

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT**FALL 2009****Email: pdsedra@sfu.ca**

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:

1. In-class mid-term exam 25%
2. Presentation 10%
3. Research paper 45%
4. Seminar participation 20%

Texts:

1. David W. Lesch, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2007).
2. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).
3. Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (University of Arkansas Press, 2003).

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.

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 quotation, and one student will oppose the argument.
4. The students are expected to draw, in the first instance, upon the text from which the quotation is drawn, in order to grasp the broader argument the author is making. Only then should the student draw upon further texts – those listed in the syllabus, as well as additional texts the students may locate through library research. Please 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: 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 10

Introduction

September 17

The Age of Nationalism

Lesch 1-44

Shafir and Peled 1-34

Swedenburg xv-37

debate

“When official nationalist discourse made the peasant into a symbol, it effaced his or her regional specificity. It also generalized the peasant as a hardy, independent small farmer – never an oppressed sharecropper or a landless laborer.”

– Swedenburg, 23

September 24

Colonial Projects

Lesch 45-93

Shafir and Peled 37-73

debate

“The most distinguishing characteristic of the Jewish Labor Movement in Palestine was that it was not a labor movement at all. Rather, it was a colonial movement in which the workers’ interests remained secondary to the exigencies of settlement.”

– Shafir and Peled, 37

October 1

Strategies of Resistance

Lesch 94-125

Swedenburg 76-106

debate

“Although Palestinian village life was in fact frequently riddled with inter- and intraclan and family disputes, public ideology nonetheless stated that it was crucial for rural communities to unite to repel the threat of any outside invader.”

– Swedenburg, 79

October 8

The Collapse of Partition

Lesch 126-161

debate

“For average Palestinians, the international community had failed them, the Arab states had failed them, and their own divided, weak leadership had failed them. In such conditions, they had absolutely no chance against the Israeli juggernaut.”

– Lesch, 145

October 15

Negotiating Boundaries

Shafir and Peled 74-109, 137-158

Swedenburg 38-75

debate

“It is normal for colonialism to masquerade as a mission of benevolence. What seems most distinctive about Zionist colonialism is that, most often, altruism is expressed toward the land rather than toward the indigenous population living on it.”

– Swedenburg, 59-60

October 22

Exile, Internal and External

Shafir and Peled 110-136

Swedenburg 107-170

debate

“Even leftist or progressive Palestinian histories have tended to neglect popular participation and initiatives, which they have regarded as inherently deficient because these were not rooted in ‘true’ political consciousness, namely, some form of ‘modern’ ideology such as socialism or communism.”

– Swedenburg, 111

October 29

From Revolution to ‘Setback’

Lesch 162-232

debate

“Ironically, this period of relative calm through 1954 may have been the most propitious time for a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict up to the flurry of diplomatic activity in the 1990s.”

– Lesch, 169

November 5

The Dynamics of Occupation and Settlement

Lesch 233-300

Shafir and Peled 159-183

debate

“Indeed, the colonial dimension of Jewish-Arab relations, which had been confined, for nearly twenty years, to the territory of the sovereign state of Israel, was bound to burst out, as long as no single authority or agreed-upon division were established in the territory of post-Mandatory Palestine.”

– Shafir and Peled, 160

November 12

In-class mid-term exam

no debate

November 19

Intifada

Lesch 300-325

Shafir and Peled 184-212

Swedenburg 171-201

debate

“The only apparent leverage the Palestinians seemed to have was the very act of intifada, but Israel’s repressive apparatus proved to be too much to overcome – as well as Israel’s support base in the United States.”

– Lesch, 306

November 26

The Politics of Peace

Lesch 326-364

Shafir and Peled 213-259

debate

“The DOP signed in Oslo between Israel and the PLO was an important signpost. By expressing Israel’s willingness to withdraw from large sections of the West Bank and

Gaza Strip, that is, to at least partially decolonize these regions, the government in effect declared that the process of state building had come to an end and, with it, the rationale for maintaining the republican pioneering type of citizenship.”

– Shafir and Peled, 232

December 3

Social Realignment(s)?

Shafir and Peled 260-348

Swedenburg 202-216

debate

“But as the liberal discourse of the market seems to predominate, citizenship itself becomes more privatized and the overall commitment to social solidarity and to social rights is gradually diminished.”

– Shafir and Peled, 307