

**University of Florida**  
**Fall 2009**

**The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Professor: Tamir Sorek

Time: MWF, 4:05 – 4:55

Place: 0105 Keene-Flint Hall

Office hours: 3356 Turlington Hall, Monday and Friday, 2-3 pm, or by appointment

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The course introduces students to the complexity of the Israel-Palestinian conflict in its various dimensions. It combines historical outlining of the conflict's development from the beginning of Zionist immigration to Palestine until the current day, with thematic analysis of its dynamics. The course juxtaposes different subjective points of view and motivations of the various actors involved and analyzes the socio-political process as products of these interrelated positions.

The lectures and reading demonstrate how the internal structures of both societies influence and are influenced by the dynamics of the conflict. Special emphasis is given to the significance of interdependency of culture and politics; national symbolism as both product of the conflict and an element that maintains it; and the significance of heroism, victimhood and martyrdom in shaping the conflict and the identities of the parties involved. Class meetings include lectures, movies, and discussions.

**Assignments and Grading:**

**Reading:** The course will use three different textbooks, each one of them tells the story of the conflict in a different way. We will pay attention to the ways political sympathies are reflected in the vocabulary as well as in the emphasis on various events and aspects of the conflict. The following required books are available for purchase at the UF BookStore or Title Town and they are also on reserve at Library West.

- James L. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Allan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine*, Polity Press, 2005.
- Paul Scham, Walid Salem, and Benjamin Pogrund: *Shared Histories: A Palestinian-Israeli Dialogue*, Left Coast Press Inc, 2006

Each one of these books highlights general themes of the conflict, but none of them provides a detailed history of the conflict. If you are interested in more details, the following book is recommended: Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-2001*, Vintage books, 2001.

Other items on the list are available through the library's electronic reserve system or the provided web links.

**On-line Reading reports (20%):** Students are expected to post a short but thoughtful commentary (150-200 words) on the reading items – **before** class. The aim of this assignment is to verify that students read the relevant materials in time. If it is found to be ineffective it will be replaced by weekly multiple choice quizzes.

**Class participation and web discussion (20%):** You are expected to take an active part in both class and web discussions. For each student, the mode of participation in which she/he is more active among the two will be worth 15% of the final grade, and the second mode will be worth 5%.

**Take home (24 hours) mid term exam on 10/14-15 (20%)**

**Final exam (40%)**

## **Class schedule and reading assignments**

### **Week 1: Introduction**

8/24: What is the conflict about?

8/26: Different ways to tell the story:

#### Reading:

- 1) "The Land and its Lure", Ch. 1 (pp. 1-12) from Gelvin
- 2) "Introduction: Two Worlds Collide", Ch. 1 from (pp 1-20) from Dowty

8/28: Two national narratives

Reading: Pages 7-10 from "Shared Histories"

### **Week 2: First Encounters**

8/31: Palestine before the conflict

#### Reading:

Reading: "The Jewish Story" and "The Arab Story", Chapter 1+2 from (pp 21-68) from Dowty

9/2: The origins of the Zionist movement

Reading: "Cultures of Nationalism", Chapter 2 (pp. 14-45) from Gelvin

9/4: Discussion: First encounters - documents

#### Reading:

- 1) Excerpts from Herzl: Old New Land, 119 - 125

- 2) Excerpts from: Yitzhak Epstein, The Hidden Question, first appeared in *HaShiloah* (Odessa), 17 (July–December, 1907) 193–206. Translated by Alan Dowty, in: “A Question That Outweighs All Others: Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue”, in: *Israel Studies* 8 (Spring 2001): 34-54 (only pages 42-53 are required).
- 3) Ottoman voices against Zionism (translated by Michelle U. Campos), from the course website.

### **Week 3: Nation building under the British Mandate**

9/9: 1) Arabs and Jews under British Mandate in Palestine  
Reading: Ch. 4 (pp. 76-91) from Gelvin

9/11: The emergence of Palestinian national identity  
Reading: Ch. 5 (pp. 92-115) from Gelvin

### **Week 4: The holocaust and the conflict**

9/14: Palestine in WWII and the partition plan of 1947  
Reading: Pages 116-125 from Gelvin

9/16: Discussion: The Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict  
Reading: Shared Histories, pages 135 – 176: a. The Holocaust, the creation of Israel, and the shaping of Israeli society (Dalia Ofer); b. The Holocaust in the Palestinian perspective (Ata Qaymari); c. Discussion 4.

9/18: Discussion – continue.

### **Week 5: 1948: Nakba and Independence**

9/21: The 1948 War

Reading: Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948*, University of California Press, 2002, pp. 101-143.

