

INTL4780—Spring 2026
U.S.-Israeli Relationship
Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:15-14:00

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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. Available as an ebook on the UGA library website: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=f40f1fdc-6a2a-3d41-9f07-9eb5a66424d7>
- Gilboa, Eytan, and Efraim Inbar. *US-Israeli Relations in a New Era: Issues and Challenges after 9/11*. Routledge, 2009. Available as an ebook on the UGA library website: <https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=f0106880-70a6-3975-8fbb-3e1ce667769a>

Grading 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

Grade Composition

Quizzes and writing assignments: 15%
Group Presentation: 15%
Attendance and Participation: 20%
Midterm: 20%
Final exam: 30%

Assignments

Quizzes and writing assignments:

There will be period quizzes on course topics and readings **and** two writing assignments with your groups.

Group Presentation:

Students will be divided into 8 groups. Each group will represent a different state or non-state actor in the region. 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 Exam:

Final exam covering major themes, topics, and concepts from the entire 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.

Use of generative AI:

Use of generative AI (i.e. ChatGPT, Perplexity AI, Claude etc.) is permitted only when explicitly allowed for specific assignments. When used, students must cite it appropriately and clearly indicate how it contributed to their work through a “Generative AI Disclosure” placed at the beginning of the assignment it was used for. Unauthorized or undisclosed use of AI tools will be treated as academic misconduct. If you're unsure whether AI use is allowed, ask before proceeding.

Attendance:

- You are allowed up to 3 unexcused absences without penalty. After that, each additional unexcused absence will lower your attendance/participation grade by 5 points. Excused

absences (i.e. illness, family emergency, religious observance, university-sponsored activity) must be documented and communicated to me in advance or as soon as possible. You will have up to five days after an illness to provide a doctor's note.

- If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain any missed material or announcements from a classmate or the course website.

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 an inclusive 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.

Course schedule—session descriptions and reading assignments

*This is a tentative schedule; changes will be made/posted to ELC during the semester.

- **January 13:** Review the Syllabus
- **January 15:** 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 20:** Israel and the United States
 - Eli Sperling, *Singing the Land: Hebrew Music and Early Zionism in America*. University of Michigan Press, 2024. Introduction.
- **January 22:** 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 27:** What is American Zionism in the early 1950s?
- **January 29:** 1956 Suez Crisis
 - Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Boston: Brandeis UP, 2012. Pp. 222-270.
- **February 3:** 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 5:** 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 10:** 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 12:** 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 17:** 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 19:** No class!
- **February 24:** 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 26:** 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.
- **March 3:** Midterm!
- **March 5:** The Oslo Accords
 - Quandt, William. *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2001, Chapter 12.
- **Spring Break!**
- **March 17:** The Clinton Years
 - Indyk, Martin. *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Simon & Schuster, 2009. Chapter 6.
- **March 19:** 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 24:** 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 26:** 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 31:** Israel's Relations with the Arab States
 - 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.
 - Kupchan, Charles. *The Abraham Accords: A Turning Point in the Middle East*. *Foreign Affairs*, 2020.
- **April 2:** U.S.-Israel Relations Amid Bilateral Tensions/The Obama Doctrine/JCPOA

- 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 7:** Trump's First 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 9:** 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 14:** 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 16:** Gaza
 - "How Americans View the Israel-Hamas Conflict 2 Years Into the War," <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/10/03/how-americans-view-the-israel-hamas-conflict-2-years-into-the-war/>
 - "32% in U.S. Back Israel's Military Action in Gaza, a New Low," <https://news.gallup.com/poll/692948/u.s.-back-israel-military-action-gaza-new-low.aspx>
- **April 21:** Bibi Trump 2.0
 - "U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts," <https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts>
 - "Israel: Major Issues and U.S. Relations" <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R44245>
- **April 23:** Presentations!
- **April 17:** Presentations!
- **April 22:** Presentations!
- **April 24:** What may come next?