

**Israel: People, Politics and Culture**  
History 3608  
Wednesdays, 11:30-1:30am (AHB-1B08)  
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Office: Lawson Hall 2245  
Office hours: Mondays 2-3pm and Thursdays 10-11am

**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:**

Abdel Monem Said Aly et al., *Arabs and Israelis*

Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*.

The remaining readings can be found online through OWL.

**Assignments:**

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

25% **Journal**

30% **Academic book review**

35% **Final research paper**

\*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. These are inherent and critical aspects of our course and to be treated with the same seriousness and consideration as 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. Assignments will not be accepted after two weeks past the due date.**

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

### Assignments:

1. **Journal:** In 1-2 pages per entry, students will reflect critically on class topics. **These short responses will be due the following class** (with the exception of the last two classes where students are not expected to write a response). These are opportunities for you to assess and synthesize the material, make sense of the larger theme and use 1-2 examples from class, readings outside events or film screenings to explore the larger ideas.
2. **Academic book review:** in 3 pages, students are to write a critical, academic book review on one of the monographs used for the research paper. For an example, see: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7300>

**Please also include a cover page that identifies the topic of your final research essay in broad terms.**

Due on March 9<sup>th</sup>.

3. **Final research paper:** In approximately 8-10 pages, using 8 monograph-length sources, write a research paper on a topic of your choosing that is related the course subject of modern Israeli history. Typically it is easiest if you consider an historical question – why or how did an event or series of events take place when and how they did? Start thinking of this early and discuss possible topics with the instructor. **Due at the beginning of the last day of class (April 6<sup>th</sup>).**
4. **Participation:** i.e. *active* and *engaged* participation in class. Naturally, **attendance to all classes is therefore mandatory.** Students who come to class but do not participate regularly in discussions will receive no more than 65%.

### Grading rubric:

**Based on Western's grading scale (see,**

**[http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student\\_records/transcripts/grading\\_scalegpa\\_conversion.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_records/transcripts/grading_scalegpa_conversion.html)):**

A+ 90-100%

A 80-89%

B 70-79%

C 60-69%

D 50-59%

F Below 50% or assigned when course is dropped with academic penalty.

**The Teaching Resource Centre suggests that following general guidelines for essays.**

**From:**

**[http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/resources\\_graduate\\_students/ta\\_handbook/markin\\_g\\_practices/essay\\_characteristics.html](http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/resources_graduate_students/ta_handbook/markin_g_practices/essay_characteristics.html)**

### **Characteristics of an "A" Paper:**

Excellent, with perhaps, one forgivable flaw.

- Challenging thesis and clearly developed.
- References used intelligently in argument.
- Correct sentence/ grammatical structure.
- Sophisticated writing style.
- Appropriate documentation.
- Subtlety and complexity in approach to subject.
- Independence of thought.

### **Characteristics of a "B" Paper:**

Good overall (i.e., does many things right).

- Some minor errors in factual content OR
- Some errors in terminology or general writing skills OR
- Some lapses in clarity (i.e., vagueness, incompleteness, flaws in structure).

### **Characteristics of a "C" Paper:**

Generally correct, with more than a few flaws.

- Inconsistent or superficial.
- Weakness in line of argument.
- Dull thesis.
- Mechanical approach to argument.
- Lack of support.
- Problems with basic grammar or matters of style.
- Simplicity of thought, structure, or expression.

### **Characteristics of a "D" or Failing Paper**

- Does not make its case.
- Severe difficulties in logical structure or mechanics of expression.
- Illogical, unsupported thinking without a line or argument.
- Inadequate thinking about the topic.
- Incoherent writing.

Jan. 6	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Part I</b>	<b>Political Narratives</b>
Jan. 13	<p><b>The Zionist Idea and the Land before the State</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”          -<i>Arabs and Israelis</i>, 7-39</p>
Jan. 20	<p><b>The war of 1948</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>          -<i>Arabs and Israelis</i>, 46-63.          -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>
Jan. 27	<p><b>1949-1973, A political survey of the modern state, part I</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <i>Arabs and Israelis</i>, 85-96, 118-190.</p>
Feb. 3	<p><b>1973-2006, A political survey of the modern state, part II</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <i>Arabs and Israelis</i>, 195-213, 231-248, 269-279, 306-313; 361-70.</p>
<b>Part II</b>	<b>Social and Cultural Questions</b>
Feb. 10	<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.          - Shafir and Peled, “The Frontier within”          - 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>
Feb. 17	<b>Reading Week</b>

Feb. 24	<p><b>Beginnings and varieties of Israeliness – <i>Mizrahim</i> and <i>Ashkenazim</i></b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims” in <i>Social Text</i> 19/20 (1988): 1-35.</li> <li>- Shafir and Peled, “Mizrahim and women”</li> <li>-Almog Behar, “Ana min al Yahoud”</li> </ul>
March 2	<p><b>New Immigrants: Ethiopians and Russians</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clive Jones, <i>Soviet Jewish Aliyah</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>- Shafir and Peled, “Emergent Citizenship groups”</li> <li>- Steven Kaplan and Hagar Salamon, “Ethiopian Jews in Israel”</li> </ul>
March 9	<p><b>The Politics of Judaism in Israel</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shafir and Peled, “The Wages of Legitimation”</li> <li>-Shlomo A. Deshen, “The Emergence of the Israeli Sephardi Ultra-Orthodox Movement”, <i>Jewish Social Studies</i> 11 (2005): 77-101.</li> <li>-“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.</li> </ul> <p><i>Academic Book Review due today.</i></p>
March 16	<p><b>Messianism and Fundamentalism</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-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.</li> <li>-Motti Inbari, <i>Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount: Who Will Build the Third Temple?</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>-Michael Feige. <i>Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories.</i> (excerpts)</li> </ul>
March 23	<p><b>Israel and Military Culture</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ben Eliezer, <i>The Making of Israeli Militarism</i> (excerpts)</li> <li>-Yagil Levy, “Military-Society Relations: the Demise of the ‘People’s Army’”</li> <li>-Orna Sasson-Levy, “Feminism and Military Gender Practices”</li> </ul>

March 30	<p><b>Haunted Society: The memory of the Holocaust</b></p> <p><b>Readings:</b>          -Tom Segev, <i>The Seventh Million: the Israelis and the Holocaust</i> (excerpts)          -Avner Ben-Amos and Ilana Bet-El, “Holocaust Day and Memorial Day”</p>
April 6	<p><b>The Environment</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b>          Alon Tal, <i>Pollution in a Promised Land</i>, 1-12, 199-242.</p> <p><i>Final Research Paper Due today in class</i></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 to 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](mailto:MentalHealth@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, Morgan Sheriff, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84999 or [msherif5@uwo.ca](mailto:msherif5@uwo.ca)