5339-001: ISRAELI IDENTITY AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FALL SEMESTER 2012
COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: Brent E. Sasley
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Class location: 455 University Hall
Class time: Mondays, 4:00-6:50pm

Office hours: Wednesdays, 11:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment
Please note: The best and fastest way to reach me is by email.

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. To this end, the course will investigate the nature of contemporary Israeli identity and how this identity (or these identities) shape and frame Israeli policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict (particularly toward the Palestinians). It is not designed as an introductory course; students unfamiliar with Israel and the Middle East are advised to first read through a general history of Israel.

The course will explore three broad elements: First, specific aspects of Israeli identity ("what is Israeli identity"?). Second, clashes between various groups promoting different identities and how they manifest themselves ("who is an Israeli"?). Third, how all of this has influenced Israeli policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict ("why is Israeli foreign policy"?).

Students should keep up with current developments in Israel and the Middle East; these will be part of the general discussions and used as examples to highlight particular points or issues. Students can follow developments on-line through all major media outlets—such as CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC, and so on. (See the library course guide for links to these and other outlets.) For Israel-specific sources, follow Haaretz, Ynet.com, and the Jerusalem Post.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course students will be familiar with the different approaches to understanding Israeli identity, the debates over its practice, and some elements of its foreign policy. To meet these goals the course has the following objectives:
Identify key concepts and theoretical frameworks used for investigating the nature of Israel and its foreign policy. These provide us with the appropriate tools for our exploration of this region.

Understand why the current nature of Israel looks as it does. Building on the previous objective, this takes us into a deeper, more detailed examination of structures, processes, and actors in Israeli foreign policymaking.

Think critically about Israel. 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.

OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

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. Laptops and other electronic devices are acceptable for taking notes, but I reserve the right to prohibit their use if I determine they are being used for other activities.

Please note that the syllabus and course content may change, 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.

Official E-mail Policy:

Outside of class, email is the best way to reach me. Note that students must use their UTA MavMail account when communicating by email with me. I will not respond to any correspondence sent by a non-UTA email account. Students are responsible for regularly checking their UTA accounts, for information and correspondence both from the university and from me regarding course matters.

Please use standard polite greetings and address me not as a close friend but as your professor. Please note that one-line comments or questions are not enough for me to know what you are trying to say: be sure your email provides enough detail and explains the context of your comment or question, including which course you are emailing about.

Twitter and Blog Policy:

The rapid expansion of social media—including its use by instructors in the classroom—has blurred the lines between public and private lives of professors. Although I firmly believe in a strict separation between my personal preferences and what I teach in the classroom, I am active on Twitter and in blogging, two of the most prominent forms of social media. I consider it necessary, then, to set out a coherent guideline for these media.

I use both primarily for analytical commentary, and students who are interested in more discussion and debate on issues related to international relations and Middle East politics are welcome, if they wish, to subscribe to my Twitter feed and blogs.

Students are also welcome to respond to any tweets or blog posts. I expect respectful, reasoned responses or posts, without profanity; any violation of these guidelines will result in the student being blocked in the relevant method.

I must emphasize that this is not mandatory—it is not even “optional” in the context of the course. I mention this as a general comment only, in the context of a public domain that now encompasses the university and the classroom. Students’ grades are not in any way connected to this.

Required Readings:

There are five sources of mandatory readings for this course:

Journal articles (in PDF form) available through the library catalogue. To access these, log in with your UTA NetID and password to the library’s website. You will have to search for the articles, either through the journal or directly by article title. Library catalogue readings will be referred to as (Library).

Journal articles and book chapters available on e-reserve at the library. To access these, log in with your UTA NetID and password to the library’s website (“Catalog,” then “Course Reserves”). Library reserve readings will be referred to as (e-reserve).

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).

Each student will read one of two available novels, which will be assigned at our first meeting: Meir Shalev, *The Blue Mountain*, trans. by Hillel Halkin (2004); or Sayed Kashua, *Second Person Singular*, trans. by Mitch Ginsburg (2012). Both are available for purchase at the Bookstore.

**Assignments and Grade Distribution:**

**Participation.** Because this course is a seminar, students are expected to: (1) actively prepare for class by thinking about and evaluating the assigned readings, and (2) actively participate in class discussion and debates; in fact, students should do most of the talking in class. Without students’ vigorous participation, the course will simply not work and everyone’s time will be wasted. Participation is **worth 25% of the final grade**.

**Critical review essay.** Students will write one critical review essay, 3-6 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. The essay should only discuss the readings for a particular class/topic. Students **should not repeat or summarize** the readings; everyone else will have read the material. Rather, students should focus on drawing out general themes and common (or disparate) threads, taking a position on a major point raised in the readings (and be prepared to defend that position), highlighting strengths or weaknesses of the readings, and so on. In short, the essay is meant to be a critical-analytical evaluation of the material and how it relates to that class’s topic and the course materials more generally. The review essay is **worth 15% of the final grade**. In order to facilitate discussion of these essays, critical review essays must be emailed to the professor by **10:00pm on the Thursday before the scheduled class/topic** on which the essay is based. The professor will then post the essay to the course Blackboard, with the expectation that everyone will read and be prepared to discuss it.

