

**INTL4780—Spring 2025**  
**U.S.-Israeli Relationship**  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:45-14:00

**Instructor:**

Dr. Eli Sperling  
Office: 312 Candler  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:15 am - 12:15 pm  
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**Course Overview:**

Since the early 20th century, both Republican and Democratic administrations have had complex relationships with the Zionist movement in Palestine and, after its establishment in 1948, the state of Israel. Despite tensions and varying approaches, U.S.-Israeli strategic ties deepened in the late 1960s, leading to a set of norms that have generally shaped American policy toward Israel and the broader Middle East, regardless of who occupies the White House. However, shifting political landscapes in Israel, the U.S., and the Middle East have recently challenged aspects of this relationship, raising questions about its future. This course will provide an engaging exploration of the past, present, and potential future of the U.S.-Israel relationship, drawing from scholarly, journalistic, cultural, and other sources.

**Required Texts:**

- Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019.
- Gilboa, Eytan, and Efraim Inbar. *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges after 9/11*. Routledge, 2009.
- Additional readings will be available on ELC and at the library.
- **Grading:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Grade Composition</b>
A	93-100	Quizzes: 10%
A-	90-92	Group Presentation: 15%
B+	87-89	Participation and attendance: 20%
B	83-86	Midterm Exam: 20%
B-	80-82	Final Paper: 35%
C+	77-79	
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	

<b>Grade Percent</b>	<b>Grade Composition</b>
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D 63-66	
D- 60-62	
F 00-59	

### **Assignments:**

#### **Quizzes:**

There will be two quizzes based on the readings throughout the semester.

#### **Short Writing Assignments:**

Two short writing assignments will be required.

#### **Group Presentation:**

Students will be divided into pairs midway through the semester. Each group will research and present on a core issue in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Presentations will take place during the last three weeks of the semester and will be 20 minutes long. More details will be provided in the first weeks of the semester.

#### **Participation:**

Students are expected to regularly attend class, having completed the required readings. Participation includes asking and answering questions, and engaging in class discussions on the broader subject matter.

#### **Midterm Exam:**

A midterm exam will cover the topics discussed in the course up to that point.

#### **Final Paper:**

The final paper will relate to the group presentation topic. Instructions for the paper will be provided in the second half of the semester.

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### **Policies:**

#### **Academic Integrity:**

All students must adhere to UGA's academic honesty policy, which is outlined in *A Culture of Honesty* and the University of Georgia Student Honor Code.

#### **Special Needs:**

This course promotes dignity and respect for all students. If you require accommodations based on a disability, please contact me privately to discuss your needs. Early communication is encouraged, preferably within the first week of classes, to ensure appropriate accommodations can be made. You should also contact the Disability Resource Center at: <http://drc.uga.edu>.

### **In-Class Discussion Guidelines:**

Civility and respect are crucial in academic discourse. Differences in opinions are expected, and all communications should be constructive and respectful. Please alert me to any issues regarding inappropriate communication. Active participation is key to success in this course, which includes being prepared by doing the readings and engaging in discussions.

