Crossroads of Empires and Conflicts: Jaffa and Tel Aviv in Modernity

Class code

Instructor Details

Dr. Martin Wein

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Office hours by appointment

Class Details

Seminar

Time to be confirmed.

Prerequisites

As part of the Ottoman Empire, the Holy Land entered the modern period with the brief Napoleonic invasion of 1799, the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and the establishment of a communications and transportation corridor running via the Mediterranean and through Levantine port cities, such as Jaffa, the commercial and cultural center of Ottoman Palestine. Tel Aviv began as a Jewish suburb of Jaffa.

This course is based in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, perhaps the last Levantine port city, the main entry point to the Holy Land by sea, and Jerusalem’s gateway to the West. An ancient yet modern cosmopolitan hub, it offers a full spectrum of the region's heritage, including Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ruins at Tell Jaffa, remains of Palestinian Kasbahs, villages, and watering systems for citrus orchards, Turkish villas, mosques, and administrative compounds, American, Armenian, German, Greek, Italian, and Lebanese Christian neighborhoods, a French-built historical railway to Jerusalem, the British-constructed port and “green city” urban planning, in addition to landmarks of the Jewish National Home, and the UNESCO world heritage site of “white city” Bauhaus architecture. The contemporary “global ghetto” of African refugees and Asian migrant workers known as the “black city” will also be studied.

Although Tel Aviv-Jaffa is the biggest city of Israel today, with nearly half the country’s population in its wider urban area, it only has seen a tiny fraction of the research and publication devoted to Jerusalem. Existing scholarship is moreover often split into studies of either Jaffa or Tel Aviv. While Jerusalem Studies has often focused on archeology and Jewish-identified layers, Jaffa-Tel Aviv Studies has more of an architectural and universalist historical outlook. The city will be studied in a broad regional literary context, including its role in ancient Egyptian texts, in the biblical tradition, in Greek mythology, and in local or global literature, poetry, song, as well as in recent cinematography.

The course will offer ample opportunity for interactive fieldwork.

Please feel free to ask the lecturer for additional individual meetings. If you plan on using human subject research please consult IRB and country-specific guidelines and restrictions.

Desired Outcomes

• Demonstrate ability to apply theories on place and globalization to the context of Tel Aviv-Jaffa
• Develop an understanding of contemporary Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Israel, and the Middle East as the product of ongoing historical processes
• Establish a solid historical foundation, basic concepts, and knowledge of administrative patterns of modern Europe, the Mediterranean, and regional or global empires in the modern period
• Advance a new interreligious/secular understanding of the Middle East conflict and its worldwide repercussions
Assessment Components

- presentation of readings with leading discussion (30%)
- fieldwork assignment (5-10 pages essay, 10%)
- draft proposal for final essay (10%, 1 page, peer response)
- final paper on topic of your choice (10-15 pages essay on a topic of your choice, 50%)

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: active participation, excellent oral and written work, originality of thought

Grade B: active participation, good oral and written work

Grade C: active participation, complete oral and written work

Grade D: participation, complete oral and written work

Grade F: incomplete participation or work

Grade conversion

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Grading Policy

No-shows for presentations in class, and assignments due after the deadline without requesting an extension may receive zero grades.

Attendance Policy

NYUTA has a strict policy about course attendance for students. NO UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE PERMITTED. All medical-based absence requests MUST be presented to the Program Coordinator. Non-medical requests should be made to the Director and in advance of the intended absence. In the case of illness, contact the Program Coordinator within seven (7) days of the absence or as soon as practicable and provide medical documentation. Your instructors will be informed of any excused extended absence.

Your instructors are not authorized to approve your absence, and they are required to report any absences to the Director or Assistant Director immediately. Unexcused absences will be penalized by deducting 3% from your final course mark for each such absence. This may affect your final grade.

Late Submission of Work

All works must be submitted on time, unless you have received an explicit extension. Any late submission may result in grade deduction at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism: the presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

Required Text(s)

No books need to be acquired

Supplemental Text(s)

See below in syllabus
It is hard to overestimate the importance of the internet, or its contribution, to the build up of contemporary knowledge of the world around us. Albeit it needs to be used wisely. This means that one must be selective and careful when relating to internet-based sources, identifying and distinguishing opinions from facts, and journalism from academics. Most importantly, one should make clear reference to internet sources, allowing the reader the opportunity to consult these resources as and if required.

Please also note that the ‘world-wide web’ – www – exists in many languages. Many sources about Israel in English, for instance, will be aimed at tourists or readers living primarily in English-speaking regions of the world. Sources might differ when reading them in other languages. Use the internet critically.

You can never be too safe, so do ensure both the reader and yourself that you know well what your internet sources are.

Cameras for documentation

### Session 1

**Introduction and Overview**

- Personal Introductions
- Introduction: "Focusing in on the Middle East, the Holy Land and Tel Aviv-Jaffa"
- Discussion of the Syllabus and Questions; Distribution of Reading Presentations
- Mini Walking Tour around the NYU Center

### Session 2

**Ottoman Jaffa: From Napoleon to the Suez Canal**


Optional:


### Session 3

**Ottoman Jaffa: From the Suez Canal to the British Conquest**


### Session 4

**British Mandate: A Tale of Two Cities**


Optional:


### Session 5

**British Mandate: Christian-Jewish-Muslim Relations in Jaffa and Tel Aviv**

Session 6

**Eclectic and Bauhaus City: A Unique Architectural Heritage**


Optional:


Session 7

**1948 and the Aftermath**


Please collect and evaluate additional material from:

PalestineRemembered. Available from: http://www.palestineremembered.com [follow up on the tabs for pictures and other material]


Session 8

**Tel Aviv: City Without a Past?**

Azaryahu, Maoz. *Tel Aviv: Mythography of a City*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007 (pp. 106-190, 224-244).


Session 9

**Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Jubilee, Destruction, Preservation, and Debate**

Docomomo 40, March 2009: Special Issue on Tel Aviv’s 100th Anniversary Celebration


Session 10

**Present Trends and Future Outlooks**


| Session 11 | Walking Lecture 1: A City Built on Sand?  
Excursion: meeting on Clock Tower Square, Jaffa  
Finish at the Old Central Bus Station |
| Session 12 | Walking Lecture 2: Walking the Hyphen  
Excursion: meeting on Dizengoff Square  
Finish in Old Jaffa |
| Session 13 | Walking Lecture 3: Walking the Boulevard Ring  
Excursion: meeting on Kikar Atarim Square  
Finish on Herzl Street near Shalom Tower |
| Session 14 | Tel Aviv-Jaffa in Songs and Movies (excerpts)  
*The Blaumilch Canal (The Big Dig)* by Ephraim Kishon, Israel, 1969.  
*Ajami* by Scandar Copti and Yaron Shani, Israel, Palestine, Germany, France, 2009. |

**Classroom Etiquette**

Please do not use computers or other devices except for directly class-related purposes.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

A set of walking lectures through Tel Aviv-Jaffa (sessions 11-13)

You will be required to participate in walking lectures of three and a half hours, in small groups, “hands on” and on–site. It is important that you come well fed, bring comfortable shoes and clothes, a cap, umbrellas/sun glasses/sun lotion and water, as well as change for drinks and the bus. We will stop for explanations, discussions, visits and a coffee break. In case of strong rain check your e-mail for weather related changes up to two hours before tours.

A film festival “Another Israel” with guest filmmakers (schedule TBA)


*Paper Dolls* by Tomer Hyman, Israel, Switzerland, United States, 2006 (documentary).

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

Day trips to Jerusalem and Acre

**Your Instructor**

Please see www.mjwein.net