

POL 110A – Contemporary Israeli Politics
Fall 2016, Monday/Wednesday/Thursday
Time: 16:45 – 17:35
3 credits

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Course Description:

This course takes as a premise the importance of rational, informed discussion and analysis of current political events for good citizenship. It aims to provide a space to foster these skills and knowledge, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. All major news events, domestic and international, are fair game for class discussion during the semester. There may be periodic guest speakers or field trips. In addition to analysis of current events, we will review writing issues and styles in Political Science, using the course text.

Course Goals:

- Be better able to summarize, analyze and evaluate policy arguments (that is, improve critical thinking skills)
- Be better informed about domestic and international political issues
- Be more comfortable speaking in public
- Improve analytical skills, both oral and written writing skills

Course Requirements:

Class participation, attendance, and demeanor:

All students are required to attend class regularly, to have read a major daily newspaper, to be informed of major political and economic events, and to participate in class discussions. Because this class is organized around discussion of current events, class attendance is essential. *If you are absent more than three times you will imperil your grade, unless you have a documented medical or personal family emergency. Should a student miss 20% or more of class sessions, he/she will be automatically withdrawn from the course and receive a W.* To get an excused absence one must be ill and bring a doctor's note. The classroom is a special environment. Sometimes, because we live in a small institution, we tend to forget the niceties of classroom etiquette. In the classroom, we treat each other as fellow academics, engaged in a common enterprise of learning. We treat each other with respect, and we use language appropriate for the classroom, as opposed to language that we might use with friends in the dorms or in the cafeteria. I encourage all students to participate in class, and I also discourage a few students from dominating classroom discussion. Last, I expect students to come to class on time and to remain in class for the duration of the class session. To do otherwise is to detract from the classroom environment and the learning experience.

Note: Plagiarism and proper citation: Plagiarism involves using someone else's ideas without acknowledging the source. This includes using an author's ideas or the structure of his/her argument without citing the source (even if written in your own words), as well as unacknowledged quoting. A good rule-of-thumb to follow is this: any information or argument that you learned from a source and that is not common knowledge (i.e., a fact that you assume anyone in our society would know, such as the fact that George Washington was our first President) should be cited. Research papers that lack sufficient citations will be returned, without a grade, so that the student can include the proper citations. Students should also remember that while it is acceptable practice to study together, exam questions (whether in a take-home or in-class format) are to be the student's own work. Students should not consult or assist each other in preparing specific exam questions.

Plagiarism will earn the student an F on the assignment and, depending on the extent, possibly for the course. Please consult the AJU Statement of Academic Integrity for a more detailed explanation of Academic Honesty.

Required Reading and Other Assignments:

A. Diane E. Schmidt, Writing in Political Science

This book is a useful source for Political Science students, both for the short papers you will write in this course and for other Poli Sci papers you will write in college.

B. Newspaper: Read one newspaper daily; students are encouraged to consult other printed and/or audio-visual sources, as these constitute the major source material for the course.

1. Keep a written account (journal) of the news articles you find, including your thoughts about them. The journal may help you as you develop your short papers (see below).

2. Come to class prepared to discuss a news event; this may include your covering a geographic area of the world. You will also give 5 formal class presentations (see below).

3. Write 5 short (2 pages) papers analyzing an area and/or issues that you have decided to focus on. These short papers should follow the following format:

- What is the issue?
- What is the context of the issue (e.g., historical, economic)?
- What are the arguments pro/con and who is arguing them?
- What is your assessment of these arguments? You may also provide your own viewpoint, and explain why.

Presentations:

1. Israel's Political Parties – 10 minutes (info-mercial) session on the political party you were assigned

2. Political Simulation – come prepared with laws you want passed and your position vis-à-vis other parties and their major issues

3. Israel Update – each week a group will lead the Israel Update – each person in the group will have to tell 1-2 stories from the week

4. Choose a hot topic of the week and lead the class in discussion for 15 minutes on that issue – prepare history of the issue, present the sides, lead the debate with leading questions and finally help the class reach a conclusion

5. The Future of Israel – 10 minutes – your projection of where you think if Israel's long term future

Short papers - Write 5 short (2 pages) papers analyzing an area and/or issues that you have decided to focus on. These short papers should follow the following format:

- What is the issue?
- What is the context of the issue (e.g., historical, economic)?
- What are the arguments pro/con and who is arguing them?
- What is your assessment of these arguments? You may also provide your own viewpoint, and explain why.

Due dates:

1. 25th September

2. 27th November

3. 11th December

4. 25th December

5. 8th January

Assessment/Grading:

Attendance and Class participation: 25

Journal and papers: 35

5 presentations: 40

Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions.

Course Schedule:

September

Topic #1

Wed 7 Introduction, Class overview – The Miracle of Israeli Democracy

Thurs 8 The Art of Political Inquiry

Reading: Schmidt, chs. 1-2

Topic #2

Sun 11 Political Issues: Introduction to discussing the news
Reading: daily newspaper

Wed 14 Israel Update

Thurs 15 Writing in Political Science: Getting started the right way
Reading: Schmidt, ch. 3; ch. 8,
Also: The Jewish people – a History of Schisms

Topic #3

Sun 18 Israel Update

Wed 21 Political Schisms in early modern Zionism (pre State)

Thurs 22 Political History of Israel from 1948 - 1977

Sun 25 Political History of Israel from 1977-2010

October

Topic # 4

Sun 2 Israel Update

Thurs 6 The Israeli Political System

Topic # 5

Sun 9 Israel Update

Sun 16 Israel Update

Topic # 6

Sun 23 Israel Update

Wed 26 Israel's Political Parties 1 (presentation 1)

Thurs 27 Israel's Political Parties 2

Topic # 7

Sun 30 Israel Update

November

Wed 2 Israel political parties Sikkum and prep for next week

Thurs 3 Focus on Hot Topic - Yitzchak Rabin

Topic #8

Sun 6 Political Simulation (presentation 2)

Wed 9 Political simulation pt.2 (presentation 2)

Thurs 10 Israeli Political Parties sikkum

Topic #9

Sun 13 Israel update

Wed 16	Focus on hot topic of the week – Ariel Sharon
Thurs 17	Focus on hot topic of the week –
Topic #10	
Sun 20	Israel Update (presentation 3)
Wed 23	Israel Update (presentation 3)
Thurs 24	Focus on hot topic of the week -
Topic #11	
Sun 27	Israel Update
Tues	Siyur to Hevron and Gush Etzion
Wed 30	Focus on hot topic of the week – Hevron in perspective
<u>December</u>	
Thurs 1	Focus on hot topic of the week
Topic #12	
Sun 4	Israel Update
Tues 6	Siyur to Foreign ministry
Sun 11	Israel Update
Thurs 15	Siyur to Supreme court and Knesset
Topic #13	
Sun 18	Israel Update
Wed 21	no Class – 1 st day of Chanukah
Thurs 22	no class - 2 nd day of Chanukah
Topic #14	
Sun 25	Israel Update - Simon
Wed 28	Focus on hot topic of the week (presentation 4)
Thurs 29	Focus on hot topic of the week (presentation 4)
<u>January</u>	
Topic #15	
Wed 4	The Future for Israel – (presentation 5)
Thurs 5	The Future of Israel (presentation 5)
Sun 8	Sikkum of the course – Simon