Israel: State, Society, Identity
Taught in Hilary Term
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There are probably few states in the world that trigger such strong opinions and emotions as the State of Israel. While these responses are generally linked to Israel’s foreign relations and the Arab-Israeli conflict, this course aims primarily at “looking inside” Israel. It will introduce students to the politics, society, and institutions of modern Israel by paying special attention to the prevailing societal diversity and fragmentation as well as their political implications. In particular, the dynamics of Israeli politics, society, and foreign relations will be linked to the construction of Israel’s identity (and the different interpretations of the latter) from the early days of the state until the advent of the peace process in the 1990s and its collapse.

Course structure and reading list

Week 1: Zionism and the Origins of Israel's Political Culture

Required:

Recommended:

Week 2: State-Building, Nation-Building, and the Identity of Israel
Required:


Recommended:


**Week 3: Institutions, Parties, Politics**

Required:


Basic Laws of the State of Israel, at http:\\www.israel-mfa.gov.il (website of the Israeli Ministry for Foreign Affairs)


**Recommended:**


**Week 4: State and Religion**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**Week 5: Immigration, Minorities, Ethnicity, and Israeli Democracy**

**Required:**


Shafir, Gershon and Yoav Peled (2002) *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Introduction (pp. 1-34), and Chapter 3 (pp. 74-109)

**Recommended:**


Week 6: Zionism and Post-Zionism

Required:


Recommended:


Week 7: Politics, Identity and the Peace Process

Required:


Recommended:


Week 8: Alternatives and New Pathways?

Required:


Recommended:


Bibliography and Further Reading


Avineri, Shlomo and Werner Weidenfeld (eds.) (1999) Integration and Identity: Challenges to Europe and Israel, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag.


Del Sarto, Raffaella A. (1999) 'Israeli Identity as Seen through European Eyes', in Shlomo Avineri and Werner Weidenfeld, eds., Integration and Identity: Challenges to Europe and Israel, Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, pp. 59-79.


Hermann, Tamar and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar (eds.) (1997) *Israeli Society and the Challenge of Transition to Co-existence*, Tel Aviv: The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, Tel Aviv University.


