

***"Israel: History, Politics, Culture, Identity"***  
**HI 392**

DR. NAHUM KARLINSKY  
[nahumk@bu.edu](mailto:nahumk@bu.edu)

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-11:00

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 pm, Elie Wiesel Center (147 Bay State Road), or by appointment.

The object of this course is to provide basic understanding of modern Israeli politics, culture and identity through lectures, discussions and projects. Among the topics to be explored are: Israel's political system and society; ethnic relations in Israel; the Arab minorities in the Jewish state; is there a unique Israeli culture?; Israeli Occupation and settlement projects; the struggle for Israel's identity. A broad array of genres and modes of expression - not only academic writings, but also literature, popular music, film, documentaries and art - will be incorporated into our discussion.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**I. Theoretical and historical considerations**

1. Opening remarks: Israel today – the complexity of contemporary Israeli society. Individual and collective identity formation: theoretical underpinnings. The Zionist meta-narrative: basic characteristics of the Zionist meta-narrative – the *New Jew* and the return to the old-new homeland; Palestine and the Palestinians before Zionism; the Zionist movement; Zionist colonization; the British Mandate period (1917-1948)
2. World War Two – the Holocaust; 1948 -- the establishment of the State of Israel and the Palestinian "catastrophe" (*al Nakba*); A brief survey of Israel's wars, 1948-present; The Palestinians today: the Palestinian Authority and the West Bank, the Hamas and the Gaza strip; Israel's formative years, 1948-1967 [I]: Civil Religion in Israel and the formation of Israel's core identity, the "*Sabra*"
3. Israel's formative years, 1948-1967 [II], political, social and geographical foundations: Israel's political and municipal systems; the three branches of government; the educational systems; the military; the economy; types of urban and agricultural settlements: kibbutz, moshav, development towns, major cities, the Arab towns and villages; post 1948 Jewish immigration to Israel

**II. The great divide**

4. The watershed of 1973-1982 and the shattering of the old civil religion and the *New Jew* myth; Israel as a Jewish immigrant society: Jewish-ethnic relations – the Mizrahim [I]

**III. Israel's history and identity revisited**

5. The Postzionist intellectual revolution; The Mizrahim [II]: the Mizrahim of today; Israeli culinary tradition as an expression of the country's identity.

6. 1948 revisited: the debate over the 1948 war, the Palestinian refugees; the presence of the *Nakba* in contemporary Israel
7. The Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel – history, identity (a possible talk by a Palestinian, citizen of Israel)
8. The *Haredi* (Jewish Ultra-Orthodox [fundamentalist]) communities in Israel; How Jewish is the Jewish state?; The role of the Holocaust in Israeli identity
9. Is Israel a colonialist state? : Israel's Occupation and settlements' projects; The messianic component in Israeli identity and politics, *Gush Emunim*; Patterns of Militarism in Israel
10. Israeli economy, globalization in Israel; technology and environment in Israel today; Israel's social protest movement of summer 2011("Occupy Tel Aviv"); "The Bubble" -- Tel Aviv
11. The Israeli Diaspora; the "Russian" sub-culture and community in Israel; Israeli literature today and Israeli cinema; models of Israeli political regime
12. Israeli popular music; preparations for the peace conference
13. A staged Israeli-Arab-Palestinian peace conference
14. Peace conference (cont.); Concluding remarks: Is there an Israeli Identity?

### READINGS

#### Readings for module #1:

##### Recommended:

1. *Israel* in Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel>
2. *Palestine* in Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State\\_of\\_Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Palestine)
3. Alan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), pp. 1-68

#### Readings for module #2:

4. Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 4-10; 84-122
5. Amos Oz, "The Trappist Monastery", in: Amos Oz, *Where the Jackals Howl, and other stories*; translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange & Philip Simpson, (London: Chatto & Windus, [1981]), 84-106.

