

ISRAEL: ANTIQUITY IN MODERNITY
JDST 4840/6840 & ANTH 4840
DRAFT SYLLABUS

Dr. Sara Abosch

University of Memphis, Fall 2010

Class: Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-2:25 Manning Hall 417

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 11:15-12:30, and by appt., Mitchell Hall 422

E-mail: sabosch@memphis.edu

Phone: 919-621-0616

Course Description:

This course will explore some of the processes by which the ancient people and nation of Israel, long thought to be a 'ghost people,' were given new vitality in the modern world. Topics to be covered include the creation, use, and re-use of 'myth', the uses and abuses of history, and religion, as well as the shaping and reshaping of culture, memory, identity, politics, arts, and language. The centrality of the theme of exile and return in Jewish/Israeli existence will also be addressed. Particular attention will be given to seminal events/developments in the creation of modern Israeli identity such as Jerusalem's changing position in the nation, Bar Kokhba's Rebellion, the zealots' stand at Masada, the creation of the 'New Israeli Man' (*Sabra*) and the Holocaust.

Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with interdisciplinary perspectives on 'Israel' and its various meanings through readings, lectures, discussion, and film. **No prior knowledge of Jewish or Israeli history is required.** Emphasis will be placed upon improving students' analytical and conceptual skills through discussion, analysis of primary sources, writing, and speaking on topics related to the subject matter. The course paper will allow students to critically explore a topic of interest or author's perspective in greater depth.

Course Requirements:

We will have several in-class discussions. Where appropriate, original documents or website links will be provided for supplemental reading. Students are expected to have read the assigned materials **before** each class. Regular attendance and participation count toward the semester grade. The written requirements include weekly reading questions, a critical film review (5-7 pages), a critical review paper (6-8 pages), based on a book or topic of your choosing (subject to my approval), and a final exam. Guidelines for the review papers will be given out in class. The film review will be based on a film or films you choose from the Spielberg Jewish Film Archive (see below for URL).

The final grade will be calculated as follows: weekly responses/questions (15%), critical film review (20%), critical review paper (25%), final exam (30%), and class participation (10%). Late assignments will be penalized. You must hand in all written work to be assigned a grade for the course. Cheating and/or plagiarism will **NOT** be tolerated and are grounds for failing the particular assignment and the course.

Attendance, Participation, Etiquette: Regular attendance and participation in class and reading discussions count toward the semester grade. More than 2 unexcused absences will affect your course grade. Make-up exams are not given. Students are responsible for any work missed. Please turn off all electronic

communication devices **before** class begins. Texting, tweeting, IM'ing, emailing, etc. are not permitted during class.

Grading Scale:

The course grading scale is as follows: A=100-94; A-=93-90; B+=89-88; B=87-84; B-=83-80; C+=79-78; C=77-74; C-=73-70; D+=69-68; D=67-64; F=63-0.

Assignments and lecture topics may be modified during the course of the semester as the instructor determines class interests and needs.

Required Books:

The following books are available for purchase at the university bookstore. They may also be purchased used from: www.amazon.com, www.alibris.com, www.abebooks.com, www.biblio.com, etc.

- Cline, Eric H. *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel* (2004).
- Ravitzky, Aviezer. *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (1996).
- Troen, Ilan. *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement* (2003).
- Zerubavel, Yael. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (1997).

Original documents & supplemental material:

Additional material will sometimes be discussed in lecture. This material will be available online or provided by the instructor. A partial list of internet addresses of use for this course is:

- Avalon Project at Yale Law School, Middle East Documents, 1916-2001: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/mideast.htm>
- Internet Modern History Sourcebook, Documents: www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook.html
- Israeli News in English: www.haaretz.com or www.jpost.com
- Middle East Media Research Institute, News in translation: memri.org
- Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive: www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il/

Class Schedule:

August 31	Initial impressions: Introductory remarks. Creation or re-creation of nation, culture, society, history, language, etc. Reflections on antiquity in modernity and the use of religion and myth. Class Exercise: Taking a history—How historical events and group membership shape our lives.
September 2	Historical Jerusalem—Evidence; 19 th C. Europe: Emancipation & Its Discontents Cline, 1-36
September 7	Exile: Real, Imagined, & Re-imagined Cline, 36-67; Zerubavel, 3-36
September 9	No Class (Rosh Hashanah)
September 14	Herzl & the Maccabees: Religion, Nationalism, Myth and Memory Cline, 68-95; Robert S. Wistrich, “Theodor Herzl: Zionist Icon, Myth-Maker and Social Utopian” in <i>The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma</i> ,

