

Ben Schiff
Politics 122
First & Second Year Colloquium
Palestine-Israel Conflict
Spring, 2008

213 Rice Hall
Office hours: Tuesday 3:00-5:00
Wednesday 4:00-5:00
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Course Syllabus

The conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews has been a central focus of instability in the Middle East. The conflict considerably predated foundation of the state of Israel and has persisted despite myriad efforts to resolve it. It is a highly charged topic because of the deep feelings of people on both sides and close connections between them and many of the observers of the struggle. The conflict plays a major role in the politics of Arab nationalism, Islamist revivalism, and U.S. foreign and domestic relations. This course is not intended to be a dispassionate examination of the conflict, but rather a careful one, regardless of the passions it arouses. In class we will read a large quantity of historical material, political and social analyses from various viewpoints. The objective of the course is to bring out the sources and pattern of conflict and peacemaking in their complexities and to use them to learn about international conflict and its resolution.

Requirements

The class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45 a.m., in King 325.

Students will be expected to have read the assigned materials prior to class date for which they are scheduled. For some class sessions, students will be assigned to present summaries of readings; other students will be assigned to suggest questions for discussion. Classes will proceed primarily through discussion of the readings. Some video material will be screened.

Students will keep a journal, in addition to their reading notes, in which entries will chronicle their reaction to the materials presented and the discussions in class.

There will be three essays (due dates indicated in the syllabus).

Book

Charles Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 6th Edition (Bedford/St. Martins, 2007).

Grades

There are five components to the grade for Politics 122: three papers, one journal, and discussion participation. Participation requires attendance, so this will be a component of the discussion grade. The proportions of the final grade constituted by these components will be approximately:

Papers: 20% each

Journal: 20%

Discussion and attendance: 20%

Electronic and Reserve Readings

Are embedded in the syllabus and available either on Blackboard or by direct link.

There is one paper (or book) copy of each reading (except the textbook) on reserve in the library.

This syllabus may be updated during the semester, readings may be added and/or subtracted.

Current Events and Useful Web Sites

There are many web sources about current events and commentary on the conflict that might interest you. In addition to standard news sources, here are a few slightly more exotic ones:

<http://www.Bitterlemons.org> is “a website that presents Israeli and Palestinian viewpoints on prominent issues of concern. . . . produced, edited and partially written by Ghassan Khatib, a Palestinian, and Yossi Alpher, an Israeli. . . . to contribute to mutual understanding through the open exchange of ideas.”

<http://www.haaretz.com/> is the website of one of Israel’s largest newspapers, generally considered more sympathetic to the labor (left) side of Israeli politics than the right.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.jinsa.org/home/home.html> the website of The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), “a non-profit, non-partisan and nonsectarian educational organization committed to explaining the need for a prudent national security policy for the United States, addressing the security requirements of both the United States and the State of Israel, and strengthening the strategic cooperation relationship between these two great democracies.”

<http://www.jpost.com/> is the website of the Jerusalem Post, a generally right-wing Israeli newspaper.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3082,00.html> “Ynetnews is the English-language website from Yedioth Group, and a sister site to Ynet, Israel’s leading news web site “Yedioth Ahronoth,” Israel’s most-read newspaper.”

<http://justworldnews.org/> is the blog of Helene Cobban, a journalist focused on the Middle East generally and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular. She is generally sympathetic to the Palestinians.

<http://www.mideastweb.org/index.html> peace-oriented news and analysis with lots of links.

<http://www.wafa.ps/english/default.asp> Palestine News Agency

<http://english.pnn.ps/> Palestine News Network.

<http://www.minfo.ps/english/index.asp> Palestine National Authority Ministry of Information

Assigned Reading & Discussion Topics

1. Introduction, early history. Feb. 5, 7.

2/5 Mutual introductions, class outline

2/7 readings: Smith, ch. 1, 2: "The Middle East and Palestine to 1914," 1-21 .

Neville Mandel, introduction - ch. 1, "Ottoman Policy and Practice: 1881-1908," 1-31, from *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, (Univ. of California Press, 1976). (Bb=Blackboard.)

Discussion: How would you describe governance of the Palestine area under the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I?

