

# **Israeli Politics**

Rutgers University – New Brunswick  
Department of Political Science  
Fridays 11:30am – 2:30pm  
Scott Hall Room 206

Instructor: Geoffrey Levin  
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Office Hours: Fridays, Upon Request

## **Course Description:**

In proportion to its size, Israel is perhaps the most discussed and debated country in the world. Yet despite the global focus on Israel, few onlookers actually have a strong understanding of Israel's complex and fragmented political system.

This course will help you gain such an understanding by introducing you to the many political institutions, ideological visions, and demographic divisions that have driven Israeli politics from 1948 through the present day. While the course will familiarize you with many of the specifics of Israel – a Jewish state located in the Middle East – it also aims to give you a broader understanding of politics and how political institutions operate.

Politics is, in a basic sense, the interaction between people and governing institutions. As a result, a considerable focus will be on the political institutions and peoples of modern Israel. Institutions include state organs such as the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), the judiciary, the premiership, and the military, as well as intermediaries such as political parties and the ideologies that guide them. You will also learn about the many ways people in Israel define themselves – Druze Arabs, the ultra-Orthodox (Haredim), Palestinian Christian citizens of Israel, Ethiopian Jews, Religious Zionist Jewish settlers, African asylum seekers, Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi/Sephardic Jews, LGBT Israelis, Israeli Arab Muslims, and others, with a focus on how these groups identify politically and how they interact with the Israeli political system. With an eye to current developments, the course will also discuss many contemporary issues and debates in Israel ranging from Israeli foreign policy to economic issues and religious-secular debates.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the semester, students will...

1. Understand Israel's broad and diverse political spectrum, with an emphasis on political parties' positions on core issues (the peace process, religion-state dynamics, etc.).
2. Be able to discuss and write intelligently about Israel's political system and political institutions, particularly about their distinguishing traits.
3. Learn to read and engage critically with political texts, including ideological works, speeches, media articles, and op-eds regarding Israel.
4. Strengthen analytical writing skills by composing short essays and a research paper.
5. Develop their oral presentation skills through discussion, debates, and a simulation.

### **Course Requirements (out of 100 points):**

- 30 - **Three short response essays** (800-1000 words of text) to any set of assigned class readings that you choose. I will send a prompt each week. Each essay is 10 points. Due via email at 11:00am just prior to the class that covers the selected topic.

#### **What I look for when grading short response essays (each out of 10):**

- Does the essay take a clear position on the prompt question early in the essay, typically first paragraph, or second at the latest? (out of 1.5 points)
- Does the essay defend that position with solid evidence throughout the paper? (out of 2.5 points)
- Is the argument convincing? (out of 2 points)
- Is the paper well-organized into focused paragraphs that build the main case, without getting distracted by peripheral issues? (out of 2 points)
- Does the paper follow conventions of good writing, such as using proper grammar, mechanics, spelling and syntax? (out of 2 points)

- 20 - **Active and respectful participation in class, plus reading prep:**

Attendance/Participation (15 points): As you are expected to attend at least thirteen of the fourteen class meetings, you can receive up to one point for active participation each day you attend class (13 points total). Another 2 points can be earned by coming to class on time every week; students who are frequently tardy will have this grade reduced.

Reading Prep (5 points): Come to class with three handwritten observations, questions, or key term definitions based on the texts assigned (1-3 sentences each). I will check or collect these several times at random throughout the course. These, along with occasional in-class writing assignments, will be five points. Please write legibly.

- 20 - **Group Project: Israeli election campaign ad and coalition-building simulation**

- You will be assigned a political party based on your choices/rankings, which you will email me after request them.
- Two or three people will be in your group (assigned to the same party).
- Consult with your group members and online resources to decide which politicians in the assigned party you would like to be for the simulation (one must be the leader of the party). Gender of politicians does not matter. Please email me your choices.
- The due date/simulation date will be on Friday, April 21.

