History of Modern Israel

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 PM and by appointment

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00-8:15 PM (King 237)
Course Description:

Though it hardly equals the size of New Jersey and includes an infinitesimal fraction of the world’s population, the state of Israel has been consistently in the focus of world attention. A sacred place for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the land of Israel has witnessed the establishment of a Jewish state in the place Jews have considered their historical homeland for more than two millennia. This course has a threefold purpose: first, it serves as an introduction to the development of the Zionist movement and the pre-statehood settlement. Second, it deals with the various divisions that have bedeviled Israeli society since its early years: the differences between Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, secular and orthodox, as well as class, gender and generation gaps, had a significant impact on the structure of Israeli society. Finally, the course offers an introductory survey of Israeli culture, which often mirrored – and affected – the above social divisions.

Course Format, Requirements, and Attendance Policy

This class requires attendance, preparation, and active participation. I cannot overemphasize the importance of your reading assignments. A failure to read the assigned materials will affect your final grade. Students are expected to read ALL the assigned materials in advance of class, and be prepared to discuss them.

Attendance in lecture is required and constitutes 10% of your final grade. I will take attendance each time and any student who misses THREE or more lectures throughout the semester will get an “F” grade (for those 10% of the final grade). Any student who misses 25% or more of the course’s total number of lectures will FAIL the class. If extenuating circumstances such as illness force a student to miss one or more classes, the student remains responsible for the material covered during her/his absence. A physician’s note is required in such a case. Tardiness is disruptive to the class and unacceptable. If a student is tardy (arriving more than TWO minutes after the beginning of class) THREE times, it will constitute one unexcused absence. The same goes for leaving class before it ends.

Final Grade Breakdown:

Attendance – 10%

INFORMED participation in class – 10%

One oral presentation and its write up – 15% (combined).

Each student will make at least one (5-7 minute) presentation/s on the MAIN POINTS in or about a session's assigned readings. Do NOT review or report on the readings or simply state
subjective reactions to them. Rather, give 3-5 (not more!) informed insights: what struck you, why? What connections to, comparisons, contrasts with other material we have studied do you see? What implications, conclusions can you state? What questions remain in your mind after you have done the reading?

PRESENTATION WRITE-UP: On the day of your presentation, you must hand in a written version of your presentation, not to exceed 3 typed (not hand written), double-spaced pages. It is your responsibility to sign up for your presentation. If class size requires two students to lead off a session, do NOT “split” the reading between you; EACH student does the assignment. You must meet with one another at least one day before the class to discuss your points to prevent duplication.

Midterm exam – 20%
Term paper – 20%
Final assignment – 25%.

Please note: late assignments will lose 10 points for every day late.
Standards of Student Conduct

The use of computers in class is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. The ONLY exception would be students who can provide an authorization from the learning disabilities office (http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/documentation/) detailing a learning disability that requires the use of a computer. The use of texting, cell phones and pagers is also strictly forbidden. Students violating these rules will be asked to leave the class for the day, and will have an absence recorded for that date.

Standards of Academic Integrity and the Honor Code:

As all courses in Oberlin, this course operates under the Honor Code, including but not limited to, prohibition of plagiarism. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the Code. Information about the Honor Code is available on the College website and the Honor Code committee.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the appropriation and subsequent passing off of another’s ideas or words as one’s own. If the words or ideas of another are used, acknowledgement of the original source must be made through recognized referencing practices. Use of another’s ideas or words must be properly acknowledged as follows:

(1) Direct Quotation: Any use of direct quotation must be acknowledged by footnote citation and by either quotation marks or proper indentation and spacing.

(2) Paraphrase: If another’s ideas are borrowed in whole or in part and are merely recast in the student’s own words, proper acknowledgement must, nonetheless, be made. A footnote or proper internal citation must follow the paraphrased material.

For more information, see http://www.oberlin.edu/library/avoiding-plagiarism.html

Readings

The course’s textbook is The Land of Blood and Honey: The Rise of Modern Israel by Martin van Creveld. It will be available at the campus bookstore, and it is also available on reserve at the library. All the other readings are available online via Blackboard. There are no excused failures to obtain readings.

* Scholarly sources (online)
# Primary documents (online)
Lectures and Readings

Introduction (Tuesday, Sep. 1):
Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, xi-xiii, 1-16.

The Jewish Question in Nineteenth-Century Europe and the Emergence of Jewish Nationalism (Thursday, Sep. 3-Tuesday Sep. 8):
Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 16-33.

