

Israeli Politics
University of Georgia, Fall Semester 2022
Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 12:40-1:30PM
Room: Caldwell Hall 107

Dr. Eli Sperling

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11:30-12:25, can also schedule Zoom meetings throughout the week, depending on my availability

Office Location: Candler 312

Course Description:

This course explores the Israeli political system's history, social and cultural contexts, institutional characteristics and components, and numerous dilemmas. Amidst Israel's rapidly evolving domestic, regional and global political outlooks *and* upcoming national elections (during the semester!), this course seeks to offer an opportunity to critically engage with scholarly sources and Israeli political discourses. The goal of the semester is to offer students—regardless of prior course work on Israel or the Middle East—the context necessary to understand and analyze events in modern Israeli politics.

Grading structure (out of 100 points total):

- 35% (points) of final grade will be based on a take home final—the exam will consist of two essay questions, to be discussed in detail week 8 of the semester
- 30% (points) of grade will be based on an in-class midterm exam
- 20% (points) of grade will be based on contribution to a group project
- 15% (points) of grade will be based on three written assignments, each no longer than 2-pages, double-spaced. Each writing assignment will be 5 points of total grade.

Grade scale (there is no rounding or curving of assignments or of final grades in this course):

- A 93.00 and above
- A- 90.00 to 92.99
- B+ 87.00 to 89.99
- B 83.00 to 86.99
- B- 80.00 to 82.99
- C+ 77.00 to 79.99
- C 70 to 76.99
- D 65.00 to 69.99
- F 64.99 and below

In-Class Discussion Guidelines:

Civility and respect are essential when engaging in productive academic discourse. All communications for this course should be conducted constructively, civilly, and respectfully. Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this policy to my attention. Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to success in this course, paying particular attention to the following:

- Be respectful of others and their opinions, valuing diversity in perspectives, backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- Challenging ideas, phenomena and the scholars that we engage with is integral to critical thinking and the scholarly process. Please articulate your written and verbal communications carefully and thoughtfully, recognizing that a positive atmosphere of healthy discourse is encouraged.
- It is important to do the reading! We will be discussing nuanced and often complicated circumstances. Being a productive member of in-class discussions means doing the reading and being prepared to talk about those assignments and how they relate to lectures and concepts discussed in class.

Group Project:

The class will be divided into five groups, and each will represent a major political party in Israel. The groups will devise a two-part campaign strategy, with a short video/campaign ad for each component. The first is intended to market to their traditional electoral markets, the second is to garner votes from electoral groups who do not traditionally vote for the party. The groups will present their two videos, explain their reasoning behind the campaign strategies to the class during the last week of class.

Week 1: Introduction

August 17: Syllabus overview, goals and expectations of course

August 19: What is the Israeli political system? How will we analyze its evolution and many moving parts?

- Hazan, Reuven. 2018. Parties and the party system in Israel. in *The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society*— Please read the introduction, available at — https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Oxford_Handbook_of_Israeli_Politics/TPUTEAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1
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- Caramani, Daniele. 2017. “Party Systems” in *Comparative Politics*, fourth edition. Edited by Daniele Caramani. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 224-244—available online https://www.google.com/books/edition/Comparative_Politics/VQfcDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover

Week 2: Zionist political institutions in the Jewish Diaspora, Palestine pre-1948

August 22: What is Nationalism? Zionism? Political Zionism?

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. 1983. Pp. 1-7, 37-47.
- Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Zionist Idea*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997. 15-32.

August 24: Zionist immigration to Palestine, evolution of political institutions

- Mahler, Gregory S. *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State*. Rowman and Littlefield. 2004. pp. 13-42.

August 26: Labor, the Revisionists and the nucleus of the religious-right—bridging the past and the present

- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 3-26.

Week 3: 1948 War—state seeking to state keeping

August 29: 1948 War—context and overview

- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. pp. 155-178

August 31: The Position of the Palestinian Israelis

- Peleg, Ilan, and Dov Waxman. *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. pp. 19-34.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/Israel_s_Palestinians/oIi3BK_mT5YC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover
- Muslih, Muhammad Y. *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*. Columbia University Press, 1988. pp. 1-9.

September 2: The Labor establishment, *Mamlachtiut (statism)*

- Kook, Rebecca. “Changing Representations of National Identity and Political Legitimacy: Independence Day Celebrations in Israel, 1952–1998.” *National Identities*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2005, pp. 151–160.
- Zerubavel, Yael. “The ‘Mythological Sabra’ and Jewish Past: Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities.” *Israel Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2002, pp. 115–144.

Week 4: Jews from Muslim Lands

September 5: No class for Labor Day!

