

HONR338A/ISRL329D: Spring 2015
Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Through Opposing Histories RE-REVISED (ver.3-April 10)
Tu-Th 11-12:15; 2122 Susquehanna

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Office hours by appointment (send an email)

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Israelis and Palestinians have been fighting over the Land of Palestine (aka Land of Israel) for over a century, but both sides date their relationship to the Land back many centuries, even millennia. We will look at the history but especially the “narratives” that the two sides employ to explain and justify, both to themselves and others, their claims to the land, and how these narratives have both molded the conflict and been molded by it, and changed over time.

This is not solely a history course, though it will cover the relevant history. It will focus on the importance of narratives to the continuation of the conflict, as well as elements relating to identity, religion, archaeology, morality, and human rights. No previous knowledge is expected, but those with such knowledge will find it useful.

This course is a seminar, so classes will primarily focus on discussion of the readings, which students will be assigned to present. Readings will include current works of history, as well as contemporaneous material and primary sources. There will be two papers, a book review (800-1000 words) and a term paper which will analyze a particular historical issue or event from the perspective of how it fits into the narrative of each side. The topic will be chosen in consultation with the instructor. This paper should be about 2000 words, including references.

While current affairs are not our primary concern, I will occasionally assign articles that show current aspects of what we are discussing, and **I encourage questions and comments that link historical narratives with what is happening now.**

A digital version of this syllabus with hyperlinks is on Canvas. Please read it carefully during the first week. Before papers or exams I will send you a sheet explaining my expectations. Please review those carefully before you ask questions about them, an especially before the exam or paper. The syllabus will probably be revised during the semester; if so, it will be announced in class and on email, and posted on Canvas. **Also: Set your notification on Canvas to immediate or daily.** I will sometimes be sending announcements and will expect you to have read them.

Grading

10% class participation

5% quizzes (short answer; primarily on the readings)

10% oral presentations (Each student will present several of the readings during the semester)

15% Book review (Analyzing its argument and how it fits into the narratives of the conflict)

20% term paper (Students will show how well they have understood the concept of narratives' relationship to the conflict and how well they can structure their own argument.)
15% midterm exam (Essays in which students will analyze narratives in terms of the conflict)
25% final exam

See undergraduate catalogue for description of grades, e.g., A+, A, A-, etc.:
<http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1534>

Extra credit will be offered and I urge you to take advantage of it. I will announce events related to the course, some of which may be videotaped and available at <http://www.israelstudies.umd.edu/recent-events.html>. I will also suggest additional articles to read. To receive extra credit you can write 500-600 words on the talk or article and your reaction to it. Each extra credit counts 1/4 of a grade; four will bump you up, for example, from a B+ to an A-. If you're right on the line between two grades, even one or two might help make the difference. You can do up to four extra credit assignments.

Written work: All written assignments must be submitted by email (NOT THROUGH ELMS!) by midnight on the day due, i.e., that night, unless otherwise specified. They must be in MS-Word (NOT PDF) and you should edit them with care; I take off for work that is really badly written. As noted, I will send a preparation sheet before each paper spelling out what I'm looking for.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of fundamental concepts and ideas with regard to historical narratives
- Demonstrate understanding of historical methods in research and analysis
- Demonstrate critical thinking in evaluating causal arguments in history, analyzing major assertions, background assumptions, and explanatory evidence.
- Explain how cultural and political context may have an impact on individual perceptions, action, and values, especially in terms of how narratives are structured and transmitted
- Articulate how historical change shapes ideas and social and political structures.
- Explain how history can be used to analyze contemporary issues and how each side's narrative structures its understanding.
- Analyze material on the internet as to its biases and use in understanding the conflict.
- In writing a term paper, demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific element of the narratives and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken and it will be factored into your participation grade. Students are expected to come to every class, absent a good excuse such as illness. **For more than two consecutive days of absence you must provide a note from a health care professional.** You are responsible for all work covered, whether you are present or absent. If you know in advance of issues that will keep you out for more than two consecutive classes, you must notify me by email.

Religious Holidays: Students who will be absent for religious holidays must notify the instructor by email at least one week before the scheduled absence.

