



The Ben – Gurion Research Institute  
for the Study of Israel & Zionism

**The Israel Studies International Program – ISIP**

## *"The Struggle for Israeli Identity"*

**Spring Semester, 2012**

Thursdays, 12:00 – 15:30

Sde Boker Campus, The Ben Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel  
and Zionism

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**Office hours:** Beer Sheva, Main Campus Room 612, Building 72 – Wednesdays, 15:00-16:00  
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**Office location** (Beer Sheva): Building #: 72; Room #: 612

**Office location** (Sde Boker): Building: Dondish, The BG Research Institute

### **Course Description:**

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We will start by analyzing the birth of Israel collective identity during the State's formative years. We will then discuss the shattering of that collective outlook in subsequent years and will proceed to examining its transformation into its current condition of a kaleidoscopic set of different and even contrasting identities. The theoretical notions of individual and collective identities will guide us throughout the course. Among the topics to be explored are: Israel's political system and society; ethnic relations in Israel; the Arab minorities in the Jewish state; is there a unique Israeli culture?; Israeli Occupation and settlement projects; the struggle for a unifying Israeli identity.

### **Course Objectives:**

The object of this course is to provide an advanced understanding of modern Israeli politics, culture and identity(ies). The theoretical prisms of both collective and individual identities will serve us as an analytical tool in our examination of Israeli society, culture and politics.

### **Course Structure:**

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Each class will be composed of lectures, discussions and short presentations.

**Total # of Credits: 4**

### **Teaching Method:**

The course will be conducted through a combination of formal lectures, independent study and class discussions. The lectures and discussions will be based on weekly reading assignments.

A broad array of genres and modes of expression - not only academic writings, but also literature, popular music, film, documentaries and art - will be incorporated into our discussion.

### **Course Requirements**

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Mandatory attendance -- **YES**  
Pre-requisites -- **NONE**

### **Structure of Final Course Grad**

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1. Participation (including short presentations)	30%
2. Short reading assignments	40%
3. Final paper / presentation	30%

### **Course Schedule Layout:**

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#### **I. Theoretical and historical considerations**

##### **1. March 15<sup>th</sup>**

##### **Opening remarks and theoretical foundations**

- Israel today – the complexity of contemporary Israeli society
- Individual and collective identity formation: theoretical underpinnings
- The Zionist Meta-narrative: basic characteristics – the *New Jew* and the return to the old-new homeland
- "Exodus" -- the movie

##### **2. March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

##### **Israel's formative years, 1948-1967**

- Civil Religion in Israel and the formation of Israel's core identity, the "*Sabra*"
- Israel's political system
- The three branches of government
- The educational systems
- Amos Oz: "Where the Jackals Howl"

#### **II. The great divide**

##### **3. March 29<sup>th</sup>**

##### **The watershed of 1973-1982**

- The watershed of 1973-1982 and the shattering of the old Civil Religion of Statism and the *New Jew* myth
- Israel as a Jewish immigrant society: Jewish-ethnic relations – the Mizrahim [I]

#### **III. Israel's history and identity revisited**

##### **4. April 19<sup>th</sup>**

##### **The Mizrahim [II]: the Mizrahim of today**

- Current Mizrahi identity
- Shas

**5. May 3<sup>rd</sup>****1948 revisited**

- The Israeli revisionist school (the "New Historians"; Post-Zionism)
- Background to the debate on 1948
- The debate over 1948

**6. May 10<sup>th</sup>****1948 revisited [II]**

- The debate over 1948 (cont.)
- The Palestinian refugees
- The presence of the *Nakba* in contemporary Israel

**7. May 17<sup>th</sup>****1948 revisited**

- The Israeli revisionist school (the "New Historians"; Post-Zionism)
- Background to the debate on 1948

**8. May 24<sup>th</sup>****The Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel**

- The Palestinian-Arabs in Israel – history, identity
- "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel"

**9. May 31<sup>th</sup>****Is Israel a colonialist state?**

- Israel's Occupation and settlements' projects
- The messianic component in Israeli identity and politics
- Gush Emunim; the Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) communities in Israel

**10. June 7<sup>th</sup>****Israel's political regime; The Holocaust**

- Different views of Israel's political regime: Jewish and Democratic, Ethnic Democracy, Ethnocracy
- The role of the Holocaust in Israeli identity

**11. June 14<sup>th</sup>****The "Russian" sub-culture in Israel; The Israeli Diaspora**

- The "Russian" sub-culture and community in Israel
- The Israeli Diaspora

**12. June 21<sup>th</sup>****Social protests in Israel; Israeli culture; How Jewish is the Jewish state?**

- Israeli economy, globalization in Israel; technology and environment in Israel today
- Israel's social protest movement of summer 2011 ("Occupy Tel Aviv")
- Israeli film and Israeli identity
- How Jewish is the Jewish state?

