Course Content and Description:

Albert Einstein argued that the purpose of a university education is not to teach students just facts, but to teach them to think. Within this framework, this course will introduce students to the domestic politics and foreign policy of Israel. To this end it is divided into five sections: Section A focuses on the historical ideas and processes, particularly Zionism, that led to the creation of Israel in 1948. Section B explores Israeli society and the various social groups that interact and contest with each other. Section C examines the main structures and processes in Israeli politics, including its political institutions. Section D considers the shape and objectives of Israeli foreign policy. Section E delves into questions about what it means to be Israel, and how “Israel” is interpreted.

Students will note that the underlying thread tying all these sections together is the question of identity: What is Israeli identity? Where does this identity come from? How do different groups perceive and interpret Israeli identity? How do they work to make their preference the dominant one?

It is advisable that students keep up with current developments in Israeli politics. Although this is not a course on current events per se, these will of necessity be part of the class discussions. Students should follow developments by reading on-line Israeli newspapers—such as Ha’aretz, The Jerusalem Post, and ynetnews.com. All can be found in English.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course students will be familiar with the various processes and the norms of interaction between contemporary Middle Eastern actors. To meet these goals the course has the following objectives:
Identify key concepts and theoretical frameworks used for investigating Israeli society and politics, and acknowledge some of the different ideas that shape the study of this state. These will equip us with the appropriate tools for a deeper exploration of contemporary Israel.

Describe the historical and contemporary patterns, structures, processes, and important actors in Israel. This will provide us with the necessary foundation to develop the rest of the discussion.

Understand why current political, security, social, and economic interactions play out the way they do. Building on the previous objective, this takes us into a more in-depth understanding of modern Israel.

Think critically about Israeli politics and policy. It is easy to take a stance on a given issue, but more difficult to defend that stance in a logical manner that rests on a judicious, nuanced, and open-minded foundation of understanding. Learning to think critically allows us to do so.

Connect this knowledge to a better understanding of politics in general, in any region of the world. By sharpening our critical thinking and analytical skills, we can more effectively take on the problems faced by societies everywhere.

**Format:**

The course is conducted within a lecture framework. But class time will be used for general discussions and group work, in order to give students more time to discuss their own ideas and to understand the material through dialogue. Because this is a university course, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, and are encouraged to question and debate with the instructor and each other on the various issues; there is a grade for participation as well. This must be done in a productive and civil manner. Personal attacks and polemics will not be tolerated. The purpose of a freer flow of dialogue is to better understand and absorb the materials covered in class, and offensive actions and ideological or political agendas impede this process. Students who engage in such activities will have to leave the class.

PowerPoint will be used, but only to provide a skeletal outline of the lectures; students must pay attention to and take notes on what is said in class. Otherwise, they will not learn what is necessary for the course and the assignments.

The lectures are based in part on the readings, but will not necessarily directly discuss them; it will be assumed that students have done the readings.

Both the professor and the students have obligations and responsibilities in this course.

My responsibilities include making clear the objectives and material of the course; training students to think critically; returning assignments within a reasonable period of time with adequate comments and suggestions for improvement; treating students with
respect and a willingness to hear their opinions and ideas; and keeping my own personal politics out of the classroom.

Students’ responsibilities include taking seriously the purposes and assignments of the course; preparing themselves adequately for the lectures; handing their assignments in on time; treating each other and the professor with respect and a willingness to hear other opinions and ideas; and a readiness to think about the material with an open mind while keeping their own personal politics out of the classroom.

Students are also responsible for their own attendance and participation in class. Students who do miss class are responsible for obtaining the material discussed in class from their colleagues. I will not provide notes from lectures or discussions, but I am happy to discuss the material with a student who has already obtained the information. Poor attendance and poor participation will reflect on your final grade.

All cell phones, gadgets for listening to music, playing games, or contacting other people, and all similar devices must be turned off prior to the beginning of class. Students who engage in such activities will have to leave the class.

