

**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

E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), entire book. (Available electronically through Memorial Library.)

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

- *Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," pp 1-16.
- *Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe," pp. 78-97.
- *Ernest Gellner, "The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class," pp. 98-145.
- *John Breuilly, "Approaches to Nationalism," pp. 146-174.
- *Anthony D. Smith, "Nationalism and the Historians," pp. 175-197.
- *Gopal Balakrishnan, "The National Imagination," pp. 198-213.
- *Partha Chatterjee, "Whose Imagined Community?" pp. 214-225.

Jan. 31: Jews in Modern Europe

John Efron, Steven Weitzman, et. al., *The Jews: A History* (Prentice Hall, 2009), pp. 260-405.

Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer" in *Paths to Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, eds. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 3-36.

Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism & the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 1-48.

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

Shlomo Avineri, *Herzl's Vision: Theodor Herzl and the Foundation of the Jewish State* (BlueBridge, 2014), entire book. [Available electronically through Memorial Library.]

Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford Univ. Press, 2013). [Available electronically through Memorial Library.]

Feb. 28: Marxists and “The Jewish Question”

Enzo Traverso, *The Marxists and the Jewish Question: The History of a Debate, 1843-1943*, trans. Bernard Gibbons (Humanities Press, 1994), pp. 1-91, 129-150.

Jack Jacobs, *On Socialists and “The Jewish Question” after Marx* (New York Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 1-117.

Elissa Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* (Indiana Univ. Press, 2013), pp. 1-12, 31-80. [Available electronically through Memorial Library.]

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

Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars* (Indiana Univ. Press, 1983), pp. 1-83, 171-239.

Kenneth B. Moss, “Negotiating Jewish Nationalism in Interwar Warsaw,” in *Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis*, eds. Glenn Dynner and Francois Guesnet (Brill, 2015), pp. 390-434.

Samuel D. Kassow, “The Left Poalei Tsiyon in Interwar Poland” in *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), pp. 71-84.

Jaff Schatz, “Jews and the Communist Movement in Interwar Poland” in *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism. Studies in Contemporary Jewry*. XX (2004), pp. 13-37.

March 14: Left vs. Right in Palestine

Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 2012), pp. 3-152. (Available electronically through Memorial Library.)

Mitchell Cohen, *Zion & State: Nation, Class and the Shaping of Modern Israel* (Basil Blackwell, 1987), pp. 1-10, 42-197.

March 21: Spring Break

March 28: Zionists and Arabs in Palestine

Israel Kolatt, "The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," in *Essential Papers on Zionism*, eds. Yehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira, (New York Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 617-647.

Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1992), entire book.

April 4: class cancelled**April 11: Palestinian Nationalism**

Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2003), pp. xxv-131.

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 89-176. [Available electronically through Memorial.]

Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), entire book.

April 18: The Americanization of Zionism

Naomi Weiner Cohen, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 2003), entire book.

Adam Lively, "Continuity and Radicalism in American Black Nationalist Thought, 1914-1929," *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Aug., 1984): 207-235. [Available through JSTOR.]

April 25: Roads Not Taken

Noam Pianko, *Zionism & The Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Indiana Univ. Press, 2010), entire book. [Available electronically through Memorial Library.]

Leslie J. Vaughan, "Cosmopolitanism, Ethnicity and American Identity: Randolph Bourne's 'Trans-National America,'" *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Dec. 1991): 443-459. [Available through JSTOR.]

May 2: American Jews and Foreign Policy

Michael N. Barnett, *The Star and Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2016).