

HIS 130A-01 - Arab/Israeli Conflict Today
Fall 2016, Wednesday
Time: 14:00 – 15:30
2 credits

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Course Description:

This course provides an intensive, demanding and often emotional immersion into the historical, cultural and political aspects of the Middle East from a variety of experts. Throughout the semester, students will learn about the important sites in the area and possibly meet with individuals and groups that are active in Israel-Arab affairs.

Students will benefit from a unique view of the conflict between Israel and the Arab world and gain insights and experiences that most students are not exposed to. These are intellectually challenging encounters designed to enable the students to become more knowledgeable and to learn to intelligently discuss the complex nature of what happens in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The course includes exposure to some controversial points of view, difficult sights and potentially confusing experiences. Our approach requires students to listen carefully and patiently digest the information, some of which includes differing perspectives on the same historical and contemporary events. The complicated and complex nature of the subject area requires active attention and participation in all activities and lectures, during the semester.

Lectures will feature all sides of the political spectrum (Jews and Arabs and Palestinians and Israelis.) Classes are interactive experiences that review topics related to current events in detail. Assigned reading and writing exercises as well as examinations will be required, as in any academic course.

Throughout the course, students will view many examples of video footage from the Israeli, Palestinian and world media, participate in class debates over contemporary issues, and learn to respond to some of the most common allegations and threats facing Israel, such as the Apartheid accusation, the origin and predicament of the refugees and the emerging Iranian threat. Students will also explore the notion that Israel is not only about the Arab-Israeli conflict and strengthen their sense of pride in Israel's accomplishments as a modern democratic state.

Course Goals:

- A. To understand the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- B. To understand the historical, moral and physical context of the conflict
- C. To understand the different challenges of BDS on campus and in the media
- D. To understand the challenges of Judea and Samaria
- E. To be able to articulate why Jerusalem can only be the capital of Israel
- F. To Understand the importance of Israel Borders

Course Requirements:

Each class can be a learning experience if you come prepared. Therefore, read all assigned readings carefully and reflect on the thoughts therein. The lecture will develop the subject matter beyond the readings. At the end of each topic there will be ample time for questions and discussions. Regular class attendance will be required of all who are enrolled in the course.

Required Reading and Other Assignments:

Course Reader

Presentations: Five presentations throughout the course. Details to follow.

Assessment/Grading:

All students will be graded on the basis of their, presentations, final paper/exam and class participation. Cumulative Presentations 50%, Final Paper/Exam, 30%; attendance and class participation, 20%.

Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions.

Course Schedule: *please note topics are listed in no specific order and we will use current events and the students prior knowledge as a partial guide for the order in which we learn.*

Topic 1 – Introduction & Physical Dimension

The introduction begins with a discussion on the importance of studying the conflict. It focuses on an analysis of why anti-Israel bias is on the rise and addresses what can be done to regain support for Israel. Students learn key concepts that are fundamental to arriving at a more fair and honest understanding of the conflict. They are introduced to three dimensions along which the conflict will be analyzed: physical, historical, and moral.

The physical dimension examines the conventional framing of the conflict in regard to land, resources, and people. Through the use of comparative maps, graphs, and analysis, students learn that the conflict is not only a local one between Israel and the Palestinians but primarily a regional one between Israel and its neighbors.

Readings:

Poem by John Godfrey Saxe, “The Blind Men and the Elephant”:
http://www.constitution.org/col/blind_men.htm

Fox Interview with Dennis Ross on Camp David:

http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,50830,00.html

Outline of Israel’s history taken from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/Facts+About+Israel-+History.htm>

Article from Middle East Forum: “The Smoking Gun: Arab Immigration into Palestine, 1922-1931”. <http://www.meforum.org/article/522>

10 False Assumptions about Israel JCPA

Topic 2 – Historical Dimension: Land and People

These lessons examine two of the most prevalent allegations against the State of Israel; that the Jews which settled in Israel were European colonialists and that they displaced the indigenous Palestinian Arabs. Topics explored include: the undeniable historical connection of Jews with Eretz Yisrael, emotional/religious ties to the land, the history of modern Zionism, immigration patterns of both Jews and Arabs and the necessity of a Jewish homeland.

