

Modern Palestinian History

Professor Abdel Razzaq Takriti



This course examines the origins of one of the longest running and most significant settler colonial realities in modern history, exploring political, social, and economic dynamics in Palestine from the late- Ottoman period to the present. Students will consider questions of social, demographic, and cultural transformation as well as political dynamics. Using a broad range of primary sources, they will be encouraged to reflect upon the period in question on its own terms and to search for the voices of its protagonists. The subject under consideration has attracted lively debate and contributed to the development of several major theoretical approaches such as post-colonialism and comparative settler-colonial studies. These approaches, as well as major historiographical debates in the field, will be thoroughly engaged with.

Course Aims

By taking this course you will be:

1. Introduced to a wide range of debates on the subject and the variety of historiographical trends in the field.
2. Encouraged to appreciate the contrasting motivations and actions of Palestinian natives, Zionist colonists, as well as Arab, British, European, and US actors.
3. Afforded the opportunity to develop source criticism skills as well as comparative historiographical thought.
4. Exposed to the ways different forms of power and privilege construct racial and identity formations in the region; and consider the cultural, political and intellectual responses to this racialization.
5. Given the means to develop your skills as a writer and to learn how to think and communicate in writing by learning the conventions of academic writing in the discipline of history.

Course Requirements

You will be offered a series of content-specific classes, looking at a range of historical topics, issues, and problems that take you through the period in question, providing both an introduction to the study of Palestine and the Israeli state. Attendance is mandatory. Preparatory reading is set in advance for all classes. The reading is necessary to properly navigate the scholarly terrain of the subject. Every member of the class should complete the class readings. On the basis of the reading, you will be expected to share your knowledge of historiographical developments, debate topics, and both listen and respond to the views of others in a structured, respectful, positive, and tolerant environment.

Student Assessment

**Attendance & Participation (20%):* Attendance and participation are key to the success of individual students and the class as a whole. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings before attending class.

**Weekly Presentations (20%):* Starting with week 4, students will prepare a brief presentation each class (10-15 minutes total) to introduce the week's material. The presentations might include a general overview of the readings, central tensions or oppositions in the readings, inquiries into the socio-political context, etc.

**Research Project (60%):* One written paper of 2500-3000 words is required. You will select a topic, approve it with me, and engage with one or more of the concepts or

themes of this course. Your essay needs to demonstrate critical engagement with the scholarly literature in the field. Use of primary sources is highly encouraged.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Rice University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform the relevant university bodies early in the term if you may require accommodations or modification of any of course procedures. You may speak with me after class or by appointment. If you need accommodations around online learning or in classroom accommodations, please be sure to reach out to relevant university offices.

Academic Integrity

Your work in this class should reflect your own effort and ideas. When drawing on the work of others (whether directly quoting or not), you should indicate so clearly. Plagiarism is not tolerated according to university rules and guidelines.

Part I Late Ottoman Palestine



Palestine came under Ottoman rule in 1516 and remained so until the end of the First World War. Although it never acquired the status of an Ottoman administrative division, it was widely recognised as a sub-region of Greater Syria (Bilad al-Sham), centred around Jerusalem and its surroundings. The land was inhabited by three major groups: urbanites, villagers, and nomadic bedouins. The majority of the population was Muslim, coexisting with Christian and smaller Jewish minorities. Regardless of religion, the inhabitants were overwhelmingly Arab and spoke the Arabic language. The political culture was firmly Ottoman. Palestinians urban centres were closely connected to, were often governed by, and sometimes governed, surrounding cities located in present-day Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

In this first section of the course, we will examine Ottoman Palestine's political, economic, and cultural life. Exploring the richness of the territory's history during the period under consideration, we will explore life in political and economic centres such as Jerusalem, Nablus, Jaffa, Acre, and Gaza, as well as the rural districts surrounding them. This will allow us to gain insights into the lives of urban notables, religious dignitaries, merchants, artisans, labourers, landowners and peasants. What are the logics and motivations underlying the debates on this period? What are foundations on which different scholars build their contesting arguments and imagine late-Ottoman Palestine? Can this period be viewed on its own terms rather than from the prism of the present?

Week 1 Framing Palestine

Class 1: Approaching Palestinian History

Required Watching

Documentary: Aljaazeera, Al-Nakba, Episode 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7FML0wzJ6A>

Recommended Listening

Podcast: "Ottoman Palestine: The History of a Name":

<http://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2012/09/ottoman-palestine-history-of-name.html>

Class 2: Historical Background

Required Reading

*Pappe, Ilan. *A History of Modern Palestine* (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Recommended Reading

Tibawi, A.L. *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine* (Chapter 1).

***Week 2 Before Colonization**

Class 1 Political Economy

Required Reading

*Doumani, Beshara. *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1995. (Chapter 5)

Recommended Reading

Scholch, Alexander. "The Economic Development of Palestine, 1856-1882." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol.10, No.3, Spring, 1981.

Class 2 Identity

Required Reading

*Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. (Chapter 3)

*Kimmerling, Baruch; Migdal, Joel. *The Palestinian People: A History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003 (Part 1, Chapter 1)

***Week 3 Late Ottoman Dynamics**

Class 1 Revolutionary Promises and Colonial Tensions

Watch in Class: PBS Documentary "1913: Seeds of Conflict"

<http://video.pbs.org/video/2365519134/>

Required Reading

*Pappe (Chapter 2)

Recommended Reading

Ben Bassat, Yuval; Eyal Ginio (eds.) *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011 (Chapters 2 and 8).

Class 2 The Great War

Required Reading

*Tamari, Salim. *Year of the Locust*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011. pp.3-91.

Recommended Reading

Tibawi (Chapter 7).



Part II European Ascendancy and the Rise of Zionism



In the previous weeks, we have discussed the dynamic nature of the Ottoman Empire as a whole, and its Palestinian territories in particular, sampling a literature that questions the foundations of the 'Ottoman decline' thesis. In contrast, early European and American representations of late Ottoman Palestine portrayed a backward, decadent, and constantly degenerating holy land, focusing on the urgent need for its 'redemption.' These representations had a complex relationship to Zionism, and they played a role in its development in the late 19th century. Zionism itself has been presented by historians in varied ways: a response to European anti-Semitism, a quest for European Jewish self-determination, a settler-colonial project, and a socialist ideology. This week, we will read a diverse set of sources- both primary and secondary- on Zionism. These writings will allow you to reflect on a variety of major questions: Was Zionism a product of Orientalism and colonial Euro-American fantasies? Was it a nationalist project with both liberal and anti-liberal undertones? Was it a form of colonial socialism? Are its practices best approached as a coherent application of a settler-colonial framework? Can Zionism be understood without reference to its impact on the Palestinian people?

Week 4 Perceptions of Palestine and Early Zionist Beginnings

Class 1 Christian Zionism and "Holy Land Mania"

Required Reading

Obenzinger, Hilton. *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. (Chapter 1)

Scholch, Alexander. "Britain in Palestine, 1838-1882: The Roots of the Balfour Policy." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Autumn 1992.

Primary Sources:

- Twain, Mark. *The Innocents Abroad*. Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Company, 1869. (Chapters XLVI-LVI) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3176/3176-h/3176-h.htm#ch56>

Class 2

**Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon. "Exile, History and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory: Some Reflections on the Zionist notion of History and Return ," *Journal of Levantine Studies*, 3.2 (Winter 2013), pp. 37-70

Laqueur, Walter. *A History of Zionism*. New York: Schocken Books, 2003 Edition. Chapters 1-4.

Sand, Shlomo. *The Invention of the Jewish People*. London: Verso, 2009. Chapters 2 and 3.

Primary Sources:

- **Herzl (The Jewish State) http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25282/25282-h/25282-h.htm#II_The_Jewish_Question

Week 5 Zionism and Settler Colonialism

Class 1

Required Reading

Said, Edward. "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims." *Social Text*, No. 1. Winter, 1979, pp. 7-58.

