POL164A: Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East

Prof. Shai Feldman, Dr. Abdel Monem Said Aly, Dr. Khalil Shikaki

Class time: Mondays 2:00 – 4:50 pm

Location: Schwartz 103

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Course Description

This course offers students a unique opportunity to familiarize themselves with different perspectives on the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the efforts to resolve it. The class is team-taught by three scholars of Middle East politics: Prof. Shai Feldman, director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies and is a former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University in Israel; Dr. Abdel Monem Said Aly, director of the Regional Center for Security Studies in Cairo; and Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) in Ramallah.

Enrollment in this class will be limited to 30, with preference to juniors, seniors, and graduate students.
Learning Goals

- To be familiar with and recognize scholarly conventions and debates concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict
- To be able to critically assess claims made by those in the field and in the mass media
- To be able to frame questions, investigate problems, and evaluate conclusions using approaches from political science
- To develop strong oral communication skills through active participation in every class meeting
- To improve research and writing skills through thoughtful utilization of assigned reading materials

Course Requirements

All students are required to attend every class, barring illness, and to complete the assigned readings listed below in advance of each class. Students will be called upon to participate in discussion of the readings in class. This means that everyone must come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Well-informed classroom discussion is required of each student. It is highly recommended that students annotate personal copies of, or make notes from the readings.

The writing requirements listed below are intended to encourage students to approach reading materials critically, to foster improved research and writing skills, and to serve as a basis for contributing to class discussion. Students are expected to devote careful attention to the technical quality of their written work, as well as its substance.

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. All written work for this course must include appropriate citation of the sources used. See section 56c (“Avoid Plagiarism”) of the Concise English Handbook for guidance. The university policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Office of Campus Life for possible referral to the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the university. If you have any questions about this, please ask.

Four Credit Course

Success in this four credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for three hours of class time (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Individual Written Assignments

All written assignments must be typewritten, double-spaced in 14-point font (this syllabus is in 12-point), and submitted electronically via email to sfeldman@brandeis.edu as a Microsoft Word attachment (if you are not using Word, you may format your file in Rich Text Format [RTF]). Please use “Compatibility Mode” in Word to ensure that it can be read on any computer with Microsoft Office and not just those with the most recent version.
Midterm paper
12 pages. Topic to be distributed

Final paper
15 pages. Topic to be distributed

*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 Prof. Feldman about this.*

**Evaluation**

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the two written assigned essays – 35% for the midterm paper and 50% for the final paper – and on class participation (15%). Students enjoy complete academic freedom in the classroom, within the limits defined by the standards of mutual respect. **Attendance is required.**

**Readings**

The only reading assignments that students are *required* to read before each class are the ones under the title of the topic of that class. The list of additional, optional reading is provided to serve students who might wish to increase their knowledge on the specific topic, and help them in their research should they choose to address these topics in their midterm or final paper.

The primary textbooks for the course are available in the Brandeis University bookstore:


Additional required and optional readings listed on the syllabus are available on LATTE. If there are any issues with the readings on LATTE, please contact Prof. Shai Feldman immediately for assistance.

For students who wish to expand their knowledge of the details of the Arab-Israeli conflict, we recommend:


Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Discussion Topics

**Sunday, September 10: Special Session: The Crown Center’s Conference**

11:30 am – 6:00 pm

“Looking Back, Looking Forward: 100 Years of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” is a half-day conference of three panel sessions with experts on our course’s subject material. The program is available on LATTE. Attendance is strongly encouraged. Extra credit will be given.

**September 11:** Introduction: Zionism and the First Arab Awakening


Optional reading:


**September 18:** The 1948 War and the Arabization of the Conflict


Optional reading:


**September 25:**  **The Wars of 1956 and 1967**


**Optional reading:**


**October 2:**  **The War of Attrition (1969-70) and the 1973 War**


**Optional reading:**


**October 9:**  **Camp David and the Lebanon War**


Shai Feldman and Heda Rechnitz-Kijner, “Consensus, Deception, and War: Israel in Lebanon,” Paper no. 27 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, October 1984).

Optional readings:


**October 16:** Madrid, the Multilaterals, the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty, and the Israel-Syria Talks


**Optional readings:**


**October 23:**

**The Rise of Palestinian Nationalism and the 1948 War**


Optional reading:


October 30: Palestinians and Israelis between the 1950s and the 1990s: from total conflict, through limited accommodation to Oslo


November 6: Failures of Oslo


Optional reading:


November 13: Camp David and failure of permanent status negotiations


The Clinton Parameters (available at: http://www.peacelobby.org/clinton_parameters.htm)


Optional reading:


Joseph Alpher, *Settlements and Borders*. Final Status Issues: Israel-Palestinians, Study no. 3, (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1995).


**November 20:**

**The Second Intifada and Its Consequences**


https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/796f8bc05ec4f30885256cef073cf3a7f8c3013e5e0b96385256fc000529fb3?OpenDocument


http://muse.jhu.edu.resources.library.brandeis.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v017/17.3shikaki.pdf.

Optional reading:


https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/1273B3972DA8E47185256DD00055A0CF


Yehuda Ben Meir, “The Post-Disengagement Anguish” *Strategic Assessment* Vol. 8 no. 3 (Jaffee Center For Strategic Studies, November 2005)


**November 27:** The Abbas-Olmert talks, Obama’s failed efforts, and 3 Israel-Hamas Wars


The Annapolis Statement (available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/27/israel.usa1)

http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/meb83.html.


Optional reading:

Michael Herzog, “Inside the Black Box of Israeli-Palestinian Talks,” *The American Interest*, February 27, 2017

Khalil Shikaki, The Palestinian “Reconciliation Maza,”


http://www.brandeis.edu/now/2012/march/twostate.html.


President Obama's speech to AIPAC, May 2011:

**December 4:** Where do we go from here? Palestinian-Israeli Options in the Post-Arab Spring Regional Environment

Obama's speech on the Arab Spring in the State Department, May 2011:

Khalil Shikaki, “Coping with the Arab Spring: Palestinian Domestic and Regional Ramifications,” *Middle East Brief* 58, December 2011.

http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/meb97.html

https://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB104.pdf


http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/696

Optional reading:


*- To download or read the text online, search for the title in the Brandeis University library website (address provided in the link).