Please note that topics may change or may not be covered, depending on unforeseen circumstances. Any such changes are at the instructor’s discretion. If there are any changes, they will be announced in class; students then are responsible for knowing whether and when any changes have been made.

**Required Readings:**

There are four sources of mandatory readings for this course:


- Book chapters and excerpts and journal articles in pdf format on reserve at the library; book parts are also available as hard copies. Library reserve readings will be referred to as (e-reserves).

- Journal articles available on-line in pdf format, which must be searched for through the library’s catalogue. Library journal article readings will be referred to as (Library).

- Specific URLs available on the course Blackboard. To access these, log in with your UTA NetID and password at <https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/>. Blackboard readings will be referred to as (Blackboard).

- We will also read throughout the course excerpts from Amos Oz’s autobiography, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, trans. by Nicholas de Lange. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt, Inc., 2004. Students are not expected to read these ahead of class time.
Select clips from Israeli films and specific videos/recordings of Israeli music will be viewed and listened to in class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

**Participation.** Students are expected to actively contribute to the conversations that take place within the framework of learning the material. This means asking questions, answering questions, and being part of whatever class discussions, debates, group work, various assignments given apart from the three writing assignments, or other work, are included in the course. It also means contributing to on-line discussions and commentary through the course Blackboard. Participation is **worth 20% of the final grade.**

**Writing assignments.** Students will write three short papers, **each worth 20% of the final grade.** Papers are due on **Wednesday, February 16**, on **Monday, April 11**, and on **Wednesday, May 4**. Each paper is to be **5-8 pages** in length, excluding title page and bibliography; going under or over this range will result in a penalty, as the purpose is to learn how to make an argument in a specified amount of space.

Each paper will be based on a set of themes from the course: Historical ideas and developments, Israeli society and politics, and Israeli foreign policy. The specific nature of the assignments will be announced in class, well in advance of the due date. Examples of assignments could include: analysis of a reading or comparison of two readings; a particular question about a specific topic studied in a section; and so on.

Papers **must be typed or word-processed**, with normal font, spacing, and margins. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. Regardless of the style used, **page numbers must be included in the citations and bibliography.** Papers **must be emailed in**—hard copies will not be accepted. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves. Papers will be returned to students by email, with comments in the text through the Track Changes feature in Word as well as an attached page of remarks. Note that all papers will be reviewed by a plagiarism-detection program: this is not due to a presumption of guilt but rather is used as a teaching tool.

All papers are due by the beginning of class; a paper that is emailed in after class begins will be considered late. Late papers will not be accepted without penalty, unless there is a valid medical excuse and doctor’s note or evidence of another serious and unavoidable reason. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; being sick the day the assignment is due; visiting friends or relatives; having other work. Documentation is always required and is subject to verification. Papers emailed in after class begins, but on the same day the assignment is due, will be **penalized one percentage point per day off the mark received out of the total worth of the assignment, with an additional percentage point taken off for each additional day the report is late** (i.e., 1% per day off whatever grade is given out of 20%). Any requests for an extension must be made
Before the due date of the assignment. Papers will not be accepted later than one week after the due date; students will then receive a zero on the assignment.

Where assignments require research outside of class readings, students must base their research around scholarly sources, which means journal articles, books, and academic reports from well-known research institutes. Students must use at least one book and one journal article in their research for each paper (neither of which can be on the course reading list). Dictionaries, lecture notes, encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), and many websites are not acceptable; students are strongly advised to consult with the professor first to find out if a source is suitable or not. Sources containing basic background information (e.g., the CIA World Factbook) and media reports are not scholarly sources; but they are useful for providing empirical evidence for an argument.

Students are expected to use proper format, structure, grammar, and citations in all of their assignments; how students make their arguments is as important as what they argue. If a student hands in an assignment that does not meet these standard university requirements, she will have to re-submit the assignment with the requisite changes and a penalty. For technical material, see Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), sixth edition or later; the course Blackboard also has links on citations and bibliographies. Students may also consult the professor for further help.

