HISTORY 2073 X2
The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Winter 2012

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Office Hours: M-F 10:00 & 12:00

Course Description
This course is a study of the origins and expansion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It analyzes issues and problems, social, cultural, and political, that underlie the Arab-Israeli conflict and examines various solutions or plans for the ‘Peace Process’, such as the two-state solution, one state or bi-national state, as well as Zionist, Post-Zionist, PLO, and Islamist ideologies.

Note: If you are a student with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet Jill Davies or Kathy O’Rourke in Disability Access Services, Student Resource Centre, lower floor of the Old SUB (Old Student Union Building).

Required Texts
Benny Morris, One State, Two States
Avi Shlaim, War and Peace in the Middle East
David Shipler, Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land (Viewed in class)
The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict (4 vols.), Vaughn Library, Reference Section, DS 119.7.E565

Suggested texts and sites for further reading
George Antonius, The Arab Awakening
Nathan J. Brown, Palestinian Politics after the Oslo Accords
Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea
Khalid Hroub, Hamas: Political Thought and Practice
Rashid Khalidi, The Iron Cage
Benny Morris, Righteous Victims
Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited
Muhammad Muslih, The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism
Ilan Pappe, The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Yehoshua Porath, The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918-1929
Eugene Rogan & Avi Shlaim, The War for Palestine
Nadav Safran, Israel: Embattled Ally
Edward Said, The Question of Palestine
Avi Shlaim, The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World
Avi Shlaim, Collusion Across the Jordan
David Shipler, Arab and Jew
Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Mark Tessler, A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Bassam Tibi, Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry
J.W. Wright, *Structural Flaws in the Middle East Peace Process*


[www.mideasti.org](http://www.mideasti.org) The site for the ‘Middle East Institute’ in Washington D.C.


**Evaluation**

1) Participation: 20% (In-class discussion and group presentations)
2) Book Reports: 20% (17 February & 12 March)
3) Thesis statement and annotated bibliography: 10% (27 February)
4) Research Paper: 20% (9 April)
5) Exam: 30%

**Participation:** You will read and discuss the required texts in preparation for discussions on some of the key issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. To get points you need to participate in the discussions and submit notes. Full points will only be given to those who participate during class. Group presentations will cover the Issues, Problems, Solutions themes as distributed by the instructor. The presentations will be designed to spark debates on the groups’ solutions. The class will participate in the presentations by providing critiques of the proposed solutions and interpretations.

**Book Reports** (750-1000 words): Identify the thesis and main arguments of the required texts in a critical review or analysis of the work. Outline the basic structure of the book. Identify the sources used by the author. How have these shaped the arguments? Has the author ignored contrary points of view or evidence? Try to identify the importance of the works within the larger field of historical works by reading reviews of the book (consult an electronic database) or comparable books.

**Research Paper** (2,000 words, due 9 April)

The paper will be a study of one of the issues (see the course outline below and ‘problems and issues’ section).

The paper will include:
1) Thesis statement (due 27 February)
2) Themes that support the thesis statement
3) A bibliography with at least 3 sources (articles or books) in addition to the required texts. The paper must engage with one of the historical questions discussed in the course. Follow the reference guidelines in Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers* (provisional bibliography due 27 February).

**Exam:** The exam will be comprehensive, including questions on the texts and the films.
Course Outline

1. Introduction. Problems, Issues, Solutions

   - Define Mainstream, Revisionist, and Bi-national Zionism. Compare the political visions of Ben Gurion and Jabotinsky.
   - What was the rationale for bi-nationalism in the period of the British Mandate? What was the impact of the Palestinian Revolt on the bi-national idea? What finally killed it?
   - How did Zionists view the role or utility of the UK and USA in the Zionist project? Account for changes in the UK’s policy on the issue of a bi-national or two-state solution. How did the UK shape the development of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism?
   - How would you characterize Palestinian Nationalism, its origins, its goals, and its ideology based on a reading of Morris?
   - Does bi-nationalism or cantonization provide a realistic solution to the Palestine/Israel conflict today or is two-statism the best option?

   - Was the idea of population transfer a natural outcome of Zionism or shaped by circumstance?
   - Relative Power of Arabs and Zionists: Who had the advantage in terms of population and arms? Who had effective external support? What impact did these facts have upon Palestinian nationalists?
   - According to Shlaim, the 1948 war for independence converted into essentially a land grab. Do you agree?
   - Why did Palestinians flee their homes in 1947 and 1948? Was the flight the policy of the Israeli government or the consequence of war?
   - Were the tactics of the Haganah designed to create a Palestinian flight? Why did militias (Arab and Zionist) adopt terror-type tactics?
   - What is the substance of Benny Morris’ testimony on refugee flight in 1948? Where do his sympathies lie?

   - How would you characterize the political culture (democratic, liberal, nationalist, socialist, elitist, Islamist) of the Palestinians during the period of the Mandate?
   - Is it possible to identify Arab radical and moderate nationalists, similar to the Mainstream and Revisionist Zionists, in the Mandate period, or was the greater consensus around the Arab nationalist cause – consider both the regional and Palestinian theatres?
   - Account for the Arab rejection of the Peel Commission Report. Consider the arguments of George Antonius, as well as the position of the Arab Higher Committee.
Compare and contrast the tactics of the mainstream Palestinian nationalists (Husseinis/Nashasbibis) to the Zionists in the Mandate era. Was compromise more characteristic of one side or the other?