2. Nationalism and national mobilization. Feb. 12, 14.

2/12 readings: Smith, ch. 2, "Ottoman Society, Palestine, and the Origins of Zionism, 1800-1914," 23-58.

Mandel, (Bb) ch. 2, "Early Arab Responses: 1882-1908," 32-57.

Discussion: What were the sources of tension between Arabs and Jews during the early period of in-migration of Jewish settlers into Palestine?

2/14 readings: Mandel, (Bb) ch. 3, 4, "The New Regime: 1908-1909", "The Committee of Union and Progress in Power," 58-92.

Alan Taylor, (Bb) "Zionism and Jewish History," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Winter, 1972), 32-51.

Recommended: Theodore Herzl (Bb) *The Jewish State*

Discussion: What are the sources of nationalism? What does it take to mobilize people around nationalism? How would you compare Zionist with Palestinian nationalism in this period?

3. Colonialism and the Palestine Mandate. Feb. 19, 21.

2/19 reading: Smith, ch. 3 "World War I, Great Britain, and the Peace Settlements 1914-1921," 59-110.

Discussion: What rival objectives was the UK pursuing? Was the Middle East being dealt with any differently than other colonial areas? Once having taken the actions they did, what should the British have expected in Palestine? How strong were the promises of the Husayn-McMahon letters and the Balfour Declaration? What does the evolution of the Declaration indicate about forces in British diplomacy? How did the Mandate deal with rival objectives of Zionists and Arabs?

2/21 readings: Jehuda Reinharz, (Bb) "The Balfour Declaration and its Maker" *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 64, No. 3 (Sept. 1992), 455-499.

Dov Gavish and Ruth Kark, (Bb) "The Cadastral Mapping of Palestine, 1858-1928," *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 159, No. 1 (March, 1993), 70-80.

Jacob Metzer, (Bb) "Economic Structure and National Goals – The Jewish National Home in Interwar Palestine," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (March, 1978), 101-119.

Discussion: Can economics be separated from politics? What legacies do you think this period left for the future?

4. Mandate, WWII, and the war of 1948. Feb. 26, 28.

2/26 reading: Smith, ch. 4, "Palestine Between the Wars," 111-169

Discussion: What were the dynamics of Jewish-Palestinian relations under the Mandate? How would you characterize British motives? Given the Mandate and its precursors (McMahon, Balfour, Sykes-Picot), was the outcome pre-ordained? Can you picture alternative histories? Who would have motivated different courses of events?

2/28 reading: Smith, ch. 5, "WWII and the Creation of the State of Israel," 170-225.

Avi Shlaim, (Bb) "The Debate about 1948," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1995), 287-304.

Efraim Karsh, "Were the Palestinians Expelled?" *Commentary* Vol. 110 (July/August 2000) available at <http://www.aijac.org.au/review/2000/258/essay258.html>.

Discussion: What is historical reality? Is there such a thing as historical responsibility? How do you think the war was experienced by Jews, Palestinians, Arab fighters, Zionist leaders, Palestinian leaders, Arab government leaders? What were the crucial determining facts for the outcome of 1948? Why is this period so sensitive to the national mythologies of both Israelis and Palestinians?

5. Palestinian, Arab, and Israeli Nationalism. March 4, 6.

3/4 reading: Smith, ch. 6, "The Beginning of the Arab-Israeli Conflict . . .1949-1957," 226-264.

E.G. H. Joffe, (Bb) "Arab Nationalism and Palestine," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (June, 1983), 157-170.

Discussion: Did creation of a Jewish state have to result in a long-standing conflict? What were motives on all sides to negotiate/not negotiate a solution to the displacement of Palestinian Arabs? Who were the strong/weak actors in these considerations?

3/6 reading: Smith, ch. 7, "From Suez to the Six-Day War 1957-1967," 264-305.

Uri Ben-Eliezer, (Bb) "A Nation-In-Arms: State, Nation, and Militarism in Israel's First Years," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April, 1995) 264-285.

Discussion: What did Israel learn from 1956-1957? How thoroughly was Israel established on the eve of the 1967 war? What were its relations with Arab states and with Palestinians? What was the apparent way forward for each?

