This course introduces students to the modern history of Palestine, focusing on the conflict for control of this land. We will begin in the late 19th century, with the initial encounter between Palestinian Arabs and the first waves of European Zionist settlers. We then explore the British Mandate rule, the establishment of the state of Israel/the Nakba, the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the continued struggle since. The course ends by examining the failure of the Oslo peace process its aftermath. This course seeks to examine the roots of this ongoing struggle in its historical context and to understand why the various parties to this conflict have thought and acted as they did. Drawing on political and cultural histories, official documents, interviews, literature and films, we will consider how different primary sources lend themselves to different kinds of historical arguments, as well as the ways that these sources can be used to challenge official histories and popular myths.

Course Requirements and Grade Evaluation

Class Participation and Attendance (15%): Attendance for the course is mandatory. Your active participation in class is essential to creating a productive, interactive learning environment, and you are expected to come to class having completed the required readings.

Response papers (15%): you need to submit response papers of approximately 500 words each on the assigned readings for any 4 weeks of the course.

Midterm (30%) and Final Exam (40%): Both the mid-term and final exam will be take home exams. You will be given a choice of essay questions.

Please note: It is recommended, before our first class meeting, that everyone to read all of James Gelvin, The Israel-Palestine Conflict. The syllabus details the relevant segments to each class but this is the basic background for the topic in general and for class discussion.

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on the course’s Blackboard site.

Additional Ground Rules:

1) Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.

2) Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including political activism; 3) work in other classes.

3) Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must also be typed or word-processed (Times New Roman or similar, 12 point) with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper. No written work may be submitted electronically.
4) All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with its provisions.

5) All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first three papers and does not take the final will fail the entire course.

6) Computers should be used in class only in matters pertaining to the class. It is remarkably easy to tell when students are fixating on whatever happens to be on their computer screens rather than paying attention in class. Students are also advised not to engage in any activities in class not related to the class. This includes text messaging.

7) No permission is granted to upload ANY materials from this course on to a third party web site. Such materials are for the use of students in this class only.

8) Students with learning or other disabilities are advised to make proper arrangements with the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the term.

Weekly Topics

Week 1- February 6-8: Canaan/the Land of Israel/Palestine: Geography, History and Politics

- *Historiographical interventions:
  - Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, The pitfalls of Palestiniology
  - Avishai Ehrlich, Israel: Conflict, War and Social Change
  - Roger Owen, Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine, introduction.

Film: selections from Palestine: histoire d’Une Terre, 1993.

Week 2- February 13-15: Palestine in the Ottoman Period

- *Beshara Doumani, Rediscovering Palestine, ch. 1, conclusion (pp. 1-53, 233-245)
- *Rashid Khalidi, Palestinian Identity, pp. 28-34 and ch. 3 (pp. 35-62)
- *Mark LeVine, Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880-1948, ch. 2 (pp. 28-59)

Week 3- February 20-22: The “Jewish Question” in Europe and the Rise of Zionism

- Gelvin, The Israel-Palestine Conflict, pp. 33-45.
- *encyclopedia entry on “Zionism”
- Theodor Herzl, The Jewish State
- *Amos Elon, The Israelis: Founders and Sons, chs. 2-3 (pp. 33-56).

*Primary sources:
  - “BILU” manifesto;
  - Pinsker, Auto-Emancipation;
  - Theodor Herzl, Address to the First Zionist Congress.

Film: Biluim
Week 4: February 27-29: Zionism, Jews and Arabs in Palestine before 1914

- Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, pp. 46-75.
- *Elon, The Israelis*, ch. 4 (pp. 57-81).
- *Khalidi, Palestinian Identity*, ch. 5 (pp. 89-117).
- *Zachary Lockman, Comrades and Enemies*, ch. 1 (pp. 21-57).

**Film:** Selections from *Land of Promise: the first Palestine sound picture*, 1935.

Week 5: March 5-7: The First World War and the Postwar Settlement


**Primary sources:**
- Sykes-Picot agreement
- MacMahon letter
- Balfour Declaration
- Soviet appeal to Muslim workers
- The “Hogarth Message”
- Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”
- King-Crane Commission recommendations
- General Syrian Congress resolution
- Memorandum by Mr. Balfour
- Amir Faysal’s memorandum to the Peace Conference
- British mandate for Palestine.

Week 6: March 12-14: Palestine under British Colonial Rule, I

- *Ellen Fleischmann, The Nation and Its “New” Women*, ch. 1 (pp. 3-23).

**Primary sources:** Vladimir (Ze’ev) Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall (We and the Arabs)” (1923).

Week 7: March 19-21: Palestine under British Colonial Rule, II

- *Ted Swedenburg, Memories of Revolt*, ch. 3 (pp. 76-137).
- *Rashid Khalidi, The Iron Cage*, ch. 2 (pp. 31-64)

**Primary sources:**
- Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (“Peel Commission”);
- Testimony of Vladimir Jabotinsky before the Palestine Royal Commission, 1937;
- The “Biltmore Program,” 1942.

**Midterm- Take home**

Spring Recess: March 24-31

Week 8: April 2-4: The Partition of Palestine, 1947-1949

- Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, pp. 126-143
• *Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Introduction, Conclusion (pp. 1-8, 588-601)
• *reviews/critiques of Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, etc.

*Primary sources:
  o Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel;
  o UN General Assembly resolution 181.

Film: Selections from *Route 181: fragments of a journey to Palestine*, 2003.

**Week 9- April 9-11:** The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1949-1982


*Primary sources:
  o U.N. Letter on the Position of the Palestinian Refugees, 1949;
  o Abba Eban Speech to the U.N. on Israel’s Reasons for Going to War, 1967;
  o Speech by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser after the Nationalization of the Suez Canal (1956);
  o UN Security Council Resolution 338;
  o UN General Assembly 194;
  o UN Security Council Resolution 242.
  o Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s speech to Israel’s parliament (the Knesset) (November 20, 1977)

**Week 10- April 16-18:** Israel and the Palestinians, 1948-1967

- *Meron Benvenisti, Sacred Landscapes*, ch. 1 (pp. 11-54).
- Oz Almog, “The Elect Son of the Chosen People,” ch. 2 of *The Sabra: the Creation of the New Jew*. (book on library online)

Film: *500 Dunam on the Moon*, 2002.

**Week 11- April 23-25:** Israel and the Palestinians, 1967-1991, I

- *Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf), My Home, My Land*, Preface, chs. 1-4 (pp. vii-72).
• David Kretzmer, *Human Rights in the West Bank and Gaza*
• *Amos Oz, “The Finger of God?”*
• Sonya Antonius, “Fighting on two fronts. Conversations with Palestinian women”, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8:3 (Spring 1979), 26–45.
• Sahar Khalifa, *Wild Thorns*, selections.

**Week 12-April 30-May 2: The United States, Israel and the Middle East**
• Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influence on U.S. Middle East Policy*, chs. 4-5 (pp. 61-123). Available online on library website.
• *Melani McAlister, Epic Encounters*, ch. 4 (pp. 155-197)
Film: *Arna’s Children*, 2003.

**Week 13- May 7-9: From Oslo to the Second Intifada and Beyond**
• Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, ch. 10 (pp. 228-251).
• Beinin and Stein, *The Struggle for Sovereignty*, chs. 1, 5-6, 10-11, 14, 17, 25-26, 28, 30- 32, 34-36.
• Lori Allen, “There Are Many Reasons Why: Suicide Bombers and Martyrs in Palestine,” *MERIP* no. 223 (Summer 2002).
*Documents and readings* Richard Falk, “Camp David II”.


**Final Exam- Take home**