CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course name: Seminar on the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict
Course number: POLI 3003 AMJO
Programs offering course: Summer Middle East Studies, I
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Summer 2019, Session I

Course Description

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is arguably the most relevant and enduring conflict of our time: polarizing as no other, seemingly intractable, vastly covered in our news headlines.

This course introduces the main contours of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first part of the course will focus on the political history of the conflict, starting with its origins in the late XIX century all the way to the most recent developments. This historical survey will serve to better understand the specific topics addressed in the second half of the course: the role of violence, the politics of the Israeli and Palestinian societies, the impact of US policies, the occupied territories and the settlements issue, and – last but not least! – possible solutions to the conflict.

Learning Objectives

This course in its first half focuses on political history; and in its second part, it veers towards political science. Knowing history is a necessary background to think about politics in an informed, proper fashion.

In this course, we seek to develop a critical, probing and inquisitive look: we aim at uncovering, grasping and criticizing the power relations that inform the politics of Israel-Palestine so to demystify the most commonplace assumptions, ideas and notions about the conflict.

I firmly believe there is no right or wrong answer given a priori: it is upon us, in our class, to come up with our own. Such answers will not be provided by the instructor: they should result from the common, democratic and participatory effort of everyone. As instructor, I will only try to stimulate and organize a discussion: my lecture functions as a perspective to introduce and approach a given topic; during class discussions, I may play devil’s advocate to try and help you think otherwise.

However, ultimately what you are going to get out of the class is dependent upon what you put in it: you must come to class willing to engage in discussion, accept new intellectual challenges, and re-examine cherished beliefs. The final aim of this course is to encourage your growth as independent thinkers rather than providing a set of notions about Israel-Palestine.
In sum, this course seeks to assist and enable you to:
- understand the history behind present day events
- detect and understand power relations developing in the course of the conflict
- question categories and ways of thinking
- develop and apply critical analytical skills

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Methods of Instruction

The class will be structured as follows:
- students' presentations (5-10 minutes - see below)
- a discussion/debate (20-30 minutes)
- lecture from the instructor, usually with power point presentation (70-80 minutes)
- final questions (30 minutes)

Movies and videos will be shown as well (see weekly schedule section below).

Assessment and Final Grade

The final grade for this class will be determined by four multiple choice quizzes, class presentation(s)\(^1\), a final exam, and class participation. More in details:

1. Quizzes 20% (4X5%)
2. Final exam: 40%
3. Attendance and participation: 25%
4. Class presentation: 15%

Course Requirements

In-class final exam:

\(^1\) The number of presentations will depend on the number of students in the class.
40% of final grade. You will have to answer two essay questions out of a pool of five. You will have to provide six identification answers choosing from a list of twelve terms.

The essay questions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Are you answering the question?
- Is there a clear thesis and argument?
- Is there evidence that you have done the readings?
- Is there evidence of critical, personal engagement with the topic at hand? Or are you just reiterating and summarizing the readings?
- How well are you mastering the topics we dealt with in class?
- Is the language used appropriate?

You must be in class the day of the exam. There can be no make-up exams.

Quiz:

Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice questions in order to assess progression with the assigned readings. Each quiz will last 15 minutes at the beginning of class.

Class participation:

- During class lectures and discussions, we are not simply going to re-examine what the readings are about, but we are going to expand upon them. Hence, both active class participation and completion of the readings are essential. Your mere presence in class will not count towards evaluating participation: your active participation in class will. You must engage the instructor and fellow students with questions, thoughts and considerations. The more consistent, thoughtful and enriching your contribution, the more your class participation will be positively evaluated (25%).

- Presentation: you will be expected to monitor developments in the Israel-Palestine (and the larger Middle East when relevant) as they occur. At the start of each class, we will devote some 20 minutes to talk about current events. Each one of you will be in charge to present a particular news or event (or more than one, depending on the number of students) during a specific day. You shall sign up for which day you wish to present during the first day of class. Your presentation should last between 5 and 10 minutes and it should lead to an open discussion by posing questions to the audience (15%).

In order to keep abreast of developments, everyone (not just the presenter of the day) is thus required to read a daily newspaper such as The New York Times, The Guardian, The Independent, or The Washington Post. If you can read Arabic, Hebrew, Persian or Turkish, then feel free to follow a newspaper of your choice in that language as well (for a list of Middle Eastern newspapers, visit www.onlinenewspapers.com). You are encouraged to read from sources you may be less familiar with: prominent news sites such as www.aljazeera.com, http://english.alarabiya.net, www.jadaliyya.com are published in English. Here are a few more examples of sources for your to look up:
Attendance and Class Participation.