*Your project grade is divided into two parts with equal weight (10 points each):*

#### **A. Campaign ad – 2-5 minutes, for your party in the “April 21, 2017” elections**

- You can shoot it with your phone or using a real camera.
- Alternatively, you can animate or use video editing in different creative ways. Just be sure you are able to show it in class.

- If your group has problems with making a video, please contact me about the option of making a “radio ad” plus a visual component.
- Your grade is based on accuracy of your message, based on real party’s message (3 points), how convincing it is (2 points), creativity (2 points), demonstration of fairly-shared workload (2 points), professionalism of project quality (1 point).
- Also, submit one paragraph, separately, on how each member contributed to the project.

### **B. In-class presentation of platform (3 minutes) and coalition simulation**

- After we watch your ad, you have three more minutes to present and discuss your party’s platform. Up to two other students can ask questions, which your group should answer.
- After all groups finish, every student will vote (but cannot vote for his or her own party).
- I will tally the vote and tell you how many seats each party has.
- Party leaders will attempt to form a coalition.
- The coalition will present their shared platform and priorities. Notes are permitted.
- The opposition will present their main points of disagreement.
- Grades are based on accuracy of politicians’ message (2.5 points), how convincing it is (2.5 points), creativity (2.5 points), and oral presentation skills (2.5 points).

### 30 - **Final Paper: Well-Researched “Magazine” Article**

Imagine you have been asked to write a feature article for a major magazine based in the United States or Israel (like *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, the *Jerusalem Post*’s magazine, etc.) As with many magazine feature article, the required length is 3000 words of text. The editor expects you to pick an informative, interesting, and important topic to explore that is related to Israeli politics. Oddly, she/he has also asked you to include citations and a clear main argument that runs throughout the paper. These guidelines do not bother you, and you set forth on your task.

- Please email me an idea for your topic by Friday, March 24. Include a main question that you seek to answer/explore/discuss
- By Friday, April 7, you should email me an outline that includes your thesis at the topic and at least five sources you plan to use.
- By April 21 (the final class session) you must have completed at least 1000 words of your paper (more is better). Please bring it to class along with a revised outline. It will be a peer review session; you will review each other’s work and give feedback to each other on how to improve and complete the paper.
- Citations required, using a common format (MLA, APA, or Chicago); footnotes preferred, but in-text citations and endnotes are also accepted.
- If you have any questions about citations, refer to Rutgers’ writing center, the university plagiarism policy, or email me.
- Include page numbers.
- Be sure to include a title; subtitle is optional.
- You may have sections and subheadings, though this is not required.
- Email it to me at [gpl233@nyu.edu](mailto:gpl233@nyu.edu) as a Word document, with your last name as doc title
- The paper should be Times New Roman 12, and double-spaced

- 3000 words does not include title, footnotes, name, or headings. 3000 words should be around 12 pages, but this will vary based on the words you choose, of course.
- Due date is **Saturday, May 6** before midnight.

What I look for when grading research paper

1. Did the author choose a compelling yet properly-defined question/topic, and start with a thought-provoking title and introductory paragraph to lure readers in? (out of 3 points)
2. Does the author outline a question early in the paper and thoroughly explore the topic with evidence throughout the paper, ultimately coming to a convincing conclusion? (out of 12 points)
3. Does the author use an appropriate range of reliable sources and properly cite them? (out of 5 points)
4. Is the paper well-organized into focused paragraphs without getting distracted by peripheral issues? (out of 5 points)
5. Does the paper follow conventions of good writing, such as using proper grammar, mechanics, spelling and syntax (out of 5 points)

