Politics of Near & Middle East: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Course ID: POL-UA 9540

Instructor Details:
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Class Details:
Fall 2011  
[Click here and enter class meeting time]

Prerequisites:

Class Description:
The Israeli Palestinian conflict is one of the longest unresolved national conflicts of the modern era. With its roots in the early twentieth century, its persistence has shaped and affected – adversely, for the most part - the lives of millions of Palestinians and Israelis and engaged the international community for many decades. This course attempts to provide a comprehensive introduction to the historical evolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to the core issues that comprise it, and to its major societal and political ramifications. Centrality is accorded to two key events and the contradictory consequences they bore for the two peoples: the first is the 1948 War, which gave rise to the emergence of the Israeli state and, at the same time, resulted in the mass uprooting of Palestinians, their dispersal in adjacent Arab countries, and subsequently in the yet unresolved Palestinian refugee problem. The second key event is the 1967 War, in the wake of which Israel imposed a regime of military occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a regime that persists to this very day. At the same time, the war and its aftermath induced the emergence of the Palestinian resistance movement, which subsequently led to the consolidation of the PLO as the representative of Palestinian national aspirations. Major attention is given also to the hitherto failed attempts at resolving the conflict, with a focus on the shifting political agendas of the chief players (State of Israel and the Palestinian National Movement) and on the impact of international players and of the changing international contexts.

Course Objectives:
The course seeks to introduce the student to the historical evolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to major societal and political ramifications that the conflict bore for Palestinians and Israelis, and to the varied narratives to which it gave rise.

Grading and Assessment:

Class participation: 10%

Midterm paper: 20%

Final paper: 70%

Attendance is required and students are expected to participate in class discussions. Following the courses website is most important; each week an announcement regarding the upcoming session will be posted on the course's website. In addition, many of the course's reading materials will be placed on the site. Students are therefore expected to follow the course's site on a regular basis.


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.

Additional Required Equipment
n/a

**Session 1**

**Introduction: The core issues that comprise the Palestinian-Israeli conflict today (2011):** A brief overview presenting the peoples (Israelis and Palestinians); the major political players (State of Israel, Palestinian National Authority (PNA), The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), The Hamas government in Gaza, the US, the European Union, the United Nations (UN)); the central current dimensions of the conflict: Palestinian statehood and sovereignty, control over territory and borders, Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT), the Palestinian refugee problem, the future status of Jerusalem, and more; former attempts at resolving the conflict and their failure. Following a concise introduction to the present realities of the conflict we will turn back to its origins and evolution.

Data sources for the first meeting will be posted on Blackboard.
Session 2

Back to the Beginnings: Palestine in the Last Decades of the Ottoman Rule, and the Emergence of the Zionist Movement and of Arab Nationalism

[Enter date]


Session 3

Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate: Demography, Economy(ies), Societies, National Politics and Conflict

[Enter date]


Session 4

The 1948 War and its Direct Ramifications: Background, Sequence, the Emergence of the Israeli State, the Palestinian War Refugees and Origin of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, and Further Immediate Consequences for the Two Peoples

[Enter date]


Refugeeness, Dispersal and Life in Exile, Part I: the International Community, the UN, UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees from a Perspective of more than six Decades


Refugeeness, Dispersal and Life in Exile, Part II: The Legal-Political-Social Status of Palestinians in the Arab "Host" Countries (the cases of Jordan, Lebanon, and the Gulf States); Trends of Politicization among Palestinian Communities up to the 1967 War: Between Arab and Palestinian Nationalism


From the 1967 War to the Lebanon War (1982): Israeli Conquests, Arab Defeat the Emergence of the Palestinian Resistance Movement and Consolidation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the restructuring of the conflict


**The Arab Minority in Israel**


Primary Source:
National Committee of Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, "The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel".
http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/dec06/tasawor-mostaqbali.pdf

**The Israeli Occupation over the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Transformation of Palestinian Society**


Session 10

Prolonged Military Occupation and the Development of the Palestinian National Movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip up to the Intifada


Session 11

The Palestinian Popular Uprising (first Intifada), Israeli Reaction(s), and subsequent Political Outcomes


Session 12

The Oslo Peace Process: the Declaration of Principles, Establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, Interim Agreements, Internal Oppositions to the Oslo Scheme, and Mounting Obstacles on the Way to Palestinian Statehood


**Primary Sources**


**Session 13**


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