9/23: The 1948 War

Reading: Benvenisti, pp. 144-172

9/25: The 1948 War - discussion

### **Week 6: The controversial history of 1948**

9/28: No Class

9/30: The Historiographic debate over the 1948 war

Reading:

Reading: Pages 177-204 from Shared Histories: 1) The U.N. Partition resolution of 1947: Why wasn't it implemented? (Moshe Ma'oz). 2) Paradoxes of the U.N. 1947 Partition Plan (Walid Salem). 3) Discussion 5.

10/2: The Historiographic debate - continue

Reading: Israeli Historiography of the 1948 war (Avraham Sela) 5) The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem in 1947-1948 (Adel H. Yahya). 6) Discussion 6.

### **Week 7**

10/5: The Arab-Israeli War

Reading: Pages 165-194 from Gelvin.

10/7: Re-emergence of Palestinian nationalism

Reading:

Pages 196-211 from Gelvin

10/9: Discussion

The Palestinian national covenant: <http://www.mideastweb.org/plocha.htm>

### **Week 8: Occupation in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Lebanon**

10/12: Israel and the PLO in Lebanon

Reading:

1) 126-130 from Dowty

2) "Hitler is Already Dead, Mr. Prime Minister", pages 396-404 from: Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*

10/14: The occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip

10/16: Discussion: Mechanisms of Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

1) Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank, B'tselem Report, May 2002.  
Summary:

[http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/200205\\_Land\\_Grab.asp56](http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/200205_Land_Grab.asp56) and  
Chapter 1: [http://www.btselem.org/Download/200205\\_Land\\_Grab\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/Download/200205_Land_Grab_Eng.pdf)

2) The Legality of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria  
and the Gaza District : <http://www.moetzetyesha.co.il/arti.asp?id=44>

### **Week 9: The first Intifada (1987-2003)**

10/19: The first Intifada

Reading:

Reading: Elias Rishmawi, "Tax Revolt in Beit Sahur" in Lynd et al, (eds.) *Homeland: Oral Histories of Palestine and Palestinians*, pp. 271-281

10/21: The first Intifada - continue

Reading: "Public Opinion and Political Change: Israel and the Intifada", Asher Arian; Michal Shamir; Raphael Ventura, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3. (Apr., 1992), pp. 317-334.

10/23: Discussion

### **Week 10: The Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada**

10/26: The Oslo Process

Reading: "Oslo: What went right?", Ch. 10 (315-354) from Kimmerling, Baruch and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003

10/28: The second Intifada

Reading: "Oslo: What went wrong?" Ch. 11 (355-397) from Kimmerling and Migdal

10/30: Discussion

### **Week 11: Arabs in a Jewish State**

11/2: Arabs in a Jewish State:

Reading: Ch. 1 (pp. 1-13) and 8 (150-182) from: Tamir Sorek, "Arab Soccer in a Jewish State" Cambridge University Press, 2007.

11/4: Discussion of a document: *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, December 2006:

<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf> (pp. 9-18)

11/6: Movie: Channels of Rage

### **Week 12: The relations between internal and external conflicts**

11/9: Mizrahi/Ashkenazi cleavage in Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Reading: Shenhav, Yehouda "The Jews of Iraq Zionist Ideology and the Property of the Palestinian Refugees of 1948: An Anomaly of National Accounting". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31: 605 – 630, 1999

11/13: Palestinian Christians and Muslims

Reading: Rabinowitz, Dan "Strife in Nazareth: Struggles over the Religious Meaning of Place", *Ethnography*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 93-113, Mar 2001

### **Week 13: The Martyrs and the conflict**

11/16: Zionist Martyrs

Reading: Yael Zerubavel, "The Battle of Tel Hai," *Recovered Roots*, pp. 39-47

11/18: Palestinian Martyrs

Reading: "Cautious Commemoration: Localism, Communalism, and Nationalism in Palestinian Memorial Monuments in Israel," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 50 (2) 2008.

11/20: Discussion

## **Week 14: Religion and the conflict**

11/30: Religion and the conflict in Israel

Reading: Kimmerling, Baruch: "Religion, Nationalism and Democracy in Israel," *Constellations*, 1999, 6, 3:339-363

12/2: Religion and the conflict among Palestinians

Reading: Document: The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas):

<http://www.mideastweb.org/hamas.htm>

12/4: Discussion

## **Week 15: Solutions?**

12/7: Two states or one?

Reading:

1) Chapter 8 (Pages 204-216) from Dowty

2) Ghada Karmi, *The future is one nation*, The Guardian, 9/25/2008.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/sep/25/middleeast>

3) Gush Shalom Forum, "Two States or One State", A debate between former Knesset Member Uri Avnery and Dr. Ilan Pappé, May 8, 2007

[http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/Transcript\\_eng\\_improved.mht](http://gush-shalom.org.toibillboard.info/Transcript_eng_improved.mht)

12/9: Final Exam