



Rothberg International School
בית הספר לתלמידים מחו"ל ע"ש רוטברג
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים



Department of Summer Courses
and Special Programs

המחלקה לקורסי קיץ
ותוכניות מיוחדות

The Israel-Hamas War: Beyond Campus Rhetoric (48850) **Online Course**

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January 7 – April 14, 2024

Sundays from 13:00 – 14:30 EST

28 Academic Hours, 2 Optional Academic Credits

Tentative syllabus

The Israel-Hamas war has seen an unprecedented international media, campus and public outburst leaving many challenged to understand the conflict and its context. This course provides participants / students with the tools to understand and engage with the issues regarding this more than century old conflict, its more recent manifestation on campus, in visual culture and across the media and social networks. To this end, the course is divided into three complementary modules: the first presents the background to the creation of the state of Israel and the unfolding of the Arab-Israel conflict. The second covers international law and the pursuit of war. It addresses the terminology used to frame the rules of engagement in armed conflict and considers how it has been used in the current round of hostilities. The third module examines representations of the war in the news and on social media. It looks at the manipulation of images and documentation and unpacks the effects of different modes of dissemination and representation.

The course will be taught on zoom by lecturers drawn from the faculty of the Hebrew University and can be taken for academic credit.

Please Note: Those Students taking the class for credit will be expected to complete an assignment, the details of which will be announced by the teachers of the respective modules. Students will complete an assignment from one of the modules listed below. The assignment will be submitted to the professor of that module.

7th January - Session 1: Zionism: Jewish National Movement, Historic Context, and the Claim of Colonialism

We begin by identifying the common denominators of the Zionist ideology and defining its place in the context of Jewish history. The continuity and change of the Jewish relationship with the Land of Israel will be discussed, as well as the claim of the relationship between Zionism and colonialism.

Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Brandeis, Hanover 2012) pp. 3-26.

Gershon Shafir, "Zionism and colonialism: a comparative approach," in Ilan Pappé, ed., *The Israel/Palestine Question Rewriting Histories* (London, 1999), pp. 81-96.

Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations* (Routledge, London and NY) 2009 pp. 65-82

14th January - Session 2: The Emergence and Development of the Triangular Conflict.

This session explores the claim that Palestine was "twice promised" by the British, first to the Arabs and shortly thereafter to the Zionist movement. It will discuss the growth of the Jewish community in Palestine, Arab opposition, and the British attempt to maintain their presence in the country amidst a deepening conflict. We shall also discuss attempts to resolve the conflict by partitioning the land, in 1937 and 1947, as well as binationalism.

Michael J. Cohen, *The Origins and Evolution of the Arab-Zionist Conflict* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987) 1-132.

Morris, Benny, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-1999* (New York, Knopf, 1999) 67-189.

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 42-64.

21st January - Session 3: 1948

This class will focus upon Israel's War of Independence and the Palestinian *nakba*. The class will begin with an analysis of the initial phase of the war when primarily Jewish and Palestinian forces fought each other and then, following Israel's Declaration of Independence, the role of Arab armies who converged on the new state. During this period there emerged the Palestinian refugee problem. The class will explore the scope and causes that led to the departure of the Palestinians.

Rashid Khalidi, 'The Palestinians and 1948: the underlying causes of failure,' in Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, (eds.) *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, Middle East Studies 2001) pp. 12- 36.

Benny Morris, "The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem," in Laurence J. Silberstein, ed., *New Perspectives on Israeli History* (New York: 1991): 42-56

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 155-178.

28th January - Session 4: 1949-1967

The class will examine the aftermath of the war of independence, relations between Israel and its neighbors, the armed activities of Palestinians into Israeli territory and the Israeli response. Some attention will be given to the 1956 Sinai Campaign and thereafter attention will focus on the Six Day War and Israel's control of the conquered territories.

Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 259-301, 302-346

Michael Oren, 'Did Israel Want the Six Day War, *Azure Spring* 1999, no. 7, 47-86.

Shapira, *Israel*, 295-306, 307-325.

4th February - Session 5: 1968 - 1978.

We will discuss PLO activity both along Israel's borders and internationally as well as Black September. The session will discuss the Yom Kippur 1973 War and peace with Egypt.

Ian Bickerton and Carl Klausner, *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (London and New York: Routledge 2016), 175-230,
Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 347- 493
Shapira, *Israel*, 326-354

11th February - Session 6: Between Wars and Peace

The period following the peace treaty with Egypt sees an escalation on Israel's northern border and leads to the first Lebanon war, and later the first intifada. Together with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iraq configuration this appears to create a new environment of hope with peacemaking efforts, particularly the Oslo process during which Israel offered to end the occupation of Gaza and almost all the West Bank. We will ask why the process collapsed and instead ignited a second intifada.

Ian Bickerton and Carl Klausner, *A History*, 231-377
Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 494-675.
Shapira, *Israel*, 377-390, 411-449.

18th February - Session 7: From Gaza withdrawal to Israel-Hamas War.

This class will focus primarily on the events that began with Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip in 2005 and the evacuation of some 8,000 Israelis. Shortly thereafter Hamas took control of the territory and launched attacks against Israel to which Israel responded by intermittent campaigns. The class will culminate with an examination of the current war, its unfolding and possible scenarios in its aftermath.

Ian Bickerton and Carl Klausner, *A History*, 423-425, 428-433, 435-438, 473-474
Menachem Klein, "Hamas in Power", *Middle East Journal*, 61, no. 3 (Summer 2007), pp. 442-459.
Jonathan Spyer, *The Transforming Fire: The Rise of the Israel-Islamist Conflict* (Continuum, 2010).

