

Geographies of the Palestine-Israel Conflict

Geographies of the Palestine-Israel conflict - 54363 - ENVI 497 - 301, fall (8/20-12/12/2014)

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Course Description: Scope, genesis, development, impact, and prospect of the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Course Organization and Objectives: *Geography* is an interdisciplinary field of study straddling nature and culture. It integrates multiple ways of knowing by means of synthesizing a range of academic disciplines and intellectual approaches. *Geographies of the Palestine-Israel Conflict* is a course designed to (1) highlight the scope of the conflict, (2) chronicle its Euro-Russian geopolitical genesis, (3) map its on-the-ground development in Palestine-Israel, and (4) outline its impact on and prospect for U.S. domestic and global political economy. Through a combination of interdisciplinary learning and critical thinking, the course engages students to identify, describe, explain, and interpret complex problems and geographies spanning the local and global scales of the conflict. Critical thinking encourages students (1) to develop the habit of gathering and examining evidence before forming conclusions, (2) to learn how to unlearn (understanding and dispelling misconceptions, inaccuracies, stereotypes, biases, and preconceptions), (3) to be sensitive but critical about subject-related controversies, (4) to understand the relationship between an action and a predicted reaction in game theory decision-making, (5) to be always wary of illusions, (6) to think sometimes outside the box, (7) to distinguish between audience-centered media and fact-centered academia, and (8) to learn how to ground moral and political judgment into facts, not the other way around.

Course Assignments and Grading: Course assignments are **SHORT** and **WEEKLY**. They include: five blogs (100 to 150 words, each, and worth 10% in all), four short multiple choice exams (10 questions, each, and worth 40% in all), three short critical thinking essays (200 to 300 words, each, and worth 30% in all), and one research paper (1500 to 2000 words and worth 20% in all) whose completion includes submitting a short proposal (worth 5%) and writing a paper (worth 15%). **Blogs** consist of a one-paragraph discussion of a current and/or controversial issue in a way that encourages you to (1) think critically and deeply about the Palestine-Israel conflict and (2) learn how to ground your own moral and political judgment into facts, not the other way around. **Exams** are designed to assess quantitative reading and learning from textbooks, online readings, PowerPoint slides, and educational videos. **Critical thinking essays** are micro theme assignments designed to assess qualitative learning and critical thinking through the concise analysis and evaluation of a variety of information, ideas, and ways of knowing in order to identify, articulate, describe, explain, and interpret pressing Palestine-Israel problems and issues. **The research paper** is designed to help students develop information literacy and critical thinking skills and express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively in writing. **Final grades** are assigned according to the following scale: A+ (100% and above), A (96 to 99%), A- (90 to 95%), B+ (86 to 89%), B (83-85%), B- (80 to 82%), C+ (76 to 79%), C (73 to 75%), C- (70 to 72%), D+ (66 to 69%), D (63 to 65%), D- (60 to 62%), and F (below 60%). **No late or make-up assignments or exams** will be accepted under any circumstances in this course because of the following GOOD reasons: (1) you have too many short assignments (14 short assignments, worth no more than 2 to 15 percent, each), (2) the assignments are submitted online with open books, (3) some students can claim to have encountered computer or internet or other technical or non-technical problems or reasons which instructors cannot verify accurately, (4) make-up assignments or exams may not provide equal opportunity for students, and (5) you are given 15% extra credits to offset possible loss of points due to technical or non-technical problems or reasons you may encounter during the semester. If you miss the deadline for an assignment or exam or you fail to submit it properly according to the guidelines and instructions, FORGET about it and count on the 15 extra credit percent (which will be added to your final score). Please don't expect make-up assignments or exams for emergency or health reasons, for computer or browser crash, for Internet connection or Blackboard access, or other technical or non-technical problems. Take care of your time management and Information Technology equipment and skill.

Course Standards and Policies: Students are responsible for all announcements made on Blackboard or via email. Academic dishonesty is the cardinal sin in academia and includes cheating on examinations, plagiarism

(intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own), falsification, forgery (the imitating or counterfeiting of images, documents, signatures, and the like), obstruction, multiple submission, facilitating academic dishonesty, misconduct in research and creative endeavors, misuse of academic resources, misuse of intellectual property, and violation of ethical and professional standards (see Code of Student Conduct at: <http://www.indstate.edu/sci/docs/CodeConduct.pdf>). The critical thinking essays and the research paper must be uploaded (by the deadline) through the TurnItIn link, which can help detect plagiarism (no other forms of submission will be accepted). Academic dishonesty will subject its author(s) to 0 points on the given assignment or failure in the course, and could also lead to further disciplinary action. University policies regarding academic freedom, documented disabilities, expected personal responsibilities & other matters apply to this course and are available: <http://www.indstate.edu/fs/docs/sycamoreStandard.pdf> & <http://www.indstate.edu/fs/docs/fsPolicies.pdf>.

Course Required Textbooks:

- Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), *A Jewish state: an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question*, Charleston: BibliBazaar, 2010 (101 pages, \$5 used, \$17 new, on Amazon.com).
- Ilan Pappé, *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007 (336 pages, \$7 used, \$11 new, on Amazon.com).
- John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policy*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007 (484 pages, \$5 used, \$11 new, on Amazon.com).
- Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: peace not apartheid*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007 (288 pages, \$6 used, \$11 new, on Amazon.com).

Course Blackboard Documents (required online readings, PowerPoint slides, videos or video synopses, current issues in the news, announcements, study guides, assignment instructions, and assignment due dates) *are part of this syllabus* and are available at: <http://blackboard.indstate.edu>

You MUST check your Blackboard course site and your email on a daily basis for announcements, for details not in this syllabus, and for posted current issues in the news.

Course Calendar (details about assignment instructions and assignment deadlines are part of this syllabus and are posted on Blackboard, ONE topic at time):

Week 1 (8/21/14): Introduction to syllabus and course

Get your textbooks and review the following short readings about them and their authors

Theodor Herzl: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/2004/Pages/Herzl%20and%20Zionism.aspx>

Illan Pappé: <http://www.counterpunch.org/whitbeck01272007.html>

Mearsheimer/Walt: <http://electronicintifada.net/content/book-review-israel-lobby-and-us-foreign-policy/3525>

Jimmy Carter: http://www.cartercenter.org/news/editorials_speeches/latimes_palestine_081206.html

Week 2 (8/26, 8/28): Scope of the conflict (**Blog 1 is due 8/28**)

Review PowerPoint slides on Blackboard

Week 3 (9/2, 9/4): Scope of the conflict (**Exam 1 is due 9/4**)

Watch videos/video clips on Blackboard

Week 4 (9/9, 9/11): Euro-Russian geopolitical genesis of the conflict (**Essay 1 is due 9/11**)

Read Ould-Mey's 'The Non-Jewish Origins of Zionism' at:

<http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/The%20Non-Jewish%20Origin%20of%20Zionism2.pdf>

Week 5 (9/16, 9/18): The Jewish state as an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question (**Blog 2 is due 9/18**)

Read Hertz's 'Jewish question,' 'Jewish Company,' and 'Local Groups'

Week 6 (9/23, 9/25): The Jewish state as a peculiarly modern structure on unspecified territory (**Exam 2 is due 9/25**)

Read Herzl's 'Society of Jews' and 'Jewish State'

Week 7 (9/30, 10/2): On-the-ground development of the conflict in Palestine-Israel (**Blog 3 is due 10/2**)

Read Pappe's 'The ethnic cleansing of Palestine,' chapters 1-8

Review PowerPoint slides on Blackboard and read carefully the two versions of the Balfour Declaration

Week 8 (10/7, 10/9): On-the-ground development of the conflict in Palestine-Israel (**Essay 2 is due 10/9**)

Read Pappe's 'The ethnic cleansing of Palestine,' chapters 1-8

Week 9 (10/14, 10/16): State of Israel, UNRWA, State of Palestine, & the 'Peace Process' (**Exam 3 is due 10/16**)

Read Pappe's 'The ethnic cleansing of Palestine,' chapters 9-12

Review UNRWA's map of Palestine refugees at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011011352710.pdf>

Week 10 (10/21, 10/23): Impact of the conflict on U.S. domestic and global political economy (**Blog 4 is due 10/23**)

Read Mearscheimer and Walt's 'Part I: The United States, Israel, and the Lobby'

Week 11 (10/28, 10/30): Impact of the conflict on U.S. domestic and global political economy (**Essay 3 is due 10/30**)

Read Mearscheimer and Walt's 'Part II: The Lobby in Action'

Week 12 (11/4, 11/6): Impact and Prospect of the conflict (**Exam 4 is due 11/6**)

Read Mearscheimer & Walt, Read Carter's 'Palestine: peace not apartheid,' chapters 1-11

Week 13 (11/11, 11/13): Prospect of the conflict (**blog 5 due 11/13**)

Read Carter's 'Palestine: peace not apartheid,' chapters 12-17

Week 14 (11/18, 11/20): What is to be done to resolve the conflict according to the UN, Carter, Pappe, Mearscheimer, Walt, and Gates? (**Research paper proposal, due 11/20**)

Review the core conclusions of the textbooks, the PowerPoint slides, and the videos

Fall Break: 11/25, 11/27

Week 15 (12/2, 12/4): Study Week (work on your research paper)

Week 16 (12/8-12/12): Final examination week (**Research paper due on 12/8/14 at 10 pm**)