******* PAPER #1 DUE MARCH 7 *******

6. War and negotiation (1): March 11, 13.

3/11 reading: Smith, ch. 8, "War and the Search for Peace . . . 1967-1976," 306-353.

Discussion: What choices did Israel face following its victory in 1967? What were the contrary pressures? What was the Palestinian experience?

3/13 reading: Yezid Sayigh (Bb), "Armed Struggle and State Formation," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Summer, 1977), 17-32.

Hemda Agid-Ben Yehuda, Yehudit Auerbach, (Bb) "Attitudes to an Existence Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sept. 1991), 519-546.

Discussion: How did the Palestinians factor into Israeli thinking following 1967?

7. Autonomy, nationalism, and conflict. March 18, 20.

3/18 reading: Smith, ch. 9, "Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Camp David Accords . . . 1977-1984," 354-405.

William Quandt, "Camp David and Peacemaking in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 101, No. 3 (1986) 357-377.

Discussion: What happened to the Palestinians in the Camp David peace? Who was responsible? What lessons can you draw about piece-meal versus comprehensive agreements?

3/20 reading: Brian Van Arkadie, (Bb) "The Impact of Israeli Occupation on the Economies of the West Bank and Gaza," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter, 1977) 103-129.

Discussion: The course so far. General views, questions to address during the next half, etc.

Break March 22-30.

8. Intifada to Oslo. April 1, 3.

4/1 reading: Smith, ch. 10, "From Pariah to Partner . . . 1984-1993," 406-449.

Sara Roy, (Bb) "The Gaza Strip: A Case of Economic De-Development," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Autumn, 1987), 56-88.

Ann Lesch, (Bb) "Prelude to the Uprising in the Gaza Strip," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn 1990), 1-23.

Ziad Abu-Amr, (Bb), " Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4. (Summer, 1993), p. 5-19.

Discussion: What kind of conflict was the first intifada? What were its crucial military, social, economic and political characteristics?

4/3 reading: Ian Lustick, (Bb) "Israel's Dangerous Fundamentalists," *Foreign Policy* No. 68 (Autumn 1987), 118-139.

Edy Kaufman, (Bb) "The Intifadah and the Peace Camp in Israel: A Critical Perspective," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Summer, 1988), 66-80.

Don Peretz, (Bb) "The Impact of the Gulf War on Israeli and Palestinian Political Attitudes," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Autumn 1991), 17-35.

Discussion: With the waning of the first intifada, and Israeli/Palestinian involvement in the Gulf crisis and war, how did the political context change, and why was this positive from the standpoint of a peace process? What else was going on at the same time that affected the negotiations?

9. The Oslo period. April 8, 10.

4/8 reading: Smith, ch. 11, "Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and agreements . . . 1993-1999," 450-498.

Discussion: What was achieved and what was left open in the Oslo accords?

4/10 reading: Miriam Lowi, (Bb) Bridging the Divide: Transboundary Resource Disputes and the Case of West Bank Water," *International Security* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Summer, 1993) 113-138.

Sara Roy, (Bb) "De-Development Revisited: Palestinian Economy and Society since Oslo," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Spring,

1999) 64-82.

Stanley Fischer, Patricia Alonso-Gamo, Ulric Erickson von Allmen, (Bb) "Economic Developments in the West Bank and Gaza since Oslo," *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 111, No. 472 (Jun., 2001), p. F254-F275.

Discussion: What needed to happen for Oslo to succeed?

10. Politics in the 1990s. April 15, 17.

4/15 reading: Reuven Y. Hazan, (Bb) "Intraparty Politics and Peacemaking in Democratic Societies: Israel's Labor Party and the Middle East Peace Process, 1992-96," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3. (May, 2000), 363-378.

Arye Naor, (Bb) "Lessons of the Holocaust Versus Territories For Peace, 1967-2001," *Israel Studies*, Volume 8, No. 1 (June 16, 2003), p. 130-152

Discussion: What kind of political learning is possible in a conflict situation?

4/17 reading: Wendy Kristianasen, (Bb) "Challenge and Counterchallenge: Hamas's Response to Oslo," *Journal of Palestine Studies* Vo. 28, No. 3 (Spring, 1999), 19-36.