**Expectations:** Budget at least eight hours of course preparation each week. If you are having trouble understanding a concept or term, feel free to ask me or discuss with your fellow students. We are very fortunate to have the time and privilege to explore these important topics together, so please come to class fully prepared, having read and understood all of the assigned material. Remember to read critically – you are not expected to, nor should you, always accept the authors’ claims. Rather, you should *engage* with the texts and come to class prepared to explain what aspects of the authors’ arguments and assumptions you agree or disagree with and why.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism is a severe academic offence. Plagiarism consists of presenting the words or ideas of others as your own. All direct quotations and ideas must cite original sources. I read all of your work and have the ability to process it through computer software designed to detect plagiarism. Students who plagiarize may receive an F on the assignment – perhaps in the course – and will be reported to the dean. If you have any questions about what plagiarism consists of, or are having any trouble in the class, please contact me at [gpl233@nyu.edu](mailto:gpl233@nyu.edu). If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, it is much better to contact your instructor in advance and accept relatively small grade deductions (half a letter grade per day) than to risk failing the course due to plagiarism. For examples of the negative effects of plagiarism, see the careers of former Senator John Walsh (2014), presidential candidate Joe Biden (1987), and Melania Trump (2016).

**Computer Policy** – Computer use during lecture is discouraged but permitted. If you need a laptop or tablet, I highly recommend that you turn off the Wifi. If students frequently appear distracted by their computers, I may have to institute a no-electronics policy.

**Attendance:** Every absence after a students’ first will negatively participation grade (see above), as will frequent tardiness (more than ten minutes late more than twice).

**Course Structure:** Class runs from 11:30am to 2:30pm. There will generally be a 10-minute break around 1:00pm

**Office Hours:** Please email me if you would like to schedule a time before or after class to meet.

**Late Papers:** The grade of the assignment will be lowered by 10% for each day a paper is late.

**Books (Available on Amazon):**

- **Required:** Gregory Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of the Modern State* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). [\*\*THIRD EDITION\*\*](#)
- **Required:** Robert O. Freedman, ed., *Contemporary Israel: Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Security Challenges* (Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press, 2009).
- **Optional:** Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983). **Free Online (GoogleBooks)**
- **Optional:** Donna Rosenthal, *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (New York: Free Press, 2008).

All other readings will be available to you as PDFs or as links.

**Optional:** Consider following Israeli news sources such as [Haaretz](#), [The Jerusalem Post](#), [Ynet News](#), [972](#), [Al-Monitor's Israel Pulse](#), [Israel HaYom](#), [Fathom](#), [i24news](#), or [Times of Israel](#).

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## Weekly Readings

### Week 1 (1/20): Zionism, Nation-States, and the Creation of Israel

**Please read before first class:**

- Mahler's *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapters 1-2 (p. 13-77)

**Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will:

- Be introduced to each other, the syllabus, and course requirements.
- Be able to define key terms such as politics, political institutions, nationalism, and Zionism as well as basic facts about Israel's creation, Israel borders, and Israel's voters.
- Begin to contemplate various meanings of a "Jewish and Democratic State"

**In class:**

- **Introduction:** Students will introduce themselves and discuss what drew them to enroll in this course.
- **Lecture:** The lecture discusses the rise of nationalism as an ideological framework, the creation of the modern state system, and the birth of Zionism and Israel as major events in Jewish history.

- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Student will read “The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel” (May 14, 1948) in small groups and discuss using questions that help identify how concepts of nationalism, religion and ethnicity are used in the document. We will then discuss potential meanings of a “Jewish and Democratic State.”

## **Week 2 (1/27): Institutions - The Knesset, the Government, the Party System**

### **Reading before the second class:**

- Mahler’s *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapters 5-8 (p. 135-243)

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will:

- Be able to discuss the core components of Israel’s electoral system and the potential benefits and drawbacks of that system.
- Understand how and why various electoral reforms to the system were proposed and discussed, as well as who benefits or loses out from each reform.
- Strengthen debate and presentation skills through in-class activities.

### **In class:**

- **Lecture:** The lecture gives an overview of the “who” in Israeli politics – namely, Israel’s demographic breakdown, its geography, and its political parties. It offers a brief history of major parties and discusses different type of parties, how elections work, how coalitions are formed, how ministers are appointed, and so forth. Students learn how the premiership and presidency function, the basic laws, and how the Westminster model works.
- **Skills Lesson:** We will discuss what good presentation, debate, and participation in class consists of.
- **Debate:** There will be an in-class debate regarding potential political reforms. Students will randomly be divided into five small groups – parties a, b, c, d, and e, with each party set to advocate for a different reform. Reforms include raising and lowering the electoral threshold, reinstating direct election of the prime minister, creating electoral district for electing MKs, and a law granting the leader of the largest party the premiership automatically, which are all inspired by real, historic or contemporary reforms discussed in Israel. Each group will prepare the case for their own reform and their opposition to the others (because for this exercise, only one reform can be passed), and then each group will present and then debate.

