

## **Jews, Judaism and Modern Israel**

### **Description:**

This course will address the historical, philosophical/political and religious issues at the heart of the juxtaposition of Jews, Judaism and the Jewish State, and how these shape the latter's legal system and laws, military, relationships within society and daily life.

### **Outline:**

#### **Introduction (8/30/2011):**

Personal introductions, motivations for studying this topic, questions that interest students  
Expectations and basic lesson model  
Defining the terms and parameters of the discussion  
The main questions to be addressed  
Why it all matters

#### **Historical (9/6-13/2011):**

The 1800s – The beginnings of the story of Modern Israel  
1880s-1918 – In the shadow of the Ottomans  
1918-1948 – the British Mandate  
The Holocaust and the Jews of Palestine  
1948-1967 – Independence and the building of a nation state  
1967-1993 – Ruptures and reconstructions  
1993 – Present – Elusive peace, as Israel comes into its own

#### *Assigned Reading:*

#1<sup>1</sup>

#### **Philosophical/Political (9/20-27/2011):**

Zionism vs. Anti-Zionism  
Differing Visions – Herzl vs. Achad Ha'am, and their synthesis by subsequent thinkers  
Socialists vs. Revisionists, Right vs. Left  
The Knesset and its antecedents  
The circuitous development of the Israeli political parties

#### *Assigned Reading:*

#1, #2

#### **Religious (10/4-11/2011):**

Secular vs. religious vs. traditional  
The divisions amongst religious Jews

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<sup>1</sup> See numbering of books below. Actual page numbers TBD for all assigned readings. Students will not be responsible for reading what is not assigned, though such reading can and will help with final project.

The “Status Quo” and its breakdown  
Orthodox Hegemony in Jewish Life in Israel  
Other Jewish Movements

*Assigned Reading:*

#1, #3

**Military (10/18-25/2011):**

The pervasive nature of the Israel Defense Force in society  
A “Jewish” military  
Strategic and tactical; enemies and allies  
Purity of arms  
The “Samson” option  
The role and function of religion in the IDF

*Assigned Reading:*

#4

**Legal (11/1-8/2011):**

Declaration of Independence  
Constitution  
Courts and their make-up  
Ottoman and British Law in Israeli legislation and case law  
Jewish Law in Israeli legislation and case law  
International treaties

*Assigned Reading:*

#1, #3, *primary texts of founding documents found in public domain*

**Relationships (11/15-22/2011):**

Sephardim and Ashkenazim  
Secular and Religious  
The Chareidim (Ultra-Orthodox) and Everyone Else  
Russian Jews  
Men and Women  
Relationship with Non-Jews  
Evolving Relationship with the Diaspora

*Assigned Reading: #2, #3, #5*

**Daily Life (11/29-12/6/2011):**

Speaking Hebrew  
Celebrating holidays

School systems  
Culture  
Cuisine  
Music

*Assigned Reading:*

#5

**Future (Final Project due 12/7/2011 by email):**

Israel in 2021 – Achievements and Challenges – Students will address what they think will be the achievements and challenges Israel will have in one of the areas above (excluding daily life). As there can be no right or wrong answers to such a question, students will be graded according to the grounding and persuasiveness of their arguments.

**Grading:**

Participation: 50%  
Weekly quizzes: 30%  
Final: 20%

**Methods of Learning:**

Readings  
Instructor questioning  
Learner questioning  
Worksheets  
Discussion  
Video clips  
Quizzes  
Project

**Basic Lesson Model:**

Quiz on assigned reading – 20 minutes  
Introduction of issue and quiz review – 15 minutes  
Student questions – 10 minutes  
Reading and worksheet – 20 minutes  
Discussion – 25 minutes  
Break – 15 minutes  
Video clip and worksheet – 30 minutes  
Discussion – 20 minutes  
Wrap-up – 15 minutes  
Introduction of next class and pointers for reading – 10 minutes

**Texts From Which Reading Will Be Assigned:**

- 1) Israel: A History - [Martin Gilbert](#)  
Paperback: 785 pages  
Publisher: McNally & Loftin Publishers; Rev Upd edition (September 3, 2008)  
ISBN-13: 978-0688123635
- 2) Zionism - [David Engel](#)  
Paperback: 232 pages  
Publisher: Longman; 1 edition (January 19, 2009)  
ISBN-13: 978-1405835565
- 3) Jewish Identity in Modern Israel: Proceedings on Secular Judaism and Democracy  
- [Rothenberg Naftali](#)  
Hardcover: 236 pages  
Publisher: Urim Publications; First Edition edition (September 1, 2002)  
ISBN-13: 978-9657108369
- 4) The Sword And The Olive: A Critical History Of The Israeli Defense Force -  
[Martin Van Creveld](#)  
Paperback: 448 pages  
Publisher: Public Affairs; 1st edition (July 2, 2002)  
ISBN-13: 978-1586481551
- 5) The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land - [Donna Rosenthal](#)  
Paperback: 480 pages  
Publisher: Free Press; First Edition edition (February 1, 2005)  
ISBN-13: 978-0743270359