

**Israel: People, Politics and Culture**  
History 3608  
Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30am (STVH-1155)  
Prof. Wobick-Segev, [swobicks@uwo.ca](mailto:swobicks@uwo.ca)  
Office: Lawson Hall 2245  
Office hours: Thursdays 9:30-11:30am

**Course Description:**

It is rare that a week goes by without Israel making it into the news, frequently on the front pages. Religious, geo-political and historical factors have propelled the tiny state to a place of international prominence. This class seeks to introduce students to the people, politics and culture of contemporary Israel. Despite the impression that the popular media presents of a homogenous Jewish society, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel is in fact very diverse and even fragmented. The course introduces students to the varied nature of Israeli culture. In the first classes, we begin briefly with an historical overview of Zionist ideology, the legacy of the British Mandate, and life in the region before the establishment of the State of Israel. From there, we will explore the critical divisions within Israeli society, including tensions between secular and religious Jews, between Jews and Arabs, and between *Mizrachim/Sephardim* and *Ashkenazim*. We will discuss how these divisions have influenced and shaped the society, the idea of a Jewish state, and the visions of its future.

**Learning outcomes:**

After taking this class, students will be able to:

Analyze and explain the key events, institutions, and debates in the history of Israel;

Analyze and explain the most important political, cultural, and ethnic divisions and tensions within Israeli society;

Formulate clear and analytic arguments in a research essay based on textual and visual sources.

**Required Texts:**

Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*

The remaining readings can be found online through OWL.

**Assignments:**

10% Active and engaged **Participation (attendance to all classes is mandatory)**

15% **Book Response** (Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*), 2-3 pages in length

30% **Movie responses** (students are expected to write **two** critical and analytical responses to the movies that integrate the weekly readings and classroom discussions; these are NOT movie *reviews*), 2-3 pages in length, **due the week after the showing [Waltz with Bashir and Avoda Aravit]**

20% **Academic book review**, 3 pages in length, students write a critical, academic book review on one of the monographs used for the research paper

25% **Final research paper**, 8-10 pages in length

\*Students are encouraged **THOUGH NOT REQUIRED** to use their foreign language skills when researching their final research essay.

\*\* Over the course of the year, students will be **EXPECTED** to attend several lectures and events outside of our regular class time.

**All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, use 1” margins, 12-point font.**

**Assignments handed in late will be penalized 2% per day. Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances.**

**No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.**

Jan. 7	<b>Introduction</b>
Jan. 14	<p><b>Eretz Israel/Palestine before 1948</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Pinsker, “Autoemancipation” in <i>The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader</i> edited by Arthur Hertzberg (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 181-198.  “The Balfour Declaration”  Tom Segev, <i>One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>Amos Oz, <i>A Tale of Love and Darkness</i> (begin reading)</p>
Jan. 21	<p><b>The war of 1948 and its aftermath</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Benny Morris, <i>1948: A history of the First Arab-Israeli war</i> (excerpts)  Meron Benvenisti, <i>Sacred Landscape</i> (excerpts)  Bernard Avishai, <i>The Tragedy of Zionism: How Its Revolutionary Past Haunts Israeli Democracy</i> (excerpts)</p> <p>Amos Oz, <i>A Tale of Love and Darkness</i> (finish reading)</p>
Jan. 28	<p><b>Forging a New Society: Mass Immigration and the Israeli Melting Pot</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Tom Segev, <i>1949: The First Israelis</i> (excerpts)  Anat Helman, “‘Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew’”: National Ideology and Everyday Culture in Tel- Aviv,” in <i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i> 92 (2002): 359-382.</p> <p><b>Films:</b> <i>Sallah Shabati</i> (selected scenes) and <i>Turn Left at the End of the World</i> (selected scenes)</p>
Feb. 4	<p><b>Democratic and Jewish? The experience of the “forgotten Palestinians”</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Ruth Gavison, “Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the Ethnic Democracy’ Debate,” in <i>Israel Studies</i> 4/1 (1999), 44-72.  Itamar Rabinovich, “From ‘Israeli Arabs’ to ‘Israel’s Palestinian Citizens’, 1948-1996”, in Rabinovich and Reinharz (eds.), <i>Israel in the Middle East</i>, 183-187.</p>

