



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 Emergence of the Modern State of Israel (48775)

Dr. David Mendelsson

david.mendelsson@mail.huji.ac.il

<https://huji.zoom.us/j/6046323394>

June 29-July 22, 2026

60 Academic Hours, 4 Academic Credits

Tentative syllabus

Course Description

This course will begin with an examination of the Zionist idea, its common denominators, and variegated factions. Due consideration will be given to the late-nineteenth century European context in order to appreciate the socio-economic, political and cultural factors that impacted on the Zionist movement. The course will explore how competing visions for the Jewish state responded to the realities of Palestine, its local Arab population, Ottoman rulers and the existing Jewish population. During and following the First World War a new set of circumstances emerged for the Arab and Jewish populations. Empires were awarded Mandates with a view to granting self-determination to Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. The course will examine the various British attempts to restore law and order and placate the ambitions of the Arab national movement whilst simultaneously not giving the appearance of abandoning its commitments to the Zionist movement. Why in 1939 did Britain withdraw from partition and recommend serious limitations on Jewish immigration and land purchase as well as the establishment of a single Palestine state? Students will learn of the first Arab-Israeli war, the refugee crisis and the Rhodes armistice agreements. Students will be introduced to the writings of the New Historians.

The course will then turn its attention to internal and external dilemmas that faced and indeed continue to face the Israeli state. We will examine religious-secular tensions, the schism along Jewish ethnic lines, and the state – minority relations between Israel and its Arab national minority. Our final day will examine the constitutional crisis facing Israel as an expression of deep internal schisms.

The various expressions of the Israel-Arab conflict will be given due consideration as well as the efforts at peace making, particularly those with Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians.

Classes take the form of lectures, discussion based on assigned readings and on-site visits.

Course Requirements

1. Preparation of bibliography for class discussion.
2. Participation in field study trips.
3. Participation grade (10 % of final grade)
4. Three short essay assignments (45 % of final grade). Each assignment should be three pages in length, double spaced. For description and submission dates see below.
5. Final take home exam (45 % of final grade)

Earning graduate credits for this course

- o Graduate students are expected to inform the Rothberg International School at rissummer@savion.huji.ac.il of their interest in earning graduate credits for their summer course(s).
- o Graduate students must complete a 25-page, double-spaced, seminar paper with a bibliography, instead of the course's standard final assessment. The students will discuss this paper in class. The topic and bibliography for these papers must be chosen in agreement with each course instructor. Students must approach course instructors by the end of the first week of the course and arrange a time to meet and define their paper topic and bibliography.
- o The seminar paper must make use of at least five scholarly sources (books or academic articles), in addition to Internet resources.
- o The graduate seminar papers must be submitted within 2 months following the course completion.

List of Key Books

READING LIST

Hertzberg, Arthur, ed., *The Zionist Idea* (Philadelphia: 1959). **Overseas Library 933.609 H576; E-BOOK**; (hereafter Hertzberg)

Kaplan, Jonathan, ed., *The Zionist Movement*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: 1983). **Overseas Library 933.608 K17** (hereafter, Kaplan I and II)

Laqueur, Walter and Rubin, Barry, eds., *The Israel-Arab Reader*, 7th rev. and updated ed. (Penguin, New York: 2008). **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317** (hereafter, Laqueur and Rubin)

Morris, Benny, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001* (New York, Vintage, 2001) **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

Rabinovich, Itamar and Reinhartz, Jehuda, eds., *Israel in the Middle East* (Brandeis, Hanover: 2008). **Overseas Library E990(029) R116** (hereafter Rabinovich and Reinhartz)

Shapira, Anita, *Israel: A History* (Brandeis, Hanover 2012) **Overseas Library E9 S529; E-BOOK**

Course Outline

(* denotes required reading)

Session 1: Introduction: Zionism in its Historical Context and the Common Denominators of the Zionist Idea.

Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982). Introduction. **Overseas Library 933.609 A958; ERESERVE**

Gideon Shimoni, "Ideological Perspectives," in Moshe Davis, ed., *Zionism in Transition* (New York: 1980): 3-42 **Overseas Library 933.632 D263; ERESERVE**

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* (Atheneum, New York 1973) pp. 15-100, **Overseas Library 933.60 H576; E-BOOK**

Session 2: First Waves of Immigration/Herzl and the Rise of Political Zionism

*Shapira, *Israel* pp. 27-42. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

or Morris B, pp. 37-59. **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

* Hertzberg, pp. 204-226 (Herzl) **Overseas Library 933.609 H576; E-BOOK**

Session 3: Zionism as a Secular Jewish Identity

*Hertzberg, pp. 256-260 (Ahad Ha'am), 293-295 (Berdyczewski), 390-395, (Katznelson) 411-414 (Pines). **Overseas Library 933.609 H576; E-BOOK**

Anita Shapira, 'The Image of the New Jew in Yishuv Society,' in (ed.) Israel Gutman, *Major Changes within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1996) pp. 427-442. **Overseas Library 933.47 (08) G984; E-BOOK**

Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover and London: 1995), pp. 269-305. **Overseas Library 933.609 S556; ERESERVE**

Distribution of First Assignment: Herzl, Ahad Ha'am and the Integrationists

Session 4: The Yishuv during World War I, Promises, Promises, the Mandate and Churchill White Paper

*Letter from Sir Henry McMahon to the Sharif Hussain, 24.10.1915 in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 11-12, Sykes-Picot Agreement, Laqueur and Rubin, p. 13-16, **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE**

* Balfour Declaration in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 16. **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE**

* The Mandate for Palestine in Hurewitz, pp. 106-111; **ME327(08) H963; ERESERVE** Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 30-36; **E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE** Friesel, pp. 38-46; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912** Kaplan II, pp. 101-109. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17**

* Churchill Memorandum in Hurewitz, pp. 103-106; **Overseas Library ME327(08) H963; ERESERVE** Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 25-29; **E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE** Friesel, pp. 24-29; **933.608 F912; ERESERVE** Kaplan II, pp. 113-118. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE**

Benny Morris, pp. 67- 106, **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 42-64. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

*Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, ch. 7, "The Formation of Palestinian Identity, 1917-1923," pp. 145-175. **Overseas Library E320.9(A) K45; E-BOOK**

Session 5: Developments 1929-1931 and the Arab Question in Zionist Thought

*Passfield White Paper in Friesel, pp. 104-115; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912 Kaplan II, pp. 144-155. Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE**

* MacDonald Letter in Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 36-41; **ERESERVE**

Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317 Friesel, pp. 117-124; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912; ERESERVE** Kaplan II, pp. 156-163. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17**

*Kaplan I, pp. 319-322 (Jabotinsky), 327-333 (Ben Gurion), 333-340 (Buber). **Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE (p. 318-323, 327-340)**

B. Morris, pp. 111-128. **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

Field Trip to Tel-Aviv

Session 6: The Partition Plan and the MacDonald White Paper

* Selection from the Peel Commission Report in Friesel, pp.125-146; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912; ERESERVE Kaplan II, pp. 164-182, Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE** Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 41-43. **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE**

* The MacDonald White Paper in Hurewitz, pp. 218-226; **Overseas Library ME327(08) H963; ERESERVE** Laqueur, pp. 44-50, **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE** Friesel, 163-174; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912; ERESERVE** Kaplan II, pp. 193-204. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE**

Cohen, Michael., *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate*, pp. 10-49, 66-87. **Overseas Library E97 C678; ERESERVE (p. 10-49)**

B. Morris, pp.138-160. **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

Session 7: Developments during World War II/The Struggle for the State

* Cohen, *Origins* Map, 1937 Partition Plan, p. 94, 1947 UN Partition Plan p. 128, Cease-Fire lines p. 129. **Overseas Library E327.56 C678; ERESERVE; Moodle**