Simulation prep paper. In order to prepare for the simulation that will be conducted in class, each student will submit, independently, a prep paper 5-10 pages in length. The prep paper is worth 10% of the final grade and is due at the beginning of class on Monday, March 28. Given the nature of this assignment, papers will not be accepted after class begins, and there will be no extensions on this assignment. The purpose of this paper is to prepare and familiarize students with their particular party/role. The prep papers will be discussed in greater detail in class. Students should bring two copies of their prep paper to class on March 28: one to hand in, and one to rely on during the simulation.

Prep papers must be typed or word-processed, with normal font, spacing, and margins. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. Regardless of the style used, page numbers must be included in the citations and bibliography. Prep papers must be emailed in—hard copies will not be accepted. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves. Papers will be returned to students by email, with comments in the text through the Track Changes feature in Word as well as an attached page of remarks. Note that all prep papers will be reviewed by a plagiarism-detection program: this is not due to a presumption of guilt but rather is used as a teaching tool.

Students must conduct research outside of class readings for the prep paper. This means that students must base their research around scholarly sources, which means journal articles, books, and academic reports from well-known research institutes.
Students must use at least one book and one journal article in their research for each paper (neither of which can be on the course reading list). Dictionaries, lecture notes, encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), and many websites are not acceptable; students are strongly advised to consult with the professor first to find out if a source is suitable or not. Sources containing basic background information (e.g., the CIA World Factbook) and media reports are not scholarly sources; but they are useful for providing empirical evidence for an argument.

**Simulation.** In order to give students a more direct understanding of and experience with the politics and politicking of Israel, two classes will be devoted to a simulation of decision-making within and between actors in Israeli politics. These will take place on **Monday, March 28** and **Wednesday, March 30**. Students will be divided into three to five groups, each representing a specific political party in Israel. Students will then engage in a process of discussion, debate, argument, and negotiation in order to construct a coalition government. Simulation details will be provided in class. A de-briefing/discussion of the simulation and its results will take place on Friday, April 1.

Students will be graded on their participation in the simulation; this activity is **worth 10% of the final grade.** Simulation activity consists of four elements: vigorous participation in one’s group discussions (including the formulation and evaluation of policy options); peer evaluations; contributions to the de-briefing session; and simulation evaluations.

**ACADEMIC DISHonesty:**

Neither the professor nor the university has any tolerance for any form of academic dishonesty. Students who engage in such activities will face serious penalties, ranging from (among others) failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion from the university. According to the Regents’ Rules and Regulations, academic (scholastic) dishonesty “includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.”

**Students with Disabilities:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation. As the professor I am required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. It is the students’ responsibility to inform me of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. You may contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for more information: (817) 272-3364, or www.uta.edu/disability.
DROPPING THE COURSE:

Students are responsible for deciding whether or not they should drop the course, and for being aware of the consequences of doing so. The last day to drop classes is April 1, 2009. Students should see their respective departmental advisors for more information.

STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMS:

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of programs to help students connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at (817) 272-6107, or http://www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess-home/.

Participation: 20% (Throughout the course)

Writing assignments (3): 20% each (Due Wednesday, February 16; Monday, April 11; Wednesday, May 4)

Simulation prep paper: 10% (Due Monday, March 28)

Simulation activity: 10% (Monday, March 28 – Friday, April 1)

GRADING SCALE:

A 80-100%
B 70-79%
C 60-69%
D 50-59%
F 0-49%

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, January 19: Introduction to course

No readings.

Friday, January 21: Israel: Too unique for comparison?


Section A: Historical Ideas and Processes

Monday, January 24: Precursors to Zionism


Wednesday, January 26: Precursors to Zionism, cont.