READINGS

Basic knowledge: Since this course emphasizes the narratives of the conflict, there is not enough time to teach the full historical background. Thus, for those who don't know much about the conflict, I suggest that you do some extra reading if you feel you need more background knowledge. There are very many good histories of the conflict. One of the shorter ones (around 265 pp. of text), which I recommend is Allan Dowty's *Israel/Palestine*.

Readings will be from Neil Caplan's *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Contested Histories* (Wiley-Blackwell 2010). The first 4 chapters are on ELMS, in FILES, where most of the readings are. You must purchase a copy of the book (online; I don't think the bookstore has it) preferably asap but before the week of Feb. 25, which is when we will start Ch. 5.

All students are expected to read all readings before the date due, and understand them sufficiently to discuss them and, occasionally, take a surprise quiz on them. Every reading will have a point of view and when you finish each one you need to ask yourself what the author was trying to get across beyond the facts, which is what I will ask you. Students will generally introduce the readings and start the discussion on them. I generally assign between 3-40 pages **per class**, i.e., 60-80 per week. This is history, not rocket science and you are reading for ideas and the most important (**not** all) facts, which you should try to decipher as you read.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: What are "narratives" and "historical narratives"? How are they related to "history"? Bias, prejudice, informed opinion vs. "objectivity." Theoretical discussions and examples.

Readings (for): Thursday, Jan. 29

Pp. 7-31 from E.H. Carr; *What is History?* (1960)

Caplan ch. 1 (pp.3-13)

Scham, Narrative Chart

Week 2: Sources of the Jewish, Muslim, and Arab Narratives. The prehistory of the conflict, i.e., to the 1880s. The Bible, nature of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian relationship to the Land.

Readings, Tues. Feb. 3.

A Jewish Perspective:

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/The_Jewish_Claim_To_The_Land_Of_Israel.html

A Muslim Perspective: <http://www.onislam.net/english/ask-about-islam/islam-and-the-world/politics-and-economics/166085-was-palestine-promised-by-allah-to-the-israelis.html?Economics=>

Neil Silberman, "The Tyranny of the Narrative: History, Heritage, and Hatred in the Modern Middle East." (175-83)

Sandra Scham, "Battle of Archaeologists" (73-78)

Zeev Herzog, (from *Ha'aretz*, 1999) <http://individual.utoronto.ca/mfkolarcik/jesuit/herzog.html>

Recommended: Caplan. Ch. 2.

Thurs., Feb. 5: Understanding the conflict as a whole:

Readings

Scham, "Israeli & Palestinian Historical Narratives."

Pressman, "A Brief History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict." **Assignment:** Use the "working copy" in ELMS and insert 8-12 headings into the piece. Submit it by email by Wed., Feb.4 at NOON.

Week 3: Zionism and Palestinian Nationalism

Readings for Tues. Feb 10

Caplan, Ch. 3 (pp.41-51)

Shlomo Avineri Intro to *The Making of Modern Zionism*

Scham, Zionism and Israel, Encyclopedia article

Readings: Thursday, Feb. 12

Bishara Doumani, "Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History." *Journal of Palestine Studies*

As'ad Ghanem, "Palestinian Nationalism"

Goldschmidt and Davidson, "Roots of Arab Bitterness"

Week 4: Is Zionism Colonialism?

Readings: Tues. Feb. 17

http://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.zionist.colonialism.palestine.1965.pdf

Ran Aaronsohn, "Zionism and Colonialism"

Dina Porat, *Forging a Zionist Identity Prior to 1948*, pp. 47-67 in Rotberg

World War I, Balfour, and European control of the Middle East

Thurs. Feb. 19 Film: "Promises and Betrayal: Britain & the Struggle for the Holy Land (53 min.)

Readings: Balfour Declaration

Caplan, Ch.4

Ari Shavit, Introduction to *My Promised Land* (2013), pp. 3-22

Week 5: The Mandate: Why Everyone blames the British

Readings Tues. Feb. 24

See the film Promises and Betrayals online ("Modules" in ELMS

Review carefully Caplan, pp. 82-96

Review the Balfour Declaration

Thurs. Feb. 26: CLASS CANCELLED "Inclement Weather"

Week 6: The Arab Revolt and the First Partition Plan

Readings: Tues., March 3: Review carefully Caplan, pp. 82-96

Gill, *Why the Arabs Rejected Zionism*

Hillel Cohen, "Truth Projects"

Musa Alami, 1933 Memo

The Role of the Holocaust and its Treatment by the Parties

Readings: Thurs. March 5: Caplan Ch. 5, pp.101-06

Dahlia Ofer essay

Ata Qaymari essay

Joseph Massad, "Palestinians and Jewish History: Recognition or Submission?"