Class discussion addresses nation state creation vs. the creation of the state of Israel. General historical conditions for nation state development are analyzed, and nation state creation in the Middle East is explored.

Readings:

Background on Zionism: “Zionism – Definition and Early History”

<http://www.mideastweb.org/zionism.htm>

Proclamation of Independence for the State of Israel

http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm

Topic 3 – Yediat Ha'Aretz

Every part of the Land of Israel has been cried over, prayed over and fought over. In this presentation students will begin to develop a geographical and historical understanding of the Land of Israel. They will learn to orient themselves on the map of Israel and identify where various cities and regions are. They will

appreciate that both ancient and modern Israel are located in the same place, and that there was continuous presence of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel throughout the millennia.

Students will examine the connection of the Jewish people to different cities throughout Israel that hold particularly special significance, through history and story. Among the cities focused upon are: Beit Lechem, Hebron, Be'er Sheva, Shechem, Teveria, Tzfat & Jerusalem and the significance of Israel defending itself.

Readings:

Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine, Samuel Katz – Pages 85 – 115

“Continuous Jewish Presence in the Holy Land”, Samuel Katz

<http://www.eretzyisroel.org/~samuel/presence.html>

“A State of Exile”, Yishai Fleisher – Yediot Achronot, Aug. 6th, 2007

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3433810,00.html>

“The Palestinian Authority and the Jewish Holy Sites in the West Bank: Rachel’s Tomb as a Test Case”, Nadav Shragai – Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs – December 2007

http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=2&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=377&PID=1852&IID=1923&TTL=The_Palestinian_Authority_and_the_Jewish_Holy_Sites_in_the_West_Bank:_Rachel%27s_Tomb_as_a_Test_Case

http://www.honestreporting.com/articles/reports/Denial_of_Religious_Rights_by_the_Palestinian_Authority.asp

Defensible Borders JCPA

Topic 4 – Historical Dimension: Refugees & 'Occupation'

The first part of this presentation will question and deconstruct the allegation that Jews and Israel are the cause of the Palestinian refugee problem. Two questions are asked; how did the Palestinian Arabs become refugees and what is presently perpetuating their suffering. Class discussion will explore the history of other refugee populations, the circumstances under which the Arabs fled, the Partition Plan of 1947 and the war of 1948. We will also address the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands, the concept of ethnic cleansing, the state of the Muslim population in Israel, and the role of the UN in governing the Palestinian refugee situation.

The second part will introduce and analyze the 'occupation' accusation and the common allegation by Arab spokespersons that 'occupation' is a legitimate justification for terrorism. The history of Jews in ancient cities such as Shechem, Hebron and Jerusalem is explored and the circumstances surrounding the Six Day War are analyzed. Students review Israel’s offers of land in exchange for peace as well as Arab leaders’ responses to these offers. Among the core messages is the understanding that territories and settlements are not the only issue in dispute between the parties involved.

Readings:

House Resolution 185 – Regarding the creation of refugee problems in the Middle East, North Africa and the Persian Gulf:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:hr185ih.txt.pdf

Dore Gold’s “From ‘Occupied Territories’ to ‘Disputed Territories’”

<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp470.htm>

Topic 5 – The Moral Dimension

Students analyze the notion of Israel hatred as a proxy for anti-Semitism. They will learn Sharansky’s 3D formula for differentiating between legitimate criticism of Israel and hate speech.

Students analyze and assess the impact of generalizing and drawing conclusions from isolated instances in the media. They compare and contrast Israel's misdemeanors with the crimes of other regimes. The idea of strict comparative standards as a basis for assessing Israel's behavior is a guiding principle.