## **Week 3 (2/3): From “Labor Zionism vs. Revisionist Zionism” to “Labor vs. Likud”**

### **Reading before the third class:**

- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 2, “The Israeli Right,” (p. 21-44)
- Efraim Inbar, “The Decline of the Labor Party,” *Israel Affairs* 2010, (p. 69-81)
- Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel*, Chapter 2, “Zionist-Socialism” and Chapter 3, “Revisionist Zionism as a Civil Religion.”

- Read for free on GoogleBooks:  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=GNViB08w5hgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=&as\\_pt=BOOKS&cd=1&source=gbs\\_api#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=GNViB08w5hgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=&as_pt=BOOKS&cd=1&source=gbs_api#v=onepage&q&f=false)

### Objectives:

By the end of this week, students will...

- Understand the historical development and ideologies of Israel's two major political parties, Labor and Likud.
- Learn how to write short analytical pieces
- Begin to critically engage with ideologies, political speeches/statements and media articles/news/opinion pieces.

### In class:

- **Lecture:** The lecture will discuss the goals of Zionism and two of Zionism's historically major streams – Labor Zionism and Revisionist Zionism, including the ideological roots of both, drawing in part from the concept of “civil religion.” The lecture will include a discussion of key thinkers and leaders as well as the many divisions within each movement.
- **Video:** We will watch a short 5-minute excerpt of the film “Avoda” (1935)
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Students will then be broken up into pairs and each pair will be given either excerpts of Jabotinsky's “Iron Wall” or texts from key Labor figures on mandate-era view on the so-called “Arab question.” Each pair will read, discuss, and the present their text(s) to a different pair of student with the other text. We will then turn to a class discussion.
- **Lecture:** After break, the second lecture will discuss how Mapai/Labor and Herut/Likud have fared/ruled since 1948, from Labor dominance through the present day. This will include a speech from Menachem Begin in 1981 related to Mizrahim.
- **Writing Workshop:** We will workshop an essay written by a student (identity kept anonymous); I will talk about what I look for and how I grade these papers.

## Week 4 (2/10): (Non)Orthodox(s) - Haredim, Religious Zionists, Seculars, & the Rabbinate

### Reading before the fourth class:

- Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapter 3, (p. 79-100)
- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 4, “Israel's Religious Parties,” (p. 77-96)
- Liebman and Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel* – Chapter 7, “The Responses of Traditional Religious Jews to Israeli Civil Religion” Read for free on GoogleBooks:  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=GNViB08w5hgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=&as\\_pt=BOOKS&cd=1&source=gbs\\_api#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=GNViB08w5hgC&printsec=frontcover&hl=&as_pt=BOOKS&cd=1&source=gbs_api#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Profile of Naftali Bennett: David Remnick, “The Party Faithful,” *The New Yorker*, 2013.  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/01/21/the-party-faithful>
- *Optional:* Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, Chapter 9, “The Haredim,” (p. 183-204) and Chapter 11 “The Non-Orthodox: War of the Cheeseburgers,” (p. 231-256)

## Objectives:

By the end of this week, students will...

- Understand the historical development of and differences between the Haredi and Religious Zionist sectors within Israel.
- Contemplate the role of religion in Israel and in Israeli politics, and what it means to be a “Jewish state.”
- Grapple with the multiple value sets at play when reenacting real Israeli debates regarding the role of religion in Israeli political life.