Friday, March 6, Your book choice for the book review due by email by 3pm (earlier preferred)

Week 7: Preparation for the War of Independence/Nakba

Readings: Tues., March 10

Caplan, Ch. 5, pp. 106-21

Jewish Virtual Library, The War of Independence, at:

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/1948_War.html

Krystall, "De-Arabization of West Jerusalem"

Readings: Thurs. March 12, Massacres and Counter-Massacres: Matt Hogan, Guest Lecturer

Hogan, "Deir Yassin" (2001)

Yoav Gelber, "Propaganda as History: What happened at Deir Yassin" (pp.307-18)

Rudoren, "1967 Soldiers Speak, NYT"

SPRING BREAK, March 14-22

Week 8

Readings: Tues., March 24. *Nakba/War of Independence; Refugees and Right of Return*

Said Ali, Feldman, Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Ch. 4, pp. 46-79

Wed., March 25. Book Review due by midnight.

Readings, Thurs. March 26. 1967 and the Re-Emergence of the Palestinians

Caplan, Ch. 7, pp.143-52

Week 9: The Six-Day (June) War through the Yom Kippur (October) War and the Re-emergence of the Palestinians

Readings, Tues. March 31: Caplan, Ch. 7, pp.131-52

Rudoren, "1967 Soldiers Speak, NYT" in FILES. Click on the link "Continue Reading the Main Story" and watch the short videos embedded in it, even though the subtitles are sometime hard to see. Be prepared to discuss, among other things, why many Israelis see the conquests of 1967 as a burden rather than a triumph, and how that war changed Israel fundamentally.

The Emergence of Religion as a Potent Force; How it Interacts with Nationalism

Readings: Thurs. April 2: Landau, "Holy Land, Unholy War" (2012)

Sprinzak, Ehud. Chapter 2, pp. 35-51. "The Revival of Territorial Maximalism" in *The Ascendance of the Radical Right in Israel* (1991)

Week 10: Religion and the Temple Mount

Tues, April 7 Readings: Carroll, Christian Zionists (2010)

Reiter, Narratives of Jerusalem (Read thoroughly! There's a lot in there)

Thurs. April 9 Refugees

Brynen, Palestinian Refugees (2008)

Yahya, Palestinian Refugees (2005)

Final paper topic due by email midnight, Sunday, April 13.

Week 11: Legitimacy issues

Tuesday April 14: Reading

Caplan, Ch. 8, pp. 160-172, Ch. 9, pp. 178-188

Scham, Historical Narratives and Peacemaking (2006)

Thurs. April 16: Settlements: Film, *Inside God's Bunker* (in class)

Readings

Taub, *The Settlers*, pp. 46-98

Week 12: Hamas and Islamism

Tuesday, April 21: Readings

Council on Foreign Relations, Hamas Backgrounder (2014)

Hamas Covenant (1988). Read portions highlighted in red.

Scham and Abu Irshaid. *Hamas: Ideological Rigidity and Political Flexibility* (2009)

Wed. April 22, 12-1:30, Lecture: Democracy and Peacemaking. EXTRA CREDIT & LUNCH! RSVP

Thurs. April 23: Islamism

Ayoob, Islamism

Armanios, Sunni and Shi'a

Final paper summary/outline due at midnight Thursday, April 23

Week 13: Tues, April 28. The Narratives of Oslo

Caplan, Ch. 10, pp.195-210

Pundak, From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong (2001)

Thurs, April 30: Reading

Pressman, Camp David to Taba (2002)

Week 14. Tues. May 5: 2014 War in Gaza

Waxman, Just War?

Bouris, Gaza War

Chorev, Protective Edge

Thursday, May 7: The Possibility of Reconciliation

Hermann, Recognition (2013)

Zeidani, Recognition of the Other and his Past (2013)

Final paper due Sunday, May 10 at midnight

L/D of classes: Tues. May 12

Caplan, Ch. 11, pp.224-244, Ch. 12, pp.252-265