Political Science 665
Israeli Politics and Society
Professor Nadav Shelef
Fall 2014

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00, and by appointment
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Course Description
This course examines some of the issues currently facing Israeli society and the ongoing debates in Israeli politics. The course is organized into two parts. The first part establishes the historical and political background against which contemporary Israeli politics plays out. The second part of the course focuses on a number of crucial cleavages and debates within Israeli society – along political, religious, ethnic, and national lines. Although this course is not about the Arab-Israeli or Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, their influence on Israeli politics and society will be addressed.

Course Requirements
Our class time will be split between lectures and discussions. Students are expected to attend all classes having read the assigned readings and ready to participate in class discussions.

You should also keep up on current events relating to Israel, including daily perusing of articles in the New York Times and, among others, in:
http://haaretz.com/
http://www.ynetnews.com

Simulation: Forming the Israeli government
At the end of the semester we will engage in a simulation exercise in forming the Israeli government. You will be randomly assigned to represent an Israeli political party and tasked with researching its positions and with negotiating with other “parties” to form the Israeli government. As part of the simulation you will be responsible for drafting a memo detailing your desired candidate for Prime Minister and the most important items on its agenda. We will then simulate the negotiation process involved in forming the Israeli government. At the end of the exercise, you will be responsible for a memo detailing why you decided to join the government or stay in the opposition. More details to follow…

Grading Criteria
Final course grades will be assigned according to the following weights:
- Mid-term exam 30%
- Israeli politics simulation 25%
- Comprehensive final exam 45%

Academic Conduct
This class is geared to maximize our joint exploration of important topics in Israeli history, society and politics. Serious scholarly discussion becomes impossible when diatribe and invective displace scholarly analysis. As a result, when posing questions or responding to others,
students are expected to demonstrate an appropriate level of respect despite what might be deep disagreements.

The background work for your simulation memos requires you to cite other people’s work. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated!** If you are caught turning in work that is not your own or using another author’s work without properly citing it, you will receive an F on the assignment. If you have any questions about what constituted academic dishonesty, please consult the Dean of Students Web page, at [http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html)

**Required Readings**

Many of the required readings for this course are in the course reader, which is available at StudentPrint (333 East Campus Mall Rm 3301 or [http://studentprint.rso.wisc.edu/](http://studentprint.rso.wisc.edu/)) and at Learn@UW.

In addition, the following book is required for the course and is available at the University Bookstore and on reserve in College Library.

COURSE SCHEDULE

* indicates reading is in the course reader.

**September 2: Course overview**

**September 4: Why study Israel?**
Arian, Politics in Israel, pp. 1-18.

Part I: Ideological, historical, and political background

**September 9-11: The origins of Zionism**

**September 16-19: Labor Zionism**
Arian, Politics in Israel, 48-58, 117-139.

**September 23: Revisionist Zionism**
Arian, Politics in Israel, 139-150
Jabotinsky, Vladimir (Ze’ev). “The Iron Wall,” and “The Ethics of the Iron Wall” (13)

**September 25: No Class**
September 30: Religious Zionism
Arian, Politics in Israel, 150-157.


October 2-9: From Mandate to statehood- the creation of political institutions, a Jewish society, and the birth of the state
Arian, Politics in Israel, 19-36, 364-376.

Migdal, Joel. Through the Lens of Israel, pp. 51-79.*


October 14: Land of Promise screening (selections) and discussion

October 16: Mid-term exam

Part II: Major social and political cleavages in Israeli society

October 21-23: The Knesset, party systems and state institutions and party assignment for simulation
Arian, Politics in Israel, 202-312, (skim 282-298), 313-324

October 28: Israeli Political Economy
Arian, Politics in Israel, 58-82


October 30-November 6: Hawks, Doves, and the question of peace
Arian, Politics in Israel, 42-7.

Dowty, The Jewish State, ch.10, pp. 216-248.*


**November 11-13: Palestinians in Israel**


The Haifa Declaration*

**November 18-20: The religious-secular divide**


**November 25- December 2: The Jewish ethnic divide**


**December 4: Simulation: presentation of party positions**

Simulation party memos due
December 9: Simulation: party negotiations and government formation

December 11: simulation results and course review
Simulation final memo due

Final Exam: December 16th, 12:25PM-2:25PM