	<p>Grossman, <i>Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel</i> (excerpts)  Abu-Baker and Rabinowitz, <i>Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel</i> (excerpts)</p> <p><b>Film:</b> <i>Avoda Aravit</i> (1 episode)</p>
Feb. 11	<p><b>Beginnings and varieties of Israeliness</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Eliezer Ben Raphael, “Israeli-Jewish Identities” in <i>Contemporary Jewries: convergence and divergence</i> edited by Eliezer Ben Rafael, Yosef Gorni, Yaacov Ro’I (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 93-117.  “The Structure and Dilemmas of Israeli Pluralism” Judith Shuval In Baruch Kimmerling(ed.) <i>The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers</i></p>
Feb. 18	<b>NO CLASS – Reading week</b>
Feb. 25	<p><b>Mizrahi identity and the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relationship</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims” in <i>Social Text</i> 19/20 (1988): 1-35.  Yehouda Shenhav, <i>The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religious, and Ethnicity</i> (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2006), 19-49.  Albert Memmi, “Who is an Arab Jew?”  Ella Shohat, “Reflections of an Arab Jew”  Almog Behar, “Ana min al Yahoud”</p>
March 4	<p><b>Judaism(s) in Israel</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <i>Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns</i> (excerpts)  Yosseph Shilhav, “The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodox Neighborhoods in Israeli Urban Centers”, Efraim Ben-Zadok (ed.), <i>Local Communities and the Israeli Polity</i>, 157-188.  Shlomo A. Deshen, “The Emergence of the Israeli Sephardi Ultra-Orthodox Movement”, <i>Jewish Social Studies</i> 11 (2005): 77-101.  “Believers in Blue Jeans: An Interview with Aryeh Deri” (1997), in Graham Usher, <i>Dispatches from Palestine: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process</i>, 151-161.</p>
March 11	<p><b>Judaism(s) in Israel – messianism and Fundamentalism</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p>

	<p><i>Jews in Israel: Contemporary social and cultural patterns</i> (excerpts)  Ehud Sprinzak, "Extremism and Violence in Israel: The Crisis of Messianic Politics" in <i>Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 114-126.  Motti Inbari, <i>Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount: Who Will Build the Third Temple?</i> (excerpts)</p>
March 18	<p><b>Haunted Society: The memory of the Holocaust and the fear of the uncertainty</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Tom Segev, <i>The Seventh Million: the Israelis and the Holocaust</i> (excerpts)  Idith Zerthal, <i>Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood</i> (excerpts)  Julia Resnik, "'Sites of Memory' of the Holocaust: Shaping National Memory in the Education System in Israel," <i>Nation and Nationalism</i>, 297-317.</p>
March 25	<p><b>Israel and Military Culture</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Anita Shapira, <i>Land and Power: the Zionist Resort to Force</i> (excerpts)  Ben Eliezer, <i>The Making of Israeli Militarism</i> (excerpts)  Avi Shlaim, <i>The Iron Wall</i> (excerpts)</p> <p><b>Film:</b> <i>Waltz With Bashir</i></p>
April 1	<p><b>Struggling over Zionism, post 1967</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Gadi Taub, <i>The Settlers: And the Struggle Over the Meaning of Zionism</i> (excerpts)  Zartel and Eldar, <i>Lords of the Land: The War Over Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967-2007</i> (excerpts)  Baruch Kimmerling, <i>The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military</i> (excerpts)  Michael Feige. <i>Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories.</i> (excerpts)</p> <p><b>Film:</b> <i>The Ultra-Zionists</i></p>
April 8	<p><b>Crossing the Lines?</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  Sand, <i>The invention of the Jewish people</i> (excerpts)  Ami Pedahzur, <i>The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right</i> (excerpts)</p>

## **ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS**

### **Prerequisites and Antirequisites:**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

## **Medical Issues:**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical\\_accommodations\\_link\\_for\\_OOR.pdf](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf) to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about

whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

**SUPPORT SERVICES:**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

*Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.*

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or [rdashfo@uwo.ca](mailto:rdashfo@uwo.ca)