

**Israeli Politics/INTL4371**  
**University of Georgia, Fall Semester 2024**  
**Tuesday/Thursday: 2:20-3:35PM**  
**Room: Caldwell Hall 102**

**Dr. Eli Sperling**

Email: [eli.sperling@uga.edu](mailto:eli.sperling@uga.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:00-12:00pm, 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.

**Grade Scheme**

A: 93-100

A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89

B: 83-86

B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79

C: 73-76

C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69

D: 63-66

D-: 60-62

F: 00-59

**Grade Composition**

Quizzes/writing assignments: 10%

Group Presentation: 15%

Midterm: 20%

In class attendance and participation: 20%

Take home Final paper: 35%

**Assignments:**

**Quizzes:**

There will be period 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:**

Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. **This book is available in its digital format for free/open source on the UGA Library website.**

\*Changes to the syllabus during the semester are subject to the instructor's discretion.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

August 15: Syllabus overview, goals and expectations of course

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

August 20: What is the Israeli political system? How will we analyze its evolution and many moving parts?

- Edit Hazan, Reuven Y., and Gideon Rahat. "Israeli Party Politics." *Party Politics*, vol. 14, no. 6, 2008, pp. 659–661. (uploaded as PDF)
- Caramani, Daniele. 2017. "Party Systems" —alternative text, uploaded as PDF

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.

### **Week 3: 1948 War—state seeking to state keeping**

August 27: Zionist immigration to Palestine, evolution of political institutions and ideologies

- Mahler, Gregory S. *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State*. Rowman and Littlefield. 2004. pp. 13-42
- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 3-26.

August 29: 1948 War, the Labor establishment, and *Mamlachtiut (statism)*

- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. pp. 155-178
- 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 and the 1950s**

September 3: 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/oli3BK\\_mT5YC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Israel_s_Palestinians/oli3BK_mT5YC?hl=en&gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover)
- Muslih, Muhammad Y. *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*. Columbia University Press, 1988. pp. 1-9.

September 5: 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.

#### **Week 5: The 1960s**

September 10: 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](http://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](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-the-hardest-hitting-protest-song-ever-written-in-israel-1.6152410)

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.
- Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. pp. 295–306

### **Week 6: June 1967 War and its Aftermath**

September 17: The June 1967 War

- Goldstein, Yossi. "The Six Day War: the war that no one wanted," *Israel Affairs*, 24:5 (August 2018): 767-784.
- "The end of Nasserism: How the 1967 War opened new space for Islamism in the Arab world," Brookings, June 5, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/06/05/the-end-of-nasserism-how-the-1967-war-opened-new-space-for-islamism-in-the-arab-world/>

September 19: The aftermath of the War, midterm preparation

### **Week 7:**

September 24: MIDTERM!

September 26: Movie

### **Week 8: 1973 War, 1979 Peace with Egypt and a new era in Middle Eastern Politics**

October 1: 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

*NO Class on October 3, Jewish Holiday of Rosh Ha'Shana*

### **Week 9: War, Diplomacy, and the Death of Labor**

October 8: 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.
- 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.

October 10: 1982 Lebanon War, First Intifada

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

### **Week 10: The First Gulf War, New Diplomatic Horizons**

October 15: First Gulf War, 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.

October 17: The Oslo Accords

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

### **Week 11: Ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence, Gulf states and American interventions, Rabin’s Assassination and Netanyahu’s First Rise**

October 22: Netanyahu’s opposition, Palestinian-Israeli outlooks, and Camp David II

- Watch “Netanyahu At War,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W-xxpXzAC0> — come to class ready to discuss
- 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 24: The Second Intifada, Likud pursues hard power solutions to Israeli security threats

- Shamir, Jacob, and Khalil Shiqaqi. *Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada*. Indiana University Press, 2010. pp. 64-89.
- Rynhold, Jonathan, and Dov Waxman. “Ideological Change and Israel's Disengagement from Gaza.” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 123, no. 1, 2008, pp. 11–37.

## **Week 12: Palestinian Elections, Gaza-Israel conflicts, overlap with Israeli demographic/electoral tensions**

October 29: The Gaza Wars, Iron Dome and domestic shifts in Israeli domestic politics

- 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.
- 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>
- 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>

October 31: Today's electoral map in Israel—why so many elections since 2019?

- 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>
- 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>
- 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 new regional alliances**

November 5: No Class—go vote!!!

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.
- "Pitching Abraham's Tent: The Human Dimension of UAE-Israeli Normalization," <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Pitching-Abrahams->

## **Week 14: Global alliances, challenges and opportunities**

November 12: The 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>

November 14: Israel- China, Japan and India relations

- 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](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2641.html)
- 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>

## **Week 15:**

November 19: Presentations!

November 21: Presentations!

## **Week 16: A look to the future**

November 26: Presentations!

*Enjoy your Thanksgiving break!*

## **Conclusion: A look to the future**

December 3: What may the future hold for Israel’s local, regional, and global political outlooks? ***Prompt for final paper will be posted at the close of class***