##### Recommended:

6. Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories* (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 17-38
7. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 9-34

Readings for module #3:

8. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's Political Structure,"  
[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm)
9. Gregory Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 114-139
10. Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies," *Journal of Democracy*, 15:2 (April 2004), 96-109

## Recommended:

11. Reuven Shapira, "The Vanishing of High-Moral, Servant Leaders and the Decay of Democratic, High-Trust Cultures in the Kibbutz Field", in: Esther Herzoc, et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 133-155

Readings for module #4:

12. Amnon Rubinstein, "No More Sabras", in his: *From Herzl to Rabin: the Changing Image of Zionism* (New York & London: Holmes & Meier, 2000), pp. 159-182
13. Eli Amir, *Scapegoat* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), pp. 9-25, 39-52, 208-218

## Recommended:

14. Ella Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims", *Social Text*, No. 19/20 (Autumn 1988), pp. 1-35

Readings for module #5:

15. Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debate: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 89-126
16. Ofir Abu, "Citizenship, Identity, and Ethnic Mobilization in Israel: the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow – Between Universalism and Particularism," Guy Ben-Porat and Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *The Contradictions of Israeli Citizenship: Land, Religion and State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 111-134

## Recommended:

17. Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia, "Between Periphery and 'Third Space': Identity of Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns", in: Adriana Kemp, et al (eds.), *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities and Challenges* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex, 2004), pp. 203-235

Readings for module #6:

18. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), pp. 178-201
19. Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 1-27.
20. Barry Rubin, *Israel – An Introduction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 17-25
21. Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 383-384 (Appendix A)
22. Ghassan Kanafani, "Returning to Haifa", in his: *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Stories* (boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 149-188

## Recommended:

23. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, "The Palestinian Village of Ijzim during the 1948 War: Forming an Anthropological History through Villagers Accounts and Army History", *History and Anthropology*, 2002, Vol. 13(2), pp. 13-30
24. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 105-139
25. Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Brighton & Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), pp. 1-15, 298-302
26. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. xii-xxii (maps), 473-492, 588-601

Readings for module #7:

27. Azmi Bishara, "Arab Citizens of Palestine: Little to Celebrate", *Tikkun* (Jul/Aug 1998), pp. 14-15
28. Ilan Peleg, Dov Waxman, *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19-46
29. Sammy Smooha, "The 2008 Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: Main Findings and Trends of Change", in:  
[http://soc.haifa.ac.il/~s.smooha/uploads/editor\\_uploads/files/Index2008MainFindings\\_TrendsChangeEng.pdf](http://soc.haifa.ac.il/~s.smooha/uploads/editor_uploads/files/Index2008MainFindings_TrendsChangeEng.pdf)
30. David Grossman, *Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), pp. 80-100

## Recommended:

31. Anton Shammas, *Arabesques* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 226-263
32. Dan Rabinowitz, "In and Out of Territory", Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu (eds.), *Grasping Land: Space and Place in Contemporary Israeli Discourse and Experience* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 177-201
33. The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel:  
<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf>
34. Samir Srouji, "Nazareth: Intersecting Narratives of Modern Architectural Histories", *Third Text*, 20/3-4 (2006), pp. 355-371.
35. As'ad Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000: A Political Study* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 11-27, 36-38, 123-135
36. Nadim Rouhana and As'ad Ghanem, "The Democratization of a Traditional Minority in an Ethnic Democracy: The Palestinians in Israel", in: Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 223-246
37. Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), pp. 103-123

Readings for module #8:

38. Nurit Stadler et al., "Fundamentalist Citizenship: The Haredi Challenge", Guy Ben-Porat and Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *The Contradictions of Israeli Citizenship: Land, Religion and State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 135-157
39. Yoav Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel?: The Enigma of *Shas*", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.21:4 (1998), 703-727
40. David Grossman, *See Under Love* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989), pp. 51-86

## Recommended:

41. Idit Gil, “The Shoah in Israeli Collective Memory: Changes in Meanings and Protagonists”, *Modern Judaism*, 32:1 (2012), 76-101
42. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137-158.
43. Charles Liebman and Yaacov Yadgar, “Israeli Identity: The Jewish Component”, in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 163-183
44. Gulie Ne'eman Arad, "The Shoah as Israel's Political Trope", in: Dash Moore, Deborah and S. Ilan Troen (eds.), *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 192-216.

