

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

HEBREW 2241/JEWSH ST 2242

THE CULTURE OF CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

Instructor:

Office hours:

Office:

E-mail:

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with contemporary Israeli culture in all of its diversity. Since the founding of the State in 1948, Israeli society has faced a series of dramatic challenges and has undergone tremendous changes. This course will survey the major social, cultural, religious and political trends in Israel, with special emphasis on the post-1967 period. We will explore developments in music, dance, poetry, and archaeology; responses to founding ideals and ideologies; the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict; efforts to absorb new waves of immigration and to deal with questions of ethnicity; and the roles of religion and secularism in Israeli society. We will draw on a broad range of material, including print media, films, and YouTube clips.

By the end of the course, students should have an insight into the complexity of Israeli society and the richness of Israeli culture, as well as an understanding of Israel's role in Jewish life, the Middle East, and the world at large.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%):

1. You are expected to attend all class sessions.
2. You are expected to read all assigned material.
3. You should be prepared to participate in class discussions of assigned readings and videos shown in class. You are responsible for all of the material covered in class, even if you are absent.

ABSENCES:

Three or more absences for reasons other than medical or family emergencies will result in a reduction of your final grade. Absences for medical or family emergencies require written proof.

READING SUMMARIES (5%):

Each student will be responsible for presenting the class with a five-minute summary of at least one of the assigned sets of readings during the course of the semester. Reading summary assignments are on Carmen. In summarizing, you should present the main points clearly and concisely. The **typescript of your reading summary is due** on the date that you present your summary orally.

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HOMEWORK (20%):

There are **five** written homework assignments printed on the syllabus. They are due on **1/11, 2/13, 2/20, 3/22, and 4/3**. Each response should be **250 words long**. Please answer **only one** of the two questions listed for each assignment. Homework assignments are due in Carmen Assignments **before class** on the specified due date. Homework assignments **must refer to the assigned readings** on that topic. Grading will be based on the clarity of your writing, maximum coverage of substantive points, and phrasing things in your own words.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS (30%):

Each student will be required to deliver a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation on an individualized topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. You will be required to consult at least **four printed sources** and to **hand in your script and a bibliography**. A list of topics and detailed guidelines will be posted on Carmen. PowerPoints are due in Carmen Assignments **before class on Feb 22, 2017**.

FINAL EXAMINATION (35%):

The final will be in class on **Wednesday, April 19, 2017**. The final will examine all of the material covered in the course. The date of this exam cannot be changed. **No make-up exams will be scheduled. A study guide will be posted on Carmen in advance of the exam.**

GE CATEGORY: Cultures and Ideas

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students develop abilities to analyze, appreciate, and interpret major forms of human thought and expression.
2. Students develop abilities to understand how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Students will be expected to keep up with current events in Israel, using on-line versions of Israeli newspapers and other websites.

Especially useful sites:

www.haaretz.com (Haaretz newspaper--portions now require a subscription)

www.mfa.gov.il/MFA (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org (See the excellent bibliography of websites)

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Students are reminded that they are responsible for obeying the University's rules regarding academic misconduct as set forth in the Code of Student Conduct.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue;

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telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>

GRADING:

The final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Reading summaries | 5% |
| Homework | 20% |
| Oral presentation | 30% |
| Final exam | 35% |

Grading Scale:

| | |
|----|--------|
| A | 95-100 |
| A- | 90-94 |
| B+ | 85-89 |
| B | 80-84 |
| B- | 75-79 |
| C+ | 70-74 |
| C | 65-69 |
| C- | 60-64 |
| D+ | 55-59 |
| D | 50-54 |
| D- | 45-49 |
| E | <45 |

Please Note: Texting, emailing, or other unapproved online activity during class—and especially during films—will result in **an automatic grade reduction**.

ASSIGNED READINGS:

•Students are required to purchase the following books from SBX. They will probably be listed under Hebrew:

Donna Rosenthal, *The Israelis* (Free Press, 2003)

Bernard Reich, *A Brief History of Israel* (Facts On File, 2008)

•All other required readings are on the Carmen site for this course.

•All readings are to be done **before** the date indicated (with the exception of the first session).

