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GOVERNMENT 229: GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF ISRAEL
FALL 2010

Israel was founded in 1948 in war in a period personified by the brave men and women driven by a sense of historic mission to risk everything to protect Jewish lives from assault and military attack. But the generation that fought for a Jewish state also had to structure a government, activities that demanded a different kind of boldness in a context tested not by fire power but rather by competing interests and goals. Israel has never failed to impress or to occupy a privileged place of consideration in the pantheon of new nations. Many social scientists consider its political development exceptional. Since its establishment, the country has constructed a technologically sophisticated economy, a powerful military and a vibrant democracy. Once a nation on the fringes of world trends and transactions, Israel has fully entered the global economy and benefited from its market forces. Rivers of ink have been spilled on the curious proposition that these changes were presumably driven by a remarkable consensus on norms and values and/or by an unusual set of organizational talents and capacities. Some scholars depict a process of development so harmonious as to be an idealized version of the actual course of events. Still others insist that Israel's progress is simply a reflection of the organization of international politics and the ongoing dominance of imperialist forces.

Although Israeli state institutions operate more effectively than those in many other countries that achieved their independence after World War II and do so in accordance with the logic of power politics, they are not simply artificial extensions of international relations. And even as the country and its citizens have faced intense dangers and lethal existential threats, Zionist and Israeli politics were and still are arenas of intense struggles over the allocation of resources. While those struggles did not prevent Palestine's Jews from creating a common political framework, they did produce social tensions and bitter conflicts that shaped the trajectory of the country's political choices for decades.

The syllabus for Government 229 covers one hundred years of Israel's history and draws on readings from across the disciplinary spectrum representing a wide variety of perspectives on Israel's successes and failures in nation-building and in forging an effective political system. The assigned material will form the background for class discussions and will address the questions central to the course: why and how the Zionist idea was formed; what were the choices confronting Jews in the late nineteenth century. How did Zionists take advantage of opportunities for pursuing their national goals and how did they compromise them? What role has the military played in structuring the policy options for Israel's various governments? What has been the impact of war and ongoing violence on Israeli society? How have shifting demographic factors affected Israel's national identity? How has population size influenced perceptions of the adequacy of natural resources, geographic boundaries and the principles of a security doctrine? The peopling of Israel brought men and women of diverse backgrounds from radically different parts of the world together in the most unfamiliar of circumstances. How have Israeli leaders dealt with these differences and how has the idea of national belonging actually settled into people's minds and informed their capacity to imagine their options?

The course will be organized around a combination of lectures and discussions. Class participation is important and will depend on diligent preparation and ongoing contribution to the analyses of various topics. At every class session, students should be prepared to offer a one-minute oral response to the assigned reading. This means expressing a reaction or opinion, raising one question, criticism, or issue that related to the assignment. Classes will include some lecture, but hopefully, with frequent interruptions for questions, clarifications, comments, and objections.

There will be five papers assigned [three to five pages] on various topics covered during the course. These papers will not require additional research or reading, but they will demand analysis of the assigned reading and comparisons of different texts and approaches. During the semester, several movies will be screened during regular class time. Students will be expected to turn in one page 'reaction' papers to the movies. There will be no final or midterm examinations.

TEXTS TO PURCHASE:

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine* [can be purchased through University of Texas website]
Arthur Hertzberg, editor, *The Zionist Idea*
Aharon Megged, *The Living On The Dead*

September 8: **DEFINING ZION AND ITS PROMISE**

First Zionist Documentary: “The Land of Promise”

September 13: **DEFINING THE JEWISH STATE AS THE FULFILLMENT OF ZIONISM’S PROMISE**

Songs by Naomi Shemer: “Jerusalem of Gold”

“Tomorrow”

“The Honey and The Thorn”

Song by Shlomo Artzi and Gidi Gov: “Fly Away Bird...”

“Israel as a Knowledge-Nation”

YouTube “I am a Jew”

September 15: **THE MANY FOUNDINGS OF ZION**

“Proclamation of the State of Israel”

“The Law of Return”

“The Balfour Declaration”

September 20 and 22: **ZIONISM: REJECTING JEWISH HISTORY?**

“Protocols of the Elders of Zion”

“The Russian Experience”

Yehuda Amichai, “The Times My Father Died”

Hayyim Nachman Bialik, “The Talmud Student”

September 27: **DEBATING ZION AND ZIONISM: DRIVEN OUT OF EDEN OR COMING HOME**

Arthur Hertzberg, editor, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 178—226

Amos Oz, *The Hill of Evil Counsel*

September 29: **FROM CLASS TO CAPITAL**

Arthur Hertzberg, editor, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 249-277; 362-396

October 4: **A CALL TO ARMS—AN APPEAL TO GOD**

Arthur Hertzberg, editor, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 317-431; 514-523

October 6: **MISHNAH IMPOSSIBLE: ZIONIST ATTEMPTS TO TRANSFORM THE JEWISH PEOPLE**

Arthur Hertzberg, editor, *The Zionist Idea*, pp. 514-523; 556-570; 605-619

Yael Zerubavel, "New Beginning, Old Past: The Collective Memory of Pioneering in Israeli Culture"

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine*, pp. 3-50.

October 13: **DEFENDING ZION**

Movie: "Hill Twenty-Four Doesn't Answer"

Emmanuel Sivan, "To Remember is To Forget: Israel's 1948 War"

Natan Alterman, "The Silver Platter"

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine*, pp. 51-101.

October 18: **BUILDING ZION: THE HEROES**

Amos Elon: excerpts from *Israelis: Founders and Sons*

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in The Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine*, pp. 102-132.

October 20: **BUILDING ZION: THE UNSUNG HEROES**

Movie: "House on Cheloush Street"

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in The Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine*, pp. 133-198.

October 25: **BUILDING ZION: THE COSTS**

Tom Segev, excerpts from *1949: The First Israelis*

Donna Robinson Divine, *Exiled in the Homeland: Zionism and The Return to Mandate Palestine*, pp. 199-207.

October 27: **FROM DESTRUCTION TO THE PAIN OF REBIRTH**

Movie: “The Summer of Aviya”

Dalia Ofer, “The Strength of Remembrance: Commemorating The Holocaust During The First Decade of Israel”

November 1 and 3: **NATION-BUILDING VERSUS POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Asher Arian, “Israel”

November 8 and 10: **THE JEWISH STATE: BORDERS WITHOUT SOVEREIGNTY**

Gregory Mahler, Selections from *Politics and Government in Israel*

November 15 and 17: **BEING ISRAELI IN THE ‘MELTING POT’**

Movie: “Kazablan”

Anita Shapira, “Native Sons”

Alan Dowty, “The Communal Split”

Sheffer and Barak, ed. “From Obligatory Militarism to Constructed Militarism—Competing Models of Citizenship”

November 22: **THE JEWISH STATE: SOVEREIGNTY WITHOUT BORDERS**

Joel S. Migdal, “Changing Boundaries and Social Crisis: Israel and the 1967 War”

Joel S. Migdal with Baruch Kimmerling, “The Odd Man Out: Arabs in Israel”

November 29 and December 1: **THE RETURN OF THE HOMELAND? SHIFTING BORDERS AND CONTESTED IDENTITIES**

Eric Cohen, “Israel As a Post-Zionist Society”

Ehud Sprinzak, “The Politics, Institutions, and Culture of Gush Emunim”

Menahem Brinker, “The End of Zionism? Thoughts On The Wages of Success”

Anita Shapira, “From The Palmach Generation To The Candle Children: Changing Patterns in Israeli Identity”

Alan Dowty, “Religion and Politics”

***EVENING OF NOVEMBER 30: ORNIT BARKAI: 'THE HEBREW SONG:
CREATING A STATE AND RE-MAKING A NATION'***

December 6 and 8: **IMAGINING ZION-LIVING IN ISRAEL**

Yoram Bilu and Eyal Ben-Ari, "Modernity and Charisma in Contemporary Israel:
The Case of Baba Sali and Baba Baruch"
Oz Almog, "The Globalization of Israel: Transformations"
Patricia J. Woods, "Gender and The Reproduction and Maintenance of Group
Boundaries: Why The "Secular" State Matters to Religious Authorities in Israel"

December 13: **THE JEWISH STATE: MORE THAN A CENTURY LATER: A
RECKONING**

Emmanuel Sivan, "Private Pain and Public Remembrance in Israel"
Emmanuel Sivan, "To Remember is to Forget: Israel's 1948 War"
Aharon Megged, *The Living On The Dead*