

## Israel: History, Politics, Culture, and Identity

17.567  
Department of Political Science  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

IAP 2020  
Tue/Thurs 10:00am-1:00pm  
Room 5-217

### Professor Peter Krause

Office: 229 McGuinn Hall, Boston College

Email: peter.krause.2@bc.edu, pkrause@mit.edu (please include 17.567 in subject)

### Course Description

Media coverage of Israel increases by the day, but in-depth knowledge of the country and its politics and society remain in short supply. Why was Israel founded, and how have struggles over its people's identity shaped its history? Is there a unique Israeli culture? Why has Israel seemingly experienced so much conflict, both internally with Palestinians and externally with neighboring Arab states? What is the future of Israel? This course will address the history, politics, culture, and identity of Israel from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

### Course Requirements

Course grades will be based on:

#### *Class Participation (30%)*

Students are required to take an active role in the class. This means completing the assigned readings for each class, showing up to class regularly and on time, and participating consistently in class discussions and debates with quality contributions. It cannot be stressed enough that you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that session. Additionally, you should get in the habit of writing a few questions in your notes for each class as you complete the readings. The ability to ask a good question is evidence of understanding, rather than the lack of it. I will ask students for questions at the start of each class, so come prepared.

Class meetings will never be 180 minutes of lecture. Every class will include significant amounts of time for a variety of different guided discussions and debates of the readings and the relevant issues they address. All students are expected to engage in class discussion; those who do not do so on their own initiative will be regularly invited to do so by me. If you regularly prepare and engage with your reading outside of class, and with the lectures and discussions in class meetings, you will be pleasantly surprised at how much information you can analyze on a sophisticated level in no time.

More than one unexcused absence will lead to a significant reduction in a student's participation grade. If you have to miss class or discussion section for religious observance, serious illness, or a similarly serious reason, notify me *before you will miss class*, not after the fact.

Cell phones must be turned off during class. Laptops are generally not permitted in class; however, bring a laptop with you to each class as we will use them a few times. Bring hard copies of all readings to class. The participation grade includes the completion of smaller assignments throughout the course, although the majority of your participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your verbal participation in class meetings.

*Map Quiz (10%):* **January 16** in class

Students will be responsible for identifying key countries, cities, bodies of water, mountains, and deserts in and around Israel. A map guide will be distributed for studying.

*Final Exam (60%):* **January 30** in class

Students will be responsible for material covered in both lectures and required readings—which will not always overlap—for the final exam.

## Course Grading

Satisfactory completion of the assignments in this class is likely to earn a grade in the B range, not the A range. A B-, B, or B+ in this course is evidence of hard work and middle to high quality performance. A grade in the C range represents middling to lower quality work that contains one or two significant problems, while a grade in the D range represents work that accomplishes the bare minimum required and possesses a significant number of glaring problems. To receive an A of any kind in this course requires very hard work and dedication throughout the semester, as well as superior performance in each aspect of the course. Late work is docked one grade for every 12 hours that it is late (e.g. from a B to a B-).

## Zero-Tolerance Policy on Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity will be vigorously enforced. Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education. You should observe the highest standards of academic integrity in this course. Please review MIT's standards and procedures on the web: <https://integrity.mit.edu/>

Make sure that the work you submit is in accordance with university policies. Plagiarizing the work of academics or other students is unacceptable. Formal citation of others' ideas must be included in course assignments where applicable. I will provide you with handouts on when and how to cite correctly. If you have any questions, please consult with me. Violations will be reported to the Deans' Office and reviewed by the College's Committee on Academic Integrity. This could result in failure in the course or even more severe sanctions.

## Students with a Learning Disability

Students with a learning disability should meet with me as early as possible in the semester. Please bring documentation from the University Coordinator of Academic Support Services with you so that we can make arrangements that will allow you to perform at your best.