M 1/9/17 **Israel: An “Old-New Land”**

Readings:

Maps

Hatikvah, the national anthem of the State of Israel

State Seal and Flag

Chronology

•Reich, *Brief History*, 319-43 (Chronology)

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Additional chronology at:

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts%20About%20Israel/History/Facts%20About%20Israel-%20History>

W 1/11/17 **Zionism: Ideals and Ideology**

Readings:

ZIONISM: IDEALS AND IDEOLOGY

The Proclamation of the State of Israel

Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (2004) (excerpts)

First Knesset: “The Law of Return”

Eetta Prince-Gibson, “Lives, Interrupted and Rebuilt” (2008)

•Reich, *Brief History*, 13-42 (“The Prehistory of the State of Israel”)

Homework questions (Answer **one set** in 250 words):

1. What was and is the rationale for the Law of Return? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages you can see arising out of such a law?

2. What ideals are enshrined in the Proclamation of the State of Israel? In your opinion, what is the purpose of its historical preamble?

M 1/16/17 No Class—MLK Day

W 1/18/17 **“Tkuma, the Fight for Survival”** Part 1 (film and discussion)

Readings:

ZIONISM: IDEALS AND IDEOLOGY

Golda Meir, “The Zionist Purpose”

Theodore Herzl, *The Jewish State* (excerpts)

Ina Friedman, “Elsewhere” (2006)

Adam Gopnik, “Trial of the Century” (Dreyfus Affair) (2009)

*optional: David Ben-Gurion, “Vision and Redemption”

M 1/23/17 **The Kibbutz at 100**

Readings:

Lawrence Meyer, “The Kibbutz”

Janine Zacharia, “21st Century Kibbutzim”

Danielle Haas, “Going Green Down South”

Isabel Kershner, “The Kibbutz Sheds Socialism and Gains Popularity”

Bernard Dichek, “A Sober Look at Utopia” (2008)

Daniella Cheslow, “The Red Revolution” (2008)

Lawrence Rifkin, “Adult Children of the Dream” (2010)

•Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 103-118 (“The Ashkenazim”)

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W 1/25/17 **The Hebrew Language—Part I**

Readings:

William Chomsky, *Hebrew the Eternal Language*, Ch 12.

_____, “The Hebrew Alphabet.” (chart)

Jack Fellman, “Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and the Revival of Hebrew”

Herb Keinon, “How Good is Your Hebrish?”

M 1/30/17 **The Hebrew Language—Part II**

“The Wordmaker” (film and discussion)

Readings:

Zohar Shavit, “Tel Aviv Language Police” (2012)

Yona Wallach, “Hebrew” (poem)

Jodi Rudoren, “Tel Aviv Journal: Learning Hebrew on the Streets” (2012)

W 2/1/17 **Music**

Readings:

Felice Maranz, “Isaac’s Blessings.”

Rochelle Furstenburg, “The Score at 60”

Yossi Klein Halevi, “The Wizard of Sderot”

Janine Zacharia, “Risky Show Business”

Stephen Horenstein, “War of the Cassettes.”

David Green, “The Hidden Ofra Haza”

Kamoun Ben Shimon, “A Natural Renaissance” (2009)

Jenny Levin, “The Call of the Oud” (2008)

Kamoun Ben Shimon, “Reconnecting Roots” (Kobi Oz-2010)

Azzan Yadin-Israel, “A Measure of Beauty” (Hadag Nahash-2010)

M 2/6/16 No class

Readings: Music

Edwin Seroussi, “Mediterraneanism” (excerpts)

Readings: Dance

Gaby Aldor, “The Borders of Contemporary Israeli Dance”

Nina Spiegel, *Embodying Hebrew Culture*, Conclusion

Dina Roginsky, “The Israeli Folk Dance Movement”

W 2/8/17 **“Out for Love”** (film and discussion)

Readings:

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THE LEGACY OF YITZHAK RABIN

Noa Ben Artzi-Pelossof, "November 6, 1995"

Daniel Gordis, *If a Place Can Make You Cry* (2002), 27-30

•Reich, *Brief History*, 158-185 ("The Persian Gulf War and the Middle East Peace Process")

M 2/13/17 **The Political System**

Readings:

Leslie Susser, "Kadima Eyes the Secular Vote" (2008)

Jeremy Gillick, "Can Israel's Electoral System Be Fixed?" (2009)

