“Palestine-Israel” is a name designating a territory between the east shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. The boundaries of this territory have never been settled; its name, its recent history, and almost everything which have taken place within it in the last 130 years have been matters of heated, often violent and bloody, disputes. In addition to the two national movements fighting over this territory, the Jewish (Zionist) and the Palestinian, this piece of land, which, for almost a century knew no peace, is a matter of great concern and a site of ongoing engagement, investment, and entanglement for greater and smaller foreign powers, religious orders, and international organizations.

There is no symmetry between the two main parties involved, except for the fact that both claim to be the rightful inhabitants of the land, who are entitled to exercise their national sovereignty over it, controlling and governing it in parts or as a whole, and both tell its history as its autochthonous children. This course will introduce some of main aspects of this ongoing struggle, its history, and its recurring patterns, while trying to avoid, as much as possible, the two competing national perspectives, which this struggle expresses, but also reproduces and reshapes. Each of these perspectives will be part of what needs to be narrated and explained, not imposed as a framework for the narrative and the explanation at stake.

No course of this kind can exhaust the complexity and richness of the 130 years of struggle over Palestine/the Land of Israel, and account for the numerous actors and multiple timelines and spheres of action involved. A selective approach to this history is therefore necessary. The course will integrate a historical and a structural perspective in order to focus on: a few major events that shaped the two national movements (weeks 4, 7); the two rival nationalist ideologies as they emerged and evolved (weeks 3, 6, 11); the major Zionist projects that transformed Palestine - its landscape, population, and social fabrics (weeks 5, 8, 13); Palestinian modes of resistance to the advance of the Zionist projects (week 9); and a few major fault lines of separation and collaborations between Jews and Palestinians (weeks 10, 12).

**Pedagogic Framework**

The course is designed for advanced undergraduate students, but there are no pre-requisites and all are welcome. Reading materials include obligatory and recommended texts. The obligatory texts are listed according to their priority. In addition to reading and writing, students will have to engage in some active research. Each of the three short response papers required in the course of the semester has to engage one document, which is not included in the reading list and is relevant to the topic discussed when the paper is submitted. Students are
responsible for locating the relevant documents and for submitting the scanned documents together with their papers. Relevant documents may be drawn from any archive, and may include literary texts and visual art works. Further instructions will be given in class. Pending on the size of the class, class presentations and group work will be encouraged with respect to certain topics.

**Goals**

The course is designed to provide students with advanced (and basic, where necessary) acquaintance with the general historical trajectories of Palestine-Israel from 1880 to the present and its major political fault lines; to enable students follow the news from the region, place them in a wider historical and theoretical context, interpret them critically, decipher the conflicting narratives and the interests behind them; and to offer some conceptual tools for understanding the dynamic of the struggle over Palestine and articulating its national, colonial, theological, and international aspects.

**Course Requirements**

Over 14 weeks, students will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (75 minutes twice a week, 35 hours total). Required reading for the course meetings is expected to take up approximately 7.5 hours per week (90 hours in 12 weeks). In addition, researching for and writing of 3 short response papers and one final paper is estimated at total of approximately 55 hours over the course of the term.

**Students’ Obligations, Assignments, and Evaluation:** 1) class attendance and participation (20% of final grade); 3 short (2-3 double spaced) response papers (35% of final grade); final 10-15 page paper (45% of final grade).

**Response papers** should concentrate on one document related to the topic of the week in which it is submitted. The document should be read in light of one or more the texts on the reading list from that week.

**The Final Paper** is a short (12-15 double spaced pages) essay written on one, well framed case study or question, whether historical or theoretical. Outlines for final papers are due on Nov. 1st. Outlines are not graded; my comments and suggestions may be further discussed during office hours. When writing the final paper, however, comments on the outline, as well as on the short papers should be taken into consideration.

**Reading Materials:** Detailed bibliography is assigned for each meeting. Readings include mostly required and some recommended texts. Recommended texts are listed according to their relative importance. Instructions for reading will be given weekly and may reflect students’ interests and questions that will come up in class. The syllabus may be changed slightly to accommodate students’ questions and areas of interest. Most of the texts are available online. *Unmarked texts are available in the course’s website on Canvas; texts marked in red are available through the Rockefeller Library.*
Class Schedule

The First class will take place on 9/11. There will be no class on Thursday 9/6. The date and time for a make-up is yet to be determined.

1. 9/11
   Introduction – Principles for a Selective History

2. 9/13, 9/18  Ottoman Palestine at the Turn of the Twentieth Century


   Joel S. Migdal, and Baruch Kimmerling. The Palestinian People: A History (Harvard University Press 2003), chaps. 2

   Recommended


3. 9/20, 9/24  The Balfour Declaration in its Imperial Context


   Bernard Regan, The Balfour Declaration: empire, the mandate and resistance in Palestine (Verso 2017), chaps. 1-2.

   Recommended


   Bernard Regan, The Balfour Declaration, chap. 5.
4. 9/27, 10/2  Zionism: Ideologies and Institutionalization


Recommended:


5. 10/4, 10/9  Early Zionist Projects: Judaization, Hebraization; Colonization

Arieh Bruce Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew* (Oxford UP 2008), chaps. 3-4


Recommended


Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Palgrave 2010), chap. 1


*White City* (2018), a short film by Dani Gal.
6. 10/11, 10/16 The Emergence of Palestinian Nationalism


**Recommended**


7. 10/18, 10/23 Partitions and Reintegration

*There are two cluster of readings for this week. Each student has to choose two text from one cluster and one for the other.*

A. “Report to the UN General Assembly,” submitted by the second Sub-Committee of the Ad Hoc Committee established to study alternative proposals to the UNSCOP Partition Plan (1947). In Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest*, pp. 645-701.


The Oslo Accords, Declaration of Principle 1993

The Oslo Accords, Interim Agreement 1995

**Recommended**


8. 10/25, 10/30 **Transforming the Landscape**


**Recommended**


9. 11/1, 11/6 **Some Modes of Palestinian Resistance and Struggle**


**Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS**, [https://bdsmovement.net/call](https://bdsmovement.net/call)


**Recommended**


10. **11/8, 11/13 From a “Jewish State” to the “One-State Condition”**

Israel’s Proclamation of Independence, [https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm)  

**Recommended**


11. **11/15, 11/20 Securitization and Messianism: Two Contemporary Forms of Racialization**

Raffaella A. del Sarto, *Israel Under Siege: The Politics of Insecurity and the Rise of Israel Neo Revisionist Right* (Georgetown UP 2017), chap. 1, Conclusion


Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, *Rectifying the State of Israel: A Political Platform Based on Kabbala* (Gal Einai Institute 2003), chaps. 6-8, 12.


**Recommended**

Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *The Lords of the Land* (Nations Books 2007), chap. 4
12. **11/19, 11/27  Technologies of Separations, Modes of Co-existence**

Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir. *The One-State Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine* (Stanford UP 2012), part 1, chap. 3.


Marcelo Svirsky, *Arab-Jewish Activism in Israel Palestine* (Ashgate 2012), chap. 3

**Recommended**


13. **11/29, 12/4  Multiple Palestines**


14. **12/6  Conclusion: Palestine: An Exceptional Example or an Exemplary State of Exception?**

**Some Further Recommendations**

Salim Tamari, *The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine* (University of California Press 2017), chaps. 2-3, 8

