

History 500/Jewish Studies 631: Zionism and Its Critics
Spring 2023
(Tuesdays, 1:20-3:15, Humanities 5257)

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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 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. There were multiple forms of Zionism that pursued competing, sometimes antagonistic strategies and goals. Zionism also generated fierce criticism from various quarters within and beyond the Jewish community. There was much at stake in the debates among Zionists and between Zionists and their critics: the fate of Jews in increasingly perilous countries and empires, the prospects of Arab nationalism in Palestine and the larger region, and other critical issues. This seminar explores Zionism's history in multiple locations from multiple perspectives. Framed most broadly, the seminar explores the interplay between nationalism, socialism, and liberalism through the case of the Jews as they became entangled with nation-states, empires, and revolutions from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Requirements and Grades

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.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION (40% of total grade): I will assess your participation in three ways:

1. a) **General class participation (25%):** You should come to each session prepared for lively and engaged discussion.
2. b) **Discussion leading (10%):** In addition to participating every week, students will lead discussion for the first half of a seminar on TWO OCCASIONS. Take a look at the syllabus to consider the weeks in which you would like to lead discussion. You will send 3 discussion questions by 9am the Friday before the class meets.

3. c) **Quick responses (5%):** Each week, all students should write a response (around 200 words) to one of the central issues posed in the scholarly readings by 9:00 am on the day of class.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS (60% of total grade):

a) **Book Summary (10%):** All students should write a 500-word summary of assigned chapters in Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*. The summary is due on Feb. 21.

b) **Book Review (15%):** There will be one short book review assignment for which you will review Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness*. The essay should be between 1,100 and 1,200 words (the latter is the maximum word count for single book reviews in the *American Historical Review*). The review is due on April 4.

c) **Final Assignment (35%):** For undergraduate students: 2,500-3,500 words; for graduate students: 4,500-4,700 words. The assignment is due on the final day of class, May 2.

Either a second book review or another assignment of your choice. Let's discuss individually.

Outside Lectures

All students are required to attend the lecture by Dr. Keith Kahn-Harris (Leo Baeck College, London) entitled "Assessing the Significance of Left-Wing Antisemitism: Intimacy, Disappointment, and Obsession." It is scheduled for Feb. 28 at 4:00 in the Pyle Center (702 Langdon St).

Graduate students are required to attend three lectures on Hebrew literature (titles forthcoming) by the following scholars:

Dr. Lior Libman (Feb. 14 @ 10:00-11:30)

Dr. Yael Kenan (Feb. 17 @ 10:00-11:30)

Dr. Yaakov Herskovits (Feb. 20 @ 10:00-11:30)

Books

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1997)

Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (Monad Press, 1973)

Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 1995)

Readings

Jan. 24: Introduction

Jan. 31: Origins and Precursors

Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 3-82

*Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem* (1869), pp. 117-139

Feb. 10 (3:00-4:55, location TBD): General Zionism

Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, pp. 85-126

*Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (1896), pp. 201-226

*Ahad Ha'am, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem" (1897), pp. 262-269

Feb. 14: Religion and Zionism

Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, pp. 127-165

*Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, "The Land of Israel," "The War," "The Rebirth of Israel," "Lights for Rebirth" (1910-1930), pp. 424-439

*Nathan Birnbaum, "In Bondage to Our Fellow Jews" (1919)

Feb. 28: Socialist Zionism

Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, pp. 165-235

*Nachman Syrkin, *The Jewish Problem and the Jewish Socialist State* (1898), pp. 9-28

*Ber Borochov, *Our Platform* (1906), pp. 75-103

March 3 (3:00-4:55, location TBD) 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. 1-9, 58-150

*Vladimir Medem, "The Worldwide Jewish Nation" (1911), pp. 105-124

*Vladimir Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question" (1913), pp. 101-121

March 7: Jews on the Brink

Kenneth B. Moss, *An Unchosen People: Jewish Political Reckoning in Interwar Poland* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2021), pp. 1-40, 154-192, 221-253

March 14: Spring Break

March 21: Revisionism and Rights to the Land

Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, pp. 236-266, 333-388

*David Ben-Gurion, *On the Arab Question* (1937), pp. 686-690

*Vladimir Jabotinsky, Evidence Submitted to the Palestine Royal Commission (1937), pp. 557-570

*Martin Buber, "Hebrew Humanism" (1942), pp. 457-463

March 28: Palestinian Nationalism

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 9-88

April 4: Palestinian Nationalism, pt. 2

Khalidi, *The Construction of Modern Nationalist Consciousness*, pp. 89-209

April 11: Arab-Zionist Encounters

Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2014), pp. 1-38, 131-184.

*Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Iron Wall" (1923), pp. 257-263

*Hayim Greenberg, "Jew and Arab" (1934), pp. 304-307

April 18: Jewish Statehood on the International Stage

Jeffrey Herf, *Israel's Moment: International Support for and Opposition to Establishing the Jewish State, 1945-1949* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2022), pp. 1-23, 131-262

*American Council for Judaism, Statement of Policy (1944)

*Hashomer Hatzair, The Case for a Bi-National Palestine (1945)

*The Arab Office in Jerusalem (1946)

*The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (1946)

*Moshe Shertok, "Bi-Nationalism Is Unworkable" (1947)

April 25: Jewish Statehood on the International Stage, pt. 2

Herf, *Israel's Moment*, pp. 263-398, 452-463

*United Nations General Assembly, Resolution on the Future Government of Palestine (Partition Resolution) (Nov. 29, 1947)

*Kermit Roosevelt, "The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics" (1948)

May 2: A Colonial-Settler State?

Derek Penslar, "Is Zionism a Colonial Movement?" in *Colonialism and the Jews*, eds. Ethan B. Katz, Lisa Moses Leff, and Maud S. Mandel (Indiana Univ. Press, 2017), pp. 275-300

Susie Linfield, *The Lions' Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky* (Yale Univ. Press, 2019), pp. 113-39

Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* (Monad Press, 1973), pp. 9-96