Avraham Sela, (Bb) "Politics, Identity, and Peacemaking: The Arab Discourse on Peace with Israel in the 1990s," *Israel Studies* Vol. 10, No. 2 (June, 2005) 15-72.

Discussion: Is peace like a shark: it dies if it doesn't move forward?

******* APRIL 18: PAPER #2 DUE *******

11. The end of Oslo April 22, 24.

4/22 reading: Smith, ch. 12, "Image vs. Reality" (partial) p. 499-512.

Camp David: blaming Arafat.

<http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1991to_now_campdavid_2000.php>

Robert Malley, Susan Sonntag, (Bb) "The Palestinian-Israeli Camp David Negotiations and Beyond," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (Autumn, 2001), p. 62-85.

Shlomo Avineri, (Bb) "Irreconcilable Differences," *Foreign Policy*, No. 129, (Mar.-Apr., 2002), p. 78-79.

Discussion: What happened at Camp David?

4/24 reading: Jerome Slater, (Bb) "What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 116, No. 2. (Summer, 2001), p. 171-199.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, "So Close and Yet So Far: Lessons from the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process," *Israel Studies* Volume 10, Number 2, Summer 2005, p. 72-90.

Discussion: Peace Process?

12. Al Aqsa intifada, the U.S., and a frazzled roadmap. April 29, May 1.

4/29 reading: Smith, ch. 12, "Image vs. Reality" (partial) 512-560.

Discussion: Events 2001-2006.

5/1 reading: Khaled Hroub, "'A New Hamas' through its New Documents," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol XXXV, No. 4, Summer 2006, 6-27.

Discussion: How radical is Hamas? Can the Palestinians form a united front?

13. Current issues. May 6, 8.

5/6 reading: TBA

Discussion: TBA

5/8

Discussion: Final wrap up, course evaluations.

Written Assignments

1. Journal

Your journal should contain reflections upon the readings and class discussions. These should be recorded at least weekly; reactions to class discussions should be noted as soon after the class as possible. The journals will be collected at midterm, at the end of the semester and possibly at other times occasionally during the semester – KEEP CURRENT! These can be handwritten in a notebook dedicated to the cause, or assembled from computer printouts. Each entry should be dated, and ruminations should take place under the following categories:

Readings:

- What was **striking** to you in the reading?
- How did the different readings **compare to, or complement**, each other?
- Did the readings **challenge or inform any convictions** with which you came to them?
- What was the **most important aspect** of the reading for you?

Discussions:

1. Did the discussion stimulate any **new ideas** for you?
2. Were there any particularly **good ideas that came up in discussion** that you hadn't thought of before? What were they?
3. **What points did you make** in class about which you are (a) pleased or (b) that you'd change, upon reflection?
4. **What would you like to have said** that you didn't? **Why didn't you?**
5. What did you think about **how people interacted** in class?
6. How do people's **discussion styles** relate to the substance of what they discuss?
7. **What role are you playing** in discussion?
8. Were there moments when you thought you or someone else was being **misunderstood**? What caused the misunderstanding?

Papers

Three papers are due in the plastic box next to my office door (Rice 213) by 4:30 p.m. on the date indicated. They are to be printed (typed), double-spaced with at least 11 point type, with reasonable (at least 1") margins and within the page limit. Endnotes and/or bibliography can be in addition to the page limit. The first two papers can be rewritten in consultation with me if you are unhappy with the result. These are expository essays. Refer to the style sheet for some format recommendations.

1. Nationalism

Due: March 7; page limit: Five.

Based on the class readings, describe the phenomenon of nationalism using the Jewish and Palestinian cases as examples.

2. Historical responsibility

Due: April 18. Page limit: Seven.

Israelis and Palestinians make claims about the historical responsibilities that should impel others to help them, or at least to recognize their legitimacy, as they seek to establish independent existences in the Middle East. For example, Israelis frequently point to the Holocaust as a reason that Europeans should support Israel. Palestinians point to their lack of voice in the U.N. decisions that partitioned Palestine and led to the 1948 war as a reason that leaders within the U.N. of 1948 (particularly the U.S. and Britain) should help them to obtain, develop, and protect their state.

