

History of the State of Israel

NEJS 145a
(Preliminary Syllabus)

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Course Description

This course is a survey of the political, social and cultural history of the State of Israel. We will examine the background of the establishment of the state, looking at global politics in the early 20th century and the evolution of both Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. We will then explore the history of Israel from many perspectives, including diplomacy, immigration and demography, military history, film, arts and literature, sociology, ethnography, religion and international law. The goal will be to develop an appreciation for the energy and intricacies of life in Israel for all of its diverse population, a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics of the country and the significance the State of Israel has had, and continues to have, for those of different religions living outside its borders.

Grading

Requirements for the course include:

Attendance, Preparation and Reading Responses	35%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-Term	25%
Final	30%

A passing grade is required in all of the above categories in order to pass the course.

Class Conduct

Attendance and active participation is expected from all students. Except in the case of officially documented emergencies (such as a medical emergency accompanied by a doctor's note,) more than two absences will result in a reduced grade. Note that pop quizzes might be issued in-class. There will be no opportunity to make up a grade for a missed quiz, except in the documented case of a valid absence. The same goes for the mid-term which will be given in-class. Failure to take an exam will result in a failing grade for that exam.

The study of history entails grappling with big ideas about human thought, belief, behavior, and practice. Therefore, any course in history is bound to be the site of different opinions. Collegial debate is welcome, but aggressive behavior has no place in our classroom. Please exercise respect for your colleagues.

Readings

Please purchase the following book. Be sure to purchase the correct edition:

Dowty, Alan. *Israel/Palestine*. Polity, 2017. 4th edition.

Readings will also be taken from Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (UPNE, 2012)., which is available online at the library.

All readings and assignments must be completed *before* the first class in the week for which they were assigned. ("Readings" may include watching a film or reviewing other material.)

Class sessions will include presentations from the instructor and extensive discussion of the readings. You are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to come prepared for class discussion. This includes completing all required readings prior to the start of class, bringing copies of them with you to class, and thinking about any discussion posted in advance. Our ability to analyze texts critically depends on having our reading materials in front of us. Failure to bring assigned readings to class may have a negative impact on your participation grade.

Technology policy

Cell phones and other electronic devices are never permitted in class.

The evidence increasingly suggests that most students produce better work and receive higher grades when taking notes by hand rather than using a laptop, and that sitting near students using laptops and other electronic devices has a negative effect on your

grades *even if you are not using such devices yourself*. For these reasons, **I strongly encourage everyone to leave laptops packed away**.

Email is the best way that I have to communicate with you outside of class. Even if email is not your usual mode of communication, please make sure that you check it every day in case I need to get in touch with you. Similarly, please make check Latte frequently so that you are aware of announcements about the course.

Credit Hours

Success in this 4 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 (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.)

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University [Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at [LTS - Library guides](#).

Detailed Course Overview

The following is a provisional outline of the units of the course. The instructor will be as responsive as possible to the interests of the participating students and, to that end, readings and topics might be changed.

Unit 1. World War I and the Making of the Modern Middle East

The End of the Ottoman Empire and the Rise of Middle Eastern States

James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 189–229.

Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, First edition (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017) Chapter 1.

Jews Encounter Modernity

Engel, David. *Zionism*. Routledge, 2013. pp. 1-26

Zionism: It's Varieties and Opponents

Extracts from Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997): Kalischer, Bilu Manifesto, Herzl, Basle Declaration, Ahad Ha'am, Protestrabbiner, Po'ale Tsion.

Palestinian National Identity

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 2010) Chapter 2.

Unit 2. Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate

Zionism and the International Community

Dowty 47-81

The Balfour Declaration

The Growth and Ideology of the Yishuv

Selections from The Palestine Poster Project [\[Link\]](#)

Jewish-Arab Relations under the British

Jabotinsky, "The Iron Wall"

David Ben-Gurion, "On the Arab Question" (1937)

Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Chapter 7;

Gorni, Yosef. "Zionist Socialism and the Arab Question, 1918–1930." *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, no. 1 (1977): 50–70.

Unit 3. Holocaust and Partition

Shapira 78-94

Ha-Shomer Hatsair, “The Case for a Bi-national State”

Moshe Shertok “Bi-nationalism is Unworkable”

Presentation to UNSCOP of Iraqi Ambassador;

Biltmore Program;

UN Resolution on Palestine

Unit 4. Independence and Naqba

Dowty 85-103

Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel [[link](#)];

S. Yizhar. “The Prisoner”

Ghassan Kanafani “The Land of Sad Oranges”

Film: *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (clips)

Unit 5. “Sabra” Culture and the Politics of Immigration

Dowty 103-112

Helman, Anat. “Informality, Straightforwardness, and Rudeness.” In *Becoming Israeli: National Ideals and Everyday Life in the 1950s*, 163–86. Brandeis University Press, 2014

Weingrod, Alex. “Styles of Ethnic Adaptation: Interpreting Iraqi and Moroccan Settlement in Israel.” In *Israel: The First Decade of Independence*, edited by S. Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas, 523–42. SUNY Press, 2012

Reading: Orit Rozin, “Terms of Abhorrence: How Old-Time Israelis Viewed Immigrants from the Islamic World” 139-16.

Hakak, “Exile” (poem)

Film: *Shallah Shabati*

Unit 6. The 1967 War and the Rise of the PLO

Dowty 108-20

Shapira 307-315

Yitzhak Rabin, "The Right of Israel," June 28, 1967

Arafat Interview, August 1969

Palestinian National Charter (168) [\[Link\]](#)

Unit 7. The 1970s - The Great Turnaround

Dowty 120-131

Shapira 357-377

Unit 8. Peace Process I

Dowty 131-166

Film: *Rock the Casbah*

Unit 9. The Identity of Israel's Palestinian Citizens

Rekness, Elie. "The Arab Minority in Israel: Reconsidering the '1948 Paradigm.'" *Israel Studies* 19, no. 2 (2014): 187-217

TV show: *Arab Labor*

Unit 10. Religion in Israeli Society

Hamas Charter

Y. Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State*. Harvard University Press, 1992. 223-228 ("The Territories").

Essential Israel, eds. Fish and Troen (Chapters 8 and 9)

Unit 11. Contemporary Israeli Culture: Dance, Art and Literature

Spiegel, Nina S. "Creating National Folk Dance: The Dalia Dance Festivals, 1944 and 1947." In *Embodying Hebrew Culture: Aesthetics, Athletics, and Dance in the Jewish Community of Mandate Palestine*, 133-73. Wayne State University Press, 2013. [Read up to p. 162].

Unit 12. Discussion and Conclusion