

ISRAEL: POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Optional Course
for
M.A. (International Relations-West Asian Studies)
Course No: MWAS-407
Semester IV

Centre for West Asian Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to some of the major issues and debates in contemporary Israeli society and politics. Section I of the course will place the Israeli politics and society processes in a broad historical context. Section II will examine Israel's political institutions and processes with reference to the state institutions, electoral system, multi-party politics, political ideologies, and non-state actors. Section III will entirely deal with different social cleavages in Israeli society, with a view to understand contentious problems, contenting narratives of Israeli identity ('melting pot' model versus 'mosaic' model) and their ubiquitous linkages to politics. The Section IV will explore Israel foreign policy and its strategic underpinnings, with special reference to the influence of Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts as well as the 'peace process' on Israel's external relations and their influence on Israeli society and politics. Section V of the course will consider the robust debates over Zionism and post-Zionism, and the Occupation and the future of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. The aim of the course is to assist the students to develop a deeper and varied understanding of Israel's political and social developments without presumptions and biases.

Course Content

Unit I: Historical and Political Background

- Zionism and the idea of Jewish Homeland/State
- *Yishuv*, Creation of Political Institutions and Early Statehood
- Features of Jewish Society in Palestine and Israel
- Emergence of Israel as a Jewish State

Unit II: Political Institutions and Processes

- State Institutions: Legislature, Executive, Judiciary
- Parties and the Electoral System
- Political Ideologies and Governance
- Role of Military
- Influence of non-state Actors on Political Processes

Section III: Social Divisions

- The Ethnic Divide: Ashkenazim and Mizrachim
- The Religious Divide: Secular and Religious Jews
- The National Divide: Jews and Arabs
- The Ideological Divide: Zionists and Post-Zionists
- The Political Divide: Hawks and Doves
- The Identity Divide: Jews and Israelis
- Israeli Democracy: Consociational and Ethnic Dimensions

Section IV: Israel's Foreign Policy

- Foreign Policy and Strategic Doctrines
- Role of Ideology
- Jewish Dimension of Israel's Foreign Policy
- Arab-Israeli Conflict/Palestinian-Israeli (P-I) Conflict:
Impact on Israel's Foreign Policy
- Relations with Major Powers
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Section V: The Future of Israel

- Zionism and post-Zionism
- Occupation and Debate over Israel's Jewish vs. Democratic Identity
- 'One-state solution' vs. 'Two-state solution'
to the P-I Conflict: Future of Israel as a Jewish State

Method of Instruction

Lectures and tutorial will be held on a weekly basis. Questions, discussion and debate during classes will be strongly encouraged. Students are expected to keep informed of the current events in Israel.

Method of Assessment

A mid-term exam would consist of essay questions based upon the topics covered up to that point. It will be of 25 marks and student must answer two questions out of 4 of 12.5 marks each. The final exam conducted according to a schedule at the end of the semester will be of 75 marks. In the final exam, students must answer 5 out of 10 questions.

Readings

Books

1. Arian, Asher, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, second edition (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005).
2. Avineri, Shlomo. *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981).
3. Barnett, Michael N., ed., *Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996).
4. Brecher, Michael, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).
5. Dowty, Alan. *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
6. Garfinkle, Adam, *Politics and Society in Modern Israel*, second edition (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).
7. Hazan, Reuven Y. and Moshe Maor (eds.) *Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).
8. Horowitz, Dan and Moshe Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity: Palestine Under the Mandate* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978).
9. Jones, Clive and Emma C. Murphy, *Israel: Challenges to Identity, Democracy and the State* (London: Routledge, 2002).
10. Kimmerling, Baruch, ed., *The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989).