- eds. Wistrich and Ohana, selection via e-mail
- September 16 Rebellion, Destruction, Diaspora & Zionist Rebirth
Cline, 96-135; Zerubavel, 48-59
- September 21 Masada & Bar Kokhba: Re-imagined and Rehabilitated (Part I)
Zerubavel, 96-113; 178-191
- September 23 Bar Kokhba & Masada (Part II): Creating Memories and Civil Religious Ritual
Zerubavel, 60-76; 114-137
- September 28 Bar Kokhba: Hero or False Messiah?
Zerubavel, 192-213; Cline 136-163
- September 30 Islam Ascendant and the Crusader Response
Cline, 164-200
- October 5 From Saladin to the Ottomans—Jerusalem under Muslim Rule; Longing for Zion &
National Revival: Modern or Age-Old Phenomenon
Cline, 201-233; Arie Morganstern, “Dispersion and the Longing for Zion, 1240-
1840” in *New Essays on Zionism*, eds. Hazony, Hazony, & Oren, selection via e-
mail
- October 7 Onward & Upward to Zion: the Modern Zionists and the British Arrive
Anita Shapira, “The First and Second Aliyah” in *Land and Power*, by A.
Shapira, selection via e-mail; Cline, 235-266; Nurit Gertz, “From Jew to Hebrew:
The ‘Zionist Narrative’ in the Israeli Cinema of the 1940s and 1950s” in *In Search
of Identity: Jewish Aspects in Israeli Culture*, eds. D. Urian and E. Karsh, selection
via e-mail
- October 12** Jewish Settlement: Patterns and Problems
Troen, 1-41
**Critical Film Review of a film chosen from the “virtual cinema” of the
Spielberg Jewish Film Archive due today (see class handout)**
- October 14 Troen, 42-62; 85-111
- October 19** **No Class (Fall Break)**
- October 21 Jerusalem: Contested City & Capital City
Cline, 267-310
- October 26 Arabs & Jews: Parallel Lives?; Tel Aviv: Bourgeois or Workers’ City?
Troen, 233-280
- October 28 Film selections: *Tel Aviv-Jaffa* (Israel, 2009)
- November 2 Sabra’tude: Of “New” Men & Mentality
Oz Almog, “The Elect Son of the Chosen People” in *The Sabra: the Creation of the
New Jew*, by O. Almog, selection via e-mail
- November 4 We have seen the ‘other’ and he is our brother...or is he?
Almog, “Uri of Arabia,” selection via e-mail; Ze’ev Tzahor, “Ben-Gurion’s
Mythopoeics” in *The Shaping of Israeli Identity*, selection via e-mail
- November 9 War and Antiquities
Raz Kletter, “Archaeology and the 1948 War” in *Just Past? The Making of Israeli
Archaeology* by R. Kletter, selection via e-mail
- November 11 Of Zion, Zionism & Religious Disunity

Ravitzsky, 1-39

- November 16 Religious Anti-Zionism—Messianism in God’s Time
Ravitzsky, 40-78;
- November 18 Religious Adherence & Religious Diversity
Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz, “The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel”; Ephraim Tabory, “The Israel Reform and Conservative Movements and the Market for Liberal Judaism” both in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social Patterns*, eds. U. Rebhun and C. Waxman, selection via e-mail;
- November 23 Holocaust: Memories, Guilt & Responsibility
Movie: *Walk on Water*, Part I (Israel, 2004); Judith Tydor Baumel, “‘In Everlasting Memory’: Individual and Communal Holocaust Commemoration in Israel” in *The Shaping of Israeli Identity*, selection via e-mail
- November 25 No Class (Thanksgiving)**
- November 30 Movie: *Walk on Water*, Part II, & begin Religious Zionism—Messianism in Modern Times, Ravitzsky, 79-144
- December 2 The ‘Holy’ in the Holy Land: Haredi Views of Modern Israel
Ravitzsky, 145-180
- December 7** Ultra-Orthodoxy & the Modern State
Zion Zohar, “Pulsa De-Nura: the Innovation of Modern Magic and Ritual” in *Modern Judaism* 27(1): 72-99 (2007), selection via e-mail.
Course Wrap-up: Bring any questions you may have.
General essay topics will be given out in class.
Critical Review Papers due at beginning of class.
- December 16** ***Final Exam, 10:30-12:30***
(May give take home exam in lieu of final exam.)