Students are requested to maintain at all times a respectful and proper attitude towards their peers and the instructor. This includes also being in class on time (it would be preferable a few minutes before class start) and avoid premature preparation when about to leave class. Being late frequently is not accepted, as it is disruptive behavior. In both cases, I may ask you to leave the class.

Attendance to class is mandatory. Students will sign in every session. I may excuse one (1) absence over the Summer Semester; beyond that, I need documentation proving you could not be in class that day. There is no need to inform me about your absence in advance. Of course, unexcused absences will negatively impact your participation grade.

Students failing to show up for their scheduled presentation will receive an automatic F.
During the in-class examinations (midterm and final exam), no books, notes, articles, or any kind of electronic device (see below) are allowed. Copying and cheating will result in an automatic F.

No electronic devices of any kind (laptops, tablets and the likes) are allowed in class. Cell phones, in particular, must be turned off. Students failing to comply with these rules may be required to leave the classroom.

**Weekly Schedule**

**I. DEFINING (AND DEFYING) THE ISSUE**

**Day 1**

1) **Introduction to the class; The issue of Orientalism**

   Video: Edward Said, ‘On Orientalism’, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g)

   Amy Yeh, 'Said’s Orientalism', [http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_Criticism/postcolonism/Orientalism.htm](http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_Criticism/postcolonism/Orientalism.htm)


**Day 2**

2) **A contested land: the Ottoman world, the emergence of Zionism and its encounter with Palestine**

   Said, vii-xlv, 1-33
   Morris, 3-36
   Suggested:


II. A HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

Day 3

3) Palestine between the two Wars

Quiz #1

Morris, 67-128, 138-144, 155-189

Suggested:

Ephraim Karsh, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappe, Avi Shlaim, “Rewriting Israel's history – A debate”, *Middle East Quarterly* (June and September, 1996), pp. 19-25, 51-60

Day 4

4) The creation of Israel and rise of Arabism


Suggested:


*PASSIA – Special Bulletin*, “Palestinian Refugees,”

King Abdullah: “As the Arabs See the Jews, 1947”,

Day 5

5) The Six Day and the Yom Kippur wars; the emergence of the PLO

Quiz #2

Morris, 302-311, 329-346, 363-376, 385-386

Suggested:

Charles Smith, cit, chapter 7


Morris, 311-329, 387-398, 431-443

Day 6

6) Israel in Lebanon

Charles Smith, cit, chapter 8

Video: ‘Waltz with Bashir’

Suggested:

Said, 182-238


Day 7

7) Uprisings and occupations: from the 80s to the Gulf War

Morris, 561-586, 595-632, 640-651

Suggested:


Day 8

8) The intifadas, Oslo Accords and the unraveling of the peace process

Quiz #3


Edward Said, “The Morning After”, [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v15/n20/edward-said/the-morning-after](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v15/n20/edward-said/the-morning-after)


III. THE POLITICS OF THE CONFLICT

Day 9

9) The politics of Israel and the politics of occupation


Suggested:


Said, 37-82


Said, 83-181

Day 10
10) Suicide bombing and terrorism

Lori Allen, “There are many reasons why: suicide bombers and martyrs in Palestine” Middle East Report 223 (Summer 2002), pp. 34-37.

Video, ‘Paradise Now’

Day 11

11) Islamism and Palestinian militancy


Day 12

12) US foreign policy, the Arab World and the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum

Quiz #4


Suggested:

Morris, 652-671


Day 13

13) Civil society mobilizes


Day 14

14) One state, two states, one and a half state?

Ian Lustick, “Two State Illusion”,

http://ns2.merip.org/mer/mer231/challenge-two-state-solution

Suggested:

Morris, 652-671

Shamir, Jacob and Khalil Shikaki, “Public Opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian Two-Level Game,”

Day 15

15) Final Exam

Readings

There are two required texts for this class.


The rest of readings will be uploaded in a shared google document folder available at:
https://drive.google.com/?tab=mo&authuser=0#folders/0BzZ2HOiyVacJMldCTzhSMnBocUE

Or they are directly available through weblinks in this syllabus.

I expect the students to have read and prepared the readings for the weekly schedule listed here below before coming to class.

Suggested readings are additional material: it is up to the student's interest and commitment to engage them as well.

I reserve the right to revise this syllabus at any time during the semester. Materials may be added or subtracted after the start of the term.