**13. June 28<sup>st</sup>****Israeli culture (cont.) ; concluding session**

- Israeli popular music and Israeli identity
- Israeli literature – their expression of the state's identity and their influence on it
- Where are the Ashkenazim?

**READINGS****Readings for session #1:****Recommended:**

1. *Israel* in Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel>
2. *Palestine* in Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State\\_of\\_Palestine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Palestine)
3. Alan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), pp. 1-68

**Readings for session #2:**

4. Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 4-10; 84-122
5. Amos Oz, "The Trappist Monastery", in his: *Where the Jackals Howl* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), 84-106

**Recommended:**

6. Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict :Contested Histories* (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 17-38

**Readings for session #3:**

7. Amnon Rubinstein, "No More Sabras", in his: *From Herzl to Rabin: the Changing Image of Zionism* (New York & London: Holmes & Meier, 2000), pp. 159-182

**Readings for session #4:**

8. Eli Amir, *Scapegoat* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), chapters 3, 5, 19, 21.
9. Yoav Peled, "Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel? The Enigma of Shas", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 21:4 (July 1998), 703-727

**Recommended:**

10. Ella Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims", *Social Text*, No. 19/20 (Autumn 1988), pp. 1-35
11. Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia, "Between Periphery and 'Third Space': Identity of Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns", Adriana Kemp, et al (eds.), *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities and Challenges* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex, 2004), pp. 203-235
12. Ofir Abu, "Citizenship, Identity, and Ethnic Mobilization in Israel: the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow – Between Universalism and Particularism," Guy Ben-Porat and Bryan S. Turner (eds.), *The Contradictions of Israeli Citizenship: Land, Religion and State* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 111-134

Readings for session #5:

13. Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 1-27.
14. Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 383-384 (Appendix A)
15. David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1988), 5-28 (the first two stories)

## Recommended:

16. Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debate: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 89-126

Readings for session #6:

17. *Im Titzu* – <http://en.imti.org.il/>
18. David Grossman, *Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), pp. 80-100
19. Ghassan Kanafani, "Returning to Haifa", in his: *Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Stories* (boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 149-188

## Recommended:

20. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), pp. 105-139
21. Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948: War, Escape and the Emergence of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Brighton & Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), pp. 1-15, 298-302
22. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. xii-xxii (maps), 473-492, 588-601
23. Helena Lindholm Schulz, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), 44-84

Readings for session #8:

24. Azmi Bishara, "Arab Citizens of Palestine: Little to Celebrate", *Tikkun* (Jul/Aug 1998), pp. 14-15
25. Ilan Peleg, Dov Waxman, *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19-46
26. *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel:*  
<http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf>

## Recommended:

27. Anton Shammas, *Arabesques* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 226-263
28. As'ad Ghanem, *The Palestinian-Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000: A Political Study* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 11-27, 36-38, 123-135
29. Samir Srouji, "Nazareth: Intersecting Narratives of Modern Architectural Histories", *Third Text*, 20/3-4 (2006), pp. 355-371.
30. Nadim Rouhana and As'ad Ghanem, "The Democratization of a Traditional Minority in an Ethnic Democracy: The Palestinians in Israel", in: Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 223-246

Readings for session #9:

31. Israeli Settlements: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli\\_settlement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_settlement)
32. Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 1-22
33. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 112-129
34. Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), pp. 103-123

## Recommended:

35. Gershon Shafir, "Zionism and Colonialism: A Comparative Approach", in: Michael N. Barnett (ed.), *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 227-242
36. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137-158.

Readings for session #10:

37. Sammy Smooha, "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: A Deeply Divided Society", in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 31-69
38. Oren Yiftachel, " 'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine", *Constellations*, Vol. 6:3 (1999), pp. 364-390
39. David Grossman, *See Under Love* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989), pp. 51-86

## Recommended:

40. Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies," *Journal of Democracy*, 15:2 (April 2004), 96-109
41. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israel's Political Structure,": [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm)
42. Ruth Gavison, "Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the 'Ethnic Democracy' Debate", *Israel Studies* 4.1 (1999) 44-72
43. Gulie Ne'eman Arad, "The Shoah as Israel's Political Trope", in: Dash Moore, Deborah and S. Ilan Troen (eds.), *Divergent Jewish Cultures: Israel and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 192-216.

Readings for session #11:

44. Theodore H. Friedgut, "Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union: Their Influence and Identity", in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 185-214.
45. Steven J. Gold, *The Israeli Diaspora* (Routledge, 2002), 1-20

## Recommended:

46. Helena Lindholm Schulz, *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003)

Readings for session #12:

47. Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), 179-205
48. “Miracles and Mirages: A strong economy built on weak fundamentals,” *The Economist* (April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008)
49. Loshitzky, Yosefa, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001).

