

Religious Studies 131H Religion and Politics in the City: The Case of Jerusalem

Winter, 2016
Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 to 10:45
HSSB 1174

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"Wherever I go, I am always going to Jerusalem." Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav

"In conclusion, the Palestine National Council affirms its complete confidence that the justice of the Palestinian cause and of the aims for which the Palestinian people is struggling will continue to enjoy increased support from honorable and free men throughout the world. It also affirms its complete confidence in victory on the road to Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state." Palestine National Council

"Every true native of Jerusalem is always hungry for the absolute. Even if he reaches it, he goes on pinning for it. That's what Jerusalem is about." Dr. Bimbi from Shulamith Hareven's *City of Many Days*

"Still Jerusalem has some disadvantages. Thus it is reported, as found written in the Books of Moses that 'Jerusalem is as a gold basin filled with scorpions.' There you will not find anywhere baths more filthy than those of the Holy City...Learned men are few, and the Christians numerous, and the same are rude in public places...In this city the oppressed have no sustenance, the meek are molested, and the rich envied. Sharia judges remain unvisited, and erudite men are not respected, and also the schools are empty for there are no lectures. Everywhere the Christians and the Jews have the upper hand, and the mosque is empty of people and assembly of learned men." Muqaddasi, *Description of Syria and Palestine* (985 CE)

"As a result of the historic catastrophe in which Titus of Rome destroyed Jerusalem and Israel was exiled from its land, I was born in one of the cities of the Exile. But always I regarded myself as one who was born in Jerusalem. In a dream, in a vision of the night, I saw myself standing with my brother-Levites in the Holy Temple, singing with them the songs of David, King of Israel, melodies such as no ear has heard since the day our city was destroyed and its people went into exile. I suspect that the angels in charge of the Shrine of Music, fearful lest I sing in wakefulness what I had sung in dream, made me forget by day what I had sung at night; for if my brethren, the sons of my people, were to hear, they would be unable to bear their grief over the happiness they have lost. To console me for having prevented me from singing with my mouth, they enable me to compose songs in writing." S.Y. Agnon on receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature, December, 1966

"We have not found tranquility in Jerusalem's city of the dead, but perhaps we have found consolation there. All this city's dead loved her in their own ways. They all sought a safe haven, a new land, a new life – they all strove to build the celestial Zion. They all were borne on waves of hope and they all descended to the depths of despair. Now their tombstones are turning white on her soil, like seashells on the shore, but hope did not perish with them. Perhaps this accumulation of hopes and desires buried in the graveyards of Jerusalem may nurture faith that peace and reconciliation can prevail, even in this world. There is no doubt that the dead, had they mouths to speak, would wish to pass this message on to the living. For when all is said and done, their lives and their deaths bear witness to the fact that in the struggle over Jerusalem there no victors and no vanquished." Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem*

Course Description:

Jerusalem is a sacred center for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is also a national center for Israelis and Palestinians. As both a religious and political center, Jerusalem provides a unique opportunity to examine groups who hold conflicting and perhaps incompatible worldviews, yet must live side-by-side in the very same metropolitan arena. Today, Jerusalem's population is 815,300 at the end of 2014 of which Jews and others number 515,100 and the Arab population numbers 300,200. It is projected that the city's population to reach one million in less than fifteen years. The city must provide services to all of its residents. The water and sewage lines must function, electricity must be delivered, and the garbage picked

up. Questions of identity, politics and meaning are negotiated in lived experience. Families want their children to ride the buses and return from schools safely. Each morning, husbands and wives want their families to be safe. Yet, transcendent claims to truth are always there; history is not an abstraction that happened to others, but a heavy burden that weighs down upon all of its residents. Jerusalem is also a “chromosome” for the larger Middle East. Through the study of this city, one can not only understand the larger geo-political conflicts of the area, but also the ways in which these conflicts are managed and experienced in the daily life of its citizenry.

Jerusalem is situated in the frontier between Israel and Palestine. But its many cleavages are not just between Israelis and Palestinians. Within each national community there are multiple divisions that fracture these national communities. Conflicts over the relationships between state and religion, the nature of nationalism, understandings of history and the place of the divine within it, ethnicity and social equality, and claims to the city’s sacred real estate all divide this city. Indeed, we will quickly see that Jerusalem is in reality many cities. We have two goals in this course. First, we want to understand these conflicts through each of these communities, each of these cities. A series of problems lie at the very center of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. What will be the final boundaries of Israel and Palestine? What will be the status of the Palestinian refugees who left Palestine/Israel in 1948? What will be the status of the more than 325,000 Israelis living in more than 120 West Bank settlements, some like Ma’ale Adumim and Ariel that are as large as small cities? And, of course the most difficult and intractable issue: what will be final status of Jerusalem? Our second goal is to consider how both national communities can move forward toward a just and lasting peace that also takes into consideration the rival claims of nations and religions. To help us with this second goal we will have the benefit of David Makovsky, Ziegler Distinguished Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and Ghaith al-Omari, Senior Fellow, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and former Executive Director of the American Task Force on Palestine who will join our class for an entire week and participate in a public conversation on Jerusalem in Israeli and Palestinian Diplomacy.

Texts:

I have prepared a course reader that is available at the SB Printer in the University Center. I have put copies of the reader on reserve in the Davidson Library. You should begin reading a daily newspaper, either the *Los Angeles Times* or the *New York Times*, in order to stay abreast of political developments in the city and region. You will find a list of internet resources and websites at the end of this syllabus.

