Course Description and Objectives

Non-Jewish minority groups in Israel have developed widely varying relationships with the State of Israel, stemming from their initial attitudes towards Zionism and the Jewish people. We will strive to give a deeper understanding of the complexities and intricacies of Jewish-non-Jewish relations within the Jewish state. The lectures and material include the pre-State history of the different groups as well as a survey of their development in Israel. Issues to be analyzed include communal relationships to Israeli politics and society, socioeconomic integration, and group identity. The course strives to give students a deeper understanding of the complexities, intricacies and dilemmas of relations between Jews and non-Jews within Israel.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Distinguish between the various ethnic minorities in Israel
2. Critically analyze the debate over the ethnic minorities’ status
3. Summarize the legal status, rights and obligations of ethnic minorities in Israel
4. Understand the impact of Israeli policies toward its ethnic minorities

Teaching method

The course will be conducted through a combination of formal lectures, class discussion and meetings with representatives of ethnic minorities off campus. Lectures and class discussions will be based on weekly reading assignments and handouts. Students will also bring in outside material such as current events articles.
Requirements
Students are expected to actively participate in all class meetings and field trips, make class presentations and hand in assignments in timely fashion.

Structure of Final Course Grade
1. Participation (attendance, discussion, handing in reflections): 30%
2. Final exam (take-home assignment): 50%
3. Student presentation and discussion of a current events article: 20%
   Total 100%

Class outline
Note: Readings for each class to be completed in advance are listed under each topic.

1. **Friday, 3/1, 1:00-3:00**
   Introduction – Overview
   **Topics:** Expectations for the semester, the idea of the modern nation state, the status of minorities in pre-state Israel; demographic overview of Israel's non-Jewish ethnic groups

2. **Monday, 6/1**
   **11:00-13:00**
   **The Changing Status of Eretz Israel's Minorities**
   **Topics:** Israel as an ethnic democracy; Israel’s millet system; Israel’s immigration and naturalization system; balancing civil and national rights with security
   **Readings:**

3. **Monday, 6/1**
   **14:00-16:00**
   **Muslim Israeli Arabs**
**Topics:** Historical and political trauma: evolution from Israeli Arab to Palestinian identity; between visions of integration and feelings of alienation; variations within the community

**Readings:**

4. **Monday, 6/1**

16:30-18:30

**Christian Israeli Arabs: Conflicted Identity**

**Topics:** From Dhimmi to pan-Arab nationalism; Muslim-Christian tensions; revitalization and the Aramaen community

**Readings:**

5. **Tuesday, 7/1**

11:00-13:00

**The Druze: Multiple Layers of Loyalty**

**Topics:** Druze status within Muslim hegemony; the tactic of dissimulation; the covenant of outsiders and limits of privilege; why Druze serve in the IDF; the communal narrative and evolution of identity

**Readings:**
6. **Tuesday, 7/1**

14:00-16:00

**Circassians: Creating Spatio-Temporal Borders**

**Topics:** Genocide and Diaspora; relations with the Zionist movement and Arabs of Palestine; the conscription issue; maintaining identity as good Muslims and good Israelis; 21st century challenges

**Readings:**


7. **Tuesday, 7/1**

16:30-18:30

**Armenians: Caught in between**

- 1,600 years of continuous settlement
- Navigating between the Jewish majority and Arab minority in Israel
- Feeling an existential threat in the Old City

**Readings:**


**Wednesday, 8/1, 08:00-12:00**

**Community Encounters: Armenians and Arabs**

- 9:00-10:30 – Meeting with Palestinian students on campus
- 11:30-13:00 – Visit to Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem

**Thursday, 9/1, 08:00-20:00**

**Field Trip #1: Druze, Circassians and Aramaeans**

- 10:00-12:30 – Isfiya (including lunch option)
- 2:00-3:30 – Kfar Kama (Circassian Heritage Center)
- 4:30-6:00 – Jish (Tour of Aramaean community)

8. **Sunday, 12/1**
11:00-13:00

Bedouin: It’s All about the Land

**Topics:** Confronting modernity, conflicts with non-Bedouin; internal displacement and resettlement; service in the IDF; differences between northern and southern Bedouin; the fight for recognized communities and land rights

**Readings:**

9. **Sunday, 12/1**

14:00-16:00

Hebrew Israelites: Soul Citizenship

**Topics:** rise of a revitalization movement; from the USA through Liberia to Israel; the Hebrew Israelite lifestyle; living on the fringes of society; crisis with the government; gradual integration through the army and citizenship

**Readings:**

10. **Sunday, 12/1**

16:30-18:30

Russian non-Jews: Neither Here nor There

**Topics:** Demography of former-Soviet emigres to Israel; Jewish there, Russian here; creating a sub-culture; fighting for personal rights including marriage, burial and lifestyle

**Readings:**
- Raijman, Rebeca and Janina Pinsky, "'Non-Jewish and Christian': Perceived Discrimination and Social Distance among FSU Migrants in Israel," *Israel Affairs* 17 (1, 2011): 125-141.

11. **Monday, 13/1**
11:00-13:00  
**Israel and refugees**

**Topics:** Israel's historic attitude toward non-Jewish migrants and refugees; Menahem Begin’s precedent with the Vietnamese boat people; the refugee status determination process in Israel; Israel’s relationship with the UNHCR

**Readings:**

12. **Monday, 13/1**  
14:00-16:00  
**Migrant workers**

**Topics:** Israel's changing economy and the need for imported labor; the power of words and attitudes toward migrant workers; civil society to the rescue

**Readings:**

13. **Monday, 13/1**  
16:30-18:30  
**African asylum seekers**

**Topics:** Israel’s struggle with its status as a magnet for asylum seekers; terminology; Israeli evolving policies toward and their impact on asylum seekers; relations between asylum seekers and individual Israelis, NGOs

**Readings:**

**Tuesday, 14/1, 8:00-20:00**

**Field Trip #2: Bedouin, Hebrew Israelites, Migrants and Asylum Seekers**
• 9:30 a.m. – Meeting with Bedouin in Rahat
• 12:00 p.m. – Tour of Hebrew Israelite community
• 1:30 p.m. – Lunch at Oasis of Peace
• 4:30 p.m. – Meeting with Pastor Jeremiah, Lift Your Head Up Church, Tel Aviv
• 5:30 p.m. – Tour of South Tel Aviv, meeting with asylum seekers
• 7:30 p.m. – Return to Jerusalem

14. Thursday, 16/1
   11:00-13:00
   **Hidden and Temporary Communities**
   • The Ismailiya of Haifa
   • The Baha’i

15. Thursday, 16/1
   14:00-16:00
   **Conclusion**
   • Flaws in the current framework, challenges and obstacles to change
   • How minorities are changing the face and fabric of Israel