## In class:

- **Lecture:** The lecture will begin by discussing the origins and historical evolution of religion-state relations in Israel, as well as who supports and who objects to the current situation (the “status quo”).
- **Debate:** Students will then receive one of three issue descriptions – related to Haredim in the IDF, to Shabbat issues, and to gender segregation on buses. They will then be divided into six groups and prepare to debate one side of the issue assigned to them.
- **Lecture:** After break, the lecture will continue, discussing two Haredi political parties in Israel, United Torah Judaism and Shas.
- **Video:** We will see two Shas campaign ads, from 2013 and 2015, and analyze them both.
- **Lecture:** The lecture will conclude by discussing Religious Zionism, the “Daati Leumi” sector, and the parties that have represented them historically and presently.

## Week 5 (2/17): Mizrahi/Sephardi Jews

**Watch before the fifth class:** “Sallah Shabati” (1964) and YouTube Reflections on “Saadia”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5VTgOUUKQA>

## Reading before the fifth class:

- Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, Chapter 6, (p. 119-137)
- Yoav Peled. 1998. “Towards a Redefinition of Jewish Nationalism in Israel? The Enigma of Shas” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21: 703-727.
- Sami Shalom Chetrit, 2000. "Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, 4: 51-65.
- Nissim Leon, “Moshe Kahlon and the Politics of the Mizrahi Middle Class,” 2015.  
<http://israelstudies.umd.edu/Nissim%20Leon%20Research%20Paper%20-%20January%202015.pdf>
- Media Coverage of Shas
- <https://972mag.com/watch-shas-stunning-electoral-ad-is-a-challenge-to-both-right-and-left/101482/>
- <https://972mag.com/can-a-feminist-mizrahi-woman-find-her-political-home-in-shas/102354/>
- Media Coverage of Moshe Kahlon’s Kulanu Party
- <http://forward.com/news/israel/217539/is-moshe-kahlon-and-his-new-party-here-to-stay/>
- <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/11/israel-finance-minister-kahlon-free-public-broadcasting.html>



## Objectives:

By the end of this week, students will be able to...

- Analyze historic media representations of Mizrahim in Israel, and see how these fit into broader Ashkenazi-Mizrahi political, social, and economic dynamics.
- Explain how Mizrahi Jews have engaged in Israeli politics, including understanding the parties, ideologies, and politicians who have been said to represent them.
- Identify the similarities and differences in Mizrahi political engagement over the courses of Israeli history.

## In class:

- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** At the beginning of class, students will be divided into groups and given a handout with discussion questions related to the films they watched (Sallah Shabati and Saadia). After discussing in small groups, we will open it up to full class discussion.
- The lecture will begin by discussing the origins of Mizrahi and Separdi Jews, their immigration to Israel, and hardships they face after immigration.
- **Video:** We will discuss Mizrahi unrest and resentment, and watch a short documentary (10-12 minutes) on the Black Panthers in Israel.
- We will discuss Mizrahi participation in several political parties, such as the community's relationship with Likud, Shas, and the new Kulanu party.
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Lastly small groups will be handed news articles from both the 1980s and today that discuss Labor's lack of success with Mizrahim; after reading and discussing your articles, you will present what you found to another small group and then discuss as a class.

## Week 6 (2/24): Palestinian/Arab Citizens of Israel

### Reading before the sixth class:

- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 6 (p. 115-135)
- Dov Waxman, "Israel's Other Palestinian Problem: The Future Vision Documents and the Demands of the Palestinian Minority in Israel," *Israel Affairs*, 2013.
- "The Future Vision of Palestinian Politics in Israel"  
<https://www.adalah.org/uploads/oldfiles/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf>
- Profile of Ayman Odeh: David Remnick, "Seeds of Peace," *The New Yorker*, 2016.  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/01/25/seeds-of-peace>
- Hanin Zoabi Interview in *Al-Jazeera*  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/02/qa-hanin-zoabi-israel-bad-arab-150202072900248.html>
- "Zoabi Suspended" - *Times of Israel*  
<http://www.timesofisrael.com/hanin-zoabi-suspended-from-knesset-for-six-months/>
- "The Zoabi Bill" - *The Jerusalem Post*  
<http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Zoabi-Bill-seeks-to-keep-Balad-MK-out-of-Knesset>
- *Optional:* Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, Chapters 12-15

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students should be able to...