Friday, January 28: How to write a paper for this class

Margaret Price, “The St. Martin’s Tutorial on Avoiding Plagiarism: Student Resources.” (Blackboard)

Monday, January 31: Labor Zionism


Wednesday, February 2: Cultural Zionism


Ahad Ha’am, “This is Not the Way (The Wrong Way).” (Blackboard)
Friday, February 4: Revisionist Zionism


Vladimir Ze’ev Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall.” (Blackboard)

Monday, February 7: Construction of a new identity


Kimmerling, pp.16-23.

Wednesday, February 9: Politics in the Yishuv


Friday, February 11: Politics in the Yishuv, cont.

Kimmerling, pp. 56-67.


Monday, February 14: After 1948: Building the state

Kimmerling, pp. 67-78; 89-104.

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (1948). (Blackboard)

Law of Return 5710-1950. (Blackboard)

Section B: Israeli Society

Wednesday, February 16: Ethnicity in Israel

Kimmerling, pp. 104-107.


Friday, February 18: Ethnicity in Israel, cont.


Monday, February 21: Ethnicity in Israel, cont.

Kimmerling, pp. 112-121; 136-172.

Wednesday, February 23: Religion in Israel

Kimmerling, pp. 107-111.


Friday, February 25: Religion in Israel, cont.

Kimmerling, pp. 121-129; 130-133; Chapter 6 (173-207)

Monday, February 28: Religion in Israel, cont.

Wednesday, March 2:  Nationality in Israel

Kimmerling, pp. 133-136.


Friday, March 4:  Nationality in Israel, cont.

Kimmerling, pp. 41-45.


Monday, March 7:  Nationality in Israel, cont.


Section C: Israeli Political Institutions and Politics

Wednesday, March 9:  Political institutions


Friday, March 11:  Political institutions, cont.


Monday, March 14:  Spring break—No class

Wednesday, March 16:  Spring break—No class

Friday, March 18:  Spring break—No class

Monday, March 21:  Political parties and elections

**Wednesday, March 23:** Political parties and elections, cont.


**Friday, March 25:** Political parties and elections, cont.


**Monday, March 28:** *Simulation prep paper due*

**Wednesday, March 30:** *Simulation*

**Friday, April 1:** *Simulation de-briefing and discussion*

**Section D: Israeli Foreign Policy**

**Monday, April 4:** Security policy as foreign policy

Kimmerling, Chapter 7 (208-228).

**Wednesday, April 6:** Security policy or imperialism?

Kimmerling, pp. 78-84.


B’Tselem and Bimkom, “Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable the Expansion of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank.” (December 2005): 9-18; 26-32. (Blackboard)

**Friday, April 8:** Security policy or imperialism?, cont.

Jonathan Rynhold and Dov Waxman, “Ideological Change and Israel’s Disengagement from Gaza.” *Political Science Quarterly* 123, no.1 (Spring 2008): 11-37. (Library)
Monday, April 11: Israeli policy toward the Arab states


Wednesday, April 13: Israeli policy toward the Arab states, cont.


Friday, April 15: Israeli policy toward the Palestinians

Kimmerling, pp. 45-55.

Yitzhak Shamir, Opening speech to the Madrid Conference (1991). (Blackboard)


Monday, April 18: Israeli policy toward the Palestinians, cont.

Dov Waxman, “From Controversy to Consensus: Cultural Conflict and the Israeli Debate over Territorial Withdrawal.” *Israel Studies* 13, no.2 (Summer 2008): 73-96. (Library)

Wednesday, April 20: Relations with the United States

“Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States and the Government of Israel on Strategic Cooperation” (1981). (Blackboard)


Friday, April 22: Relations with the United States, cont.


Monday, April 25: The expansion of new strategic relationships

Wednesday, April 27: Current foreign policy challenges


Friday, April 29: The role of the security community in decision-making


Section E: What is Israel?

Monday, May 2: Historiography in Israel


Wednesday, May 4: Historiography in Israel, cont.


Friday, May 6: What does it mean to be Israel?

Kimmerling, pp. 84-88; Conclusions (229-237).