Readings for module #9:

45. Arye Naor, “Hawks' Beaks', Doves' Feathers: Likud Prime Ministers Between Ideology and Reality”, *Israel Studies*, 10:3 (2005), 154-191
46. Israeli Settlements: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli\\_settlement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_settlement)
47. Oren Barak and Gabriel (Gabi) Sheffer, “The Study of Civil–Military Relations in Israel: A New Perspective”, *Israel Studies*, 12:1 (2007), 1-27

## Recommended:

48. Michael Feige, *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 247-282
49. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 112-129
50. Gershon Shafir, "Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach", in: Michael N. Barnett (ed.), *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 227-242
51. Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 1-22
52. Baruch Kimmerling, “Patterns of Militarism in Israel”, in: Baruch Kimmerling, *Clash of Identities: Explorations in Israeli and Palestinian Societies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 132-153

Readings for module #10:

53. Ben Zion Zilberfarb, “From Socialism to Free Market: The Israeli Economy, 1948-2003”, *Israel Affairs*, 11:1 (2005), 12-22
54. Paul Rivlin, “Globalization and High Technology”, in: Paul Rivlin, *The Israeli Economy from Foundation of the State through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 94-117
55. Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), 179-205

## Recommended:

56. “Miracles and Mirages: A strong economy built on weak fundamentals,” *The Economist* (April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008)

Readings for module #11:

57. Steven J. Gold, *The Israeli Diaspora* (Routledge, 2002), 1-20
58. David Grossman, *To the End of the Land*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), excerpts from the book.

59. Sammy Smooha, "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: A Deeply Divided Society", in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 31-69
60. Oren Yiftachel, " 'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine", *Constellations*, Vol. 6:3 (1999), pp. 364-390

Recommended:

61. Ruth Gavison, "Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the 'Ethnic Democracy' Debate", *Israel Studies* 4.1 (1999) 44-72
62. Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001).
63. Theodore H. Friedgut, "Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union: Their Influence and Identity", in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 185-214.

Readings for module #12:

64. Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1-14, 236-248
65. Hagar Salamon, "Political Bumper Stickers in Contemporary Israel: Folklore as an Emotional Battleground", in: Esther Herzoc, et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 259-293

Readings for modules #13-14:

66. Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975)
67. Roger Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17-39
68. Stephen Van Evera, "Memory and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Time for New Narratives," *Draft Paper* (August 2003)

### **Additional Recommended Bibliography**

a. Books

1. Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict :Contested Histories* (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
2. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society: An Essay in Interpretation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985)
3. Steven J. Gold, *The Israeli Diaspora* (Routledge, 2002)
4. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989)
5. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006)
6. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press,1997)
7. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2001)
8. Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)

9. Derek J. Penslar, *Israel in History: the Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007)
10. Amnon Rubinstein and Alexander Yakobson, *Israel and the family of nations : the Jewish nation-state and human rights* (London ; New York : Routledge, 2009)
11. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002)
12. Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004)
13. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010)
14. S. Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas (eds.), *Israel: The First Decade of Independence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995)

b. Articles

1. On the Israeli diaspora see *Shofar* 16.2 (1998) - a special issue called "Israel and America"
2. Sammy Smooha, "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: A Deeply Divided Society", in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 31-69
3. Oren Yiftachel, " 'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine", *Constellations*, Vol. 6:3 (1999), pp. 364-390
4. Ruth Gavison, "Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the 'Ethnic Democracy' Debate", *Israel Studies* 4.1 (1999) 44-72
5. Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu, "Saints' Sanctuaries in Israeli Development Towns: on a Mechanism of Urban Transformation", in: Eyal Ben-Ari and Yoram Bilu (eds.), *Grasping Land: Space and Place in Contemporary Israeli Discourse and Experience* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 61-83
6. Yoram Bilu and Yehuda C. Goodman, " "What does the soul say?" : Metaphysical uses of Facilitated Communication in the Jewish Ultra-Orthodox Community ", in: Esther Herzoc, et al. (eds.), *Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 529-554