25th February - Session 8: Introduction to International Law and International Humanitarian Law and the Events of 7 October 2023

To properly understand the international legal framework which governs the hostilities between Israel and organised armed groups in the Gaza Strip, it is necessary to take a step back and understand the nature of international law generally, as well as that of international humanitarian law (IHL, also known as the law of armed conflict and the laws of war). We shall also discuss some of Hamas' and other organised armed groups' violations of international law on 7 October 2023.

Sir Robert Jennings and Sir Arthur Watts (eds), *Oppenheim's International Law* (9th edn, Longmans 1992) vol 1, 3-22

Christopher Greenwood, 'Sources of International Law: An Introduction'

https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ls/greenwood_outline.pdf

Robert Kolb, *Advanced Introduction to International Humanitarian Law* (Elgar 2014) ch 1

[Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field](#) (adopted 12 August 1949, entered into force 21 October 1950) 75 UNTS 31 [please focus on Article 3]

[Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua \(Nicaragua v United States\) \(Merits\) \[1986\] ICJ Rep 14](#), paras 218-219

3rd March - Session 9: The Conduct of Hostilities under IHL

Much of the discussion regarding the present hostilities, in academic and other circles, has focused on compliance with the rules governing the conduct of hostilities under IHL. Key words and catch-phrases include “distinction”, “proportionality” and “war crimes”. It is thus necessary to consider what these concepts actually entail. This will also provide important background for assessing claims of “genocide”.

[International Convention on the Laws and Customs of War](#) (adopted 18 October 1907, entered into force 26 January 1910) [1910] 9 UKTS 119 (Hague Convention IV) [please focus on Article 23 of the annexed Regulations]

[Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts \(Protocol I\)](#) (adopted 8 June 1977, entered into force 7 December 1978) 1125 UNTS 3 [please focus on Articles 13, 48, 49, 51, 52, 57, 58]

Dieter Fleck, ‘Methods of Combat’ in Dieter Fleck (ed), *The Handbook of International Humanitarian Law* (4th edn, OUP 2021) 170, 170-190, 198-220

[Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) (adopted 9 December 1948, entered into force 12 January 1951) 78 UNTS 277 (UNTS) [please focus on Articles I, II, III]

[Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide \(Croatia v Serbia\) \[2015\] ICJ Rep 3](#), paras 463-475

[Further reading: Ian Henderson, *The Contemporary Law of Targeting* (Nijhoff 2009) chs 3, 4, 7, 8]

10th March - Session 10: Occupation and Humanitarian Assistance

Much has been said since 7 October 2023 about humanitarian relief entering into the Gaza Strip. The extent of Israel’s obligations regarding humanitarian relief depends on whether it is an “occupying power” in the Gaza Strip. Indeed, to the extent the obligations of an occupying power apply, it would be difficult to accept that Israel has been adhering these obligations. Yet, Israel’s official position is that since the Disengagement in 2005, the Gaza Strip is not subject to its belligerent occupation. Even if Israel is not an occupying power, it would nevertheless have obligations under international law to allow and facilitate humanitarian relief, though such obligations are subject to significant caveats. The purpose of this session will be to consider these issues.

[International Convention on the Laws and Customs of War](#) (adopted 18 October 1907, entered into force 26 January 1910) [1910] 9 UKTS 119 (Hague Convention IV) [please focus on Articles 42 and 43 of the annexed Regulations]

[Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War](#) (adopted 12 August 1949, entered into force 21 October 1950) 75 UNTS 287 [please focus on Articles 23, 55 and 59]

[Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts \(Protocol I\)](#) (adopted 8 June 1977, entered into force 7 December 1978) 1125 UNTS 3 [please focus on Articles 68-70]

ICRC Commentary on the Third Geneva Convention (CUP 2021) paras 335-347 [available open access here: https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gcii-1949/article-2/commentary/2020#_Toc42429671]

Yuval Shany and Amichai Cohen, ‘International Law “Made in Israel” v. International Law “Made for Israel”’ (*Articles of War*, 22 November 2023) <<https://lieber.westpoint.edu/international-law-made-in-israel-international-law-made-for-israel/>> [please focus on introduction and the section titled “The Occupation of Gaza”]

Ori Pomson, *The Obligation to Allow and Facilitate Humanitarian Relief* (*Articles of War*, 7 November 2023) <<https://lieber.westpoint.edu/obligation-allow-facilitate-humanitarian-relief/>>

Marina Sharpe, ‘Humanitarian Access to Gaza’ (*EJIL: Talk!*, 20 November 2023) <<https://www.ejiltalk.org/humanitarian-access-to-gaza/>>

17th March - Session 11: The war of images on and after October 7

Focusing on the use of images in the October 7 assault, the Israeli policy of collecting and presenting visible evidence, the use and misuse of pictures, psychological terror through videos, the role of social media, the danger of AI generated imagery and more.

31st March - Session 12: From TikTok Intifada to Hashtag Wars - Social Media as a Conflict Zone

The role of TikTok on the 2021 Gaza conflict and in the current war, cultural (mis-)appropriation, TT as Information source, negotiating national identity, trends and challenges, antisemitism and misinformation, conspiracy theories and the empowerment of marginalised voices.

7th April - Session 13: Mediating Loss and Trauma - Processing October 7 in (digital) Media

Attempts to use (new) media platforms to preserve and make accessible the voices of survivors, victims, and hostages from Instagram accounts to digital maps and repositories and TV documentaries.

14th April – Session 14: Final Session: TBD