Leslie Susser, "The Election Stalemate" (2009)

Naim M. Peress, "A Cry for a Constituency System" (2009)

Leslie Susser, "Shas Flexes Its Muscles" (2008)

Dan Ben-David, "Shas's Demands" (2008)

Leslie Susser, "Judicial Activism Under Fire" (2009)

Eetta Prince-Gibson, "A Justice for All" (2008)

Lawrence Rifkin, "Israeli Politics, Soviet Style" (2011)

•www.mfa.gov.il

read: The Government, Facts About Israel

•www.cfisrael.org (Constitution for Israel):

read: About the Project: History

read: Committee Debates: The President of the State

Homework questions (Answer **one set** in 250 words):

1. What is the role of the President in Israel? Who can serve as President? How is the President elected? What are his/her duties?
2. What is the Shas party, and what is its constituency and political agenda? What are the advantages and disadvantages of political parties that represent specific ethnic constituencies, like Shas?

W 2/15/17 **Religion and Secularism**

Readings:

Netty Gross, "Difficult Donations" (2008)

Leora Frucht, "The Back Page" (2008)

Peter Hirschberg, "What Did You Learn in Shas School Today?"

Erik Schechter, "Surfing Past the Rabbis"

Kamoun Ben Shimon, "Freedom Riders" (2009)

Netty C. Gross, "A Lost Cause?" (2007)

Netty C. Gross, "Spiritual Impasse" (2008)

Netty C. Gross, "An Uneasy Status Quo" (2008)

Eetta Prince-Gibson, "They're Doing It Their Way" (2009)

•Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 183-253 (Chs. 9, 10, 11)

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M 2/20/17 **Women and Judaism: “Praying in Her Own Voice”**
Film and discussion. In class exercise: Please be prepared to write two sentences in response to the film. We will go around the room to hear everyone’s reactions.

Readings:

WOMEN IN ISRAELI SOCIETY:

Devra Ferst, “A Jewish Wedding?” (2008)

Netty C. Gross, “Rabbinical Courts...Worry Feminists” (2007)

Netty C. Gross, “Who Weeps for Rachel?” (2009)

Homework questions (Answer **one set** in 250 words):

1. If you were a secular Israeli, how might you want to change the current official role of religion in Israel? Please refer to the readings referring to conversion, marriage, divorce, Sabbath observance.
2. If you were a religious Zionist, how would you argue against secularists who want to separate “church” and state in Israel, or moderates who feel that orthodoxy should not be the only legitimate variety of Judaism in Israel? Please refer to specific issues mentioned in the readings.

Please note: everyone is expected to attend and pay attention to all of the oral presentations.

W 2/22/17 **Oral presentations**
***PowerPoints due in Carmen Assignments and hand in your script by start of class**

M 2/27/17 **Oral presentations**

W 3/1/17 **Oral presentations**

M 3/6/17 **Oral presentations**

W 3/8/17 **Oral presentations**

No classes—Spring Break

M 3/13/17

W 3/15/17

M 3/20/17 **East Meets West I: Jews from Many Lands**

Readings:

IMMIGRATION: YEMENITE JEWS

Reuben Ahroni, "Introduction"

Sara Levi-Tanai, "Treasure Out of Yemen"

Vered Lee, "Dancing With a Yemenite Accent" (2006)

Wendy Elliman, "A Magic Carpet's Last Fringe" (2010)

JEWS FROM OTHER ARAB LANDS

Peter Hirschberg, "The Ethnic Underclass"

Peter Hirschberg, "Beyond the Rage"

Ariel Sabar, *My Father's Paradise* (2008), 96-102

•Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 119-137 ("The Mizrahim")

W 3/22/17 **East Meets West: II**

Readings:

IMMIGRATION:

ETHIOPIAN JEWS

Rochelle Furstenberg, "Shaken Up"

Daniella Cheslow, "Garden Helps Ethiopians Set Root" (2009)

Eetta Prince-Gibson, "Ceremonial Questions" (2008)

Eetta Prince-Gibson, "Homeward Bound" (2009)

Joseph R. Hoffman, "Cross-Cultural Connections" (2008)

Jerusalem Report Cover Story (Aug 15, 2011), pp. 4-24: "20 Years On"

•Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 157-179 ("Out of Africa")

Homework questions (Answer **one set** in 250 words):

1. Imagine that you came to Israel from Ethiopia as a child during Operation Solomon in 1991. Write a page from your journal describing some of the adjustments you and your family had to make as you became integrated into Israeli society.