c. Scholarly Journals

1. Israel Studies
2. Journal of Palestine Studies
3. Journal of Israeli History
4. International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies
5. Israel Affairs
6. Azure

d. Websites

- i. Israeli newspapers and news sites: <http://www.world-newspapers.com/israel.html>
- ii. Palestinian newspapers and news sites: <http://www.world-newspapers.com/palestine.html>
- iii. Haaretz – [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)
- iv. Al Jazeera - <http://english.aljazeera.net/>
- v. The Jerusalem Post -- <http://www.jpost.com>
- vi. Ma'ariv -- [www.nrg.co.il/online/HP\\_0.html](http://www.nrg.co.il/online/HP_0.html)
- vii. Al Arabiya - <http://www.alarabiya.net/english/>

- viii. Ynet -- [www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html)
- ix. Adalah -- [www.adalah.org/eng/index.php](http://www.adalah.org/eng/index.php)
- x. The Debka Files -- <http://www.debka.com/>
- xi. Hebrew University's Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive -- <http://w3.castup.net/spielberg/> (The Archive has over 10,000 titles, with over 400 films currently available for viewing online in full for free)
- xii. Zochrot (Remembering) [*Zochrot ["Remembering"] is a group of Israeli citizens working to raise awareness of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948*]: <http://www.zochrot.org/index.php?lang=english>
- xiii. Palestine remembered: <http://www.palestineremembered.com/>
- xiv. Israel Defense Forces - <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/>
- xv. Hamas - <http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/en/>
- xvi. WikiProject Palestine:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Palestine>
- xvii. WikiProject Israel:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Israel)
- xviii. CIA World Factbook -- The West Bank and the Gaza Strip:  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html#>; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html>
- xix. CIA World Factbook – Israel:  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

### **Learning Goals:**

*By the end of the course, you should be able to:*

- Define and describe major events in the history of modern Israel
- Define and describe Israel's political regime (political parties, municipal and regional administration, etc.)
- Define, describe and appraise the major analytical terms used in our course
- Integrate course data into a coherent narrative(s) of current Israeli identity(ies)

### **Grading and Assignments:**

- Attendance is mandatory
- Readings' assignments – [35%]
- Class participation (including the staged peace conference) [15%]
- Classroom presentation [(bonus) 15%]
- Final paper [50% (or 35% if the presentation was good)]

### **Cell phones and laptops policy:**

Cell phones: Use of cell phones in class (for talking, texting, reading/writing email, or any other purpose) is prohibited. Kindly keep your cell phones turned off and stowed away in class. However, if you need to leave your cell phone on because of an ongoing emergency situation, please speak to me at the start of class.

Laptops: Kindly keep your laptop turned off and stowed away in class. Using laptop computers in class is distracting to me and other students, in part because the temptation to take “just a second” to check email or web updates is hard to resist.

### **Possible topics for classroom presentations**

- Israel's political system



- Israel's educational systems
- Israeli military
- Globalization and Israel
- Israel's municipal and regional systems
- The postzionism debate
- The Israeli economy
- Israel's settlement projects and colonialism
- How Jewish is the Jewish State?
- The Holocaust in Israeli identity
- The Israeli Diaspora
- Jewish-ethnic groups in Israel
- The Ultra-Orthodox sub-culture in Israel
- Civil society in Israel [NGOs, etc.]
- The Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel
- 'Ethnic democracy' versus 'ethnocracy'
- 'Jewish and democratic' versus 'a state for all its citizens'
- Israeli popular music as a reflection of the country's identity
- Israeli literature and Israeli identity
- Israel and the Jewish-Diaspora relations
- The development of Israel's culinary as an expression of its identity
- The Israeli-Palestinian ethnic and national conflict in comparative perspective:
  - Cyprus
  - Sri Lanka
  - Former Yugoslavia
  - South Africa
  - Northern Ireland
  - French Algeria
  - Former Soviet Union
  - The Balkans
  - Africa

**Changes to the syllabus may occur**