

# ***THE ISRAELI KIBBUTZ***

**J ST 497A -- FALL 2011**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Israeli *kibbutzim* [plural; *kibbutz* is single] were attempts to help establish a Jewish state, renew the Jewish people, re-connect the Jews to their historical homeland, align individual needs to a larger purpose, and to foster and serve Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel (the *Yishuv*) and, later, the State of Israel. They also turned out to be a practical means for helping to obtain these goals: They provided work for the Jews, efficiently produced food, other goods, and services, and have contributed disproportionately to Jewish (and Israeli) defense. They also provided a cultural model—of sacrifice, collectivity, and labor—that, to a degree, influenced others.

The first kibbutz was established over 100-years ago, during a period in which the social and cultural conditions differed tremendously from the present. During the past two decades, some of the principles that were thought to have been fundamental and definitive to a kibbutz have been discarded by many of them. Israeli politics and economic conditions, along with the changing priorities of many Israelis, have made kibbutz-style collectivism unworkable in many cases, and today's kibbutzim might be unrecognizable to those of an earlier time.

This course will study the history of the kibbutzim, the factors that contributed to their formation and change, their ideologies, core institutions, everyday life on them, their relationship to Jewish (and, later, to Israeli) defense, and to the overall aims of Zionism.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

*The required readings have been (or will be) posted to ANGEL. Changes in the required readings may take place during the semester.* Any additional required readings will be made available through ANGEL, Electronic Reserves, e-Journals, public web sites, or distributed in class.

MOST READINGS ARE TAKEN FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES:

- Bowes, Alison M. 1989. *Kibbutz Goshen: An Israeli Commune*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.
- Fuchs, Esther, ed. 2005. *Israeli Women's Studies: A Reader*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers U. Press.
- Gavron, Daniel. 2000. *The Kibbutz: Awakening from Utopia*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, & Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Hertzberg, Arthur, ed. 1997. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.
- Leviatan, Uriel, Hugh Oliver, and Jack Quarter, eds. 1998. *Crisis in the Israeli Kibbutz: Meeting the Challenge of Changing Times*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger.
- Lieblich, Amia. 1981. *Kibbutz Makom*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. 2011. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York and Oxford: Oxford U. Press.
- Mort, Jo-Ann and Gary Brenner. 2003. *Our Hearts Invented a Place: Can Kibbutzim Survive in Today's Israel?* Ithaca and London: Cornell U. Press
- Near, Henry. 1997. *The Kibbutz Movement: A History – Volume II: Crisis and Achievement, 1939-1995*. London and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
- Near, Henry. 2007[1992]. *The Kibbutz Movement: A History – Volume I: Origins and Growth, 1909-1939*. Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
- Rebhun, Uzi and Chaim I. Waxman, eds. 2004. *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*. Hanover and London: Brandeis U. Press; Published by U. Press of New England.
- Spiro, Melford E. with the assistance of Audrey G. Spiro. 1965[1958]. *Children of the Kibbutz*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Weingarten, Murray. 1955. *Life in a Kibbutz: The Only Book of its Kind in English*. New York: The Reconstructionist Press.

#### READINGS ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING JOURNAL ARTICLES:

- Palgi, Michal. Women in the Changing World of the Kibbutz. *Women in Judaism* 1(1):1-15, 1997.

Spiro, Melford E. Utopia and Its Discontents: The Kibbutz and Its Historical Vicissitudes. *American Anthropologist* 106(3):556-568, 2004.

Tsur, Muki. Pesach in the Land of Israel: Kibbutz Haggadot. *Israel Studies* 12(2): 74-103, 2007.