Readings:

"Media Relations" from The Jerusalem Center for Communications and Advocacy Training

http://members.tripod.com/~animzmirot/media_help/how_to_deal_with_the_media.htm

"Graffiti on History's Walls," by Mort Zuckerman

http://www.jewishworldreview.com/mort/zuckerman_new_anti_sem.php3

We Were Brought up to Hate" by Nonie Darwish from the Telegraph (December 12, 2006).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/02/12/do1205.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/02/12/ixop.html>

Steven Erlanger's "In Gaza, Hamas's Insults to Jews Complicate Peace," from the New York Times (April 1, 2008):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/01/world/middleeast/01hamas.html>

Topic 6 – The Palestinian Narrative

This lesson introduces and analyzes the Palestinian narrative. Current events are analyzed through the lens of the anti-Israel perception. The lesson includes the viewing and analyzing of video footage of Hamas and Palestinian Authority spokespeople discussing the plight of Palestinians throughout history until the present day.

Readings:

Joseph Massad, "Return or Permanent Exile: Palestinian Refugees and the Ends of Oslo" -

http://www.radioislam.org/historia/zionism/massad_refugees.html

Edward Said on "Occupation is the Atrocity"

<http://mediamonitors.net/edward34.html>

Luxury Alongside Poverty in the Palestinian Authority
Researchers: Yael Kaplan, Ryan Hartney, and Andrew Felsenthal

Palestinian Narrative JCPA

Topic 7 – Responding to the Apartheid Accusation and the Territories

On many college campuses the apartheid analogy is evoked in order to slander and defame the Jewish state by falsely equating it with South African apartheid. The presentation only dissects this misleading claim and provides additional context.

Israel's Rights in the Territories under International Law

[Amb. Alan Baker](#)

Topic 8 What is BDS and how to combat it?

This lesson shifts the focus from theory to practice. Key questions regarding advocacy are considered: Why are most Jews silent about Israel, why is advocating for Israel important, and why supporting Israel is everyone's business? Students review the notion that "ideas win wars" and moral courage is introduced as a key component of advocacy and standing up for Israel.

The lesson continues with a discussion of the characteristics of effective advocacy. Four key concepts are

presented, the Big Truth theory, going on the offensive, going beyond reason, and the characteristics of effective campaigns.

The lesson concludes with the learning of ARM (Address, Reframe, Message), an advocacy technique that enables constructive engagement and discussion in a hostile environment, and focuses the discussion on the broader and more relevant issues regarding the conflict.

Readings:

Visit Honest Reporting's Big Lies interactive online program.

<http://www.honestreporting.com/a/bigLies.asp>

"How to Recognize Unfair Reporting," from CAMERA.

http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=22&x_article=385

"The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," Harvard

"Propaganda, Lies, and Wire Service Articles," by Barry Rubin, June 22, 2008 (GLORIA Center, Herzliya, Israel):

<http://www.spme.net/cgi-bin/articles.cgi?ID=4168>

BDS Unmasked: Radical Roots, Extremist Ends Dan Diker

Topic 9 – Shivat Zion

Throughout the ages the Jewish people have yearned for *Zion* and made concrete efforts to return to her from all the lands of their dispersion. This session will enable the students to understand how the Jewish people maintained their connection to Israel throughout the nearly 2,000-year-long Exile. Additionally, students will trace the various *aliyot* of the last century, along with the central personalities who embodied the Jewish yearning to return to Israel.

The lesson describes the return of the varied Jewish populations to Zion that specifically occurred during the modern era. Students are introduced to the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate, and touch upon the difficulties imposed by the White Paper of 1939. The presentation goes on to highlight accounts of Jews from post-World War II Europe, Jews from Arab lands who were forced out of these countries around 1948 and Israel's independence, Jews from Ethiopia and the marvels of those operations to airlift them to Israel, Jews from the former Soviet Union, and Jews from Western countries such as the U.S.A, Canada and the U.K.

Readings:

Israel's Rights as a Nation State/ Amb. Alan Baker

Topic 10 -Jerusalem – A Divided City?

This topic delves into the history and significance of Jerusalem and explores why Jerusalem is so central to the Jewish people. The unit begins with the holiest site to the Jewish people - the Temple Mount - and the central role it has played throughout Jewish history. Students will learn how the Jewish people have expressed their love for Jerusalem throughout the millennia. The unit concludes with some of the numerous artifacts that have been uncovered in recent times which attest to the central place that Jerusalem has played in the life of the Jewish people.

Readings:

Nadav Shragai

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."

Jerusalem Divided JCPA