* Shlomo Lambroza, “Jewish Responses to Pogroms in Late Imperial Russia”, in Jehuda Reinharz (ed.), Living With Antisemitism: Modern Jewish Responses, 253-274.

# Theodor Herzl, excerpts from The Jewish State, in Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), The Zionist Idea, 218-226.
# Ahad Ha’am, “Progress and Anti-Semitism”, in Essays, Letters, Memoirs, 209-211.

Under Ottoman and British Rule – the Yishuv to 1939 (Thursday, Sep. 10-Tuesday, Sep. 15):
Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 33-55.

* Shulamit Reinharz, “Manya Wilbuszewitz-Shohat & the Winding Road to Sejera”, in Esther Fuchs (ed.), Israeli Women’s Studies: A Reader, 60-77.


# Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall” (1923), in Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), Israel in the Middle East, 41-43.
The Rise of the “New Jew” – The Normalization of the Jews (Thursday, Sep. 17):

Class is cancelled on Tuesday, Sep. 22 (Yom Kippur)

* Anita Shapira, Land and Power, 29-33.

# Yonatan Ratosh, “A Letter to the Hebrew Youth” (1943)

The Holocaust, the War of Independence, and the Establishment of the State of Israel (Thursday, Sep. 24 – Thursday, Oct. 1) (3 meetings):

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 55-67.

* Dina Porat, The Blue and Yellow Stars of David, 1-2, 239-262.

# Yitzhak Sadeh, “My Sister on the Beach”, in Ronit Lentin, Israel and the Daughters of the Shoah, 207.

Mass Aliyah, Ashkenazi-Mizrahi Rift, and the Hegemony of the Labor Movement (Tuesday, Oct. 6-Thursday, Oct. 8):

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 68-116.

# Lea Ben-Dor, “The Black Panthers” (1971), in Rabinovich and Reinharz (eds.), Israel in the Middle East, 234-237.


From the Zenith to the Nadir: The Six-Day-War, the Yom Kippur War and Its Aftermath (Tuesday, Oct. 13-Thursday, Oct. 15):
[Midterm exam is on Tuesday, Oct. 13]

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 116-162.


# Yehoshua Bar-Dayan, Diary of a Soldier, May-June 1967 (excerpt).


Oct. 17-Oct. 25 – Fall Recess

The Likud’s Victory and Social Unrest (Tuesday, Oct. 27-Thursday, Oct. 29):

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 162-193.

# Peace Now, “Platform” (1980), in Rabinovich and Reinharz (eds.), Israel in the Middle East, 312-314.

# Amos Oz, In the Land of Israel, 27-48, 87-100.

**The Strengthening of Orthodox Judaism and Messianism (Tuesday, Nov. 3-Thursday, Nov. 5):**

* Yosseph Shilhav, “The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodox Neighborhoods in Israeli Urban Centers”, Efraim Ben-Zadok (ed.), Local Communities and the Israeli Polity, 157-188.


**Israeli Arabs or 1948 Palestinians? (Tuesday, Nov. 10-Thursday, Nov. 12):**
[Term paper is due on Tuesday, Nov. 10]

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 194-239.


# National Committee for the Defense of Arab Lands, “Manifesto”, in Rabinovich and Reinharz (eds.), Israel in the Middle East, 311-312.

# Sami Michael, Refuge (excerpt).

# Mahmoud Darwish, “Those Who Pass between Fleeting Words”,
http://www.merip.org/mer/mer154/those-who-pass-between-fleeting-words

**Israeli Popular Culture: A Challenge to Zionism? (Tuesday, Nov. 17-Thursday, Nov. 19):**


* “The Play That Tore Israel Apart”, *Jewish Chronicle* (June 24, 2010).

# Yehuda Amichai, “God Has Mercy on Kindergarten Children”, Esther Raizen (ed.), *No Rattling of Sabers*, 36.


**Renewed Immigration and the Oslo Years (Tuesday, Nov. 24-Thursday, Dec. 3) (3 meetings):**
Class is canceled on Thursday, Nov. 26 (Thanksgiving Break)


# Shmuel Yilma, From Falasha to Freedom: An Ethiopian Jew’s Journey to Jerusalem (excerpt).


**Into the 21st Century - Whither Israel? (Tuesday, Dec. 8-Thursday, Dec. 10):**

Van Creveld, Land of Blood and Honey, 264-282, 300-320.


# Ari Shavit, My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy in the Middle East, 325-337, 412-419.

# Ben-Dror Yemini, “Parade of Achievements”, Ma’ariv (Sep. 30, 2011).


**The final paper is due on Sunday, December 20, at 9:00 AM.**