11. Migdal, Joel S., *Through the Lens of Israel: Explorations in State and Society* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001).
12. Nimni, Ephraim, ed., *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Israeli Fundamentalist Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2003).
13. Peretz, Don and Gideon Doron, *The Government and Politics of Israel*, third edition (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997).
14. Peri, Yoram, *Generals in the Cabinet Room: How the Military Shapes Israeli Policy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006).
15. Shindler, C., *A History of Modern Israel*, First edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
16. Shapira, Anita ed., *Israeli Identity in Transition* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

Books Chapters

1. Dowty, Alan, "Consociationalism and Ethnic Democracy: Israeli Arabs in Comparative Perspective." In David Levi-Faur, Gabriel Sheffer and David Vogel (eds.) *Israel: Dynamics of Change and Continuity* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 169-182.
2. Galnoor, Itzhak, "The Israeli Political System: A Profile." In Keith Kyle and Joel Peters (eds.) *Whither Israel? The Domestic Challenges* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993), pp. 87-102.
3. Gutmann, Emanuel, "Israel: Democracy Without a Constitution." In Vernon Bodganor (ed.) *Constitutions in Democratic Politics* (Aldershot: Gower, 1988), pp. 290-308.
4. Hazan, Reuven Y., "Party System Change in Israel, 1948-1998: A Conceptual and Theoretical Border-Stretching of Europe?" In Paul Pennings and Jan-Erik Lane (eds.) *Comparing Party System Change* (London: Routledge, 1988, pp), 151-166.
5. Horowitz, Dan and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). Ch. 2: "Israel as a Multi-Cleavage Society," pp. 32-97.
6. Mahler, Gregory S., *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2004). Ch. 3: "The Social and Economic Context of Politics", pp. 85-114.

Journal Articles

1. Avineri, Shlomo, "Ideology and Israel's Foreign Policy," *The Jerusalem*

- Quarterly*, Volume 37 (1986), pp. 3-13.
2. Chetrit, Sami Shalom, "Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Volume 29, Number 4 (2000), pp. 51-65.
 3. Dahan-Kalev, Henriette, "You're So Pretty—You Don't Look Moroccan," *Israel Studies*, Volume 6, Number 1 (2001), pp. 1-14.
 4. Diskin, Abraham, "The New Political System in Israel," *Government and Opposition*, Volume 34, Number 4 (Autumn 1999), pp. 498-515.
 5. Evron, Boas, "Israel's Shifting Identity," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Volume 9, Number 1 (2002), pp. 102-107.
 6. Ghanem, As'ad, Nadim Rouhana and Oren Yiftachel, "Questioning 'Ethnic Democracy': A Response to Sammy Smooha," *Israel Studies*, Volume 3, Number 2 (1998), pp. 253-267.
 7. Hazan, Reuven Y., "Executive-Legislative Relations in an Era of Accelerated Reform: Reshaping Government in Israel," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, Volume 22, Number 3 (August 1997), pp. 329-350.
 8. Hazony, Yoram, "The Zionist Idea and its Enemies," *Commentary*, Volume 101, Number 5 (May 1996), pp. 30-38.
 9. Judt, Tony, "Israel: The Alternative," *The New York Review of Books*, October 23, 2003.
 10. Liebman, Charles and Bernard Susser, "Judaism and Jewishness in the Jewish State," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Volume 555 (Jan 1998), pp. 15-25.
 11. Shain, Yossi & Barry Bristman, "The Jewish Security Dilemma," *Orbis*, Volume 46, Number 1 (Winter 2002), pp. 47-71.
 12. Smooha, Sammy, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies*, Volume 2, Number 2 (1997), pp. 198-241.
 13. Sprinzak, Ehud, "Extremism and Violence in Israel: The Crisis of Messianic Politics," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Volume 555 (Jan 1998), pp. 114-126.
 14. Waxman, Dov, "The Jewish Dimension of Israeli Foreign Policy," *Israel Studies Forum*, Volume 19, Number 1 (Fall 2003), pp. 34-56.
 15. Yehoshua, Avraham B., "Separating Religion from National Identity," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Volume 9, Number 1 (2002), pp. 94-101.