The State of Faith
Secularism in the Face of Religious Revival

Summer 2018
July 2 – 26, 2018
45 Academic Hours, 3 Academic Credits

Instructor
Shachar Yanai

Course Description
The course examines the philosophical, cultural and political aspects of the growing polarization between secular and religious communities in Israel and other Western democracies, and explores the prospects for a constructive dialogue between these seemingly opposing worldviews.
It will focus on processes of “religionization” and secularization in Israel and their effects on social and political tensions between the different communities. The Israeli case will be examined in a global, historical and philosophical context, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the causes for the current trends of religious resurgence and the secular responses to it in the “western world”.
We will also examine alternative conceptual frameworks and approaches to understand and try to bridge the rifts between the communities in the context of democratic rule.
The course includes site visits to religious and secular communities and organizations in Israel, and meeting with relevant activists from opposing sides of the political spectrum.

**Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown**

Active participation: 10%
2 short reading reports: 20%
Final paper (5-7 pages): 70%

**Course Outline**

**Part 1: Characterizing of the Conflict**

The Burning Issues - Gay Rights, Jewish Education, Higher Court of Justice, Minority Rights, Women’s Army Service and Holy Sites, the Right to the Land, and the Shabbat


**Part 2: Philosophical and Historical Background**

**Enlightenment and the Rise of Secularity**


**Religious Revival and the Post-Secular Age**


**Part 3: The Sources of the Israeli Predicament**

Zionism- Between Secularity and Religion


**Part 4: Secularity and Religion in Contemporary Israel**

Religion and State in Israel - The Status Quo and the Orthodox Monopoly


- **Shlomo Hasson**, *State and Religion in Israel, Possible Scenarios*, (The Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies, College Park, MD, 2015), p, 29-59

**Site visit - Forum Chiloni, Givat Haviva, Zehut**

Political Religionization and “Under the Radar” Secularization in Contemporary Israel


**Part 5: New Outlooks for the Future**


**Site visit - Dialogue Organizations**
Part 6: Summation

Bibliography


Rene Descartes, Meditations on the First Philosophy, in, Descartes, Selected Philosophical Writings, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p.76-98


H. Dreyfus and S.D. Kelly, All Things Shinning, Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age, (Free Press, New York, NY, 2011), p 1-21


Shlomo Hasson, State and Religion in Israel, Possible Scenarios, (The Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies, College Park, MD, 2015),p, 29-59


Guy Ben- Porat, Between State and Synagogue, (Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013), p 176-212