- Identify the strong differences of opinion and diversity that exist within Israel's Arab communities.
- Evaluate key claims and values advanced by these political parties and engage with them through advocacy and critique in an active debate setting.
- Recognize dilemmas and complicating factors faced by those in Israel's Palestinian community, particular related to political engagement and communal belonging.

### **In Class:**

- The lecture will discuss who are Palestinian citizens of Israel, their history, how scholars have viewed them, and what political parties have aimed to represent them.
- **Video:** Watch in class: *Arab Labor* TV episode "Loyalty" - Season 1, Episode 7 (25 min) followed by discussion of Arab Labor episode with guiding questions.
- **Debate:** Small groups will receive a handout describing five political parties that have very different agendas regarding Palestinian citizens of Israel and the role of this minority in Israeli democracy. After preparing, groups will debate.

## **Week 7 (3/3): Feminist Politics, Religion, and Sexual/Reproductive Rights**

### **Reading before the seventh class:**

- Yael Yishai, *Between the Flag and the Banner*, Chapter 8 – "Body Politics," (p. 205-230)
- Hanna Herzog, "Homefront and Battlefield. The Status of Jewish and Palestinian Women in Israel," *Israel Studies*, Volume 3, Number 1, Spring 1998, (p. 61-84)
- Frances Rada. "Women's Human Rights: Dichotomy between Religion and Secularism in Israel" *Israel Affairs*, Volume 11, Number 1, 2005. (p. 78-94)
- Aeyal Gross, "The Politics of LGBT Rights in Israel and Beyond: Nationality, Normativity, and Queer Politics," *Columbia Human Rights Law Review* 46.2.81, 2015.
- *Optional:* Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, Chapters 16-17

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Define, identify, and apply key terms from queer studies and nationalism in relation to Israel and other case studies.
- Grapple with complex and often counterintuitive status of gender politics in Israel.

### **In class:**

- **In-Class Writing:** Students will be given news articles that show nationalistic use of LGBT rights by European and American right-wing politicians, and asked to write their thoughts on how this connects to the Israeli situation as described in Aeyal Gross's article, and the terms "homonormativity" and "homonationalism" as defined there.
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Students will then talk about their writings in small groups and discuss the guiding questions on the board before we open up into full class discussion.

- **Lecture:** The lecture will discuss LGBT, sexual, reproductive, and women's rights issues in Israel, particular in relation to Israel's religious-secular divide.
- **Video:** After break, we will watch and discuss parts of the 2014 film "Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem" about a woman attempt to get a divorce through Israel's rabbinic court system.

## **Week 8 (3/10): The Judiciary, the Military and Security Services**

### **Reading before the eighth class:**

- Mahler's *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapter 4 (p. 105-130).
- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 7, (p. 135-158).
- Yagil Levy, "Who Controls the IDF? Between and Over-Subordinate Army" and "a Military that has a State" in *Civil-Military Relations in Israel: Essays in Honor of Stuart A. Cohen* edited by Elisheva Rosman-Stollman, Aharon Kampinsky.
- Oren Soffer. "Judicial Review of Legislation in Israel: Problems and Implications of Possible Reform," *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12, No.2, 2006, pp.307-329.

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Describe the various values and legal imperatives at play in the deciding of a number of court cases in Israel.
- Identify the similarities and differences between judicial review in Israel and in America.
- Understand the role of the military and security services in Israeli political discourse.

### **In class:**

- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** After the lecture on the judiciary system and judicial review in Israel, small groups will receive each receive a handout describing a notable court case – relating to the deportation of terrorists' families, extrajudicial killings, and the recognition of Reform/Conservative conversions in Israel. After discussing them based on guiding questions on the board, groups will present each case to the class and offer their own evaluation of the decision.
- **Video:** After break and a lecture on the role of the IDF in politics, we will watch twenty minutes of "The Gatekeepers," a documentary based on interviews with Shin Bet directors, some of who are now in politics, and discuss.