Recommended Reading

Sayigh, Faye. *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine*. Beirut: PLO Research Centre, 1965. https://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC12_scans/12.zionist.colonialism.palestine.1965.pdf

Primary Sources:

- Jabotinsky (The Iron Wall- We and the Arabs) http://www.jabotinsky.org/multimedia/upl_doc/doc_191207_49117.pdf

Class 2

Required Reading

Sternhell, Zeev. "In Defence of Liberal Zionism". *New Left Review*, 62, March-April 2010.

Piterberg, Gabriel. "Settlers and their States: A Reply to Zeev Sternhell". *New Left Review*, 62, March-April 2010.

Shafir, Gershon; Peled, Yoav. *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. (pp.37-55)

Film: Watch in class Eyal Sivan's documentary Jaffa, The Orange's Clockwork

Primary Sources:

- Ahad Ha'am (The Jewish State and Jewish Problem)
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/haam2.html>

Part III Occupation, Colonization, and Resistance



World War I reshaped the history of the Arab lands. Allied to Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire was defeated in the war, and all of its former Arab territories came under European colonial control. British and French mandates were established in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Palestine. The Palestinian mandate proved to be particularly problematic due to the British commitment to Zionism and the settlement of European Jews in Palestine, despite resolute native opposition. In this week, we will examine the ways in which the British Balfour policy facilitated Zionist settlement in Palestine. We will then proceed to discuss the nature of the British administration, the ways in which it interacted with the native Palestinian and the growing Zionist settler population, as well as the social transformations that affected Palestinian society between 1918 and 1948.

Week 6 The Balfour Policy and the Establishment of the British Mandate

Class 1

Required Reading

Reinharz, Jehuda. "The Balfour Declaration and Its Maker: A Reassessment". *The Journal of Modern History*. September 1992.

Tibawi, A.L. Chapter 7

Lord Montagu's Memorandum

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/montagu-memo-on-british-government-s-anti-semitism>

Recommended Reading

Tibawi, A.L. Chapters 8 and 12

Class 2

Required Reading

Huneidi, Sahar. "Was Balfour Policy Reversible? The Colonial Office and Palestine, 1921-23." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Winter 1998.

Allen, Lori. "Determining Emotions and the Burden of Proof in Investigative Commissions to Palestine." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59 (2), 2017. pp. 385-414.

Primary Sources:

King-Crane Commission Report

http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/The_King-Crane_Report

Memorandum submitted to Winston Churchill, British Colonial Secretary, by the First Palestinian Delegation to London, 24 October 1921. <http://btd.palestine-studies.org/content/palestinian-diplomacy-4>

Week 7 The Political Economy of Colonialism

Class 1

Norris, Jacob. *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905-1948*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. pp.63-212.

Class 2

Meiton, Frederick. *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2019. Introduction, Chapter 2, and Conclusion.

Pappe, Ilan. "Review of Electrical Palestine." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Volume 50, Issue 4, Spring 2020.

Week 8 The Palestinian Search for Strategy

Class 1

Matthews, Weldon. *Confronting an empire, constructing a nation: Arab nationalists and popular politics in Mandate Palestine*. London: IB Tauris, 2006. pp. 44-233

Class 2

Required Reading

Takriti, Abdel Razzaq. "Before BDS: Lineages of Boycott in Palestine" *Radical History Review*, Issue 134, May 2019.

Recommended Reading

al-Hout ,Bayan Nuweihad. 'The Palestinian political elite during the mandate period', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 11, 1979, pp. 85–111.

Week 9 Crisis and Resistance: The Palestinian Peasantry and the Road to Revolt

Class 1

Required Reading

Anderson, Charles. "The British Mandate and the Crisis of Palestinian Landlessness, 1929-1936," *Middle Eastern Studies*. Vol. 54, No. 2, March, 2018.

Recommended Reading

Reilly, James. "The Peasantry of Late-Ottoman Palestine." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol.10, No.4, 1981.

Class 2

Required Reading

Kanafani, Ghassan. *The 1936 Revolt in Palestine*.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kanafani/1972/revolt.htm>

Kayyali, A.W. *Palestine: A Modern History*. London: Croom Helm, 1978. pp. 155-231.