   - What impact did the Cold War have on the balance of power between Israel and the Arab states? What impact did it have upon Western influence over the Arab states vis-à-vis Israel. Give particular attention to US policy in the region.
   - Describe the doctrine of preemptive strike or ‘Ben Gurionism’ and considered its justness, given the historical context.
   - Why was the 1967 War regarded by Israelis as existential – a matter of a survival of the state. Account for the Israeli view.
   - Outline the basic points of UN Resolution 242. Why was it problematic? Why did the Israeli’s not comply with UN Resolution 242?
   - How did international alignments change after the war? What impact did these have upon the peace negotiations, according to Shlaim?
   - Was the occupation beneficial to the Israelis? Which strand of Zionism benefitted?
   - Account for the Likud’s decision to make peace with Egypt.
   - Was Camp David reflective of US globalist or regionalist approaches to conflicts? What were the wider implications of Camp David for the Peace Process, particularly as it related to Palestinians?

   - What was the consequence of the 1967 war for Palestinian nationalism? Compare and contrast the impact of the 1967 war upon the Arab states and the Palestinians.
   - Describe the ideological content of the PLO. Is it comparable to the Likud, or only more radical Zionist groups?
   - Consider the PLO’s tactics. Was negotiation on the table, or only armed struggle? Is it fair to conclude that recognition of Israel was only tactical, and not conducive to the two-state solution?
   - Alongside the PLO, what other groups made up Palestinian politics after 1967?
   - How did the intifada alter Palestinian politics?
   - What according to the Jewish Rabbi portrayed in Arab and Jew is the biggest impediment to the establishment of peace between Arabs and Israelis?
   - What according to the Palestinian journalist in Arab and Jew is the biggest impediment to the establishment of peace between Arabs and Israelis?
   - What does the film say about the expansion of settlement activity since 1967?
Book Report 1, due February 12: Shlaim, War and Peace

7. Study Week.

   - The international context appeared favorable at the time of the Madrid Conference. Why? Describe the reordering of global and regional alignments. What were the primary US motives in the negotiations?
   - How would you characterize the basic model for negotiations at Madrid, as set by the USA and its ‘partners’? Was it practical? Ultimately, what was the main outcome of Madrid?
   - How did Madrid impact upon Palestinian nationalism and the policy of the state of Israel?
   - How did the Clinton administration change international alignments and the configurations for negotiations?
   - What was the basic model or ‘road map’ toward a settlement laid out at Oslo? What were its positive outcomes? Negative?
   - Is it fair to say that Likud’s posture toward peace with the Palestinians was calculated to preserve the status quo?
   - With example of Madrid and the failure of the Oslo Accord to bring about peace, what would you say are some of the benefits and pitfalls of international intervention in the Arab-Israeli conflict?
   - How did the 2nd intifada compare with the 1st?

   - Explain IDF Tactics in the Occupied Territories and the ‘Infrastructure of Terror’ as it developed in the 1990s.
   - What is the psychological impact of occupation upon the Palestinians?
   - What is the psychological impact of occupation upon the Israelis?
   - How do Israeli terrorists justify their actions?
   - How do Palestinian terrorists justify their actions?
   - What is the impact of terrorism on Israeli society?

10. Demographic and Social Problems in Israel and Occupied Territories. Benny Morris, pages 161-201 & Arab and Jew
    - What might be some of the pitfalls of Morris’s solution to the conflict?
    - What proportion of the state resources do Arab Israeli communities receive in comparison to Jewish Israeli communities?
    - What are the typical stereotypes or perceptions that characterize Israelis and Arabs toward the other?
    - What is the worry expressed by the Israelis regarding living alongside Arabs?
    - How has education impacted upon the values of the younger generation?
What is the condition of the Arab in the Israeli social ladder?
Discuss the difference between co-existence and integration. Which is the better model for a country like Israel?
Is cross-cultural dialogue an option in reconciliation or is separation of the communities the more realistic option?

Book Report 2, due March 12.

11. Presentations.
13. Presentations.

Issues, Problems, Solutions
1. Did Palestinian nationalism exist before Zionism? Or is it a product – a reaction – to it? What are the implications for the peace process?
2. What was the impact of successive aliya upon Palestinian-Jewish relations during the Mandate? Which strain of Zionism triumphed?
3. Why did the Arab leadership in Palestine and in the surrounding states consistently fail to seek a compromise that might have assured a bi-national state?
4. Account for the massacres at Dar Yassin and the Hadassah Convoy. Were these calculated acts of terror?
5. Were/Are ‘collective punishments’ a calculated tactic of the Haganah/IDF?
6. Was the idea of “population transfer” a policy or an accidental outcome of the 1948 War?
7. Why did the Israelis resolve against a return of refugees in 1948-1949? What were the arguments and acts supporting this resolve?
8. What were the domestic – cultural and social factors – that helped push events toward war in 1967?
9. How important was the Arab-Israeli conflict in determining inter-Arab politics?
10. Why did Israel not take the historic opportunity to make peace with its Arab neighbors in 1967? What has been the consequence of occupation?
11. How has US foreign policy shaped the Arab-Israeli conflict? For better or worse?
12. How had the intifada affected the organization of Palestinian society and leadership?
13. Trace the evolution of Palestinian nationalism after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza? Has this evolution enhanced the conditions for peace?
14. Describe the Likud’s posture toward peace with the Palestinians. Is it fair to say that all overtures are calculated to preserve the status quo?
15. Describe the significance of a collective mentality or psychology in the perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict.