Spring 2016
PSC 2379 10 – Israeli Politics and Foreign Policy
Prof. Evgeny Finkel, efinkel@gwu.edu

Class
Mon, Wed. 2:20-3:35PM
Corcoran 106

Office Hours
Wed. 12:30PM-1:30PM or by appointment
Monroe 419

Course Description
This class discusses the internal politics and foreign policy of the state of Israel, and the main ongoing debates in the Israeli politics. The first part of the class presents the political, ideological, social, and economic foundations of the Israeli state from the very beginning of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century. The second part of the class discusses the main cleavages and political debates that dominate the Israeli politics – the relations between ethnic, national, religious, and socio-economic groups in Israel, Israeli national identity, civil-military relations, foreign policy and the debate between Zionist and post-Zionist ideologies. Even though this class is not about the Arab-Israeli or Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, their influence on Israeli politics and society will be addressed.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes
As a result of completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the politics and the society of Israel
- Understand the main theories and arguments of the Israel Studies field
- Analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate the contemporary academic and political discourse on the topic

Required Books

Requirements and Class Policies
The class combines lectures and in-class discussions, which means that the students are expected to attend the lectures and to read all the required materials. The class is structured around two meetings each week. Students’ active participation in the discussions is required and class participation is a substantial part of the final grade. The assignments for this course include: a midterm examination, two short film reports and a final paper. Students who cannot attend a class or an exam because of a religious holiday should notify me during the first week of the semester. Makeup exams will be allowed only in cases of a religious holiday (after notifying me during the first week of the semester) or medical emergency. Late submission of papers will be penalized.

**Film Reports**

During the semester the students will be required to submit two film reports. Each report should be about three pages long. The reports should be submitted on the first Monday, 12pm following the film screening in class. The goal of the report is to critically evaluate the film, its historical accuracy, the narratives it presents and the film’s portrayal of the conflict.

**Grading Criteria**

Film Reports: 10%
Midterm: 25%
Final Exam: 45%
Participation (not simply attendance!): 20%

**Academic Conduct**

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html)

**Special Needs and Support outside the Classroom**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center,
Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

The University Counseling Center (UCC, 202-994-5300) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- Crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- Confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
Course Outline and Schedule

01.11. Course Overview and Description

01.13. Introduction to the Field
Readings
Arian, Politics in Israel, pp. 1-47.

01.18. MLK Day, No Class.

01.20. Historical Background
Readings

01.25. Historical Roots of Zionism
Readings
Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, ch. 2.

01.27. Labor Zionism
Readings
Arian, Politics in Israel, 48-58, 128-139

02.01. Revisionist Zionism
Readings
Arian, Politics in Israel, 139-150

02.03. Religious Zionism
Readings
Arian, Politics in Israel, 150-157.
02.08. The British Mandate and the Institutional Origins of Israel

Readings

02.10. The Creation of the State

Readings

02.15. President’s Day, No Class

02. 17. Midterm

02.22. Israeli Domestic Politics Since 1948: Brief Overview

Readings

02.24. Film 1

02.29, 03.02. The Knesset, party systems and state institutions

Readings

03.07, 03.09. Foreign Policy and Security: Hawks and Doves

Readings

03.14; 03.16. Spring Break


Readings


03.23. Film 2

03.28. Jews and Arabs in Israel Part 2.

03.30. Security, Terrorism, Counterterrorism, State-Military Relations

Readings


04.04, 04.06. Ethnic Relations in Israel

Readings


### 04.11, 04.13. The Role of Religion

**Readings**


### 04.18, 04.20. External Relations

**Readings**


### 04.25. Challenges, Continuation, and Change; Wrapping Up

**Readings**


04.27. Designated Monday. Film 3.

Take-home Final Exam will be distributed May 3, 8am and due May 5, 5pm