Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to acquaint the students with a variety of American Jewish perspectives regarding the state of Israel and its role within Diaspora Jewish discourse: to what extent Israel is viewed by American Jews as a focus of Identification or as a challenge to their American Jewish identity?

Course Assignments: Class Presentation and Paper:

- Weekly reading assignments, each consists of 20-30 pages; each text will be the focus of a discussion dealing with a different American Jewish attitude toward Israel.
- Reading assignments: Students must submit 5 150-word-assignments. Assignments must be submitted until Sun. noon, 2 days before the relevant class.
- A final written assignment: a comparison between the various American Jewish attitudes toward Israel, and its perception as a challenge and/or as a focus of identification
- A discussion group (once every two weeks) in which texts relevant to class will be discussed and analyzed.
### Course Grading

- General participation & article presentations 10%
- Reading assignments 30%
- Final assignment 60%

### CALENDER

**Week 1 (February 26, 2019):** Introduction: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Jewish Quest for Belonging

**Week 2 (March 12, 2019):** The Israeli View of Diaspora Judaism


  **Leading question for 1st reading assignment:** What is the Israeli view (represented by Amos Oz) regarding the prospects of Jewish survival in the United States?

**Week 3 (March 19, 2019):** “America is Different”: The Prospect of Jewish Life in America:


  **Leading question for second reading assignment:** What are the differences between the American view (Ben Halpern) and Israeli view (Oz) regarding the prospects of Jewish survival in the United States?

**Week 4 (March 26, 2019):** The Prospect of Jewish survival in America:


  **Leading question for 3rd reading assignment:** What are the differences between Halpern’s views in the first and second chapters? What are the similarities and differences between the view of Haplern (second chapter) and Oz regarding this question?

**Week 5 (April 2, 2019):** Israel’s foundation and the quest of reconstructing a "New Jew"


  **Leading question for 4th reading assignment:** What is the role of Zionism in solving the crisis in Judaism?

**Week 6 (April 24, 2019):** American Zionism and Israel's negation of the exile

- Ofer Shiff, "Reform Jewish Prophet or Zionist Leader?" *The Downfall of Abba Hillel Silver and the Foundation of Israel*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014, pp. 245-270.

  **Leading question for 5th reading assignment:** What is the role of Israel according to Silver? Where does he stand in comparison to Kaplan and Halpern?

**Week 7 (April 30, 2019):** “America is Different” in retrospect

Leading question for 6th reading assignment: What are the similarities/differences between Kaplan’s and Barnett’s views of the connections between Israel and Jewish universalism?

Week 8 (May 7, 2019): American Jewish Perspective on "Israel and the Holocaust"

Leading question for 7th reading assignment: What are the similarities/differences between Ben Halpern and Dershowitz views of the role of Israel regarding the question of Jewish survival?

Week 9 (May 14, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification

Leading question for 8th reading assignment: What are the differences between Dershowitz and Beinart regarding the role of Israel and Zionism for American Jews?

Week 10 (May 21, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification – the question of Alliya (1)

Leading question for 9th reading assignment: Define Kelner’s view of Birthright in terms of the Halpern's stand regarding the role of Israel and the Kaplan's one.

Week 11 (May 28, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification- the question of Alliya (2)

Leading question for 10th reading assignment: Describe Wisse's Journey from childhood to the time she wrote the article in terms of Halpern's and Kaplan’s stands regarding the role of Israel.

Week 12 (June 4, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification - the question of Alliya (3)

Leading question for 11th reading assignment: Define the differences/similarities between the two articles by Dershowitz regarding the role of Israel for diaspora Jewry.
Week 13 (June 11, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification


**Leading question for 11th reading assignment:** please find 2-3 examples of the “Halpern’s stand” and 2-3 examples of the “Kaplan’s stand” regarding the challenges facing Jewish identity within American society. Explain the role of Israel in each category.

Week 14 (June 18, 2019): Israel as a Challenge and/or as a Focus of Identification