Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:45-4:15, and by appointment
Office: 414 North Hall
Phone: 263-2280
Email: shelef@wisc.edu
TA: Peter Nasuti

Course Description
This course examines some of the issues currently facing Israeli society and the ongoing debates in Israeli politics. The course is organized into two parts. The first part establishes the historical and political background against which contemporary Israeli politics plays out. The second part of the course focuses on a number of crucial cleavages and debates within Israeli society – along political, religious, ethnic, and national lines. Although this course is not about the Arab-Israeli or Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, their influence on Israeli politics and society will be addressed.

Required Readings
Many of the required readings for this course are in the course reader, which is available at Bob’s Copy Shop at 616 University Avenue and at Learn@WU.

In addition, the following book is required for the course and is available at the University Bookstore and on reserve in College Library.

Grading Criteria
Final course grades will be assigned according to the following weights:
- Participation 10%
- Mid-term exam 30%
- Research paper 30%
- Comprehensive final exam 30%

Course Requirements
Students are required to attend all classes having read the assigned readings before each session. Though class time will primarily be devoted to lectures, questions are welcome and some time each week will be set aside for discussion.

You should also keep up on current events relating to Israel, including daily perusing of articles in the New York Times and, among others, in:
http://haaretz.com/
http://www.ynetnews.com
Research Paper
Students are also expected to write an original research paper of between 3000 and 3500 words. The paper provides you with the opportunity to pursue some analytical question about Israel that you are interested in. A good paper both informs and persuades; to do this it must be logically organized, clearly argued, and well documented. Avoid writing a paper that merely restates the readings or repeats the lectures. You need to do some original thinking, research, and analysis in this paper. Stay away from normative arguments or political polemics. The goal is to explain an aspect of Israeli politics or society rather than justify, apologize, castigate or assign blame for one thing or another. This is hard work. You are strongly encouraged to meet with the TA or the professor to discuss the progress of your paper throughout the class.

You are required to submit a paper proposal to the TA by November 5th. The proposal should be no more than one page long and include a discussion of the research question and at least five sources (not including any course material) that you plan on using in your research.

The papers are due by in class on December 13th. Late papers will be penalized half of one letter grade for every day they are late.


Style Counts! Spelling mistakes as well as errors of syntax and grammar are unacceptable. At best they are evidence of sloppy work. At worst they make your argument impossible to understand. While style does not replace substance, a poorly written or organized paper makes it difficult to get to your argument. I encourage you to consult the UW Writing Center’s “Writer’s Handbook” for more information about style, organization and references. http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/index.html

There are also a number of excellent guides on the web that I encourage you to consult about how you could go about writing an analytical research paper. Some good sites include:

- How to Research a Political Science Paper, by Peter Liberman: http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political_Science/researching.html
- Writing Political Science Papers: Some Useful Guidelines, by Peter Liberman,: http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political_Science/tips.html
- An accurate summary of some things not to do, which (unfortunately) students commonly do, can be found at Advice on How to Write a Bad Paper.

Here is a rough explanation of how we will be evaluating the papers:
A: This is an outstanding paper. It is well organized around a clear and insightful argument that is logically organized and well-supported with evidence from the historical record and the scholarly literature. The paper considers alternative arguments, deals with countervailing evidence, and weighs their relative merits. It also convincingly shows that its main argument is
better/more complete than the alternatives. This paper also shows how and why the question it
pursues and the answer it offers are significant and important. There are few (or no) spelling or
proofreading problems and the paper is well and appropriately documented.

AB: High quality in terms of style and content. The paper has a clear thesis statement, good
organization and supporting evidence. It shows a solid grasp of the issues at stake and is well
written. This paper shows evidence of original thought and planning. While it makes some
reference to the scholarly literature it does not fully engage it.

B: The paper shows a decent understanding of the phenomenon and the overall argument is
relatively clear although it may tend more toward summary than analysis. While the wider
literature is acknowledged, the paper does not add its own insights. However, there may be
significant grammatical and syntax errors, organizational problems, and the references to the
literature may be perhaps a bit narrow, superficial or insufficient.

BC: The paper conforms to some of the requirements, but falls short on many, or is seriously
marred by crucial shortcomings, including, but not limited to, poor organization, poor grammar
or a poor understanding of the question. While there is some attempt to deal with the question,
the argument is unclear and/or it is not adequately supported by appropriate evidence. There is
little attempt to anchor the argument in the literature on the topic.

C: The paper attempts to pose and answer a question but does not actually do so. In other words,
it has no argument. It may also be plagued by, among other problems, poor organization, poor
writing, over-generality, lack of evidence or its inappropriate, selective or partial use.

F: The paper does not meet the requirements of the assignment and/or is so poorly written as to
be unintelligible or has plagiarized from a published text or another student. Note also that an
adequate paper that is not on an appropriate topic also falls within this realm

We will take into consideration papers whose final version shows significant improvement over
erlier drafts. (Note, to take advantage of this you have to complete drafts of your paper early
enough to get feedback. In other words, don’t wait until the last moment to start your paper.)

**Academic Conduct**

This class is geared to maximize our joint exploration of important topics in Israeli history,
society and politics. Serious scholarly discussion becomes impossible when diatribe and
invective displace scholarly analysis. As a result, when posing questions or responding to others,
students are expected to demonstrate an appropriate level of respect despite what might be deep
disagreements.

The research paper requires you to cite other people’s work. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated!** If
you are caught turning in work that is not your own or using another author’s work without
properly citing it, you will receive an F on the assignment. If you have any questions about what
constituted academic dishonesty, please consult the Dean of Students Web page, at
[http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html)
COURSE SCHEDULE

* indicates reading is in the course reader.

**September 4: Course overview**

**September 6: Why study Israel?**

Part I: Ideological, historical, and political background

**September 11-13: The origins of Zionism**

**September 18: No class**

**September 20: Labor Zionism**

**September 25: No class**

**September 27: Labor Zionism continued**

**October 2: Revisionist Zionism**
Arian, *Politics in Israel*, 139-150
Jabotinsky, Vladimir (Ze’ev). “The Iron Wall,” and “The Ethics of the Iron Wall” (13)

October 4: Religious Zionism
Arian, Politics in Israel, 150-157.

October 9-16: From Mandate to statehood- the creation of political institutions, a Jewish society, and the birth of the state
Arian, Politics in Israel, 19-36, 364-376.
Migdal, Joel. Through the Lens of Israel, pp. 51-79.*

October 18: Mid-term

Part II: Major social and political cleavages in Israeli society

October 23-25: The Knesset, party systems and state institutions
Arian, Politics in Israel, 202-312, (skim 282-298), 313-324

October 30: Israeli Political Economy
Arian, Politics in Israel, 58-82

November 5th: One page paper proposals due

November 1-6: Hawks and Doves
Arian, Politics in Israel, 42-7.
Dowty, The Jewish State, ch.10, pp. 216-248.*


**November 8-13: Palestinians in Israel**


The Haifa Declaration*


**November 15-20: The religious-secular divide**


**November 22: No class: Thanksgiving break**

**November 27-29: The Jewish ethnic divide**


**December 4-11: National Security and past and future peace processes**


Texts of Camp David Accords and Oslo Agreements*


**December 13: Papers due in class and review**

**Final Exam: December 18th, 5:05PM-7:05PM**