September 7: Israel's population doubles

- Stillman, Norman. *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*. Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976. pp. 328 – 333, 336-342.
- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 222-270.

September 9: Demographic questions, Labor solutions

- Kohavi, Noya. "Why Was the 1965 Beatles Concert in Israel Really Canceled?" *Haaretz*, January 12, 2018, www.haaretz.com/1.5018895
- Chetrit, Sami Shalom. "Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2000, pp. 51–65.
- Shalev, Ben. "The Hardest-Hitting Protest Song Ever Written in Israel." *Haaretz*, June 6, 2018, www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium.MAGAZINE-the-hardest-hitting-protest-song-ever-written-in-israel-1.6152410

Week 5: 1967 War

*We will discuss and schedule in-class presentations this week

September 12: The Lead up to the war, ideational balancing in the region

- Bunch, Clea Lutz. "Strike at Samu: Jordan, Israel, the United States, and the Origins of the Six-Day War." *Diplomatic History*, 32:1 (2008): 55-76.

September 14: June 1967 War

- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. pp. 295–306
- Goldstein, Yossi. "The Six Day War: the war that no one wanted," *Israel Affairs*, 24:5 (August 2018): 767-784.

September 16: The Aftermath

- Ajami, Fouad. "How the 1967 Six-Day War Reshaped the Mideast," *US News and World Report*, June 3, 2007.

Week 6: 1973 War, 1979 Peace with Egypt and a new era in Middle Eastern Politics

September 19: 1973 War and its aftermath

- Blanga, Yehuda. “‘The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming’: American Management of the Crisis Associated with Ending the October 1973 War.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49: 4 (2013): 563-580.
- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. pp. 326–339

September 21: A path to peace built out of war, the ascendancy of Likud

- Menshawy, Mustafa. “Turning ‘Defeat’ into ‘Victory:’ the Power of Discourse on the 1973 War in Egypt.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 52: 6 (2016): 897-916.
- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 340-356.

September 23: 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace and its legacy

- Kenneth W. Stein, “Evolving a Diplomatic Legacy from the October War: The US, Egyptian, and Israeli Triangle,” in Asaf Siniver (ed.), *The October 1973 War Politics, Diplomacy, and Legacy*, London: Hurst and Company, 2013, pp. 209-229.

Week 7: Attempted and Failed Diplomacy amidst the first intifada and Gulf War, Shas and a new Israeli political landscape

September 27: First Intifada, first Gulf War, US-Israel ties

- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 391-421.

September 29: Madrid, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Bush 41

- Scott B Lasensky. “Friendly Restraint: US-Israel Relations During the Gulf Crisis of 1990-1991, Rubin Center, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol 3, No. 2 (June 1999), pp. 24-35.

September 31: Oslo Accords, Netanyahu’s opposition, & Palestinian-Israeli outlooks

- Rekhess, Eli. “The Arabs of Israel After Oslo: Localization of the National Struggle.” *Israel Studies* 7:3 (2002): 1-44.

Week 8: The Death of Labor

October 3: Camp David II

- Rynhold, Jonathan. “Making Sense of Tragedy: Barak, the Israeli Left and the Oslo Peace Process.” *Israel Studies Forum* 19:1 (Fall 2003): 9-33.

October 5: A final swing to the right

- Aronoff, Myron J. “The Americanization of Israeli Politics: Political and Cultural Change.” *Israel Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2000, pp. 92–127.

October 7: The setting of the stage for the Second Intifada, in-class recap for midterm

Week 9: Midterm! Movie....

October 10: Midterm

October 12: Movie (Men on the Edge: Fishermen's Diary Pt 1)

October 14: Movie (Men on the Edge: Fishermen's Diary Pt 2)

Week 10: Ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence, Gulf and American interventions

October 17: The Intifada rages, Likud pursues hard power solutions

- Shamir, Jacob, and Khalil Shiqaqi. *Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada*. Indiana University Press, 2010. pp. 64-89.

October 19: The Arab Peace Initiative

- Kostiner, Joseph. “Saudi Arabia and the Arab–Israeli Peace Process: The Fluctuation of Regional Coordination.” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2009, pp. 417–429., <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530190903338946>.

October 21: “The Status Quo”

- Zaha Hassan, Daniel Levy, Hallaamal Keir and Marwan Muasher, "Breaking the Israel-Palestine Status Quo," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31132>

Week 11: Gaza-Israel conflicts, overlap with Israeli demographic/electoral tensions

October 24: Withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas-PA violence

- Rynhold, Jonathan, and Dov Waxman. “Ideological Change and Israel's Disengagement from Gaza.” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 123, no. 1, 2008, pp. 11–37.