AND READINGS INCLUDE SECTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING WEB SITES

Livni, Michael (2010-2011), *Whither Kibbutz: A Personal Perspective*. <http://www.michael-livni.org/whither-kibbutz-%e2%80%93-a-personal-perspective>

MidEastWeb for Coexistence (2005-2006), *Labor Zionism and Socialist Zionism*.  
[http://www.mideastweb.org/labor\\_zionism.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/labor_zionism.htm)

Shamosh, Amnon (2009), *When the Kibbutz was a Kibbutz*. Ameinu (Perspectives)  
<http://ameinu.net/perspectives/israel.php?articleid=453>

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1) ***Attendance***. Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Class attendance is mandatory. Up to three class meetings may be missed without an excuse. Two *points* (out of 1,000) will be subtracted for each subsequent unexcused absence, up to a maximum of 50 points.

2) ***Topic, Issue, or Question (TIQ) for Each Required Reading***. Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Informed participation in classroom discussions is a critical component of the educational process. In each class meeting that has an assigned reading, I'll ask everyone to pose a *question* about the reading, describe (in a sentence) a *topic* central to the reading, or describe (in a sentence) an *issue* that the reading raises.

Scores will be based on the following formula:  $X$  (the number of TIQs presented) divided by  $Y$  (the number of class meetings with an assigned reading) times 50.

Your TIQs will help everyone in the class develop their mid-term and final paper topics, as well as, help us collectively to understand each day's reading.

3) ***Classroom Exercises***. Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Three times during the semester we will sit together as members of a (an imaginary) kibbutz committee. In advance of these classroom exercises, I will ask students to suggest the type of committee we should be and the topic to discuss. During class we will enact the role of committee members. Attendance is mandatory for these exercises. Absence will mean a zero on this assignment for the day.

4) ***Mid-term (Domain of Life) Paper & Accompanying Presentation***. The mid-term paper will be worth 20% of the course grade (200 points), and the brief (roughly five-minute) classroom presentation of the paper will be worth an additional 5% of the course grade (50 points)—for a combined total of 250 points. In these papers, students will discuss and review a “domain of life” on a kibbutz (e.g., work, education, etc.).

Papers will be three-five double-spaced pages. Your course grade will be reduced by 0.5% (five points) for each class meeting that the mid-term paper is late. Attendance is mandatory for these presentations. Absence will mean a score of “zero” on the presentation.

**5) Final Paper. Consisting of the following components** (worth a combined 60% of your course grade):

1. **Statement on the Final Paper Topic, Issue, or Question.** Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). One-two double-spaced pages. On reflection, or based on feedback, you may revise or completely change your final paper topic.
2. **Brief, Classroom Presentation of Your Statement on the Final Paper Topic, Issue, or Question.** Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Will take place on the date your “Statement” is due. Your presentation should be about five-minutes in duration. Attendance is mandatory for these presentations. Absence will mean a score of “zero” on the presentation.
3. **Source List for Final Paper.** Worth 10% of the course grade (100 points). A list of the sources you think you may cite in your final paper.
4. **Summary of Research and Information for the Final Paper.** Worth 10% of the course grade (100 points). Two-three double-spaced pages. This short paper presents a summary of what you know about the topic. The information in it may be revised for the final paper.
5. **Brief, Classroom Presentation of Your Summary of Research and Information for the Final Paper.** Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Will take place on the date your “Summary” is due. Your presentation should be about five-minutes in duration. Attendance is mandatory for these presentations. Absence will mean a score of “zero” on the presentation.
6. **Final Paper.** Worth 25% of the course grade (250 points). Five-ten double-spaced pages. Due Thursday December 15 at 12:00 noon (in my mailbox). No papers will be accepted after the deadline. This will be a synthesis and final draft of the final paper components you will have been preparing during the final weeks of the term.

### **Grading Scale**

|                                    |                                    |                                      |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A = 93-100 %<br>[930-1,000 points] | B = 83-86.9 %<br>[830-869 points]  | C = 70-75.9 %<br>[700-759 points]    |
| A- = 90-92.9 %<br>[900-929 points] | B- = 80-82.9 %<br>[800-829 points] | D = 60-69.9 %<br>[600-699 points]    |
| B+ = 87-89.9 %<br>[870-899 points] | C+ = 76-79.9 %<br>[760-799 points] | F = 59.9 % & below<br>[0-599 points] |

Grading will be implemented through a 1,000-point scoring system. For example, an assignment worth 5% of the course grade will be worth 50 points. The above grading scale will be applied to the total points earned in the course (out of the 1,000 points available).

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

***Academic Integrity.*** The Jewish Studies Program, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University take violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. ***Reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited.*** Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with the instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from any person, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity, procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts will be followed. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: [http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic\\_Integrity/integrity.shtm](http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtm)

**Note to students with disabilities:** Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: [www.equity.psu.edu/ods/](http://www.equity.psu.edu/ods/). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

*No assignments other than the final paper will be accepted after the last day of classes (December 9, 2011).*

Please ***bring your comments, suggestions, complaints, and requests for help to me immediately.*** I cannot make changes or help you over hurdles about which I am unaware. Feel free to discuss your papers with me prior to their submission. *I welcome conversations about any topic raised in the course.* Meet with, email, or telephone me when you have questions and thoughts to discuss.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule, by date, follows, below. All readings and assignments are subject to change. Hopefully, they will be few, but it's possible that I will revise the schedule with your input during the semester. Revisions will be limited.

Each listing begins with the author for that day's reading(s). When a reading is taken from a volume edited by others or from a web site, information to help you find the source will be placed in square brackets at the end of that day's listing.

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### ***INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE KIBBUTZIM and SOME PROPOSED REASONS FOR THEIR RECENT TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES: Human nature; Ideological commitment; National economic system; Rise of a technocracy; Personal and collective experience under changing circumstances***

Aug 22. Intro to course

Aug 24. Spiro (2004), pp. 556-563

Aug 26. Spiro (2004), pp. 563-568

Aug 29. Livni (2010-2011), parts 1-8 in the series [from [www.michael-livni.org](http://www.michael-livni.org)]

Aug 31. Leviatan, Quarter, and Oliver (1998), pp. vii-xvii & 159-163 [from Leviatan, Uriel, Hugh Oliver, and Jack Quarter, eds.]

Sept 2. Ben-Rafael and Topel (2004), pp. 151-173 [from Rebhun, Uzi and Chaim I. Waxman, eds.]

Sept 5. *Labor Day (no class)*

Sept 7. Mort and Brenner (2003), pp. 34-50

Sept 9. ***Exercise 1*** [Discussion: What to do with *our* kibbutz?]

### ***IDEOLOGICAL FORBEARERS: Zionism, Socialism, & Regeneration through re-connection to the land and labor***

Sept 12. From Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz:

- a. BILU *Manifesto* (1882), pp. 588-589
- b. Pinsker *Auto-Emancipation* (1882), pp. 589-591
- c. Herzl *A Solution of the Jewish Question* (1896), pp. 599-603
- d. THE FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS *The Basle Program* (1897), p. 605

- e. Nordau *Jewry of Muscle* (1903), pp. 616-617
- f. Video: *Life of the Jews in Palestine*. Media Lib. DS125 .L41 1998[1913]  
(excerpts)

Sept 14. From: MidEastWeb for Coexistence (2005-2006), *Labor Zionism and Socialist Zionism*  
[http://www.mideastweb.org/labor\\_zionism.htm](http://www.mideastweb.org/labor_zionism.htm)

- a. Ideology and Philosophy of Socialist Zionism and Labor Zionism
- b. Organizational Foundation of Labor Zionism in Palestine
- c. A.D. Gordon: The Philosophy of Labor Zionism
- d. Evolution of Socialist Zionism into Labor Zionism
- e. Goals and Slogans of Labor Zionism and Reality
- f. Labor Zionism and Workers' Settlements
- g. David Ben-Gurion and Labor Zionism
- h. Labor Zionism takes the lead in the Zionist Movement
- i. Labor Zionism after the creation of the state of Israel

Sept 16. From Hertzberg:

- a. Syrkin, pp. 331-332 & *The Jewish Problem and the Socialist-Jewish State* (1898), pp.340-350
- b. Borochoy, pp. 353-354 & *Program for Proletarian Zionism* (1906), pp. 626-628  
[from Mendes-Flohr & Reinhartz]
- c. Gordon, pp.369-371
- d. Katzenelson, PP. 389-90 & *Revolution and Tradition* (1934), pp. 390-395

***EARLY YEARS: The ideologization of improvisation & the effects of the outside world on the kibbutzim***

Sept 21. Near (2007), pp. 7-41 [Background & Beginnings]

Sept 23. Near (2007), pp. 41-69 [Spread, Expansion, & Consolidation]

Sept 26. Near (2007), [Continue above topics] pp. 69-96 & [Religious Kibbutzim] Near (2007), pp. 288-293 plus Near (1997), pp. 260-262

Sept 28. Video: *Living for tomorrow: untold stories by the pioneering women of Israel*

Sept 30. 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Rosh Hashanah (class may be cancelled)

Oct 3. Reinhartz (2005), pp. 60-77 (about Manya Shohat) [from Fuchs, ed.]

Oct 5. Leiblich (1981), pp. xi-xii & 3-39 [1970s Reflections on the 1920s-1930s on Kibbutz  
“Makom” (a pseudonym)]

***FIGHTING FOR DEFENSE, RESCUE, AND THE STATE: The effects of the outside world on the kibbutzim – A tangential aim takes center-stage***

Oct 7. Near (1997), pp. 10-21, 46-49, 55-60, 75-80

Oct 10. Near (1997), 108-118, 155-158, 166-167, & 225-230

Oct 12. Leiblich (1981), pp. 60-72

***THE DREAM REALIZED? -- THE PURPOSE UNCERTAIN? (roughly 1950s-1980s): The continuing ideologization of improvisation & the effects of the outside world on the kibbutzim***

Oct 14. Near (1997), pp. 168-176, 239-247, 278-281, & 294-298

Oct 17. Weingarten (1955), pp. 7-11, 14-93

Oct 19. Weingarten (1955), pp. 94-140, 150-171

Oct 21. Bowes (1989), pp. 43-60

Oct 24. Bowes (1989), pp. 61-80

Oct 26. Bowes (1989), pp. 81-100

Oct 28. Bowes (1989), pp. 101-128

Oct 31. Bowes (1989), pp. 129-144

Nov 2. ***Exercise 2*** [Kibbutz committee meeting (e.g., work, education, holiday, housing, etc.

Potential supplemental readings include Pavin (1998), Spiro (1965), and Tsur (2007))]

Nov 4. ***Exercise 3*** [Kibbutz committee meeting (e.g., work, education, holiday, housing, etc.

Potential supplemental readings include Pavin (1998), Spiro (1965), and Tsur (2007))]

Nov 7. Video: *Noa at Seventeen?*

Nov 9. ***Mid-term Paper Due. Presentations of Papers.***

***VARIATIONS ON A THEME – REPRISE: The present day***

Nov 11. Gavron (2000), pp. 15-41

Nov 14. Gavron (2000), pp. 43-87

Nov 16. Gavron (2000), pp. 89-117

Nov 18. Gavron (2000), pp. 119-139

Nov 21. *Thanksgiving Break (no class)*



Nov 23. *Thanksgiving Break (no class)*

Nov 25. *Thanksgiving Break (no class)*

Nov 28. Gavron (2000), pp. 143-158

Nov 30. ***Statement of Final Paper Topic Due. Presentations on Final Paper Topics/Issues/Questions.*** Gavron (2000), pp. 159-188

Dec 2. ***Source List Due.*** Gavron (2000), pp. 191-228

Dec 5. Gavron (2000), pp. 229-273

Dec 7. ***Summary of Research Due. Presentations of Research/Information.***

Dec 9. Mort and Brenner (2003), pp. 165-182; Gavron (2000), pp. 275-283, & Shamosh (optional). Course summary & review.

❖ *Final Paper Due Thursday December 15 at 12:00 noon. Place in my mailbox (105 Weaver Bldg.)*