The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

HI 393

DR. NAHUM KARLINSKY
nahumk@bu.edu

Office hours:
Elie Wiesel Center (147 Bay State Road), Room 502
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:30 pm; or by appointment

The object of this course is to study the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, examining its origins, its major historical milestones, and the different narratives and perceptions of the conflict, viewed from the perspective of Palestinians and Israelis. We will also explore the conditions that may bring about a resolution to the conflict and reconciliation between the parties. Theoretical and comparative approaches, derives from conflict resolution and reconciliations studies, will inform our discussion. A broad array of genres and modes of expression – not only academic writings, but also literature, popular music, film, posters, documentaries, and the like – will be incorporated into this class.

The course will combine lectures, classroom discussions, student presentations and in-class small group projects. We will end our course by staging an Israeli-Palestinian peace conference.

Class Schedule and Readings

Our basic textbooks:


MODULE 1 = Introduction: Personal and collective identities and the construction of historical narratives; Nationalism; The rise of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism

MODULE 2 = British Mandate Palestine, 1918-1948
3. League of Nations – Mandate for Palestine (1922)

MODULE 3 = The 1948 War – Atzmaut and Nakba
4. Said Aly et al., *Arabs and Israelis*, Ch. 2, pp. 46-84

MODULE 4 = 1967-1979 -- Israeli Occupation; Peace Treaty with Egypt, 1979; The Rise of the PLO
9. Said Aly et al., *Arabs and Israelis*, Ch. 5, pp. 156-194

MODULE 5 = The Role of Emotions -- from the First Lebanon War (1982) to the First Intifada (1987-92)

**MODULE 6 = Decolonization? -- The Oslo Accords; the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin (1995)**

16. Documentary, *PLO – Episode 5* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lMuUskXODHw&list=PLi7XUXYkpEgsndayXp1cw30xjHPgS8Dsv&index=5)

**MODULE 7 = The Other Palestinians – Arabs Citizens of Israel**

17. Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Palestinian People*, Ch. 6, pp. 169-213
   A possible conversation with a Palestinian-Arab, citizen of Israel

**MODULE 8 = The Return to Religion; the Rise of Religious Extremism – Messianic Zionism and Hamas**

23. Menachem Klein, "Hamas in Power", *Middle East Journal*, 61, no. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 442-459

**MODULE 9 = The Second Intifada (2000-2005) and the Gaza Disengagement**


**MODULE 10 = Cultural Encounters: Popular Music, Food, Film**

**MODULE 11 = Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Perspectives**


**MODULE 12 = Students Presentations; preparation for the staged peace conference**

**MODULE 13 = Staged Peace Conference; Concluding remarks**

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**Learning Goals:**

*By the end of the course, you should:*

- Have acquired good knowledge of major events in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Be able to present the different narratives of the two major parties to the conflict
- Be able to define, describe and appraise the major analytical and historical terms used in our course
- Be able to integrate course data into a coherent narrative(s) of the origins and trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

**Grading and Assignments:**

- Attendance is mandatory
- Written assignments based on the readings (summaries of articles and reflections; each about 3 pages long) – [35% of final grade]
- Class participation (in-class projects and the staged peace conference) [15% of final grade]
- Optional classroom presentation [15%, optional]
- Final paper [50%. If classroom presentation was successful it may substitute for 15% of the final grade. In this case, final paper grade will be 40% of the final grade and written assignments 30% of the final grade]

**Final paper (two options):**

1. Option One:
   It will be a research paper, based on scholarly material, on a topic that will be decided in conversation with me. The paper can focus on one of the topics that
we will have discussed in class, but will offer an elaboration or further investigation of the topic beyond what we will have addressed in class. Another option is to choose a topic that we did not discuss in class.

2. Option Two:
A take home exam, in which three out of our 12 modules will be discussed. Basically, it will be a thinking piece supported by the course’s material.

Possible topics for the final paper:
- Any of the topics that are discussed in our modules
- The role of world power(s) in the conflict
- The US policy in the Middle East and its influence on the conflict
- US domestic politics and the conflict
- The Israeli Lobby
- The Arab Lobby
- The Arab States and the conflict
- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in comparative perspective
- The 2000 Camp David Summit – analyzing the reasons for its failure
- Culture and the conflict
- Religious extremism in Israel and Palestine
- National or religious conflict?

Additional readings:
Newspapers:
1) Israeli newspapers and news sites: http://www.worldnewspapers.com/israel.html
2) Palestinian newspapers and news sites: http://www.worldnewspapers.com/palestine.html
3) Al Jazeera: http://english.aljazeera.net/
4) Ma'an News Agency: http://www.maannews.com
5) Haaretz – www.haaretz.com
6) Ynet -- www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html

Scholarly Journals
1. Israel Studies
2. Journal of Palestine Studies
3. Journal of Israeli History
4. International Journal of Middle East Studies
5. Israel Affairs
6. Azure

Websites and documentaries:
1. The Jewish Virtual Library’s text presents Israeli and Jewish-American mainstream position on the issue: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settlements.html
2. The Foundation for Middle East Peace tries to present a “balanced” perspective and a range of opinions: http://www.fmep.org/about
3. The UN’s “The Question of Palestine” website presents the UN stand, which in general is not so supportive of the Israeli (and US’s) one: http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/home.htm.
4. The website of the Negotiations Affairs Department of the PLO contains very useful information regarding the position of the Palestinian Authority about our peace conference’s topics: http://www.nad-plo.org/index.php.


6. PLO: History of Revolution: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLi7XUXYkpEgnsdayXp1cw30xjHPgS8DsV

7. Tkuma - The First Fifty Years: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpIsERpqF0KrKPnuG0lQj3b_DXmKURk

8. Al-Nakba: The Palestinian Catastrophe 1948: YouTube

Electronic devises 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: The use of laptops and other personal computers in class is limited for class purposes only.

Academic Integrity:
Every student is expected to be familiar with and comply with the BU policy on academic integrity, which can be found at: http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html. We will refer any suspected case of academic misconduct to the Dean’s Office. Any assignment judged, after a hearing by the Academic Conduct panel, to be plagiarized will receive a grade of “0.” We will discuss plagiarism and independent work in class.

Helpful resources about proper use of sources can be found many places online. About using sources responsibly (and avoiding plagiarism), see the “Harvard Guide to Using Sources” (http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do) and Dartmouth’s RWIT page (http://writingspeech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth). The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/), contains excellent advice on research and citation but also on broader topics including “Conducting Research” (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/8/). These will be especially helpful during the writing of your research papers.

Special needs:
Disabilities: Boston University takes great pride in the academic and personal achievements of its many students and alumni with disabilities. The University is committed to providing equal and integrated access for individuals with disabilities to all the academic, social, cultural, and recreational programs it offers. If you need special assistance, physical or other, please contact me so I will be able to assist you as best I can and in a timely fashion.

CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS MAY OCCUR!