History 901: Zionism and Its Critics  
(Spring 2017)

Tuesdays, 3:30-5:15  
Humanities 2261

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Course Description
In the late-19th century, Jews in a number of countries initiated a movement for the creation of a Jewish homeland of some kind in Palestine, then part of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Known as Zionism, this movement eventually led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Zionists ranged across the political spectrum from left to right. There were multiple forms of Zionism, sometimes mutually antagonistic, that pursued various strategies and goals. Throughout its history, Zionism also generated fierce criticism from many quarters within and outside the Jewish community. Much was at stake in debates between Zionists and their critics, and among Zionists themselves: the fate of Jews in increasingly perilous countries; the future of empires in the Middle East; the prospects of Arab nationalism in Palestine; and other critical issues. This seminar explores the history of the Zionist movement—its ideas and politics—in relation to its critics from multiple perspectives. Its geographic scope covers Europe, Palestine, and the United States up to 1948. In its broadest frame, the seminar is about the clash between nationalism, socialism, and liberalism through the case of the Jews as they became entangled with nation-states, empires, and revolutions from the mid-19th century to the mid-20 century.

Requirements
Active participation is crucial. I urge you to take risks, test ideas, and raise questions regardless of whether you’re convinced you are “right.” A successful seminar is one with lively, probing, freewheeling conversation.

Each student is expected to present readings during the semester. Your presentations should succinctly summarize the authors’ arguments and identify what you believe to be the most important issues for discussion. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes in length.

Finally, you are required to write two papers during the semester. The first should be a 10-page analysis of a given week’s readings and will be due two weeks after those readings are assigned. (For instance, if you want to write on week four’s readings, your paper will be due in week six.) Your second paper is due on May 11.
It should be 15 pages in length and address a particular historiographic issue, theme, question, or problem. I encourage you to speak with me outside of class about your final paper topic.

Readings

Jan. 17: Introduction

Jan. 24: Nationalism in Historical and Theoretical Perspective

Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., Mapping the Nation (Verso, 1996), following chapters:

Jan. 31: Jews in Modern Europe


Feb. 7: The Rise of the Mass Politics
Frankel, Prophecy and Politics, pp. 49-363.

Feb. 14: Class cancelled
Note: You have two weeks to read the following two books, which are best discussed together.

Feb. 21: Political Zionism and Its Zionist Critics


**Feb. 28: Marxists and “The Jewish Question”**


**March 7: Varieties of Jewish Nationalism and Anti-Nationalism in Eastern Europe**


**March 14: Left vs. Right in Palestine**


**March 21: Spring Break**
March 28: Zionists and Arabs in Palestine


April 4: class cancelled

April 11: Palestinian Nationalism


April 18: The Americanization of Zionism


April 25: Roads Not Taken


May 2: American Jews and Foreign Policy