## **No Class March 17 – Spring Break**

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## **Week 9 (3/24): Foreign Policy and National Security in Israeli Politics**

### **Reading before the ninth class:**

- Mahler's *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapters 9-10, (p. 247-316)
- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 10

**Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Identify key historical moments, actors, and considerations in Israeli foreign policy
- Evaluate the impact of foreign policy issue on Israeli politics.

**In class:**

- **Lecture:** The first part of the lecture will cover Israeli foreign policy through the First Intifada.
- **Video:** We will watch ten minutes of “The Gatekeepers” regarding the First Intifada
- **In-Class Writing:** Students will have 10-15 minutes to write, in first-person format, how they think their assigned Israeli political party would respond to the First Intifada and 1991 Gulf War. Students will then discuss what they wrote.
- **Lecture:** The post-break lecture will focus on key foreign policy issue since the 1990s (the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process will be primarily discussed next week).
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Small groups will be given handouts outlining foreign policy dilemmas (Iran, Syria, Turkey, UN) and formulate responses based on their assigned political party, and debate.

**Week 10 (3/31): Political Ideology, Settlements, and Palestinian Sovereignty****Reading before the tenth class:**

- Mahler’s *Politics and Government in Israel*, Chapters 11-12, (p. 317-383)
- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapter 9
- On Reuven Rivlin: David Remnick, “Israel’s One State Reality,” *The New Yorker*, 2014  
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/11/17/one-state-reality>

**Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Recognize the many views and potential solutions to the Israel-Palestine conflict floated by various actors.
- Identify the reasons why different factions may and may not want to compromise.
- Evaluate the claims made regarding the two-state solution by both its supporters and detractors.

**In class:**

- **Lecture:** The first part of the lecture will cover Palestinian nationalism and Israel’s debate over the future of the West Bank and Gaza.
- **Video:** We will watch twenty minutes of “The Gatekeepers” regarding the Rabin assassination, the settler movement, and the peace process.
- **Maps:** We will look at Geneva Initiative Maps in class and discuss several variants of the two-state solution. <http://www.geneva-accord.org/mainmenu/static-maps/>

## **Week 11 (4/7): Israel's Political Economy and Relations with the West**

### **Reading before the eleventh class:**

- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapters 8 and 12
- The EU and Settlements in *The Guardian*
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/16/eu-israel-settlement-exclusion-clause>
- Trump and Israel in *Politico*
- <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/12/trump-israel-worst-nightmare-netanyahu-214565>
- Interview with Israeli Startup CEO in *Forbes*
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/julianmitchell/2016/07/11/startup-nation-this-israeli-company-uses-military-principles-to-build-scalable-businesses/#4ea34a3543cc>
- Israel Democracy Index 2014 – Economy and Society (pages 7-24)
- [http://en.idi.org.il/media/3823043/democracy\\_index\\_2014\\_Eng.pdf](http://en.idi.org.il/media/3823043/democracy_index_2014_Eng.pdf)

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Understand key features of the Israeli economy and evaluate the successes, challenges, and discontents with the system and policies in place.
- Identify potential long-term issues threatening Israel's economic growth.
- Recognize Israel's complex relationship with the United States and Europe and possible economic and diplomatic challenges ahead, as well as the role of these diplomatic relationships in Israeli political discourse.

### **In class:**

- **Lecture:** The first part of the lecture will cover Israel's political economy, detailing its shift from socialist policies through the rise of the growing high-tech sector. It will also touch on gentrification in Tel Aviv and the increasing gap between the rich and poor.
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Small groups will evaluate and present to each other the various positions taken by political parties in response to economic anxieties beginning with the 2011 social protests.
- **Lecture:** After break, lecture will continue on American-Israeli and European-Israeli relations since the Second Intifada and will conclude with a question-and-answer session.