2. Which model would be preferable to apply to Israel: cultural meltingpot or multicultural society? Explain your answer.

M 3/27/17 **East Meets West: III**

Readings (continued on next page):

JEWS FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Netty C. Gross, "Remembering the Big Chill" (2008)

Yehuda Mirsky, "Let My People Go" (2010)

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Daniel Gordis, *If a Place Can Make You Cry*, 33-36
Netty C. Gross, "Israel's Russian Ministate"
Janine Zacharia, "The New Russian Class System"
Yossi Klein Halevi, "The Birth of Israel's New Jews"
Ina Friedman, "Between Countries"
Ina Friedman, "The New Russian Democrats"
• Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 138-156 ("The Russians")

Readings:

THE "ANGLO-SAXONS": JEWS FROM ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Ze'ev Chafets, "Ordinary People in Unusual Circumstances."
Stuart Schoffman, "Donuts and Democracy"
Daniel Gordis, "E-Mail From an Anxious State"
Leora Eren Frucht, "What's Ideology Got to Do with It?" (2008)
Eetta Prince-Gibson, "The Long Ride Home" (2008)
Eetta Prince-Gibson, "Sharper Vision" (2008)

W 3/29/17 **Women in the Army: "Company Jasmine"** (film and discussion)

Readings:

Netty C. Gross, "Fighting the Wrong War?"
Shani Boianjiu, "Means of suppressing Demonstrations," (2012-fiction)
This in Fiction: Shani Boianjiu : The New Yorker

Readings:

THE ARMY

• Rosenthal, *The Israelis*, 49-78 ("A People's Army")
Leslie Susser, "National Service Seeks Arab Volunteers" (2008)
Uriel Heilman, "Haredi Army Exemptions" (2012)
George Packer, "The Unconsoled" (David Grossman Profile, 2010)

M 4/3/17 **Archaeology: Digging Up the Past, Searching for Roots**

Readings:

Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (excerpt)
Yigal Yadin, *Masada* (excerpts)
F.J. Kiesler and A.P. Bartos, "The Shrine of the Book"
Yigal Yadin, "The Scrolls in the Shrine"
Ziv Hellman, "The Qumran Quandary" (2008)
Netty C. Gross, "Gratefully Dead" (2007)
Gavriel Fiske, "Blasts from the Past" (2008)
Eric Silver, "Post-Zionism in Antiquity"
Kamoun Ben Shimon, "Bones of Contention" (2010)

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Homework questions (Answer **one set** in 250 words):

1. Explain the following: “In the fifties and sixties... archaeology was a part of the Zionist enterprise. To a large extent, it was part of the great connection to the past, proof of our rights in the land. Today, archaeology is much more professional... detached from any national or religious bias. We are trying to reconstruct the ancient period in this country, without emphasizing the role of the Israelites or of a Jewish state.” (Amichai Mazar, p. 338)
2. Imagine you were a volunteer helping to excavate Massada in 1963-65. Write a page from your journal reflecting your experiences on the dig.

W 4/5/17 **Tel Aviv at 100**

Readings:

Jerusalem Report, “The State of Tel Aviv” (2009)
Josh Mitnick, “Through Their Eyes” (2009)
Ariella Newberger/Julia Kristof, “The Hidden Beauty of Bauhaus” (2009)
Jenna Hanson, “City Lines” (2009)
Bernard Dichek, “After Homecoming” (2011)
Jenna Hanson, “Between City and Sea” (2009)
Ziv Hellman, “Desperately Seeking Parking” (2009)
Eetta Prince-Gibson, “A City’s Beauty” (2009)
Yaacov Shavit, “Telling the Story of a Hebrew City” (2012)

Discussion questions to prepare at home:

What contrasts does Tel Aviv embody (e.g., old/new)? How and where do these contrasts manifest themselves? Please make a list of specific examples based on the readings.

M 4/10/17 No Class-Passover

W 4/12/17 No Class-Passover

M 4/17/17 No Class-Passover

W 4/19/17 **Final exam during regular class period**