MODERN JEWISH NATIONALISM: ZIONISM AND THE JEWISH STATE

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Course Description

The goal of this course is to provide students with basic knowledge and understanding of Zionism as a principal form of Jewish nationalism, and of its relationship to modern Jewish and world history. Zionism, in its various forms, set out to transform the Jewish people by creating a territorial homeland for a dispersed minority, by replacing (or supplementing) a religious-ethnic identity with a national one. Though influenced by other modern national movements, Zionism differed in several key respects, since the Jews lacked a common language and land. Moreover, opinions of Zionist thinkers on the basic goals of Jewish nationalism differed significantly. Their competing visions of the Zion include a purely political entity, a Jewish state grounded in socialist ideas, a site for the regeneration of the Jewish people, the cultural center for Diaspora Jewry, and the locus of messianic redemption.

Beginning with the Zionist "precursors" of the mid-nineteenth century, this course will trace development of Zionist ideas and their translation into politics, social and cultural sphere up until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and beyond. We will explore Zionist theories, politics, and practical activity through a variety of primary historical texts and historical scholarship.

Each class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Discussion will draw heavily on the assigned readings—research articles, primary texts, and visual materials. Grading in the course is based on written assignments and on class work (i.e., discussion) that demonstrates critical thinking.

Learning Objectives

1. Grasp the broad outlines of the development of Jewish nationalism and Zionism in the context of modern Jewish history.
2. Recognize the major political, social, and cultural differences within the Zionist movement.
3. Recognize the major turning points in history of Zionism in its general historical context.
4. Develop an understanding of the academic discipline of history.
5. Develop skills to read primary sources and interpret them.
6. Develop skills to evaluate and criticize scholarly theories in the field.

Readings and Other Course Materials

Background reading


Research articles

Primary sources

- Arthur Hertzberg *The Zionist Idea. A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Atheneum, 1971);

Videos

- *Pillar of Fire*;
- *Israel: a Nation is Born*;
- *Sallah Shabati*.

Please note, that all readings, including foundational text by Hertzberg, and assigned parts from source readers, artciles, and monographs, are available as PDF files through the course e-Learning site.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. **Four Quizes**: will be given every three- to four-weeks period, and will test your knowledge (such as facts, names, dates) of class material (mainly lectures and readings). Each quiz is 5% of the final grade, 20% total.
2. **Two Reaction Papers (3-4 pages)**: one question pertaining to the current theme will be posted weekly. Students are expected to pick up any of those questions, and answer them by integrating readings into their essays. First paper is due at the end of Week VII (February 21). Second paper is due at the end of Week XIV (April 18). Each paper is 10% of the final grade, 20% total.
3. **One Research Article Review (3-4 pages)**: you should pick one of the weekly research article assignments, give a written summary of its thesis and argument, and relate it to general context of the course. The review is due at the end of Week XIV (April 18). The review could also be presented to class orally. Please ask instructor for details. 20% of the final grade, 20% total.
4. **Final Exam**: The exam will be an essay drawing on topics discussed in class. 20% of the final grade.
5. **Attendance and Participation**: You are expected to participate in in-class discussions. This presumes that you DO the reading, COME to class, and PARTICIPATE intelligently and soundly in the discussion. 20% of the final grade.
## Class Schedule

### Week I. Introduction

**January 6, 8, 10**

**Introduction to History of Zionism.**

**Capsule History of Zionism and Emergence of Modern Israel.**

- **Background reading**
  - Hertzberg, 15-22

- **Research article**
  - Shmuel Almog *People and Land* in Reiharz-Shapira, 46-62.

- **Primary sources**

- **Video**
  - *Pillar of Fire.*

### Weeks II–III. Modern Jewish Nationalism: Context; Early Ideologues, Branches, and Institutions

**January 13, 15, 17, 22, 24**

- **Background reading**
  - Hertzberg, 22-45

- **Research article**
  - Shmuel Ettinger and Israel Bartal *The First Aliyah: Ideological Roots and Practical Accomplishments* in Reiharz-Shapira, 63-93.

- **Primary sources**
  - *Writings by Peretz Smolenskin, Moshe Leib Lilienblum, Leo Pinsker and Ahad Ha-Am* in Hertzberg, 141-158, 166-198, 247-277;

- **Video**
  - *Pillar of Fire.*

### Weeks IV–V. Theodor Herzl and Foundation of the Zionist Organization

**January 27, 29, 31, February 3, 5, 7**

- **Background reading**
  - Hertzberg, 45-72

- **Research article**
  - Yosef Salmon *Tradition and Nationalism* in Reiharz-Shapira, 94-116.

- **Primary sources**
  - *Writings by Theodor Herzl* in Hertzberg, 199-231;
  - *The Basle Declaration (1897)* in Laqueur-Rubin, 11-12.

- **Video**
  - *Pillar of Fire.*

**Quiz 1 on January 27.**
Week VI. Diplomacy and Zionist Politics. Second Aliyah: Land, Halutsim, and Origins of Arab Problem
February 10, 12, 14

Background reading
Hertzberg, 72-80

Research article
Israel Kolatt The Zionist Movement and the Arabs in Reiharz-Shapira, 617-647.

Primary sources
Writings by Ber Borochov, Aaron David Gordon and Chaim Weizmann in Hertzberg, 352-379, 572-578.

Video
Pillar of Fire.

Weeks VII-VIII. British Mandate. Clash of Nationalisms. Economy and Society. Third and Fourth Aliyah
February 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28

Background reading
Hertzberg, 72-80

Research article

Primary sources
The Balfour Declaration (1917); diplomatic agreements and correspondence pertaining to the establishment of British mandate over Palestine (1915-1922) in Laqueur-Rubin, 12-42.

Video
Pillar of Fire.

Quiz 2 on February 24.

First reaction paper due on February 21.

Spring Break.

Weeks IX-X. British Mandate. Politics: Clash Between Labor and Revisionism
March 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21

Background reading
Hertzberg, 72-80

Research article
Yaakov Shavit Fire and Water: Ze'ev Jabotinsky and the Revisionist Movement in Reiharz-Shapira, 544-566.

Primary sources
Writings by Vladimir Jabotinsky and David Ben Gurion in Hertzberg, 556-570, 604-619;

Video
Pillar of Fire.

Week XI. Zionist Movement and Jewish State: Independence, Defense, Immigration, Education, Identity
March 24, 26, 28

Background reading
Hertzberg, 80-100

Research article
Anita Shapira Native Sons in Reiharz-Shapira, 790-821.
Quiz 3 on March 28.

Week XII. Crisis and Revival of Zionism. An Impact of the Six-Day War
March 31, April 2, 4

Background reading
Hertzberg, 80-100
Research article
Primary sources
Video
Israel: a Nation is Born.

Week XIII. Religious Zionism: "Messianists" and "Normalizers"
April 7, 9, 11

Background reading
Hertzberg, 80-100
Research article
Messianism, Zionism and Orthodoxy: Historical and Conceptual Background in Ravitzky, 10-39.
Primary sources
Writings by Rabbi Samuel Mohilever and Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook in Hertzberg, 398-405, 416-431.
Video
Sallah Shabati.

Week XIV. Zionism of Today: Issues between Israel and Diaspora; Post-Zionism
April 14, 16, 18

Background reading
Hertzberg, 80-100
Research article
Primary sources
Introduction in Silberstein, 1-10.

Quiz 4 on April 18.

Second reaction paper due on April 18.

Research article review due on April 18.
Concluding Remarks.

Review.

Final exam.