

## THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

FALL 2014

e-mail: pdsedra@sfu.ca  
office hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30 pm,  
Thursdays 10:30-11:30 am

This course will adopt a social and cultural history approach to a subject that is most commonly analyzed in terms of political and diplomatic currents. Among the topics the course will address are Zionism, the British Mandate in Palestine, the creation of the state of Israel, the rise of modern Palestinian nationalism, and the impact of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute on the Middle East as a whole.

N.B. This is not an introductory course. Students are expected to have a knowledge of the broad outlines of the political and diplomatic history of the conflict. Please pay particular attention to the prerequisites listed below.

**Evaluation:**

In-class mid-term exam 30%  
Debate presentation 10%  
Research paper 45%  
Seminar participation 15%

**Texts:**

1. James Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War*, third edition (Cambridge University Press, 2014)
2. Mark LeVine and Gershon Shafir, eds., *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel* (University of California Press, 2012)
3. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 2009)
4. Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003)
5. Journal articles accessible through the SFU library website, via the stable URLs listed below.

**News:** At the beginning of the term, students must select one Middle Eastern newspaper and one non-Middle Eastern newspaper to consult on a regular basis online during the term. There is a wide range of Middle Eastern newspapers available in English editions on the web, and students may choose whatever newspaper they wish, as long as the

newspaper has a correspondent in Israel-Palestine. As for the non-Middle Eastern paper, again the choice is up to the student, as long as the newspaper has a reporter or bureau based in Israel-Palestine. Students are invited to send articles they find particularly interesting or related to course themes to the instructor.

**Prerequisites:** 45 units, including nine units of lower-division history credit, and one of HIST 151, 249, 251, 350, 354, or 355, or permission of the department. HIST 151 and 355 are both highly recommended.

**Format:** Students are expected to arrive having carefully scrutinized the readings for the week, and prepared to offer an analysis and critique of each of those readings. Discussion and debate are the foundation of the work students will undertake. The function of the professor is to moderate debate, to offer suggestions for directions of discussion, and to provide context for the readings. The professor expects students to leave no received notion or conventional wisdom unchallenged. Attending class is, thus, understandably, an integral part of the course.

**Debate presentation:**

1. At the beginning of the term, students will select a debate topic of particular interest, from among those listed below.
2. At the beginning of the seminar to which they are assigned, students will make a presentation of eight minutes altogether – divided into a five-minute speech, followed by a three-minute rebuttal of her/his opponent.
3. One student will support the argument indicated by the resolution, and one student will oppose the argument.
4. The students are expected to draw, in the first instance, upon the texts assigned in the syllabus for the given session. Only then should the student draw upon further texts – those students may locate through library research, or through the assistance of the instructor. Please do not hesitate to consult with the instructor for suggestions in this regard.
5. Please note that each student is expected to engage with her/his opponent's ideas directly, and that, accordingly, the three-minute rebuttal should be entirely impromptu and unprepared.
6. After the two students have debated, the instructor will open the discussion to the rest of the class.

**In-class test:** The in-class test will cover all the material discussed in the course to that point. The test will consist of four essay questions, two of which students are expected to answer. The essay questions will require students to identify, analyze, and critique trends in the historiography.

**Class participation:** Repeated absences from class will lead to a failing participation grade. Please consult the instructor should you have to miss classes for health or family reasons. Completion of the readings before class and a consistent effort to contribute to class discussions will be rewarded with high marks in this category. Lateness and poor preparation for class will be penalized.

**Term paper:**

- Students are expected to undertake original research in primary sources of their choice for the term paper. The instructor recommends that students identify the body of primary sources upon which they intend to draw **by October 15th**. Please consult with the instructor if you are uncertain as to whether the sources you have located are appropriate.
- On November 12th, students will give ten-minute presentations discussing the sources they have located, the challenges they have faced in using the sources for writing history, as well as their preliminary findings. On November 26th, students will submit their completed term papers to the instructor.
- Term papers are evaluated for clarity, organization, insight, and originality. Faulty grammar, spelling, and syntax reduce clarity, and will thus reduce your grade. Grades are final and not subject to negotiation. Term papers submitted after the deadline receive a penalty of ten percent for the first day late; for each additional day late, a further five percent will be deducted. The instructor will not accept submissions beyond a week from the given deadline. Extensions of deadlines will only be granted in the event of a documented health or family crisis.

**Course regulations:**

- I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism. These are extremely serious academic offences which may lead to loss of credit, suspension, expulsion from the University, or the revocation of a degree. If you are having trouble with a concept or assignment, meet with the instructor well before the relevant deadlines. Keep in mind that poor, but legitimate, performance in a given assignment is far preferable to jeopardizing your academic career through fraud.
  - All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on plagiarism and academic honesty. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations. In student papers, it is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived.
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**September 3rd**

**Introduction**

**September 10th**

**Imagining Palestine**

Gelvin, "The Land and Its Lure," 1-13.

Khalidi, "Contrasting Narratives of Palestinian Identity," 9-34.

Web: Eitan Bar-Yosef, "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture," *Israel Studies* 8, 2 (Summer 2003), 18-44.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/30247795>

Web: Charlotte Whiting, "Geographical Imaginations of the "Holy Land": Biblical Topography and Archaeological Practice," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 29, 2-3 (June/September 2007), 237-250.

<http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/10.1080/08905490701623342>

*debate*

Be it resolved that most nineteenth-century Western travelers to Palestine consciously advanced Zionist political claims to the land.

**September 17th**

**Palestine under Ottoman Rule**

Gelvin, "Cultures of Nationalism," 14-45.

Khalidi, "Cultural Life and Identity in Late Ottoman Palestine: The Place of Jerusalem" and "Competing and Overlapping Loyalties in Ottoman Jerusalem," 35-88.

LeVine/Shafir: Mahmoud Yazbak 27-38, Joseph B. Glass and Ruth Kark 39-50, Salim Tamari 51-62.

*debate*

Be it resolved that allegiance to the Ottoman Empire superseded particularist nationalisms among the residents of Palestine throughout the late Ottoman period.

## September 24th

### **Zionism from Europe to the Middle East**

Gelvin, "Zionism and the Colonization of Palestine," 46-75.

Khalidi, "Elements of Identity I: Peasant Resistance to Zionist Settlement" and "Elements of Identity II: The Debate on Zionism in the Arabic Press," 89-144.

Swedenburg, "Popular Memory and the Palestinian National Past," 1-37.

LeVine/Shafir: Gershon Shafir 63-76, Nitsa Ben-Ari 85-103.

*debate*

Be it resolved that nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whether Zionism or Palestinian Arab nationalism, was developed and directed by elites.

## October 1st

### **The Rise of the Mandate**

Gelvin, "World War I and the Palestine Mandate," 76-91.

Khalidi, "The Formation of Palestinian Identity: The Critical Years, 1917-1923," 145-176.

Swedenburg, "Scenes of Erasure," 38-75.

LeVine/Shafir: Philippe Bourmaud 104-124.

Web: Nadia Abu El-Haj, "Producing (Arti) Facts: Archaeology and Power During the British Mandate of Palestine," *Israel Studies* 7, 2 (Summer 2002), 33-61.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/30245585>

Be it resolved that the strength of Zionist culture was of greater importance than Zionist political organization, in establishing Jewish claims to Palestine during the Mandate.

## October 8th

### **The Collapse of the Mandate**

Gelvin, "From Nationalism in Palestine to Palestinian Nationalism," 92-116.

Swedenburg, "Popular Nationalism" and "Memory as Resistance," 76-137.

LeVine/Shafir: David de Vries and Talia Pfeffermann 125-140, Sonia Nimr 141-156, Rebecca Kook 157-169.

Web: Zachary Lockman, "Railway Workers and Relational History: Arabs and Jews in British-Ruled Palestine," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, 3 (July 1993), 601-627.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/179148>

Be it resolved that employing the 'relational history' paradigm that Lockman describes necessarily results in viewing Palestinian nationalism as 'merely a reaction' to Zionism.

### October 15th

#### **Partition and War**

Gelvin, "From the Great Revolt Through the 1948 War," 117-144.

Swedenburg, "(Un)popular Memories: Accommodation and Collaboration," 138-170.

LeVine/Shafir: Rochelle Davis 179-195, Gershon Shafir 196-220, Ramzy Baroud 221-238, Yaron Tsur 239-255, Aziza Khazzoom 256-270, Safa Abu-Rabia 271-287.

Be it resolved that the revision of the traditional historiography of 1948, undertaken by the 'new historians,' could only have arisen in Israel.

### October 22nd

#### **Occupation, Settlement, and Resistance**

Gelvin, 166-214.

LeVine/Shafir: Rebecca L. Stein 295-305, Nelly Elias and Julia Lerner 306-317, Moriel Ram and Mark LeVine 318-336.

Be it resolved that, although the legal status of Palestinian citizens of Israel and that of the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories differ substantially, they have in practice faced similar levels of political oppression and dispossession.

October 29th

**In-Class Test**

November 5th

**Intifada**

Gelvin, 214-230.

Swedenburg, "Memory Recoded: Intifada/Thawra," 171-201.

LeVine/Shafir: Laetitia Bucaille 337-349.

Web: Julie Peteet, "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian 'Intifada': A Cultural Politics of Violence," *American Ethnologist* 21, 1 (February 1994), 31-49.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/stable/646520>

Be it resolved that the *intifada* was a 'gendered' uprising that ultimately had a damaging impact on the participation of women in the Palestinian struggle.

November 12th

**Paper Progress Reports, Discussion of In-Class Test Results**

November 19th

**Nationalism and Scholarship**

Gelvin, "Zionism and Palestinian Nationalism: A Closer Look," 145-165.

Swedenburg, "Epilogue: Fabulous Images" and "Afterword," 202-216.

Khalidi, "The 'Disappearance' and Reemergence of Palestinian Identity," 177-210.

LeVine/Shafir: Gershon Shafir and Mark LeVine 1-20.

Be it resolved that Palestinian historians are less likely to write objectively about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict than are Israeli historians, because of the failure of the Palestinian nationalist movement to secure an independent state.

**November 26th**

**Papers Due, Concluding Discussion**

Gelvin, "Coming Full Circle: Oslo and Its Aftermath," 231-268.

LeVine/Shafir: Michal Frenkel 357-369, Bader Araj 370-383, Michael Feige 384-398, Erin F. Olsen 399-412, Neve Gordon 413-426, Ala Alazzeh 427-443.