Dr. Eli Sperling  
Email: eli.sperling@uga.edu  
Office Hours: Monday 10:00am-12:30PM, Zoom meetings can also be scheduled throughout the week, depending on my availability—email to inquire.  
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Scheme</th>
<th>Grade Composition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 93-100</td>
<td>Quizzes/writing assignments: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-: 90-92</td>
<td>Group Presentation: 15%</td>
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<td>B+: 87-89</td>
<td>Midterm: 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B: 83-86</td>
<td>In class attendance and participation: 20%</td>
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<td>B-: 80-82</td>
<td>Take home Final paper: 35%</td>
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<td>C+: 77-79</td>
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<td>C: 73-76</td>
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<td>C-: 70-72</td>
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<td>D+: 67-69</td>
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<td>D: 63-66</td>
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<td>D-: 60-62</td>
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<td>F: 00-59</td>
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Assignments:  
Quizzes:  
There will be 3-5 pop quizzes and about the readings, course content during the semester
Short writing assignments:
There will be two short group writing assignments.

Presentation:
Students in the course will be divided into groups during the first half of the semester. During the last two weeks of the semester, each group will give a 20 minute presentation—details will be discussed in the first weeks of the semester.

Participation:
Students should regularly attend class, having read all the required readings. They should be prepared to both pose and answer questions about the readings and engage in discussion on the broader subject matter.

Midterm Exam:
Midterm exam covering the topics in the course so far.

Final Paper
The final paper topic will relate to students’ group assignments, the countries they study during the semester for their presentation. Further instructions about the final paper will be discussed in the second half of the semester.

Policies:

Academic Integrity
Every student must agree to abide by UGA's academic honesty policy and procedures known as A Culture of Honesty and the University of Georgia Student Honor Code, which work together to define a climate of academic honesty and integrity at the university.

Special Needs
This course is guided by the assumption of dignity and respect for all persons in the classroom. My hope is to support diversity of learners and to provide a non-threatening environment. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of classes), and make sure that you have contacted the Disability Resource Center: http://drc.uga.edu

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.

**Required books:**


**Week 1: Introduction**

August 16: Syllabus overview, goals and expectations of course

August 18: What is the Israeli political system? How will we analyze its evolution and many moving parts?

- August 19: What is the Israeli political system? How will we analyze its evolution and many moving parts?
  - Caramani, Daniele. 2017. “Party Systems” —alternative text, uploaded as PDF

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


August 23: Zionist immigration to Palestine, evolution of political institutions

August 25: Labor, the Revisionists and the nucleus of the religious-right—bridging the past and the present


Week 3: 1948 War—state seeking to state keeping

August 28: 1948 War—context and overview (Presentation groups assigned, first assignment—to be presented in class on Sept. 21)


August 30: The Position of the Palestinian Israelis


September 1: The Labor establishment, Mamlachtiut (statism)


Week 4: Jews from Muslim Lands

September 4: No class for Labor Day!

September 6: Israel’s population doubles


September 8: Demographic questions, Labor solutions


**Week 5: 1967 War**

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

September 11: The Lead up to the war, ideational balancing in the region


September 13: June 1967 War


September 15: The Aftermath


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

September 18: 1973 War and its aftermath


September 20: A path to peace built out of war, the ascendancy of Likud


September 22: 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace and its legacy


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

September 25: First Intifada, first Gulf War, US-Israel ties


September 27: Madrid, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Bush 41


September 29: Oslo Accords, Netanyahu’s opposition, & Palestinian-Israeli outlooks


**Week 8: The Death of Labor**

October 2: Camp David II


October 4: A final swing to the right

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

**Week 9: Midterm! Movie…**

October 9: Midterm

October 11: Movie (Men on the Edge: Fishermen's Diary Pt 1)

October 13: Movie (Men on the Edge: Fishermen's Diary Pt 2)

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

October 16: The Intifada rages, Likud pursues hard power solutions (1-2 page paper assigned, due a week later before class begins—prompt will be sent after class)


October 18: The Arab Peace Initiative


October 20: “The Status Quo”


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

October 23: Withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas-PA violence


October 25: The Wars, Iron Dome and the politics of political violence in the periphery


October 27: No Class—Fall break!
**Week 12: Why so many elections?**

October 30: 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](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 1: 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](https://en.idi.org.il/articles/39510)


November 3: Palestinian Israeli parties—watch episode of “Arab Labor”


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

November 6: Saudi-Israel relations in a new era (1-2 page paper assigned, due a week later before class begins—prompt will be sent after class)


- 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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edKZbu5OM1c) — to be discussed in class.

November 8: Bilateral deals, cultural diplomacy


November 10: The regional politics of tech—defense and drought


**Week 14: Israel looks to the East**

November 13: Israel-China


November 15: Israel-Japan


November 17: Israeli-India


Happy thanksgiving!

**Week 15: Campaign video presentations +**

November 27: In class presentations

November 29: In class presentations

December 1: In class presentations, group discussion of the project

**Last day of class, December 4:** 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.