## Recommended:

50. Charles Liebman and Yaacov Yadgar, “Israeli Identity: The Jewish Component”, in: Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004), pp. 163-183

Readings for session #13:

51. Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1-14, 236-248
52. David Grossman, *To the End of the Land*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), excerpts from the book.

## Recommended:

53. Roger Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 17-39
54. Stephen Van Evera, "Memory and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Time for New Narratives," *Draft Paper* (August 2003)

**Additional Recommended Bibliography**

## 1. Books

1. Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict :Contested Histories* (Malden, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)
2. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society: An Essay in Interpretation* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985)
3. Steven J. Gold, *The Israeli Diaspora* (Routledge, 2002)
4. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989)
5. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006)
6. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press,1997)
7. Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2001)
8. Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999)
9. Derek J. Penslar, *Israel in History: the Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007)
10. Amnon Rubinstein and Alexander Yakobson, *Israel and the family of nations : the Jewish nation-state and human rights* (London ; New York : Routledge, 2009)
11. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

12. Anita Shapira (ed.), *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2004)
13. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010)
14. S. Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas (eds.), *Israel: The First Decade of Independence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995)
15. On the Israeli diaspora see *Shofar* 16.2 (1998) - a special issue called "Israel and America"

## 2. Scholarly Journals

1. Israel Studies
2. Journal of Palestine Studies
3. Journal of Israeli History
4. International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies
5. Israel Affairs
6. Azure

## 3. Websites

- i. Israeli newspapers and news sites: <http://www.world-newspapers.com/israel.html>
- ii. Palestinian newspapers and news sites: <http://www.world-newspapers.com/palestine.html>
- iii. Haaretz – [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)
- iv. Al Jazeera - <http://english.aljazeera.net/>
- v. The Jerusalem Post -- <http://www.jpost.com>
- vi. Ma'ariv -- [www.nrg.co.il/online/HP\\_0.html](http://www.nrg.co.il/online/HP_0.html)
- vii. Al Arabiya - <http://www.alarabiya.net/english/>
- viii. Ynet -- [www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html](http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html)
- ix. Adalah -- [www.adalah.org/eng/index.php](http://www.adalah.org/eng/index.php)
- x. The Debka Files -- <http://www.debka.com/>
- xi. Hebrew University's Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive -- <http://w3.castup.net/spielberg/> (The Archive has over 10,000 titles, with over 400 films currently available for viewing online in full for free)
- xii. Zochrot (Remembering) [*Zochrot ["Remembering"] is a group of Israeli citizens working to raise awareness of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948*]: <http://www.zochrot.org/index.php?lang=english>
- xiii. Palestine remembered: <http://www.palestineremembered.com/>
- xiv. Israel Defense Forces - <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/>
- xv. Hamas - <http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/en/>
- xvi. WikiProject Palestine: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Palestine>
- xvii. WikiProject Israel: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject\\_Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Israel)
- xviii. CIA World Factbook -- The West Bank and the Gaza Strip: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html#>; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gz.html>
- xix. CIA World Factbook – Israel: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

### **Learning Goals:**

*By the end of the course, you should be able to:*



- Define and describe major events in the history of modern Israel
- Define and describe Israel's political regime (political parties, municipal and regional administration, etc.)
- Define, describe and appraise the major analytical terms used in our course
- Integrate course data into a coherent narrative(s) of current Israeli identity(ies)

**Cell phones and laptops 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: Kindly keep your laptop turned off and stowed away in class. Using laptop computers in class is permitted only for taking notes pertaining to our discussion, or for independent work related to the course.

**Possible topics for classroom presentations**

- Israel's political system
- Israel's educational systems
- Israeli military
- Globalization and Israel
- Israel's municipal and regional systems
- The postzionism debate
- The Israeli economy
- Israel's settlement projects and colonialism
- How Jewish is the Jewish State?
- The Holocaust in Israeli identity
- The Israeli Diaspora
- Jewish-ethnic groups in Israel
- The Ultra-Orthodox sub-culture in Israel
- Civil society in Israel [NGOs, etc.]
- The Palestinian-Arab minority in Israel
- 'Ethnic democracy' versus 'ethnocracy'
- 'Jewish and democratic' versus 'a state for all its citizens'
- Israeli popular music as a reflection of the country's identity
- Israeli literature and Israeli identity
- Israel and the Jewish-Diaspora relations
- The development of Israel's culinary as an expression of its identity
- The Israeli-Palestinian ethnic and national conflict in comparative perspective:
  - Cyprus
  - Sri Lanka
  - Former Yugoslavia
  - South Africa
  - Northern Ireland
  - French Algeria
  - Former Soviet Union
  - The Balkans
  - Africa

