Department of Political Science  
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy  
University at Albany  

RPOS 399  
**Israeli Politics and Society**  
Spring 2017 Syllabus (Last Updated: January 14, 2017)  

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Class: MWF 11:30am-12:25pm (BA, Business Administration 212)  
Office Hours: WF 10:20-11:20am and by appointment (Uptown Campus, HU016)

**Course Description**  
After nearly seven decades of *aliyah* and the vicissitudes of regional politics, Israeli society and politics present a picture quite different from its Zionist writers and founders envisioned. The transformation empowered various actors and groups, whose actions in the political process and social movements have been key in shaping Israel’s public and foreign policies. This course examines the key actors and groups in Israeli politics and society divided along various cultural, ethnic, ideological, political and social fault lines. We also discuss critical issues in today’s Israeli politics, ranging from immigration, the economy, the role of the Jewish faith in public policy, settlements, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Prerequisite: R POS102 strongly recommended but not required.

**Learning Objectives**  
By the end of this course, you will be able to:  
• Summarize key policy and social issues in Israeli politics.  
• Distinguish between the positions of major players in Israeli politics and understand their causes.  
• Critically evaluate arguments and comments about essential political issues in Israel, such as migration, the settlement, socioeconomic problems, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**Required Readings**  
• Other required readings will be available on Blackboard.

**Learning Activities and How You Will Be Evaluated**  
1. Class Participation 10%  
2. Map and Who's Who Tests 10%  
3. Individual News Presentation 10%  
4. Pop Quizzes 20%  
5. Midterm 25%  
6. Final Paper 25%
Class Etiquette
• This class welcomes all perspectives and political views ONLY when they are presented in a civic fashion with grounded evidence. Please be respectful of every participant in this class, including yourself, by behaving and speaking in a decent and responsible way.
• You are expected to utilize electronic devices in a responsible manner, which means you should only use them in ways that facilitate your learning and are able to limit unnecessary distractions for yourself and others. I strongly encourage you to read the study that finds how using electronic devices influences learning negatively: http://www.yorku.ca/ncepeda/laptopFAQ.html You can also find a summary of this study at: CBC News 08/14/2013 and at: Valerie Strauss 08/20/2013.

Selective Online Learning Sources
Haaretz: http://www.haaretz.com
The Jerusalem Post: http://www.jpost.com
The Promised Podcast: http://tlv1.fm/content/the-promised-podcast/
Ynet: http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html

Assignment Policy
All assignments should be submitted according to the required format. Emailed or faxed assignments will not be accepted, with the exception of the completed Final Project. Late submissions will not be accepted, except for religious observance (which needs to be cleared with me in the first two weeks of the semester) or documented medical or family emergency (with a doctor note or one from dean).

Special Needs
Students with special needs due to physical, learning, or other disabilities will be accommodated. To request such accommodation, first register with the Disability Resource Center (Campus Center 137 http://www.albany.edu/disability/). DRC will provide you with a letter to me, detailing the provisions requested. Please submit these letters to me during the first two weeks of the semester (in person) and also remind me before each relevant event (e.g. exam and assignment due dates).

Weekly Readings
January 23: Syllabus and Course Overview

January 25: Agent-Focused Approach I

January 27: Agent-Focused Approach II
January 30: Jews in History – Watch Defamation (2009)

February 1: Shoah: Watch Night and Fog (1956)
• https://vimeo.com/74528039

February 3: History
• Freedman, ch.1 (pp.1-10).

February 6: Society
• Freedman, ch.1 (pp.10-17).

February 8: Zionism

February 10: Zionism and Israeli Culture and Society

February 13: Aliyah – The Early Years I
• Devorah Hakohen, Immigrants in Turmoil, (Syracuse University Press, 2003), ch.2 (pp.58-75).

February 15: Aliyah – The Early Years II
• Devorah Hakohen, Immigrants in Turmoil, (Syracuse University Press, 2003), ch.2 (pp.75-94).

February 17: IDF

February 20: The Israeli Left
• Freedman, ch.3 (pp.45-75).

February 22: The Israeli Right
• Freedman, ch.2 (pp.21-44).

February 24: Ashkenazim v. Non-Ashkenazim
• Roy Hasan, “If There’ll Be Peace, All the ‘Arsim’ Will Come.” http://972mag.com/if-there'll-be-peace-all-the-arsim-will-come/108774/ (English)
• http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/poetry/premium-1.2672250 (Hebrew)
February 27: Miri Regev
  http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.690943

March 1: Religious Parties
• Freedman, ch.4 (pp.77-95).

March 3: High Court of Justice
• Freedman, ch.7 (pp.135-158).

March 6: Religious-Secular Divide on Ethos
• Daphne Barak-Erez, Outlawed Pigs: Law, Religion, and Culture in Israel (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), ch.8 (pp.81-105).

March 8: Midterm Review

March 10: In-Class Midterm

March 13, March 15 and March 17
No class (spring break)

March 20: Israeli Arabs
• Freedman, ch.6 (pp.115-134).

March 22: Palestinians I – The History

March 24: Palestinians II – Israeli Policies

March 27: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (1949-2001)
• Freedman, ch.12 (pp.253-270).

• Freedman, ch.12 (pp. 270-282).

March 31: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Post-Arafat)
• Freedman, ch.12 (pp. 282-291).
April 3: Settlers

April 5: Watch Unsettled (2007)

April 7: Watch Soldier Citizen (2012)

April 10: Final Paper Discussion

April 12 No class (Passover)

April 14: Watch Rabin, the Last Day (2015)

April 17: Israeli Economy
• Freedman, ch.8 (pp.159-172).

April 19: Aliyah and the Russian-Speaking Community in Israel
• Freedman, ch.5 (pp.97-114).

April 21: Social Justice Protest

April 24: Gender

April 26: Jerusalem Gay Pride Parade

April 28: Civic Textbook

May 1: Palestinian Day Laborers
May 3: Foreign Workers

May 5: Watch Hotline (2015)

May 8: The Jewish State Today

May 10: The Israeli Question
• Watch Ben-Dror Yemini – “The Industry of Lies,” an Interview https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azMnwwQdT8
• Tomer Persico, “Israel’s ‘War on BDS’ Misses the Point,” +972 June 1, 2015. http://972mag.com/israels-war-on-bds-misses-the-point/107343/

* Final Paper Due May 17 (Wednesday) 10am (EST)