Students will also present their essay to the class, in the form of an oral presentation, **about 10-12 minutes** long, on the day of that topic. Students should feel free to be as creative as they wish in presenting their material—including websites, slides, charts, fictional dialogue, or any other format they wish to use to impart their analysis.
There is no deferral or make-up presentation; **students who do not hand in their essay on time and present on their scheduled day will receive a zero on this assignment.**

Essays **must be typed or word-processed**, with Times New Roman and 12-point font; double-spaced; and margins of 1 inch all around or 1 inch on top and bottom and 1.5 inches on left and right. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. **The only citation/bibliography style that will be accepted is MLA format.** Citations and bibliography **must include page numbers.** Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves.

Papers **must be emailed in**—hard copies will not be accepted. Papers will be returned to students’ UTA accounts 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.

A sign-up sheet for the critical review essays will be available on Blackboard by 7:00pm on August 27; on the left-hand side of the page click on “Course Materials.” Students are responsible for signing up on their own. If I determine that too many essays are bunched together, leaving time gaps elsewhere in the course, I will reassign the essays and the dates students will present.

**Movie report.** Students will write one movie report, **worth 15% of the final grade**, on the film shown in class on October 22. The report is to be **3-4 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. It is due by **Monday, October 29, 4:00pm**.

The movie report **must be emailed in**—hard copies will not be accepted. A report that is emailed in after class begins will be considered late. Late reports 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. Reports handed 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 15%). Any requests for an extension must be made before the due date of the assignment. **Reports will not be accepted after 3 calendar days after the due date;** students will then receive a zero on the assignment.
The report does not require research, though students may include and cite research if they wish. The report must explain how the film ties into the course readings and class lectures/discussions. An assignment sheet with some questions for consideration will be posted on the course Blackboard and made available at 7:00pm on October 21. These questions will serve as the basis/framework for the report, but the report should also include your own perceptions and critical analysis.

Papers **must be typed or word-processed**, with Times New Roman and 12-point font; double-spaced; and margins of 1 inch all around or 1 inch on top and bottom and 1.5 inches on left and right. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. **The only citation/bibliography style that will be accepted is MLA format.** Citations and bibliography **must include page numbers.** Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves.

**Short research projects.** Students will write and present one short research project, 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. The project is **worth 15% of the final grade,** and is **due at the beginning of the class** on which the project is based.

Each project must be tied to the subject of a given day/set of readings, but students should pick whatever specific issue they wish to investigate. For example, if writing on Becoming Israel III, students can explore the identity or politics of Israeli Arabs, the Jewish character of the state, the contemporary danger or not to Israeli democracy, and so on.

Although it is not mandatory, students are strongly encouraged to confer with the professor about their papers on a regular basis, including regarding the specific topic, the paper’s content, style/structure, bibliography, and so on. I am also happy to read over a draft or several drafts (however long or short) of the paper and provide comments, so long as the paper is given to me with enough time to go through it before the due date.

All papers are due at 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 handed 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 15%). Any requests for an extension must be made
before the due date of the assignment. Papers will not be accepted after 3 calendar days after the due date; students will then receive a zero on the assignment.

Papers must be typed or word-processed, with Times New Roman and 12-point font; double-spaced; and margins of 1 inch all around or 1 inch on top and bottom and 1.5 inches on left and right. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. The only citation/bibliography style that will be accepted is MLA format. Citations and bibliography must include page numbers. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves.

Papers must be emailed in—hard copies will not be accepted. Papers will be returned to students’ UTA accounts 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.

Students will also present their research projects to the class on the day of that topic, in the form of an oral presentation. The presentation should be a maximum of 12 minutes. This is an opportunity for students to inform the rest of the class (including the professor) about the issue and its importance. Students should feel free to be as creative as they wish in presenting their material—including the use of short films, websites, slides, charts, fictional dialogue, or any other format they wish to use to impart their analysis. Discussion of the project and its arguments will follow.

These are research projects, and so research must be based on scholarly sources, which means journal articles, books, and academic reports from well-known research institutes (some of the latter are listed on the course’s library guide). Students must use at least two books and two journal articles in their research for their 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 be asked 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.
Book review and discussion. Students will write one book review, worth 15% of the final grade, on the novel they are assigned. The review is to be 4-6 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. It is due by Monday, December 3, 4:00pm.

The book reviews will form the basis for class discussion on December 3; be prepared to discuss the points raised in your book review, to defend them against contrasting points raised by others, to support them with reference to course readings, and so on.

The review does not require outside research, though students may include and cite research if they wish. The review must explain how the film ties into the course readings and class lectures/discussions. For background information on how to write a book review, see the instructions at Purdue Owl (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/704/1). In addition, consider these kinds of questions in the book review: How does the author define and explain/demonstrate Israeli identity (or identities)? What factors contributed to the development and character of Israeli identity? What tensions are evident through the book? Do you agree, based on your own assessment of the course readings, that the author adequately or accurately captures the nature and/or debate about Israeli identity? Explain your answers.

