Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism

The Woodman-Scheller Israel Studies International Program (WSISIP)

Spring 2018

**Multiculturalism in Israel: Dilemmas of Public Policy**

**Lecturer:** Dr. Ofir Abu  
**Email:** abuofir@post.bgu.ac.il

**Office Hours:** By appointment  
I strongly encourage you to come and speak to me during the semester. I will also try to be very responsive to emails and I urge you to write to me.

**Class Time:** Thursday, 16:30-18:00

**Class Location:** TBA

**Description and Goals**

Multiculturalism in Israel is a solid fact, but the discourse around multiculturalism in Israel rarely scratches the surface of the challenges that multiculturalism poses to public policy. It does not engage with the ability of public institutions – such as welfare, immigration and education – to meet the needs and demands of ethno-cultural groups as part of their integration in society and state institutions. National and cultural diversity that characterizes contemporary Israeli society and the claims that derive from it require new thinking about the nature of public policy and its compatibility to this reality; it is required to create a balance between civil equality, collective rights and social cohesion. After exposing the students to the main theoretical discussions on multiculturalism, we will move forward to examine the ability of existing institutions and arrangements in Israel to respond to the challenges of public policy in a multicultural context. Class discussions will focus on the impact existing institutions and arrangements have on the status of individuals and groups within Israeli society. The main objective is to deepen the understanding of the relationship between multiculturalism and public policy in Israeli society as well as to weigh different alternatives to existing policies.

The course is organized into three parts. Part I establishes the theoretical background necessary to understand what multiculturalism is and how it shapes mechanisms of inclusion in contemporary developed democracies. Part II focuses on the relationship between cultural diversity and public policy. We will discuss how multiculturalism affects different social and political structures. Part III then analyzes different issues that stand at the heart of the discussion around multicultural public policies in Israeli society, including workplace diversity, education, land allocation, law, and immigration.
Requirements

Attendance and participation (10 percent of the grade): You must attend all classes and if for a valid reason (such as a medical problem or other emergency) you cannot do so, you must inform me ahead of time during by e-mail. Class attendance will be recorded and final grade points will be deducted for unexcused absences.

You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings as well as current events related to the course's theme (www.haaretz.com. You can also register for a free access to The Jerusalem Post, Israel’s oldest English-language daily newspaper, www.jpost.com). It is highly recommended that students annotate personal copies of, or make notes from, the readings.

Questions, discussion and debate during class are strongly encouraged. Students enjoy complete academic freedom in the classroom, within the limits defined by the standards of mutual respect. All students must be respectful and considerate of each other’s opinions, regardless of how controversial or provocative they may seem.

Response papers (30 percent of the grade): Each student will submit three response papers during the semester. These papers will review, discuss, and critically evaluate one of the readings for a specific week. Papers must be submitted by every student individually (no collaborative work). Papers should not exceed the length of two pages in Times New Roman font size 12. Papers should use formal and adequate rules for writing academic papers including appropriate citation of the sources used. Papers should be sent to my email address: abuofir@post.bgu.ac.il. Once your paper has been accepted, you will receive a confirmation email.

Research Proposal (5 percent of the grade): Each student will hand in a proposal for the final research paper (up to 500 words). Each proposal should include the topic of the paper, appropriate research question, how the question relates to class readings, and how you are going to go about answering your question. The proposals should include a list of at least five potential scholarly sources (i.e., books and journal articles). Students are expected to turn in their proposals by week 5.

Class presentation (15 percent of the grade): All students will present their research to the class on week 11. The purpose of the presentation is to allow the class’s participants to give feedback on each other’s work, so students would have enough time to revise their work before submission. Each presentation would be approximately 15 minutes plus 5 minutes for Q&A.

Research Paper (40 percent of the grade): The final paper is due on July 31, 2018 and should be no more than 20 double-spaced pages with appropriate citation.

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation: 10%
Response Papers: 10X3=30%
Research Proposal + Class Presentation: 20%
Research Paper: 40%
Topics & Readings

Part I: What is Multiculturalism?

Week 1+2 – The Politics of Recognition


Recommended:


Week 3 – Mechanisms of Inclusion: Representation, Veto, and Quotas


Recommended:


Part II: Cultural Diversity and Public Policy

Week 4 – Multiculturalism and Public Policy

Recommended:


**Week 5 – Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion**

http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/multiculturalism_4627.jsp


Recommended:


**Week 6 – Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Can They Go Together?**

Recommended:


**Part III: Multicultural Dilemmas of Public Policy in Israel**

**Week 7 – Multiculturalism and National Identity in Israel**


Recommended:


**Week 8 – Multiculturalism and Education in Israel**


Recommended:


**Week 9 – Multiculturalism in Israel's Public and Civil Society Sectors**


Recommended:


**Week 10 – Multiculturalism and Law in Israel**


Recommended:


**Week 11 – Student Presentations**

**Week 12 – Multiculturalism and Land Allocation in Israel**


**Week 13 – Multiculturalism and Immigration in Israel**


Recommended: