

POLI 4060 “Politics of Israel”

Classroom: 116 Stubbs Hall
Class Time: T TH 9-10:20
Office Hours: MWF 10:00-12:00

Instructor: Leonard Ray
Office: 208C Stubbs Hall
Email: lray2@lsu.edu

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the political system of the modern state of Israel. After a quick review of the history of the Zionist movement and the foundation of the state of Israel, the course will focus on the social, economic, and demographic evolution of the country since 1948. These developments help explain the diversity of political parties which compete in legislative elections, and comprise coalition governments of varying stability. Whether there will be an early election during the course of the semester remains to be seen. The course will cover some of the quirks of the Israeli system, such as the use of judicial review in the absence of a written constitution, the use of primaries in a PR system, and the failed experiment with the direct election of the Prime Minister. We will conclude with discussions of some of the ongoing controversies in Israeli politics, including what exactly it means to be a Jewish State, relationships with the European Union and the United States, and the future of the territories occupied in 1967.

About the instructor: Dr. Ray is an associate professor of political science. Much of his research has focused on political parties and public opinion, and his teaching interests include French politics. This course will reflect these interests, and so students can expect some emphasis on the Dreyfus affair, Franco-Israeli cooperation during the French Fourth Republic, and the collapse of the Franco-Israeli alliance following Algerian independence in 1962 and the six day war in 1967.

Readings:

Assigned readings should be done before the class period for which they are assigned. Do not wait until the night before- the amount of reading varies from class to class, you will want to plan ahead.

Mahler, Gregory S. *Politics and Government in Israel*. Third Edition. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. This is one of the standard textbooks on the topic, and is used at many American, British, and Israeli universities. A typical government textbook, it focuses on the development of the state, demography, electoral and party politics, and government institutions. The book emphasizes political life within the pre 1967 borders, and concludes with a long discussion of negotiations to implement a two state solution to the issues of the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. (ISBN: 9781442265363)

Shavit, Ari, *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*, Spiegel & Grau 2013. This is a personal reflection on important moments in the political and social history of Israel. Written by an Israeli journalist with both a strong affection for Israel, and a critical eye, this book gives you a cultural and emotional context for the factual framework presented by Mahler. It is a work which has attracted criticism from both the right (<http://mosaicmagazine.com/observation/2013/12/their-tragic-land/>) and the left (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/aug/14/liberal-zionists/>). (ISBN: 978-0385521710)

Kashua, Sayed. *Native: Dispatches from an Israeli-Palestinian Life*, Grove Press. 2017. Until he left Israel in 2014, Sayed Kashua was a regular columnist for the newspaper Haaretz. An Arab citizen of Israel, he lived the complicated mixture of identities of the non-Jewish citizens of Israel. His columns explore this situation and track a decade of Israel's recent political history. (ISBN-13: 978-0802126290)

Several additional readings will be posted on Moodle.

News Sources: Students are expected to keep up with developments in Israeli politics. Mainline media sources such as the Economist and New York Times are good starting points.

Three particularly useful Israeli English language news sites include:

Haaretz newspaper	http://haaretz.com/
Ynews	http://www.ynetnews.com
Jerusalem Post	http://jpost.com
Times of Israel	https://www.timesofisrael.com/

An interesting current events podcast is the "Promised Podcast" from TLV1 <https://tlv1.fm/podcasts/the-promised-podcast-show/>

Requirements:

Mid Tem Exam (25%)

Final Exam (25%)

Three short writing assignments (+/-2 pages) (10% each)

Coalition Formation group project (10%)

Class Participation (10%)

Technology Use

Cell phones and mobile devices must be put away for the duration of the class period. The use of laptop computers is discouraged. Notetaking by hand is a more effective learning strategy than notetaking on a computer. If you use a laptop in class, you are not allowed to connect to the internet during class. Seriously. Turn your wifi off for the duration of the class. Do not let me catch you with a web browser open.

Course Schedule (Subject to change)

January 11. Ancient Israel and Diaspora

Readings:

Ch. 5. "Zaccai and the Zealots" in Barry L. Schwartz. *Judaism's Great Debates: Timeless Controversies from Abraham to Hertzl*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. 2012.

Mahler pp 1-17

January 16. European Antisemitism and the Enlightenment

Readings:

Introduction (Sections I, II (pages 15-32) in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959.

January 18. Religious Zionism and Political Zionism

Readings:

Rabbi Kalischer "Seeking Zion" (pp 108-114) in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959.

Pines, "Jewish Nationalism Cannot Be Secular", "Religion is the Source of Jewish Nationalism," "Jews will accept hardship only in the Holy Land," in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*.

Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959. pp. 412-415.*

Sections IV, V (pp 45-51) in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959.

Leo Pinsker "Auto-Emancipation" Sections I, II, and IX, X in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959.

Herzl "The Jewish State" Sections I II and V and VI (online)

The Pittsburgh Platform 1885 <http://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/platforms/declaration-principles/>

Ch.10. "Hertzl and Wise" in Barry L. Schwartz. *Judaism's Great Debates: Timeless Controversies from Abraham to Hertzl*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. 2012.

January 23. Ottoman Palestine and WWI

Readings:

Chapter One "At First Sight 1897" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*

Mahler pp 17-22

January 25. Labor Zionism

Readings:

David Ben-Gurion. "The Imperatives of the Jewish Revolution," in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959., pp. 606-619.*

A.D. Gordon, "People and Labor," "Some Observations," "Our Tasks Ahead," in *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Arthur Hertzberg ed. Doubleday & co. Garden City New York 1959., pp. 371-374; 383.*

Chapter Two "Into the Valley" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

February 6. The British Mandate/ Revisionist Zionism

Readings: Correspondence with the Palestine delegation and the Zionist Organization

<http://hdl.handle.net/2027/yale.39002033907149>

Jabotinsky "The Iron Wall", "Ethics of the Iron Wall", "bi-national Palestine"

Mahler pp. 23-33

February 8. The Great Arab Revolt and the Peel Commission

Chapter Three "Orange Grove 1936" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Ben Gurion 1937 letter (On Moodle)

February 13. Mardi Gras Holiday

February 15. Nazism and WWII

Readings: Chapter Four "Masada, 1942" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Mahler pp. 33-44

February 20. The birth of the State of Israel

Readings:

Israeli Declaration of Independence (on Moodle)

Chapter Five "Lydda, 1948" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Eisenstein, Arendt et al: Letter to NYT RE: Begin.

Mahler pp.

Recommended:

Morris, Benny. 1986. "The Causes and Character of the Arab Exodus from Palestine: The Israel Defense Forces Intelligence Branch Analysis of June 1948." *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22: 5-19.*

February 22. Consolidation of the Israeli State

Readings:

Chapter Six "Housing Estate, 1957" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Chapter Seven "The Project, 1967" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Mahler Chapter 2

Recommended:

Yael Zerubavel, "The Mythological Sabra and Jewish Past: Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities," *Israel Studies*, Summer 2002, Vol. 7, Issue 2.

February 27. The Six Day War (1967) and Greater Israel

Readings: Chapter Eight "Settlement, 1975" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*
"Is Peace Achievable? A view from Jerusalem" US State Dept 1977
"Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders" Yigdal Allon *Foreign Affairs*
"Growing Risk of Egyptian Resumption of Hostilities With Israel" State Dept memo 1973

Recommended: Edward Said, "The Condition of Palestinians after Camp David"
Yost, Charles W. 1968. "The Arab-Israeli War: How It Began." *Foreign Affairs*, 46: 304-320
"Blow up the Dome of the Rock" http://www.middleeast.org/archives/1999_01_05.htm

February 29. Lebanon and the First Intifada

Readings:

Chapter Nine "Gaza Beach, 1991" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*
The Intifada and Political Discourse in Israel

March 6. Oslo. (The 2 state solution)

Mahler Chapter 12

Chapter Ten "Peace, 1993" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*

"The Israel PLO Accord is Dead" Amos Perlmutter

March 8. Midterm Exam

March 13. The Contemporary Setting

Reading: Mahler Chapter 4 and 5

March 15. Ethnic politics in Israel

Henriette Dahan-Kalev, "You're So Pretty—You Don't Look Moroccan," *Israel Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (2001): 1-14

Chapter Eleven "J'Accuse, 1999" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*

"The Russian Revolution in Israel" in Dowty ed. *Critical Issues in Israeli Society*

March. 20. The Government and the Party System

Mahler Ch 6 and 7

March. 22. Political Behavior in Israel

Mahler Ch 8

March. 27. Economic Policy

Chapter Fifteen "Occupy Rothchild, 2011" Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*

Jacob Metzger Some Perspectives on the Israeli Economy: Stocktaking and Looking Ahead " *Israel Studies*

March. 29. The role of Religious Law

Mahler Chapter 3

Ch.6 "Hillel and Shammai" in Barry L. Schwartz. Judaism's Great Debates: Timeless Controversies from Abraham to Hertzl. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. 2012.
JONATHAN FOX and JONATHAN RYNHOLD A Jewish and Democratic State? "Comparing Government Involvement in Religion in Israel with other Democracies" Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions, Vol. 9, No. 4, 507–531, December 2008

April 3. Who is a Jew?

Reform resolution on patrilineal descent

Alexander Yakobson "Jewish Peoplehood and the Jewish State, How Unique?—A Comparative Survey"

April 5. Settlements and Jerusalem

Mahler Ch 10, 11

"Israel: The Alternative" Tony Judt

Naftali Bennet "A New Plan for Peace in Palestine"

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304081804579559432394067704>

April 10. The Arabs of Israel

Chapter Thirteen "Up the Galilee, 2003" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

Sayed Kashua "Native"

April 12. Coalition Formation exercise

"Foreign" policy

April. 17 The Palestinians

Ashrawi interview from JPS

The Jewish State, What's in a name?

The Likelihood, Consequences, and Policy Implications of a PA Collapse or Dissolution

April. 19 Relations with Europe and a shifting Middle East

Chapter Sixteen "Existential Challenge, 2013" Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

TBA

April. 24. Israel in American Politics

Mead, Walter Russell "The New Israel and the Old." Foreign Affairs. Jul/Aug2008, Vol. 87 Issue 4, p2846.

"The Israel Lobby And U.S. Foreign Policy" John J. Mearsheimer, Stephen M. Walt Middle East Policy Volume 13, Issue 3, 2006

John Judis "Zionist Movement" in Foreign Policy

April 26. The war of words (and images)

Lutz Ch 12 and 18,

“Defeating Anti-Israel Propaganda: A Guide”

University BDS Campaigning Guide: Student Solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle

April 28. Looking back and ahead

Chapter Seventeen “By the Sea” Ari Shavit, My Promised Land

“Tony Judt’s Final Word on Israel “

Re-read Hertzl “Jewish State”

Final Exam 12:30-2:30