Issues in Contemporary Israeli Society
Lecturer – Yisrael Ne'eman

First Class

The National Memory – A review of Jewish national, cultural and religious identity from the ancient period to the 20th century. What unifies the Jewish People after 2000 years of Diaspora? The impact of Tanakh (Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures) and the ancient period on the Jewish World and in particular on the Israel of today. Understanding the identity of Jewish Israelis. Messianism and the Land of Israel as the center of Jewish religious/national redemption.

Tanakh – also known as Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures:

Salvation – Jewish Messianism and its nationalist overtones
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-messianism/

Second Class

Zionism: Jewish National Liberation – Beginning in the 1800s the secularization of Jewish identity alongside the continual non-acceptance of the Jews in much of the Christian and Muslim worlds leads to the development of modern nationalism and massive immigration known as "ingathering of the Exiles" from the Jewish World to the Palestine Mandate, and later to the State of Israel. No longer depending on God for salvation, secular Jews, in particular those from the Left commence economic and political development to ensure the establishment and success of the Jewish State. World War II and the Holocaust leave a major impact. Later there is immigration from the Arab/Muslim World and the former Soviet Union. What is Zionism today and is it secular nationalism?

Zionism – Jewish Nationalism (article from Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Third Class

Ideology/Theology and Political Expression – Understanding Israeli democracy with emphasis on the Knesset (parliament) and formation of the government. A breakdown of the theologies and ideologies that form the basis of Israeli society – Labor, Likud, General Zionism, National Religious and Haredi. Israel prides itself of
being "Jewish and democratic." Ideological shifts face off against pragmatism over the past 70 years – Principles betrayed, opportunities lost or a correct balance?

Major Zionist ideologies and basis for political parties – concentrate on understanding ideologies
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_Zionism#frb-inline

Fourth Class
War and Peace 1947-77 – Three major wars (1948, 1967 and 1973), the semi-militarization of Israeli society thru lack of choice alongside the solidification of the military, security concepts and economic development. The formative years of the Israeli State leave a lasting impression on all Jews and the world at large. If 1948 was the national liberation with the battle born establishment of the Jewish State can 1967 be viewed as a spiritual redemption as the "Promised Land" from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea is under Israeli control? After the 1973 Yom Kippur War issues of "land for peace" become pressing, yet the Palestinian issue is not seen as central.


On Moodle

Fifth Class
War and Peace 1977-2000 – The shift towards peace making leaves many Israelis in a major dilemma when defining "peace and security" when Israel signs a peace agreement with Egypt (1979) while relinquishing the Sinai Peninsula. The argument of secure borders began in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War and continues to the present. Israel signs a peace agreement with Jordan in 1994 and engages the Palestinians thru the Oslo Accords during the 1990s. The hopes and failures of the 1990s are still with us today.


On Moodle

Oslo Accords - Summary
c-faculty.chuo-u.ac.jp/~mikenix1/ip/Oslo%20Accords.pdf

Sixth Class
Part 1: Minorities in Israel – Not everyone in Israel is Jewish and the Arab minority is a very diverse community. Arabs have Israeli citizenship but most identify with Arab nationalism at least in part while not a few Muslims see Islam as their first identity. The Arabic speaking population includes Muslims, Christians, Druze,
Bedouin and Circassions. Very diverse and with differing interests we will analyze identity, loyalty and development issues concerning Israel's Arabs. How can the Arabic speaking minority implement its differing agendas in the "Jewish and democratic" state?

Sammy Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archtype"
http://img2.timg.co.il/communafiles/32398285.pdf

**Part II: Haredim** – Israel’s ultra-orthodox population is increasing at a faster rate than any other sector of the Jewish population. Yet most do not support modern political Zionism and are considered non-Zionists as they neither support nor are against the state but rather they await the Messianic End Time and demand a state governed by Jewish religious law (Halacha). Politically their parties are in the government with long standing agreements with the right wing Likud to ensure funding for their educational institutions but for the most part refuse to serve in the army and have a low rate of participation in the work force. Can this change and will their rabbis allow for social and economic integration?

Israel's Surprising Poverty | The New Yorker

**Seventh Class**

*From 2000 Onwards: Contradictions and Challenges* – The hopes for a two-state solution as expressed thru the Oslo Accords was a great disappointment for the Israeli Left and "peace camp" but a vindication for the right and religious factions. The 2000-04 Second Ìntifada (Low Intensity Conflict) and the rise of the Hamas Islamic fundamentalists halted peace-making while Greater Land of Israel activists develop more settlements and completely oppose a Palestinian State. On the Lebanese front, the Iranian supported Hezbollah fought Israel in 2006 while from Gaza Hamas engaged Israel in 2008-09, 2012 and 2014. Is peace possible?

Demographically, the two fastest growing populations in Israel are the Arab Muslims (esp. the Negev Bedouin) and the ultra-orthodox Jewish (non-Zionist) Haredi, most of whom refuse to serve in the army. Are these groups being integrated into Israeli society?

On Moodle or PDF

**Eighth Class**

*Final Test and Israel Update* – A 25 question multiple choice exam will be given at the beginning of the last class.
The second hour and a half of class will be dedicated to updating students on what is happening in Israel today and answering students' questions. All students are expected to attend (if not 6 points will be deducted from their final grade).