Recommended Reading

Essaid, Aida. *Zionism and Land Tenure in Palestine*. London: Routledge, 2014. Conclusion.

Primary Sources

Hope Simpson Report

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-194707/>

Week 10 The Great Revolt of 1936-39

Class 1

Required Reading

Parsons, Laila. *The Commander*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2016. pp.107-141

Recommended Reading

Hughes, Matthew. *Britain's Pacification of Palestine*. Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp.78-253.

Class 2

Required Reading

Anderson, Charles. "When Palestinians Became Human Shields: Counterinsurgency, Racialization, and the Great Revolt (1936-39)," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 63, No.3, 2021.

Norris, Jacob. 'Repression and Rebellion: the British Response to the Arab Revolt in Palestine of 1936-1939', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 36, No.1, 2008, pp.25-45.

Recommended Reading

Kelly, Mathew Craig. "The Revolt of 1936: A Revision", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.44, No.2, Winter 2015, p.28.

Part IV The 1948 War and its Aftermath

The end of the British mandate witnessed the outbreak of full scale war between Zionist settlers on one side and the Palestinian indigenous population and the surrounding Arab states on the other. The former achieved victory and established the State of Israel on 78% of the land of Mandate Palestine. In contrast, the Palestinians were not only militarily vanquished, but most of them were also forced into becoming refugees, prevented from going back to their lands and villages. Thus, Israelis began to refer to 1948 as the 'War of Independence' while Palestinians called it the "Nakba" (catastrophe), signalling the formal erasure of Palestine from the map and the dispossession of the majority of its inhabitants. This part of the course features a range of debates over this milestone event in the modern history of the Middle East. Our discussion culminates with a brief overview of the 1967 war, the resulting conquest of the entirety of historic Palestine by the Israeli state, and ongoing colonialism.



Week 11 The Nakba

Class 1

Required Reading

Khalidi, Walid. 'Plan Dalet Revisited,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn 1988

Pappe, Ilan. 'The 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn 2006

Recommended Reading

Sayigh, Rosemary. "Women's Nakba Stories: Between Being and Knowing" in Sa'di, Ahmad; Abu-Lughod, Lila (eds.). *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Class 2

Required Reading

Shlaim, Avi. 'The War of the Israeli Historians,' *Annales*, 59:1, January-February 2004
<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ssfc0005/The%20War%20of%20the%20Israeli%20Historians.html>

Beinin, Joel. 'Forgetfulness for Memory: The Limits of the New Israeli History', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 2005.

Recommended Reading

Morris, Benny. 'Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948,' in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd Edition, 2008.

Masalha, Nour. 'A Critique of Benny Morris,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn 1991.

Finkelstein, Norman. 'Myths, Old and New,' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn 1991.

Morris, Benny. 'Response to Finkelstein and Masalha', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn 1991.

Finkelstein, Norman. 'Rejoinder to Benny Morris', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 1992

Week 12 After the Nakba: Survival and Resistance

Class 1

Nabulsi, Karma; Takriti, Abdel Razzaq. "The Nakba Generation" in *The Palestinian Revolution*.

Nassar, Maha. *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2017. pp. 1-78.

Class 2

Sayigh, Rosemary. *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. London: Zed Books, 2007 Edition. Chapter 3.

Irfan, Anne. "Petitioning for Palestine: Refugee Appeals to International Authorities". *Contemporary Levant*. Volume 5, Issue 2, 2020. pp.79-96.

Primary Sources:

Fayez Sayigh. *The Palestine Refugees* (1952).

Week 13 From 1967 to Gaza 2023

Class 1

Required Reading

Pappe, Ilan. *The Biggest Prison On Earth: A History of the Occupied Territories*. London: Oneworld, 2017. Introduction, Chapters 1-7.

Nabulsi, Karma. "Being Palestinian". *Government and Opposition*. 2004.

Recommended Reading

Anziska, Seth. *Preventing Palestine*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. pp.117-308.

Class 2

Required Reading

Khalidi, Rashid. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017*. Metropolitan Books, 2020. pp. 207-257.

Human Rights Watch. "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution". 2021.