All course stuff is on the course website: https://christiansandisrael.wordpress.com/
CHRISTIANS AND ISRAEL

CLASS INFO

NEJS 139b – Christians and Israel
Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6:20pm

Instructor – Dr. Walker Robins
wrobins@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays Noon-2pm in Mandel 320

Summary
Both before and after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, Christians have disagreed strenuously over the meaning and significance of a Jewish state in Palestine. Many factors—including those not typically understood as “religious”—have shaped how different Christian communities have related to Israel. Theology has been the guide for many. For others, humanitarian concern. For still others, national obligations and conceptions of peoplehood have determined their approach. And the list goes on.

This course will examine the roots and development of the many different approaches to the question of a Jewish state among four different Christian groups—Catholics, American mainline Protestants, American evangelical Protestants, and Arab Christians of various church affiliations.

Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of distinctions between different Christian groups and individuals (in terms of theology, social groupings, practice, etc.) in relationship to how these groups have engaged the idea or reality of a Jewish state in the Holy Land. They will also be able to demonstrate understanding of the interaction between religious ideas and political and social realities in shaping that engagement. They will be able to develop and respond to historical questions about both by building methodologies for answering such questions, finding and engaging appropriate source material, and constructing arguments rooted in source material.
Required Texts
A course packet is available at the campus copy center (should be ready Friday morning). All other readings will be posted online.

Attendance and Participation
Students are allowed 3 absences throughout the semester. Additional absences will result in the loss of a letter grade.

This class is built around discussion, so coming to class prepared is crucial.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class.

Email Policy
Please note that I will only reply to emails during working hours (i.e., 9am-5pm M-F). You can send them whenever—this is more about when I will get to them.

Electronics
Do not use cell phones in class.

Disabilities
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 (781-736-3470 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.

Academic Misconduct
Academic misconduct is unacceptable. So we are clear, this includes plagiarism, submission of work for multiple classes, purchasing work, fabrication of sources and fraud, as well as assisting other students in such acts. Beyond official university policy,
personal integrity is extremely important to me. Please don’t devalue the work of your fellow students by cheating. Take pride in what you do and what you put your name on.

Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for policies and procedures pertaining to academic misconduct.
CHRISTIANS AND ISRAEL

SCHEDULE

1/10 – Introductions

1/15 – NO CLASS – MLK Day

1/17 – Traditional Jewish and Christian Interpretations of Diaspora
CP (Course Packet) – Romans 8:6-8
CP – excerpts from Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho (2nd century, CE)
CP – excerpt from Augustine, City of God (5th century, CE) – readings here

1/18 (Yes–Thursday!) – Judeo-Centric Interpretations of the Bible
Yaakov Ariel, “The Roots and Early Beginnings of the Evangelical-Jewish Relationship.”
CP – excerpt from Henry Finch, The World’s Great Restauration (1621)

1/22 – Christian Restorationism
Yaakov Ariel, “Evangelicals and Jewish Restoration”, 82-90.
CP – The Blackstone Memorial (1891)

1/24 – The Arrival of Zionism
Bunton, “Ottoman Palestine.”
*CP – excerpt from Herzl, The Jewish State (1896)

1/29 – Early Christian Allies and Opponents of Zionism
*Shalom Goldman, “Theodor Herzl and His Christian Associates.”
*CP – excerpt from Herzl’s diary on William Hechler
CP – excerpt from Herzl’s diary on Pope Pius X

1/31 – The Christian Communities of Palestine
2/5 – Arab Christians, Nationalism, and Zionism
Emanuel Beska, “Khalil al-Sakakini and Zionism before WWI.”

2/7 – Exam I

2/12 – The Mandate Era
Bunton, “British Palestine.”

2/14 – Christians in the Palestinian National Movement
Daphne Tsimhoni, “The Arab Christians and the Palestinian Arab National Movement.”
CP – First Arab Orthodox Congress, “Demands of the First Arab Orthodox Congress (1923).”

Mid-Term Recess – NO CLASS week of 2/19

(2-Pager 2 due on 2/25 by 11:59pm)

2/26 – The Vatican and a “Corpus Separatum”
Silvio Ferrari, “The Vatican, the Palestine question, and the internationalization of Jerusalem.”
CP – Pius XII, “In Multiplicibus Curis” (October 24, 1948)

2/28 – The “Palestine Question” Among American Mainline and Liberal Protestants
Caitlin Carenen, “The American Christian Palestine Committee, the Holocaust, and Mainstream Protestant Zionism, 1938-1948.”

3/5 – The “Palestine Question” Among American Conservative Evangelical Protestants
CP – Frank Norris, “Letter to President Harry S. Truman” (1947)

3/7 – 1948
Bunton, “Atzmaut and Nakba.”
3/12 – Christians in a Jewish State, Part I
Uri Bialer, “Missionary Activity.”

3/14 – Christians in a Jewish State, Part II
Uri Bialer, “Goat and Chicken Diplomacy.”

3/19 – Exam II

3/21 – 1967 and After
Bunton, “Occupation” and “The Rise and Fall of the Peace Process”

(Source Write-Ups due 3/25 by 11:59pm)

3/26 – Conservative Evangelicals and Israel

3/28 – Shifting Alliances
Benjamin Netanyahu Speech to Christians United for Israel (2012)

Passover/Spring Break

4/9 – Palestinization and the Churches
Daphne Tsimhoni, “Israel and the Territories–Disappearance.”
*CP – Statements by the Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem

4/11 – Palestine Liberation Theology
CP – Kairos Palestine

4/16 – The Catholic Theological Reorientation
*Shalom Goldman, “Rome and Jerusalem.”
CP – Nostra Aetate

4/18 – The Catholic Political Reorientation
CP – Fundamental Agreement Between the Holy See and the State of Israel
(Final Papers due 4/22 by 11:59pm)

4/23 – Review and Prospect

4/25 — NO CLASS — Friday Schedule

FINAL

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