Biltmore Program in Hurewitz, pp. 234-235; **Overseas Library ME327(08) H963; ERESERVE** Laqueur, pp. 77-79; **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; Friesel, pp. 186-187; Overseas Library 933.608 F912; ERESERVE** Kaplan II, pp. 55-56. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17; ERESERVE**

* Selections from UN General Assembly Resolution 181 in Friesel, pp. 265-274; **Overseas Library 933.608 F912; ERESERVE** Kaplan, pp. 231-240. **Overseas Library 933.608 K17** Laqueur, 65-77, **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE** Rabinovich and Reinhartz, pp. 61-63. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

* Evyatar Friesel, 'The Holocaust and the Birth of Israel,' *The Wiener Library Bulletin* vol. 32, nos. 49/50, 1979. **Overseas library 933.47(08) G984** (in Major Changes within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust, pp. 519-544)

* Michael J. Cohen, "Why Britain Left: the end of the Mandate," *The Wiener Library Bulletin* 31 (45/46) (1978): 74-86. **ERESERVE**

B. Morris, pp.161-191. **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

Distribution of Second Assignment: Compare and contrast two Zionist thinkers and their approach towards the Arabs of Palestine.

Session 8: The 1948 War and its Aftermath

* UN General Assembly Resolution 194, Rabinovich and Reinhartz, pp. 89-92. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

Israel-Egypt Armistice in Hurewitz, pp. 299-304. **Overseas Library ME327(08) H963; ERESERVE**

*Benny Morris, "The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem," in Laurence J. Silberstein, ed., *New Perspectives on Israeli History* (New York: 1991): 42-56 **Overseas Library E320.17 S582; ERESERVE**

Morris, Righteous, pp. 191-249. **Overseas Library E327.56 M875; E-BOOK**

*Ari Shavit, *My Promise Land* (Spiegel and Grau NY 2013) pp. 99-134. **E-BOOK**

Shapira, *Israel*, pp. 155-178. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

Session 9: Mass Migration and the Emergence of the Ethnic Schism in Israel

* The Development Town, pp. 158-164, Social and Ethnic Tensions in Wadi Salib pp. 164-167, The Black Panthers pp. 234-237, Rabinovich and Reinhartz. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

*Picard, Avi. "Building the Country or Rescuing the People: Ben Gurion's Attitude Towards Mass Jewish Immigration to Israel in the mid-1950s." *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, no. 3 (May 2018): 382-399. **EJOURNAL**

*Sammy Smooha, , "The Jewish Ethnic Divide and Ethnic Politics in Israel." *The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society*, 2021, 95–210. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edsram&AN=edsram.997010305570605171&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 222-247. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

Session 10: Religion and State

*The Status-Quo Agreement, pp. 58-59, **Moodle**, The Proclamation of the State of Israel p. 72-74. The Law of Return, p. 102-3, The Debate on a Constitution pp. 96-102, Jewish Religion and Israeli Nationality: The Brother Daniel Case, pp. 172-174. Ne'eman Commission, Report on the Conversion Law, pp. 463-468, Rabinovich and Reinhartz. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

Eliezer Don-Yehiya, 'Orthodox Jewry in Israel and North America,' *Israel Studies*, vol. 10 no. 1, spring 2005, 157-187. **E-JOURNAL**

Distribution of Third Assignment

Field Trip to Mount Herzl

*Maoz Azaryahu, 'Mount Herzl: The Creation of Israel's National Cemetery,' *Israel Studies*, vol. 1 no. 2, Summer 1996, 46-74. (ERESERVE)

Session 11: The *Haredim* in Israel

Either:

Menachem Friedman, "The Ultra-Orthodox in Israeli Society," in Kyle, Keith and Peters, Joel, eds., *Whither Israel? The Domestic Challenges* (London and New York: 1993).. pp. 177-201. **Overseas Library E320.9 K99; ERESERVE**

Or:

Samuel Heilman, *Defenders of the Faith: Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry* (Shoken, New York, 1992) pp. 11-39. **Overseas Library E296.682 H466; ERESERVE**

