

HISTORY 2073
The Arab-Israeli Conflict
Winter 2010

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BAC 404

585-1814

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Office Hours: M-W-F 10:30-11:30 & 1:30-2:00

Course Description

This course is a study of the origins and expansion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It analyzes issues and problems that have driven the Arab-Israeli conflict by examining two key historical turning points, 1) the 1948 war, and 2) the 1967 war.

Required Texts

Benny Morris, *1948*

Tom Segev, *1967*

PBS Video, Host, David Shipler, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

Suggested Texts

David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace*

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*

Rashid Khalidi, *British Policy toward Syria and Palestine 1906-1914*

Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*

Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*

Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918-1929*

Eugene Rogan & Avi Shlaim, *The War for Palestine*

Nadav Safran, *Israel: Embattled Ally*

Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*

Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*

Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*

David Shipler, *Arab and Jew*

Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*

Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry*

Evaluation

- 1) Participation: 20% (Debates 10%, based on oral testimony and notes)
- 2) Book Reviews: 20% (19 February & 26 March)
- 3) Research Paper: 30% (8 April) **Note: You will lose ten percent of the paper grade if you fail to submit provisional thesis statement, themes or outline, and bibliography).**
- 4) Exam: 30%

Participation: You will read and discuss the required texts in preparation for debates on some of the key issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. To get points you need to participate in the two debates and submit notes. Full points will only be given to those who participate in the debate, but submission of your notes on the issues prior to the debate is a partial basis of evaluation. **Five points for each debate.**

Book Reviews: Write a review (750-1000 words) that identifies the thesis and main arguments of the required texts. This is a critical review or analysis of the work. Does the author show a bias? Has the author ignored contrary points of view or evidence? Include within your review of the book a discussion of the sources used by the author. What are the primary and secondary sources? How have these shaped the arguments? Try to identify the importance of the works within the larger field of historical works by reading reviews of the book (consult an electronic database) or comparable books.

Research Paper (2,000 words, due 8 April)

The paper will be a study of one of the issues (see the course outline below and 'problems and issues' section).

The paper will include:

- 1) Thesis statement (provisional statement due January 29)
- 2) Themes that support the thesis statement (provisional themes due February 12)
- 3) A bibliography with at least 3 sources (articles or books) in addition to the required texts. The paper must engage with one of the historical questions discussed in the course. Follow the reference guidelines in Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* (provisional bibliography due 1 March).

Exam: The exam will be comprehensive, including both texts and the film, *Arab and Jew*

Course Outline

1. Introduction. Landscape and Geography.
 - Palestinian-Jewish Relations before the Mandate.
 - The historical and contemporary ideas of Palestine and Israel
 - Communal Relations within the Ottoman Empire
2. Zionism and Palestinian Nationalism during the Mandate. Benny Morris, Chapters 1.
 - Zionism and Arab Nationalism, pages 1-12
 - Relative strengths of the Zionist and Palestinian national institutions, pages 12-22
3. Palestine & the International community. Morris, Chapter 2.
 - UK and the Arabs, pages 22-36
 - UN & Partition of Palestine, pages 37-74

Debate 1: 'The West favored the Zionist cause, ensuring a Jewish State at expense of the Palestinians.' Debate the pros and cons.

4. The War of 1947-1949: Civil War. Morris, Chapters 3 & 4.
 - Relative Power of Yishuv and Palestinians
 - Why did Palestinians flee their homeland in 1947 and 1948?
 - Question of Palestinian/Jewish 'Terror'
5. The War of 1947-1949: The Arab Invasion. Morris Chapters 7 & 8
 - Existential War or Political War?
 - Relative Strengths of Israel & Arab states
6. The War of 1947-1949: Israeli Victory. Morris, Chapters 9, 10 & 11.
 - Refugee Crisis & Population Transfer
 - Borders and Armistice

Book Review 1, Benny Morris, 1948, due February 19.

Debate 2: 'Zionism was ideologically premised on dispossessing the Palestinian of their lands.' Debate the pros and cons.

7. Study Week. Read Tom Segev, *1967*
8. The War of 1967: Causes and Events. Tom Segev, Chapters
 - Existential War or Political War?
 - Israel's Social and Political Crisis
9. The War of 1967: Events & Consequences. Segev, Chapters
 - Peace Process: Refugees, Borders, Jerusalem
 - Politicization of Palestinian Society
 - Radicalization of PLO

Debate 3: 'The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is driven by strategic and defensive considerations only.' Debate the pros and cons.

10. Jerusalem: A Multi-Dimension City. Film, *Arab and Jew*
 - A Multi-Ethnic City
 - A Divided City
 - Status quo in Jerusalem since the 1967 War

Book Review 2, Tom Segev, 1967, due March 26.

11. Demographic Problems in Israel and Palestinian Occupied Territories. Film, *Arab and Jew*
 - Minority Status
 - Immigration & Politics
 - Democracy & Judaism

12. Palestinian Nationalism after 1967. Film, *Arab and Jew*

- Guerilla Warfare
- Negotiations

13. War, Terrorism and Human Rights. Film, *Arab and Jew*

- IDF Tactics in the Occupied Territories
- 'Infrastructure of Terror'
- International Law & Occupied Territories

Debate 4: 'The Peace Process has been blocked since 1967 because of PLO and Hamas terrorism.' Debate the pros and cons.

14. Review

Issues and Problems: Possible Research Paper Topics

1. Did Palestinian nationalism exist before Zionism?
2. How did Arab nationalism change after the creation of the Mandate?
3. Describe the evolution of political and cultural identities of the peoples living in the Ottoman region of Palestine from the Ottoman to Mandate period.
4. How did the second aliya change Palestinian-Jewish relations? What was the impact of the second aliya on Palestinian national identity formation?
5. How did communal relations change after the formation of the Mandate?
6. Why did the Arab leadership in Palestine and in the surrounding states consistently fail to seek a compromise that might have assured either a bi-national state or a Palestinian state?
7. What were the motives of Israelis and the various Arab states, as well as Palestinians, in the 1948 War?
8. Account for the massacres at Dar Yassin and the Hadassah Convoy. Were these calculated acts of terror?
9. Were 'collective punishments' a calculated tactic of the Haganah and IDF?
10. Was the idea of "population transfer" a policy or an accidental outcome of the 1948 War?

11. Why did the Israelis resolve against a return of refugees in 1948-1949? What were the arguments supporting this resolve. What actions were taken to block the return?
12. What were the domestic – cultural and social factors – that helped push events toward war in 1967? What were the political factors?
13. Were the internal or external – the actions of the Arab states and guerillas – more important causes of the 1967 war?
14. Is it possible that if Israel had not occupied the West Bank in 1967 that Palestinian national identity might have been erased – or at least absorbed into other political communities?
15. Why did Israel not take the historic opportunity to make peace with its Arab neighbors in 1967? What factors influenced its decisions?
16. What similarities are there between the events of 1948 and 1967?
17. What sort of socioeconomic problems were confronted by ‘Arab’ Israelis?
18. Did the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza enhance or harm the cause of Zionism?
19. Trace the evolution of Palestinian nationalism after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza?
20. Describe the significance of a collective mentality or psychology in the perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
21. Describe the conditions of Palestinians living in refugee camps in 1948 \. How have these conditions changed over the subsequent fifty years?
22. What’s your solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict? Consider the problem of refugees, boundaries, and Jerusalem. Consider the nature of the state in Israel/Palestine itself – divided or reunited as a bi-national state.
23. Has the post-Zionist historical writing of the last twenty years corrected historical understanding or represented a political bias?