There is no deferral or make-up presentation; students who do not hand in their review on time and discuss their review during class will receive a zero on this assignment.

Reviews must be typed or word-processed, with Times New Roman and 12-point font; double-spaced; and margins of 1 inch all around or 1 inch on top and bottom and 1.5 inches on left and right. Reviews must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. The only citation/bibliography style that will be accepted is MLA format. Citations and bibliography must include page numbers. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves.

Reviews must be emailed in—hard copies will not be accepted. Reviews will be returned to students’ UTA accounts 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.

Final exam. A final take-home exam, worth 15% of the final grade, will be written at the end of the course. Students will have one week to write the exam: It will be posted on the course Blackboard and accessible at the end of the final class on December 3, and due by Monday, December 10, midnight. The exam will be cumulative, taking into account everything studied from the beginning of the course (class discussions, readings, film, and any other materials covered in the course). The format of the final
exam is one essay question. Students should not conduct any outside research; their focus should be on the course materials—but they must incorporate and cite from the course readings.

Exams must be typed or word-processed, with Times New Roman and 12-point font; double-spaced; and margins of 1 inch all around or 1 inch on top and bottom and 1.5 inches on left and right. Exams must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. The only citation/bibliography style that will be accepted is MLA format. Citations and bibliography must include page numbers. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves.

Exams must be emailed in—hard copies will not be accepted. Exams will be returned to students’ UTA accounts 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 exams 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.

There will be no make-up exam, barring a very serious development or illness. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; visiting friends or relatives; having other work. If there is an illness, students will have to provide a medical note—not one in which a doctor writes that the student confirms he/she was sick, but a detailed note explaining that the doctor knows for a fact that the student was sick on the day of the exam and could not be expected to write. Documentation must be provided for a missed exam within three days after the missed exam, regardless of the reason, and is subject to verification. Any requests for a deferral must be made before the date of the exam in order to be considered, and are at the professor’s discretion. A missed exam must be made up within three school days after the date of the original scheduled exam. No make-up will be allowed after three school days, and a zero will be assigned for that grade.

Please note that no extra credit work is provided or allowed, regardless of circumstances. Please also note that not completing an assignment and instead re-weighting the worth of other course assignments is not an option.

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 October 31, 2012. 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: 25% (Throughout the course)
Critical review essay: 15% (Due the day of that topic)
Movie report: 15% (Due Monday, October 29, 4:00pm)
Short research project: 15% (Due the day of that topic)
Book review: 15% (Due Monday, December 3, 4:00pm)
Final exam: 15% (Due Monday, December 10, midnight)

GRADING SCALE:

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

**Monday, August 27:**  *No class – Watch introduction video lecture on Blackboard*


**Monday, September 3:**  *Labor Day – No class*

**Monday, September 10:**  Becoming Israel, Part I


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

Kimmerling, Chapter 3 (89-111).


Kimmerling, 130-133; 136-163.


Monday, September 17:  
*Rosh Hashanah – No class*

Monday, September 24:  
Becoming Israel, Part II


Kimmerling, Chapter 6 (173-207).


Monday, October 1:  
Becoming Israel, Part III


Kimmerling, 133-136, 164-169.


Brent Sasley, “Israeli Democracy is Safe Than We Think.” *Mideast Matrix*, November 21, 2011. (Blackboard)

**Monday, October 8:** Security as a value or identity


Kimmerling, Chapter 7 (208-228).


**Monday, October 15:** The struggle over Israeli myths and narratives

Kimmerling, 16-39; Chapter 4 (112-129).


Monday, October 22:  
Film: TBA

Monday, October 29:  
Movie report due

1948 and Palestinian refugees


Shabtai Teveth, “Charging Israel with Original Sin.” Commentary 88, no.3 (September 1989): 24-33. (Library)


Monday, November 5:  
1967, the Land of Israel, and the State of Israel

Yoram Bar-Gal and Bruria Bar-Gal, “To Tie the Cords Between the People and Its Land: Geography Education in Israel.” Israel Studies 13, no.1 (Spring 2008): 44-67. (Library)


Oded Haklai, “Religious-Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration: Lessons From Jewish Settlers’ Activism in Israel and the West Bank.” *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no.6 (June 2007): 713-739. (Library)


**Monday, November 12:** A hand stretched out in peace or with mailed fist?


Shlomo Avineri, “Irreconcilable Differences.” *Foreign Policy* 129 (March-April 2002): 78-79. (Blackboard)

Ministry of Defense (Israel), “Israel’s Security Fence.” In particular click on the enlarged view of the barrier’s route. (Blackboard)

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)

Monday, November 19: A hand stretched out in peace or with mailed first? 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)


Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, “Address at the Saban Forum.” (2007) (Blackboard)


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, November 26: Zionist, post-Zionist, non-Zionist, anti-Zionist


**Monday, December 3:**  
*Book review due*  
Israeli identity in “fiction”

*The Blue Mountain* and *Second Person Singular*.

**Monday, December 10:**  
*Final exam due by midnight*