## Israeli and Middle East News Sources

We will discuss Israeli news in every single class. Students are required to read one article in an Israeli or Middle Eastern media source before every class and come ready to discuss it. This will help students make connections between past and present and significantly enhance students' knowledge of Israel and the impact of this course. Below are some suggested English-language news sources:

### Israeli News Sources

*Ha'aretz*: [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)

*Israel Hayom*: [www.israelhayom.com](http://www.israelhayom.com)

*Jerusalem Post*: [www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com)

*Ynet*: [www.ynetnews.com](http://www.ynetnews.com)

### Palestinian News Sources

*Palestine News Network*: [english.pnn.ps](http://english.pnn.ps)

*Wafa*: [english.wafa.ps](http://english.wafa.ps)

### Middle East News Sources

*Al-Jazeera*: [www.aljazeera.com](http://www.aljazeera.com)

*Lebanon Daily Star*: [www.dailystar.com.lb](http://www.dailystar.com.lb)

*Al-Ahram*: [english.ahram.org.eg](http://english.ahram.org.eg)

*Jordan Times*: [www.jordantimes.com](http://www.jordantimes.com)

## Required Books for Purchase

1) Abdel Monem Said Aly, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave, 2013)

2) Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2013)

## Course Readings

There is a significant amount of required reading for each class as each is more than double the length of a regular class meeting; you are expected to complete all of the reading on time. Be prepared to discuss the main arguments and evidence of each required reading during class discussion. All required readings for the course are either in your purchased books or are available on-line in the course's Stellar site. Students should immediately familiarize themselves with the mechanics involved.

## **Class Plan**

**January 7: Introduction to Israel: Zionism and the Idea of Jewish Nationalism**

**January 9: Warring Nations and the Founding of Israel**

**January 14: Arab-Israeli Relations: War and Peace**

**January 16: Ethnicity, Religion, and Israeli Identity and Culture (Map Quiz)**

**January 21: Settlements, the West Bank/Gaza, and the Intifadas**

**January 23: Israel's Domestic Politics and Economy**

**January 28: Israel's Foreign Policy and The Future Of Israel**

**January 30: Final Exam**

## **Readings and Class Schedule**

By Monday, January 6 at noon, you must answer the three questions on the survey at this link: [https://bostoncollege.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1TxbQZh4zNvuGeV](https://bostoncollege.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1TxbQZh4zNvuGeV)

### **January 7: Introduction to Israel, Zionism and the Idea of Jewish Nationalism**

*Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 1, pp. 7-39

*My Promised Land*, pp. ix-xiv

Shlomo Avineri, "Zionism as a National Liberation Movement," *The Jerusalem Quarterly* No. 10 (1979) pp. 133-144

### **January 9: Warring Nations and the Founding of Israel**

*Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 2, pp. 46-79

*My Promised Land*, pp. 49-132

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) pp. 9-34

### **January 14: Arab-Israeli Relations: War and Peace**

Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 4-6

*Arabs and Israelis*, pp. 118-149, 195-226

*My Promised Land*, pp. 175-198

Jeremy Ginges et al, "Sacred Bounds On Rational Resolution Of Violent Political Conflict," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Vol. 104, No. 18 (2007) pp. 7357-7360

### **January 16: Ethnicity, Religion, and Israeli Identity and Culture**

*My Promised Land*, pp. 135-174, 271-312

Dalia Ofer, "We Israelis Remember, But How? The Memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli Experience," *Israel Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Summer 2013), pp. 70-85

"The Difficulty Of Drafting Ultra-Orthodox Jews Into Israel's Army," *The Economist* (September 30, 2017)

Almog Behar, "Ana min al yahoud - I'm one of the Jews"

## January 21: Settlements, the West Bank/Gaza, and the Intifadas

*My Promised Land*, p. 201-225

Peter Krause and Ehud Eiran, "How Human Boundaries Become State Borders: Radical Flanks and Territorial Control in the Modern Era," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (July 2018) pp. 479-499

*Arabs and Israelis*, pp. 231-265

Sari Nusseibeh, "The Archimedean Lever: Right in the Face of Might," *International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies* (2005), pp. 91-98

Amotz Asa-El, "The Wall and Us: The Restoration of the Israeli Consensus" in *Israel on Israel*, (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), pp. 149-154

## January 23: Israel's Domestic Politics and Economy

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Israeli Democracy: How Does it Work?" ([link](#))

Gregory Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), pp. 114-139

Ben Zion Zilberfarb, "From Socialism to Free Market- The Israeli Economy, 1948-2003," *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 11 No. 1 (2005), pp. 12-22

*My Promised Land*, pp. 339-364

"The Rise of the Capitalist Kibbutz," *The Financial Times* (January 25, 2010)

## **January 28: Israel's Foreign Policy and the Future of Israel**

*My Promised Land*, pp. 365-419

*Arabs and Israelis*, pp. 442-459

Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, "The United States and Israel since 1948: A Special Relationship?"  
*Diplomatic History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1998), pp. 231-262

## **January 30: Final Exam**