Yoel Finkelman, 'The Ambivalent Haredi Jew,' *Israel Studies* Vol. 19, 2 (summer 2014) 264-293.**EJOURNAL**

Session 12: The Six Day War and its Aftermath

* The Khartoum Resolutions in Rabinovich and Reinhartz, p.241-2. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

UN Security Council Resolution 242 in Rabinovich and Reinhartz, pp. 242-243; **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE** Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 365-366. **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE**

* The Palestinian National Covenant in Laqueur and Rubin, pp.366-371; **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317** Rabinovich and Reinhartz, pp. 243-246. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

* Allon Plan in Rabinovich and Reinhartz, p. 257. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

Shapira, *Israel* pp.295-306, 307-325. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

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

Session 13: The *Yom Kippur* War, *Gush Emunim*, and Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty

The Turning Point in the Yom Kippur, pp. 265-269, The Yom Kippur War, pp. 269-276,

Agranat Commission pp. 278-284. UN Security Council 338, p.331, Egyptian- Israeli Disengagement, pp. 337-340, Rabinovich and Reinharz **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 326-354. 357-390, 391-422. **Overseas Library E9 S529; EBOOK**

*Gush Emunim, Opinion Paper, January 1978, Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 305-307. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

David Newman, 'From *Hitnachlut* to *Hitnatkut*: The Impact of *Gush Emunim* and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society,' *Israel Studies* vol. 10, 3, fall 2005, 192-224. **E-JOURNAL**

Session 14: The Begin Years 1977-1983

Weitz, Yechiam. "From Peace in the South to War in the North: Menachem Begin as Prime Minister, 1977–1983." *Israel Studies*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2014, pp. 145–165. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/israelstudies.19.1.145. **EJOURNAL**

Shapira, *Israel* pp. 357-390.

Session 15: Palestinian Arabs in Israel

Michael Milshtein, "The New Way": The Key to Understanding Ra'am's Strategy

From "Israeli Arabs" to "Israel's Palestinian Citizens," pp. 183-187. Orr Commission; Report on Clashes between the Security Forces and Israeli Citizens in October 2000, pp. 479-484, Rabinovich and Reinharz. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

*The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel* (2006)

Ellie Rekhess, The Arab Minority in Israel: Reconsidering the "1948 Paradigm". *Israel Studies*, 19(2), 187-217. (2014). doi:10.2979/israelstudies.19.2.187 **EJOURNAL**

Ahmed Tibi, "My Independence Day" *The Jerusalem Report* (Israel at 50), May 14, 1998. p. 170 **E-JOURNAL**

Session 16: Peace Process and Current Crisis

*Laqueur and Rubin, 6th ed., pp. 404-409 (Camp David Frameworks for Peace), 413-425 (Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles) 443-455, (Israel-PLO: Cairo Agreement - "Oslo I"). 502-522. **Overseas Library E327.56(08) L317; ERESERVE**

*Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ("Oslo II"). Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 502-505. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

*Israel and Palestinian Authority: Hebron Accords (January 15, 1997), pp. 522-523.

*Israel and Palestinian Authority: The Wye River Memorandum (October 23, 1998) pp. 529-534. Rabinovich and Reinharz, pp. 507-513. **Overseas Library E990(029) R116; ERESERVE**

On Gaza War (2015):

Shapira, *A History* pp. 422-467.

Session 18: Israeli Democracy in Crisis

Bibliography TBA

Students work on Take home test

Site Visits

The Urban Expression of the New Jew

Study Outing to Tel-Aviv

Depart 8:30am from Student Village.

Return by 6:00pm.

Walk along First Station through Neveh Tsedek to Rothschild Street for discussion on early Tel-Aviv, Visit Independence Hall, Lunch on Sheinkin Street, Visit Rabin Square, Reading poetry on the Tel-Aviv beach front.

Israel's Civil Religion: Then and Now

Study Outing to Mount Herzl

Depart 8:30am from Student Village.

Return 12:30pm.

(Students are recommended to go to *Yad Vashem* following the morning visit to Har Herzl).

NB: The program is subject to change.