**Class Schedule and Readings:** This is a tentative schedule; changes will be made/posted to ELC during the semester.

- **January 7:** Review the Syllabus
- **January 9:** The United States and Israel
  - Elizabeth Stephens, *US Policy Towards Israel: The Role of Political Culture in Defining the 'Special Relationship'*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2006. Introduction.
  - *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Introduction.
- **January 14:** Israel and the United States
  - Eli Sperling, *Singing the Land: Hebrew Music and Early Zionism in America*. University of Michigan Press, 2024. Introduction.
- **January 16:** US Interests in the Middle East
  - Samuel Lewis, *The United States and Israel: Constancy and Change*, in William Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1988, pp. 217-57.
- **January 21:** Truman, American Jews, and Israel
  - Michael Ottolenghi, *Harry Truman's Recognition of Israel*, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2004), pp. 963-988.
- **January 23:** What is American Zionism in the early 1950s?
- **January 28:** 1956 Suez Crisis
  - Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 222-270.
- **January 30:** The Cold War, Nuclear Weapons, and Kennedy
  - David Tal, *Symbol or Substance? Israel's Campaign to Acquire Hawk Missiles, 1960-1962*. *International History Review* (Canada), Vol. XXII no. 2, (June 2000), pp. 304-317.
- **February 4:** Political and Social Divides
  - Little, Douglas, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and Israel, 1957-68*. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1993): 563-585.
  - Chetrit, Sami Shalom. *Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative*. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, 2000, pp. 51-65.
- **February 6:** June 1967.
  - 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.
- **February 11:** What changes/what does not after 1967?
  - Noam Kochavi, *Joining the Conservative Brotherhood: Israel, President Nixon, and the Political Consolidation of the Special Relationship*. *Cold War History*, Vol. 8, No. 4, November 2008, pp. 449-480.
- **February 13:** October 1973 and the transition towards Carter
  - 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.
  - 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.
- **February 18:** The Camp David Accords
  - Quandt, William B. *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1986, Introduction.
  - Stein, Kenneth W. *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace*. London: Routledge, 1999. Chapter 7.
- **February 20:** U.S.-Israeli Relations in the Reagan Era
  - Ben-Zvi, Abraham. *The Reagan Administration and the Palestinian Question: The First Step Towards the Dialogue with the PLO*. *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1995): 149-164.
- **February 25:** George H.W. Bush and the First Gulf War
  - Telhami, Shibley. *Power and Leadership in International Bargaining: The Path to the Camp David Accords*. Columbia University Press, 1990. Chapter 5.
  - Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 8.
- **February 27:** The Oslo Accords
  - Quandt, William. *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2001, Chapter 12.
- **March 4:** The Clinton Years
  - Indyk, Martin. *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster, 2009. Chapter 6.
- **March 6:** U.S.-Israel Relations during the Second Intifada
  - Kurtzer, Daniel C. *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East*. United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008. Chapter 4.
  - Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 10.

**March 11:** Midterm Exam

- **March 13:** The Bush Doctrine and Israel
  - Michael Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2007. Chapter 10.
  - Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 11.
- **March 18:** U.S.-Israel Relations under Obama
  - Goldberg, Jeffrey. *The Obama Doctrine*. *The Atlantic*, April 2016.
  - Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 12.
- **March 20:** Israel's Relations with the Arab States
  - Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. New York: Norton, 2014. Chapter 16.
  - Kupchan, Charles. *The Abraham Accords: A Turning Point in the Middle East*. *Foreign Affairs*, 2020.
- **March 25:** U.S.-Israel Relations
  - Ross, Dennis. *Be Strong and of Good Courage: How Israel's Most Important Leaders Shaped Its Destiny*. Public Affairs, 2019. Chapter 10.
  - Freedman, Robert. *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 13.
- **March 27:** U.S.-Israel Relations: Current Issues and Future Challenges
  - Michael Doran, *The Real Obama Doctrine*. *Foreign Affairs*, April 2015.
  - Indyk, Martin. *Master of the Game: Henry Kissinger and the Art of Middle East Diplomacy*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2021. Chapter 12.
- **April 1:** The Obama Doctrine
  - Menachem Klein, *An Arab Spring and an Israeli Winter?* 2013, pp. 400-420.
  - 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.
- **April 3:** From Obama's Cairo Speech to the JCPOA
  - Carmit Valensi and Udi Dekel. *The Current Challenges in the Middle East Demand a Joint United States-Israel Strategy*. *Strategic Assessment*, Vol 19, No.1, 2016, pp. 25-39.
  - *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 8.
- **April 8:** Trump's Presidency
  - Pew Research Center. *American and Israeli Jews: Twin Portraits From Pew Research Center Surveys*, January 24, 2017, Pew Research.
  - Wang, Yu. *Israel-China Relations in the Trump Era*. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2020, pp. 277-300.
- **April 10:** Christian Zionism

- Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo77sTGpngQ>
- *Israel and the United States: Six Decades of US-Israeli Relations*. Routledge, 2019. Chapter 11.
- **April 15:** Bibi-Biden
  - Eilam, Ehud. *The Relations between the United States, Israel, and Iran. Israeli Strategies in the Middle East*, 2022, pp. 137-167.
  - *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges after 9/11*, pp. 196-232.
- **April 17:** What is next during Trump's second term?
  - *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges after 9/11*, pp. 233-249.
- **April 22:** Presentations
- **April 24:** Presentations

**Final paper due May 4 by 5:00PM**