cases.

Course requirements:

- Attendance and active participation: 10% of your final grade will rely on your regular attendance in classes each week (please make sure you sign in through the sign-up sheet), and can include pop quizzes. Active participation means that you demonstrate your knowledge of the course material in class through volunteering your insights about the readings during the lecture. A perfect grade in this category (10/10) involves being both physically in the class and involving yourself (regularly) in class discussion. An active classroom benefits everyone (and is the most fun), however the professor reserves the right to limit discussion at any time.

- Critical reading responses: 15% of your final grade. Each student is required to hand in two analytical reading responses (worth 7.5% each) throughout the course, beginning from class 5 (excluding classes 13-15). Responses are due at the beginning of the class for which you are submitting. These responses are maximum 1.5 pages in length (double spaced. Times New Roman) and should be critical reflections on the readings for that class. A good response will reflect on the themes of the course, on the content of week (and if relevant on previous weeks), and the argument or thesis being forwarded by the reading.

- Final research paper (you will have to choose from three questions):
  a) An annotated bibliography worth 15% with at least 10 sources you plan to use (4 out of 10 have to be primary sources). Due October 15 2014 at the beginning of the class. Consult the professor if you have questions regarding sources.

  b) Final research paper worth 25% which is between 10 to 12 pages (double spaced Times New Roman). The essay involves answering a broad
theoretically informed question, and is due **December 4 2014**, to be handed in at the beginning of class.

- **A cumulative final exam:** 35% of your final grade, is scheduled in regular exam time (**Wed December 17 2014** between 9:15-12:15pm). It will cover all course content for the semester, and will be divided into two sections: short answer (define and explain the significance) and one longer essay question.

**Assignment submission:**
All assignments must be submitted in person by when they are due. If there is a reason a student cannot submit in person, this has to be agreed upon with the professor ahead of time. Assignments submitted after the due date will be **penalized 2 points per day**, except in cases of a documented illness or personal emergency.

**Course aims:**
- Providing students with a comprehensive general understanding of the political development of the Israeli state, including broad knowledge of the institutions of government, main internal societal conflicts, and the dynamic impact of security issues and of the larger Middle East conflict on the state and society;
- Facilitating students' ability to analyze the case of Israel in a comparative perspective on several levels of analysis, including placing different aspects of the state and society in a comparative framework;
- Assisting students to critically analyze the case of Israel, including the ability to conduct academic research using primary and secondary sources.

**Course material:**

Textbook available in Brandeis University bookshop:
All other assigned materials, as well as all information about assignments and course updates will be made available to students in a course pack or online through LATTE.

**Please note:**
- The recommended readings at the end of each week relate to the general topic covered during that week.
- The readings in the syllabus are subject to change on occasion. Students will be notified in advance.

**Academic Integrity:**
You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity: [http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/top10students.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/top10students.html).
Any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences. For further questions on academic integrity please consult the Academic Integrity Resources on the LTS website.

**Use of cell phones and laptops in the classroom:**

Use of cell phones in class, for talking, texting or reading/writing email is prohibited. If you wish to leave your cell phone on in 'silent' mode because of a specific emergency, please alert the professor at the beginning of the class.

The use of computers is permitted, if, and only if, this is for the purposes of taking notes in class. If it is discovered that students are using computers for other purposes during class time (including texting, messaging, Facebook, or surfing the web), the use of laptops in the classroom will be discontinued (please don't let this happen!).

**Latte Course Website:**

On Latte you will find a copy of this syllabus (with hyperlinks) in Course Tools => Get Course Syllabus. Assignments, course policies, and other materials are posted at the top center underneath the masthead. In the course modules are links to PowerPoint files for each week and the electronic readings assigned for that class (it is highly recommended that you print them all). Additional announcements, questions and material will be posted on Latte during the semester.

If you are experiencing difficulties logging in/accessing Latte consults the Student Guide to Latte at [http://www.brandeis.edu/legacy-latte/help/student/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/legacy-latte/help/student/index.html) or contact the Help Desk at X65883 or latte@brandeis.edu

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If you are a student who needs academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as possible.

If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations, you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in Academic Services (x6-3470 or brodgers@brandeis.edu.)

Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of accommodations, and absolutely before the day of an exam or test. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

[http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/disabilities/faculty.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/disabilities/faculty.html)
Part 1 Introduction to the Study of Israel

Week 1

Class 1: Introduction (Thursday August 28th)

No assigned readings

Week 2: Unique or just exceptional? Comparing the Case of Israel

Class 2: (Wed Sept 3rd)

"Of course we are unique, but we are not unique in thinking we are unique"
(Yacobson, 2008, quoting an anonymous scholar)


Class 3: (Thurs Sept 4th)

*Choose one of the following readings (be prepared to discuss your chosen reading in class):


Week 3 History of the Modern State of Israel: 1897-1948

Class 4: (Monday Sept 8th)


Class 5: (Wed. Sept 10th)

**Class 6:** (Thurs Sept 11th)


*Recommended:*


**Week 4 Origins of Zionism**

**Classes 7 & 8:** (Monday Sept 15th & Wed. Sept 17th)


**Class 9:** (Thurs Sept 18th)


*Recommended:*


**Week 5 Contemporary Debates over the definition of the State of Israel**

**Classes 10 & 11:** (Mon Sept 22nd & Tues Sept 23rd)


**Class 12:** (Wed Sept 24th)


*Recommended:*


**Part 2 Israel: Government, governance and Institutions**

**Week 6: Political history of the Modern State of Israel: 1948-1990s**

*Classes 13-15:* (Mon Sept 29th, Wed Oct 1st, Thurs Oct 2nd)

**Political developments by decades:**


*Professor will give additional directions regarding the readings during this week.

*Recommended*


**Week 7: The Government and the Knesset**

**Classes 16 & 17: (Mon Oct 6th & Wed Oct 8th)**


*Recommended:*


**Week 8: Political parties and party organization**

**Class 18: (Mon Oct 13th)**

Arian, Asher. (2005) "Political Parties", Chapter 5 (pp. 117-142); "Party Organization", Chapter 6 (pp. 166-180; 190-201).


**Class 19: (Wed Oct 15th)**


- Annotated bibliography assignment due

*Recommended:*


**Week 9: The Judiciary**

**Classes 20:** (Mon Oct 20th)


**Classes 21 & 22:** (Wed Oct 22nd & Thurs Oct 23rd)


**Recommended:**

*The Existing Basic Laws of the State of Israel*: Full Texts.


**Part 3 Israeli Society: Clash and Convergence (Understanding crosscutting and cumulative cleavages)**

**Week 10: State and Religion in Israel**

**Class 23:** (Mon Oct 27th)


**Classes 24 & 25:** (Wed Oct 29th & Thurs Oct 30th)


**Recommended**


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**Week 11: The Jewish Majority? Ashkenazim vs. Sephardim**

**Classes 26 & 27:** (Mon Nov 3rd & Wed Nov 5th)


**Class 28:** (Thurs Nov 6th)


**Recommended**


**Week 12: Israel's Arab minority**
Classes 29 & 30: (Mon Nov 10th & Wed Nov 12th)


Class 31: (Thurs Nov. 13th)


Recommended


Part 4 War, peace and beyond

Week 13: A History of the Oslo Peace Process

Classes 32 & 33: (Mon Nov. 17th & Wed Nov. 19th)


Class 34: (Thurs Nov. 20th)


Recommended


Weeks 14 & 15: The fall of Oslo and beyond

Class 35: (Mon Nov 24th)


Classes 36-38: (Mon Dec 1st, Wed Dec 3rd, Thurs Dec 4th)


- Final research paper due December 4th

Recommended

Text of peace agreements (and additional primary sources) related to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (English), http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/MFADocuments/Pages/Selected%20Reference%20Documents.aspx


Week 16: Is Israel unique or just exceptional?

December 8th: Exam review