## **Week 12 (4/14): Recent Immigration and Politics**

### **Reading before the twelfth class:**

- Freedman, *Contemporary Israel*, Chapters 5 (on "Russian" parties in Israel)
- Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, Chapters 7-8 (on USSR Jews and Ethiopian Jews)
- Barak Kalir, "The Jewish State of Anxiety: Between Moral Obligation and Fear in the Treatment of African Asylum Seekers in Israel," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2015, 580-598.
- Law of Return (1950)
- <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1950-1959/pages/law%20of%20return%205710-1950.aspx>

- Critique of Law of Return in *The Guardian*  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/mar/11/israel-return-jews-palestinians>
- A Defense of the Law of Return: Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, “Democratic Norms, Diasporas, and Israel’s Law of Return,” (2005).  
<http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42d75369-d582-4380-8395-d25925b85eaf%7D/yakobsonrubinstein2005.pdf>
- Sara Hirschhorn in *Haaretz*: American Immigrants in Israeli Settlements  
<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.673358>
- Jihad Abu Salim in 972: “Trapped 'from fence to fence' in Gaza”  
<https://972mag.com/trapped-from-fence-to-fence-in-gaza/122666/> 11

### Objectives:

By the end of this week, students will be able to...

- Identify and discuss recent immigrant groups to Israel as well as the problem and controversies surrounding them.
- Analyze the discourse on immigration in Israel and understand the political use/meaning of different terms used to describe those moving to Israel (like *oleh hadash*, migrant, refugee, immigrant, and infiltrator).
- Understand the “Law of Return” and contemporary discourse surrounding it and immigration to Israel in general.

### In class:

- **In-Class Writing:** Students will spend the first 10-15 minutes writing, by hand, what they think the ideal immigration policy for Israel should be. If they have mixed feeling they should note them.
- **Small Group Discuss/Present:** Students will be divided into groups to share what they wrote, then present their discussion to the class.
- **Lecture:** The lecture will discuss the Law of Return, the “Soviet” Aliyah, American Jews in Israel, Ethiopian Israelis, and controversies over migrant workers.
- **Watch:** A recent i24 video news report on African asylum seekers in Israel and brief documentary on YouTube about recent French migration to Israel.
- **Debate:** In small groups, students will be assigned positions on several controversial immigration-related issues in Israel and the debate in small groups on the assigned issue.

## Week 13 (April 21): Campaign Ad Presentations, Election and Coalition Simulation

No additional assigned readings. Prepare group project.

### Objectives:

By the end of this week, students will:

- Apply what they learned about an Israeli political party in a practical way through making a campaign ad.
- Strengthen related skills connected to oral presentation, debate, and negotiation.
- Adapt the mindset of Israeli politicians by being placed in their shoes; students are pushed to consider the many factors that political leaders in Israel must think about

during the crucial democratic processes of elections, platform-building, and coalition negotiations.

**In class:**

- **Simulation:** We will watch all of the campaign ads and then groups will give a brief presentation of their campaign platforms.
- Students will vote and results will be announced after break.
- The largest party will try to form a coalition, then both the coalition and opposition will be expected to negotiate, write, and present shared platforms.
- We will then discuss their coalition in light of current news about Israel's real coalition and compare the in-class coalition with political realities in Israel.

**Week 14 (April 28): Peer Review and Guest Lecture on "Social Media in Israeli Politics"**

**Assignment:**

- Come to class with three printed copies of your paper draft (at least 1000 of 3000 words written, ideally more).

**Objectives:**

By the end of this week, students will:

- Strengthen their writing and editing skills through a peer review session, which involves looking critically at other students' writing and receiving similar feedback on your own.
- Learn more about the topics that two other students are writing about, as well as see alternative approaches to writing a research paper.
- Better understand how social media affects – and reflects – Israeli politics today.

**In class:**

- **Guest Lecture:** Yoav Halperin of NYU will give a short lecture on his research, which explores the way that social media sites, particularly Facebook, are used in Israeli political discourse today.
- **Writing Workshop:** Students will be divided into groups of three and present their paper topics to each other. Using a worksheet that will be distributed, students will peer review the draft papers of two papers, offering input related to all aspects of the paper. Specific instructions will be provided.
- The final version of the paper is due to [gpl233@nyu.edu](mailto:gpl233@nyu.edu) by 11:59pm **Saturday, May 6**.

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