Course Requirements:

1. Regular attendance in lectures and careful preparation of all reading assignments.
2. There will be an essay mid-term examination on Thursday, 4 February. The mid-term examination will constitute 40 percent of the final course grade.
3. Two extra-course meetings and 2 to 3-page reports will constitute 10 percent of the final course grade. Both events are necessary to receive credit for this component of the course. These are listed and described below. The reports may only be turned during lecture at the class meeting immediately following the presentation.
4. A comprehensive final examination on Tuesday, 15 March at 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. The exam will constitute 50 percent of the course grade.

Extra-class Assignments:

Tuesday, 26 January – Professor Shaul Bassi (Ca'Foscari University in Venice) on “Shylock in Venice” at 8:00 in Corwin Pavilion. This event is sponsored by the Herman P. and Sophia Taubman Foundation Endowed Jewish Studies Symposium.

Wednesday, 23 February – David Makovsky and Ghaith al-Omari (Washington Institute for Near East Policy in Washington, D.C.) on “Jerusalem in Israeli and Palestinian Diplomacy” at 5:00 p.m. in Campbell Hall.

Please note that these summaries may only be turned in during lecture. Other submissions must have prior approval of the instructor.

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments:

January 5 and 7 Introduction: Jerusalem as a Material and Symbolic Reality.

Reading Assignment: Benvenisti (2), Kollek (3), Lis (4) and Barkat (5).

January 12 and 21 A Historical overview of Jerusalem, the Sanctity of Jerusalem and the Six Day War.

Reading Assignment: Chronology of Jerusalem (1), Werblowsky (6), Lazarus-Yafeh (7), Nusseibeh, Sabella, Reiter (8) and Montefiore (9).

* Please note that we will not have class on Tuesday, 19 January.

January 26 The Seven Cities of Jerusalem: The Social Ecology and Cosmology of the City and Torah and State.

* Tuesday, 26 January – Professor Shaul Bassi (Ca'Foscari University in Venice) on “Shylock in Venice” at 8:00 in Corwin Pavilion.

January 28 and February 2 Torah and State: Taking the City.

Reading Assignment: Friedman (10). Please note that this reading will be distributed in class.

* Mid-term Examination on Thursday, 4 February.

February 9 and 11 The Zionist Center.

Reading Assignments: Segev (13) and Shavitt (14).

February 16 and 18 A Few Steps for the Messiah: The Messianic Suburbanites.

Reading Assignment: Feige (11) and Sprinzak (12).

February 23 The Way Forward with David Makovsky and Ghaith al-Omari.

* Wednesday, 23 February – David Makovsky and Ghaith al-Omari (Washington Institute for Near East Policy in Washington, D.C.) on “Jerusalem in Israeli and Palestinian Diplomacy” at 5:00 p.m. in Campbell Hall.

February 25 The Palestinian Nationalist Center with Ghaith al-Omari

Reading Assignment: Cohen (15), Wallach (16), and Tamari (17).

March 1 and 3 The Islamic Challenge.

Reading Assignment: Mishal and Sela (18) and Reiter (19).

March 8 The Christianities of Jerusalem.

Reading Assignment: Bowman (20), Ramon (21), Halevi (22), Minerbi (23), and Gorenberg (24).

March 10 Can the Jerusalem Problem be Solved?

Reading Assignment: Klein (25), Ramon (26), and Sontag 27)

Websites and Internet Resources

1. Municipality of Jerusalem www.jerusalem.muni.il
2. The Israel Human Rights Organization B'Tselem www.btselem.org
3. Palestinian Academic Society for International Affairs or Passia www.passia.org
4. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs www.jcpa.org
5. Arutz Sheva www.israelnationalnews.com
6. Ha-Aretz www.haaretz.com
7. The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies www.jiis.org
8. Palestine Remembered www.palestineremembered.org
9. Muqata.blogspot.com Israeli Religious Nationalist Newsletter and blog in English.
10. Palestine Human Rights Organization www.alhaq.org

11. Jerusalem Media and Communication Center www.jmcc.org
12. Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information www.ipcri.org
13. Center for Palestine Research and Studies www.pcpsr.org
14. Orient House and the Arab Studies Society www.orienthouse.org
15. Palestine Media Watch www.palwatch.org
16. Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies www.dayan.org
17. Jerusalem Quarterly www.jerusalemquarterly.org
18. Jerusalem Post www.jpost.com
19. Yediot Ahronot www.ynetnews.com
20. Ministry of Information, Palestine Authority [www. http://www.minfo.gov.ps](http://www.minfo.gov.ps)
21. Middle East Research and Information Project www.merip.org
22. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy www.washingtoninstitute.org
23. The Dinur Center for Research in Jewish History, Hebrew University www.dinur.org
24. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs www.mfa.gov.il
25. Terrestrial Jerusalem www.t-j.org.il
26. Peter Beinart's blog "Open Zion" at thedailybeast.com/openzion.html
27. Government of Israel <http://www.israel.org/gov>
28. Palestine News Agency <http://www.wafa.pna.net/EngText/IndexE.htm>
29. Office of the Israeli Prime Minister <http://www.info.gov.il/eng/min-pmo.htm>
30. Palestinian National Authority <http://www.pna.net/>
31. Palestinian Ministry of Information <http://www.pna.org/mininfo>
32. Palestine News Agency <http://www.wafa.pna.net/EngText/IndexE.htm>
33. Jerusalem Times <http://www.jerusalem-times.net/>
34. Middle East Media Research Institute <http://www.memri.org>
35. Peace Now www.peacenow.org.il