Discuss the idea of historical responsibility. Do historical events create lasting international obligations of a state, society, or people to another group or state? Use the Israeli and Palestinian cases to argue either in favor of, or against, the principle of such obligation, but be sure to structure your paper around a clearly stated position on this question. Remember that effective arguments take into account the strongest form of the counter-arguments.

3. Causes of peace and conflict

Due: May 13. Page limit: Nine.

Following Oslo, it appeared that there was a serious possibility of peace breaking out between Palestinians and Israelis. After the Al Aqsa Intifada, the Gaza pullout, and the Wall, peace appears more distant than during the 1990s. What are the leading causes of the retrogression (if you see it as such), and what do you consider to be the one or two most important aspects of the situation that need to change, in order for some progress back to a "peace process," if such progress is possible at all?

The Expository Essay
Schiff's Curmudgeonly Stylistic advice

1. Expository essays need arguments. Arguments must be introduced at the beginning, argued and substantiated in the middle, concluded at the essay's end.

Introductions say more than only the topic to be discussed. They indicate the course and the outcome of the argument to follow.

Middles combine empirical information (facts) with discussion and logic (arguments) to lead the reader toward conclusions. They are constructed in the order outlined in the introduction.

Conclusions should not open up new territory. They follow logically from, or summarize, what has gone before. If you find yourself inspired with new ideas in your conclusion, go back and fit the ideas into your text where they belong. These ideas should be familiar when they appear in the conclusion.

2. Short words and sentences are as valuable as long ones. As Mark Twain said, "eschew surplussage."

3. Make sentences direct, verbs active, attribute effects to causes. It's not that "International insecurity has been exacerbated by the increasing propensity of formerly weak recipients to threaten to use or actually to employ endogenously developed or exogenously sourced military technologies." Rather, "Formerly weak states often threaten their neighbors by brandishing weapons."

4. Eliminate the double (or multiple) negative. Do not say, for instance, that "the risk of failure was not inconsiderable."

5. Long sentences with many qualifying dependent clauses frequently indicate indecision. Pare sentences down to their essential meanings. Divide separate points into separate sentences.

6. Paragraphs are units of argumentation. If a paragraph can't be summarized in one sentence, it is probably confused. Either it contains too many arguments, or it has no point. Very long paragraphs and one sentence paragraphs are danger signs.

7. Avoid the fallacious quantity. Don't say something happened "a number of times."

8. Be brave. If something "seems" or "appears," consider instead whether it "is."

9. Avoid using first person pronouns ("I", "we", "our", etc.). They weaken your argument. Unless discussing a personal view, it is more powerful impersonally to convince with logic and evidence than to depend on personal credibility.

10. If you have to say "clearly", you probably haven't been clear. "Clearly," "obviously," "thus," "moreover," "therefore," and similar words are not always bad. Frequently, however, writers use them to assert a logical connection when one hasn't been made successfully in the text.

11. Singular nouns, even if they represent collectives, are considered singular in American English. The British use plurals. For example, in American: "The U.S. government has its interests. . . ." But in British: "The U.K. government have their interests" (Note: we are in the U.S., speaking American English.)

12. It's = it is or it has. There is no other correct use of an apostrophe with **its** (there is no possessive form).

13. References (footnotes, endnotes) of some sort should be used whenever you are using information or arguments that you've gotten from another source. Any standard form is acceptable (to me). The rule of thumb is that the reference should enable a reader to find the exact material that you are using.

14. Rescue "affects" from "impacts upon," and "effect" from "impact." Affect(s) and effect(s) are tough but rewarding.

15. Other random stylistic advice:

- Proactive = active, aggressive, vigorous, etc.
- Time frame and point in time are mixed metaphors (spacial and temporal). Time frame = period, time, or duration. Point in time = moment, instant, now, then.
- Prioritize, perhaps unfortunately, made it into the dictionary. Still, consider whether it might be felicitous to rank, or set priorities..
- Forward planning and future planning are both redundant. Planning always refers to the future (just try planning the past!).
- Avoid cliches.

Move forward (progress)
 The bottom line (conclusion)
 At the end of the day (finally)
 Having said that (never necessary)
 Arguably (never necessary)
 By and large (mostly)
 (Insert your unfavorites here)

- Speaking of cliches, "all intents and purposes" is the correct formulation (not all intensive purposes).
- Evict tenants when you mean tenets.