

Israeli Politics

Spring 2022

Days:

Dr. Avi Shilon

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Jewish Studies

avraham.shilon@rutgers.edu

Student Hours: Monday 12-13 or by appointment or Zoom

Course description:

This course invites the students into a journey to Israeli politics and by introducing the creation of the Israeli democracy, the main political debates, different ideological visions, and the main cleavages and demographic divisions that have driven Israeli society from 1948 through the present days.

The students will learn about the main political events in Israel history with respect to military and diplomatic issues, different groups and parties – among them, Ultra-Orthodox (Haredim), Palestinian citizens of Israel, Religious Zionist, Jewish settlers, Ashkenazi vs Mizrahi/Sephardic Jews – which create the fabric of Israel society from its formative years to the current era.

With an eye open to current developments, the course will also discuss new trends in Israeli politics.

In addition to the reading of articles and primary sources, the students will watch and review films about Israeli politics and culture. At the end of the course the students will gain a better understanding of Israeli politics and its complexities.

What are the things you will be able to do at the end of the course?

By the end of the course students will (1) have a deep understanding of Israel's complex and fragmented politics.

2 Will be able to understand and analyzed historical and currents political events and core issues (Israel's political system, the upheaval of 1977, religion-state dynamics, etc.)

3. Be able to discuss and write intelligently about Israel's politics, history, and current affairs.

My Short Bio

I am a historian and political scientist. I was post-Doctoral fellow at New York University, The Taub Center for Israel Studies, and at Tsinghua University, Beijing (2015-2017) and I'm currently a visiting assistant prof. at NYU. My dissertation focused on *The Revisionist Movement Leaders' Attitudes Toward Jewish religion, 1925-2005*. My first book, "Menachem Begin: A Life", was published by Yale University press on 2012. My second book, "Ben Gurion: His Later Years in the Political Wilderness", explores the founding father's world-view after his

retirement (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). My new book, “The Decline of the Left Wing in Israel”, was published on 2020 by I.B.Tauris. I also write op-ed columns for *Haaretz* newspaper.

Do you need any materials for this class?

No! all the reading will be uploaded and send to the students

How are we going to study?

We will meet twice a week. We are going to discuss the reading, and to analyze primary sources. From time to time the students will be needed to present one of the readings, and we are also going to watch films about Israeli politics and leaders.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive on time. Students must complete all assigned readings before the class meeting and be prepared to participate actively in discussions of the readings and current events.

Short Presentation

Each class, one of the students will be asked to present the essence of one the readings in an informal fashion for no more than 5-8 minutes. The presentations are designed to assist students with the reading assignments.

2 Critical Response Papers

During the course the students are required to submit 2 critical papers. In each paper the students are supposed to choose one of the weekly reading or film, and write a short critical analysis of the contents, arguments, and weaknesses of the readings/films. Each paper should be no more than 2 pages (double-space).

Final paper

In the final paper the students are required to write about one of the major issues of Israel politics. The students should demonstrate their ability to analyze the case study, and to utilize academic sources (including media, surveys, and any other primary and secondary materials) to substantiate their arguments. It is important that students make critical discussion and bring their own voices and conclusions to their paper. The paper should be between 6-8 pages (double-space).

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class Participation	10%
Weekly presentation	20%
Critical Response Papers	20%
Final paper	50%

How can I get in touch with the professor?

Very easy. I will be happy to communicate with you via email and will do my best to respond as soon as possible. We can also set up a time to meet in person or via zoom.

A note about academic integrity

All students are expected to know, understand, and abide by the Academic Integrity Policy. These short and engaging videos will help explain the policy, the difference between the types of violations, and possible sanctions for students found responsible for violating the policy. In addition, students will be introduced to the Honor Pledge which asks students to verify that they have not received or provided unauthorized assistance on an assignment or examination.

- [Violation Types](#)
- [Violation Levels and Outcomes](#)

Creating a Safe Learning Environment

Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more information about your options at Rutgers, please visit endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu

What if I need some support as a student?

If you are having personal or other problems, there are many options at Rutgers for assistance.

- When you don't know where to start looking for assistance, contact the [Dean of Students](#) office.
- If you are in need of mental health services, please contact Rutgers Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>
- If you need some temporary guidance, there is "Lets Talk" – which is a CAPS service offering drop-in hours at several locations across campus. No appointment is necessary. <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counselingservices/counseling/therapy/community-based-counseling/#runbhc>
- If you are in need of physical health services due to illness, please reach out to the Rutgers Health Services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>
- If you do not have enough food, there is a Food Pantry on College Ave campus that is exclusively for Rutgers Students: <http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/>
- If you need accommodation for a disability, obtain a Letter of Accommodation from the Office of Disability Services that provides student-centered and inclusive services: <https://ods.rutgers.edu>
- If you are a military veteran or are on active military duty, you can obtain support through the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services: <http://veterans.rutgers.edu/>
- If you are in need of legal services, please visit <http://rusls.rutgers.edu/>
- If you are in need of additional academic assistance, please contact the Rutgers University-New Brunswick Learning Center: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>
- If you or somebody you know has been victimized by a crime or interpersonal violence (e.g., stalking, sexual assault), support is available at the Rutgers Office for Violence Prevention and Victim assistance: <http://vpva.rutgers.edu>

Course content

Week 1

1. The creation of a Jewish State

Maor, Moshe. (2009). 'The History of Zionism,' in: Mitchell G. Bard and David Nachmias (eds.) *Israel Studies: An Anthology*, E-Book, available at:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/isdf/text/anthologytoc.html>

Anita Shapira, *Israel -A History*, Brandeis University Press, 2012, pp 179-207

Primary texts: "Proclamation of Independence"
http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm

2. Mizrahim and Ashkenazim: Mass Immigration and its influence on Israeli Politics

Shapira, *Israel – A History*, pp 222-243

Mizrachi, Nissim. "Sociology in the garden: Beyond the liberal grammar of contemporary sociology." *Israel Studies Review* 31.1 (2016): 36-65

Chetrit, Sami Shalom. "Mizrahi politics in Israel: Between integration and alternative." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29.4 (2000): 51-65

Ester Meir-Glitzenstein (2002) Our Dowry: Identity and Memory among Iraqi Immigrants in Israel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 38:2, 165-186,

3 Israel's relations with Diaspora Jewry in its formative years

Liebman, C, "Diaspora Influence on Israel: The Ben-Gurion/Blaustein 'Exchange' and Its Aftermath," *Jewish Social Studies*, 36(1): 271-280, 1974

Urofsky, M, "American Jewry and Israel: The First Decade and Its Implications for Today," in Lucas & Troen *Israel's First Decade*, chapt. 33)

Primary text: Ben Gurion Clarifies Relations Between Israel and American Jewry," *JTA* (October 11, 1951).

4. The Holocaust in Israeli Political Culture

Lustick, Ian S. "The Holocaust in Israeli Political Culture: Four Constructions and Their Consequences: Editor's Note: This Article Is Followed by Four Comments and a Response by Ian Lustick." *Contemporary Jewry* 37, no. 1 (2017): 125-70.

Yablonka, H. "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Israel: the Nuremberg, Kapos, Kastner and Eichmann Trials," *Israel Studies*, Vol 8, no. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 1-24.

Primary text: Menachem Begin on Whether to Accept Reparations from Germany (The Knesset, 7 January 1952)

5. The Arab citizens of Israel

Zaki Shalom "Strategy in Debate: Arab Infiltration and Israeli Retaliation Policy in the Early 1950s," *Israel Affairs*, 8(3):104-117, 2002)

Peretz, D. Early State Policy Towards the Arab Population, 1948-1955. *New Perspectives on Israeli History*, 1991 82-102.

Rekness, Eli. "The Evolution of the Arab-Palestinian National Minority in Israel," *Israel Studies Review*, 2007, 12(3): 1-28,

Primary text: David Ben-Gurion: Telegram to U.S. State Department on Refugee Issue (January 22, 1963)

6. Mizrahi Protest Movements: From Wadi Salib to the Black Panthers

Roby, Bryan K. *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel's Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle 1948-1966*. Syracuse University Press, 2015. Pp 1-19 and 137-170

Zvi Ben Dor, "Invisible Exile: Iraqi Jews in Israel", *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Crossroads*, 3: 1, 2006, pp. 116-135

Yaron Tsur, "Carnival Fears: Moroccan Immigrants and the Ethnic Problem in the Young State of Israel," *Journal of Israeli History*, 18(1): 73-104, 1997

7. The role of the Supreme Court and the "Americanization" of Israeli Politics

Barak, Aharon (1998). "The Role of the Supreme Court in a Democracy," *Israel Studies* 3(2): 6-28.

Aronoff, Myron J. "The Americanization" of Israeli politics: Political and cultural change." *Israel Studies* 5.1 (2000): 92-127

8. Jewish and Democratic or Ethnic Democracy?

Yakobson, Alexander (2008). "Jewish Peoplehood and the Jewish State, How Unique? – A Comparative Survey". *Israel Studies* 13(2): 1-27.

Smooha, Sammy (2002). "The Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State". *Nations and Nationalism*. 8, 4: 475-503

9. Film: "Golda"

10. The Israeli Parliament and the absent of constitution

Chazan, Naomi (2005). "The Knesset", *Israel Affairs*, 11:2, 392-416

Rozin, Orit. "Forming a collective Identity: The Debate over the Proposed constitution, 1948–1950." *Journal of Israeli History* 26.2 (2007): 251-271

10. The rise of the Right-Wing

Colin Shindler, From Left to Right, *Israel Studies Review*, Fall 2018, pp. 61-67

Shilon, Avi. "1977: The *Mahapakh*: Its Causes and Implications for Contemporary Israeli Politics." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 108, no. 4 (2018): 545-550.

Goldstein, Amir. "Crisis and Development: Menachem Begin's Leadership Throughout the 1960s." *Israel Studies* 20.1 (2015): 110-133.

11. Film: "Begin"

12 The politics of radicalism from Left and Right

Michael Feige, "Jewish Ideological Killers: Religious Fundamentalism or Ethnic Marginality?" In *Contemporary Israel: New Insights and Scholarship*, NYU Press, 2016, pp 166-92.

Fiedler, Lutz. (2017) "Israel in Revolution—Matzpen, the Palestine Conflict, and the Hebrew Nation." *Israel Studies* 22, no. 3 153-176.

Lorenzo, Veracini The other shift: Settler colonialism, Israel, and the occupation, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2013, pp 26-42.

13 The Neo-Liberal turn and the challenge of the ultra-orthodox community (Haredim)

Arie Krampf, "Israel's neoliberal turn and its national security paradigm", *Polish Political Science Yearbook*, 2018, pp 227-241.

Gilad Malach, Lee Chaner, 2019 Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel, *The Israel Democracy Institute*, pp 1-16

14 conclusions