October 26: The Wars, Iron Dome and the politics of political violence in the periphery

- Levy, Yagil. “The Gaza Fighting: Did Israel Shift Risk from Its Soldiers to Civilians?” *Middle East Policy*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2017, pp. 117–132.

October 28: No Class—Fall break!

Week 12: Why so many elections?

October 31: Elections, tomorrow! We will have an in class activity

- Please read—Ofer Kenig, "How do Israeli Parties Choose Their Candidates," Israel Democracy Institute, August 2022, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/39528>
- For activity, read English-language (or Hebrew, Arabic if you can) press coverage from Israel about national elections—bring with you to class a bulleted summary of three articles, be ready to discuss your outlooks for elections based on those articles.

November 2: Today's electoral map in Israel

- Tamar Hermann, Or Anabi, Yaron Kaplan, "Israelis Say They Base Their Vote on Party's Economic Platform," Israel Democracy Institute, August 2022, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/39510>
- Bareli, Avi. "Hierarchy, Representation, and Inclusion in a Reflective Democratic Culture: Conflicting Perspectives in Israel's Nascent Years." *Israel Studies* 22.1 (2017): 139-64.

November 4: Palestinian Israeli parties—watch episode of "Arab Labor"

- Cohen-Almagor, Raphael and Cohen-Almagor, Raphael, *Israel as an Ethnic Democracy: Palestinian Citizens and the Fight for Equal Rights* (August 6, 2021). Berkley Forum 2021, <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3900711>
- Nasreen Haddad Haj-Yahya, Muhammed Khalaily, Arik Rudnitzky, Ben Fargeon, "Statistical Report on Arab Society in Israel: 2021," Israel Democracy Institute, March 2022, <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/38540>

Week 13: The Abraham Accords, prospects for regional and global alliances

November 7: Saudi-Israel relations in a new era

- Podeh, Elie. "Saudi Arabia and Israel: From Secret to Public Engagement, 1948–2018." *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 72, no. 4, 2018, pp. 563–586.
- Watch three-part *al-Arabiya* interview with Saudi Prince Bandar Bin-Sultan, "Prince Bandar bin Sultan on Israel, Palestine and Washington," *Al-Arabiya News*, October 5, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edKZbu5OM1c> — to be discussed in class.

November 9: Bilateral deals, cultural diplomacy

- "Pitching Abraham's Tent: The Human Dimension of UAE-Israeli Normalization," <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Pitching-Abrahams-Tent-The-Human-Dimension-of-UAE-Israeli-Normalization-An-Atlantic-Council-INSS-Emirati-Policy-Center-report-working-group-Chaired-by-Yoel-Guzansky.pdf>
- Aida Alami, "Bridging Time, Distance and Distrust, With Music," New York Times, March 26, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/world/middleeast/israel-singer-elkayam-morocco.html>

November 11: The regional politics of tech—defense and drought

- Evron, Yoram. "4IR Technologies in the Israel Defense Forces: Blurring Traditional Boundaries." *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2020, pp. 1–22.
- Dany Zaken, "Israel, UAE to cooperate on clean hydroelectricity," *al-Monitor*, March 23, 2022, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/03/israel-uae-cooperate-clean-hydroelectricity>

Week 14: Israel looks to the East

November 14: Israel-China

- Efron, Shifra, Howard J. Shatz, Arthur Chan, Emily Haskel, Lyle J. Morris, Andrew Scobell, *The Evolving Israel-China Relationship*, Rand 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2641.html

November 16: Israel-Japan

- Brummer, Matthew and Eitan Oren, "Israel and Japan's Rising Sun Relations," *Foreign Affairs*, July 28, 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/japan/2017-07-28/israel-and-japans-rising-sun-relations>
- Charles, Dani. Dani Charles, "Chutzpah meets Monozukuri: A Look at the Japanese-Israeli Cyber Relationship," *Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA*, September 24, 2019. <https://spfusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Chutzpah-meets-Monozukuri-FINAL-1.pdf>

November 18: Israeli-India

- India Defense News, "India, Israel sign cultural agreement to further strengthen people-to-people ties," India Defense News, August 22, 2020. www.indiandefensenews.in/2020/08/india-israel-sign-cultural-agreement-to.html

- Pethiyagoda, Kadir. “Is it time for India to play a role in Israeli-Palestinian peace?” Brookings Institution, February 22, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/02/22/is-it-time-for-india-to-play-a-role-in-israeli-palestinian-peace/>

Week 15: Campaign video presentations +

November 28: In class presentations

November 30: In class presentations

December 2: Last in class presentations, group discussion of the project

Last day of class:

December 5—What may the future hold for Israel’s local, regional and global outlooks? Also, we will talk through the take home final, which be released after this session. We will prep for the final throughout the semester.