CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course title: Seminar on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Course code: POLI 3003 AMJO
Programs offering course: Middle East Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

This course focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: it looks at the roots and history of the question contextualizing it into regional and international political developments. The course covers the most important events that characterized the conflict providing a solid historic background for analyzing contemporary developments. Moreover, the course analyzes the role of international and regional actors into the making of the conflict while also highlighting the impact of the Palestinian issue into the Arab world. The first class provides the theoretical tools for a critical analysis the conflict, the different actors and their political role. This approach should help the student to challenge the traditional mainstream paradigms around the Arab-Israeli crisis. The following classes are also informed by this critical approach: the analysis of important events such as the Suez crisis, the 1967 and 1973 Wars, the emergence of Palestinian resistance, the impact of the Cold War and the role of international players, require the student to grasp the political dynamics behind the mere facts. Regional events impacted by the Arab-Israeli conflict such as the Black September and the Lebanese civil war will be discussed in order to highlight the influence and relevance of the Palestinian question on regional politics. Having built a historical background and critical understanding of the conflict, the last part of the course will focus on contemporary events and the emergence of new actors, new diplomatic strategies as well as the popular mobilization that is characterizing current political developments. Finally, possible solutions will also be discussed.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:
• Outline a clear historical understanding of the conflicts, its roots, developments and present day events
• Critique the mainstream discourse on the Arab-Israeli conundrum questioning hegemonic categories of analysis
• Develop a critical and inquisitive look by 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
• Examine the power relations developing in the course of the conflict

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

The class will be structured as follows:

• students’ presentations (15-20 minutes)
• a discussion/debate (1 hour)
• lecture from the instructor (20-30 minutes)
• final questions and debates (30-40 minutes)

Documentaries screenings and guest speakers’ participation will be organized

Assessment and Final Grade

1. In-class Presentations 10%
2. Weekly Press Review 15%
3. Mid-term Exam 25%
4. Final Exam 35%
5. Class Participation 15%
   TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

In-class Presentations

The weighted value of the in-class presentations amounts to 10% of the final semester grade. Every week a student will present on the assigned readings. Each
student will present throughout the course. The presentation will serve as an opening for the class discussion in which all students are expected to actively participate. The presenter should introduce the readings, providing a general overview and summary of the material analyzed; they should critical engage with the reading sharing their analysis and thought on them and finally suggest questions to open up the discussion. The presenter is expected to provide their classmates with a hand-out (max 2 pages), preferably organized in bullet points, in order to facilitate the understanding of the subject matter. The presentation should last 15-20 minutes in total, failure to meet the time limits will result in a lower grade.

Weekly Press Review

This assignment accounts for 15% of the final grade and it is ongoing (students should provide a press review every week and the grade will be based on the overall fulfillment with the assignment throughout the course). Every week each student should prepare a short review of current events in Palestine/Israel. Students are not expected to cover every single event in the Palestine/Israel but should show familiarity with and identify the political issues and developments happening in the region. In order to do so, students should check media sources (a list of sources is provided in this syllabus) and review the news providing a short list of the events (title and links in bullet points). Along with the short review of current events, students should add at least two questions related to the readings assigned for that week. This material will be used in class discussions. The review should be sent to the instructor every Sunday by 11:30 am.

Mid-term Exam

The mid-term exam will consist of an in class test. The exam will be held during Week 6 and will last 2 hours. The weighted value amounts to 30% of the final semester grade. The exam consists of answering three questions. There will be a compulsory question for everyone while for the additional two answers three questions will be provided for the students to choose among. All the questions will concern the topics discussed in class over the previous six weeks. The compulsory question amounts to 40% of the exam’s grade, the two additional answers are each worth 30% of the exam’s grade, irrespective of the chosen question. The students
should refer to the material and readings discussed in class. All the answers should be long enough to adequately respond to the question. Consulting books, notes, readings or any other material is not allowed.

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 unless in exceptional cases with the authorization of CIEE director.

Final Exam

The final exam consists on a 3,000-word essay and it is to be submitted Week 15. The weighted value amounts to 40% of the final semester grade. The students will be provided with two titles for the final paper in week 10 and they should choose one of the provided topics for their essay. A minimum of ten (10) total sources is required. The student should refer to the material and readings discussed in class, but should also integrate the paper with at least five (5) sources outside the assigned readings. Papers more than 10% longer/shorter than the word limit (3,300-2,700 words) will be penalized 2 points per each 100 words above/below the parameter. The paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Are you focusing on the topic required by the title you choose?
- Is there a clear thesis and argument?
- Is there a clear structure?
- 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?

Details on the format and style for the paper will be provided by the instructor.
Please note that late submission of research papers will result in a 2 points deduction for each day they are late.

Class Participation

Due to the participatory nature of the course, your participation will be valued.

1. In particular, not only the “quantity” of your engagement but also its “quality” will be evaluated. However, the participation score will also take into account the personal and direct engagement of the student with the instructor: class discussions are informal and friendly so that everyone can and should feel free to express his/her opinion, comment and thought freely and as often as wanted. Yet, if any of the student might face difficulty in in-class exchanges can still email their comments to me or ask for an appointment. The evaluation of participation will take it into consideration in order to favour the ice-breaking of the student and their more consistent engagement during class discussion. Please remember that this kind of “private exchanges” is exceptional, only in case of strong inability to participate in class. The assessment of participation will also take into account students’ ability to listen to their classmates, allow them to freely express their opinion without interrupting, engage with them politely, criticizing or supporting their arguments.

2. 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 and avoid premature preparation when about to leave class. Being late frequently is not accepted, as it is disruptive behaviour.

3. Cell phones must be turned off.

4. Students failing to show up for their scheduled presentation without justification or previous notice will receive an automatic F.

5. Submitting all papers is a minimum requirement, but not a guarantee, for passing this course. Late submissions of final exams will lose 2 points of the final grade per calendar day late and will not be accepted a week after the final submission date (unless in exceptional cases approved by CIEE administration).

6. Plagiarism—the unacknowledged use of another’s words, form, or ideas—will result in failure of the course. If you are unsure of how to acknowledge outside material, speak with me immediately.
7. During the in-class examinations (midterm and final exam), no books, notes, articles, or any kind of electronic device are allowed. Copying and cheating will result in an automatic F.
8. You can reach me easily via emails; however, do not expect I will be reading and answering your emails during weekend. I am more than happy to meet with you outside class to discuss whatever issue or problem you might have with the class. Do not hesitate contacting me.

Attendance

As this class is dependent on in-class activities, discussions, and group exchanges, your attendance is mandatory, necessary, and essential to your success. Therefore, you are expected to attend and participate in every class session. If a true calamity should arise and you must miss class, it is your responsibility to contact us to determine what you have missed. Absences are excused when the student submit the CIEE absence-form stamped and signed by CIEE director. Only one unexcused absence is allowed, additional absences will result in a reduction of the final grade (5 point for each class missed without providing any reason).

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class: Orientation Week

   Introduction to class

   What do we know about the Palestinian question? Introductive questionnaire.

Week 2
Class: FRAMING THE CONFLICT: UNDERSTANDING ORIENTALISM
This class will provide the theoretical framework for approaching the study of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

- Said, Orientalism pp.1-9;
- Salaita, Steven George, Beyond Orientalism and Islamophobia: 9/11, Anti-Arab Racism, and the Mythos of National Pride

Week 3
Class: .

THE ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT: ANTI-SEMITISM, NATIONALISM, IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

This class focuses on the role of international actors in the making of the Arab region and its impact on Palestine, the emergence of Zionism and its implications for the region.

- Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East. P 239-261
- Mansour, "The Arab Worker under the Palestine Mandate (1937)." 190-205.
- Balfour Declaration (1917)
  http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp
- The Husayn-McMahon Correspondence,128-131.
- Herzl, “Local Groups”, “Society of Jews and Jewish State” and “Conclusion” (Dover 1988).
  http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2.html
- Jabotinsky, “We and the Arabs”,
  http://www.danielpipes.org/3510/the-iron-wall-we-and-the-arabs

Suggested:
• King Abdullah: “As the Arabs See the Jews, 1947”,
   http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/kabd_eng.html

We will watch a documentary: Promises and Betrayal

Week 4
Class: 

TRIUMPH AND CATASTROPHE: THE CREATION OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA

This class discusses the 1948 war, the establishment of Israel and its enduring consequences.

• Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East. P 261-271
• Pappe, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine
• Badil “Palestinian refugees in exile. Country Profile” p. 3-8; 19-37

Week 5
Class: 


This class examines the events that followed the partition of Palestine. In particular it investigates how Palestinian organized their movement and the interconnection with the regional development from 1948 to the early 70s

• Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East. 323-355
• Khalaf Salah (Abu Iyad) My Home My Land 29-40
• Habash, George. al-Thawrīyūn La Yamūtūn Abadan.. 1-4
• Palestine Research Center Aims of the Palestinian Resistance Movement with regard to the Jews
• Hamid Rashid “What is the PLO?”
• Reports on the Battle of Karameh. Al-Ahram (Cairo), 22 March 1968. Translated by The Palestinian Revolution, 2016.1
Week 6
Class: MID-TERM EXAM

Week 7
Class: SPRING BREAK

Week 8
Class: PALESTINIANS IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT: THE 1970s

This class focuses on the political transformation the PLO underwent during the 70s, in particular, it looks at the Black September events, the 1973 war and its political meaning for PLO strategies and the Lebanese Civil War.

- Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East. 356-389
- Hawatmeh, Nayef. Selected Statements Relating to the PDLP ‘Gradualist
  http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/02/22/what-really-happened-in-the-yom
- Seth Anziska,

Suggested:

- Kishli, Mohammad. “Lebanon’s Crisis: Lebanese First and Foremost, Before Relations”. Shu’un Filastiniya (Beirut), 1975. Translated by The Palestinian

Week 9
Class: UPRISINGS AND OCCUPATIONS: FROM THE 80s TO THE GULF WAR
In this class we will examine the historical developments throughout the 80s up to the Gulf War in 1991. We will discuss the economic impact on Palestinian society and will analyse the first intifada and the emergence of Hamas.

- Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East.473-499
- Tamari “The Palestinian Movement in Transition: Historical Reversals and the Uprising” pp. 57-70
- Rouhana “The Intifada and the Palestinians of Israel: Resurrecting the Green Line” pp. 58-75
- Roy, Ch. 17 “Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine” 293-308

Week 10
Class: THE ILLUSION OF PEACE

This class looks at the regional and international political dynamics that led to the Oslo accords. It will analyse the peace process and critically assess it.

- Cleveland, A History of the Modern Middle East 499-526
- Massad, Oslo and the end of Palestinian independence.
- Roy, “De-Development Revisited: Palestinian Economy and Society since Oslo”
- Edward Said, “The Morning After”,
  http://www.lrb.co.uk/v15/n20/edward-said/the-morning-after

Week 11
Class: ISRAELI SOCIETY AND POLITICAL CONTRADICTIONS

This class examines Israel's internal politics, the impact of the conflict on the society and its contradictions.

- The Economist, ‘A Nation of Tribes’,
  http://www.economist.com/node/160840

• Ella Shohat “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims” pp. 1-35

Week 13
Class: ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

This class investigates Israeli relations with international powers

• Quandt Intro 1-23
• John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy,”
• Michael Massing, “The Storm over the Israel Lobby”
• More “Killing with kindness: funding the demise of a Palestinian state” pp 981-999
• Watch the documentary Donor Opium

Readings on current reactions to the US declaration of Jerusalem as capital of Israel TBA

Week 14
Class: OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE AT THE TIME OF NEOLIBERALISM

This class examines the recent developments focusing on the neoliberal character of the occupation.

• Farsakh, “Independence, Cantons or Bantustans: Whither the Palestinian State?” p 1-16
- Pappe “The Killing Field of Gaza” 189-210
- Ytfachel “Neither Two States Nor One: The Disengagement and ‘Creeping Apartheid’” p 1-5
- Dana “Corruption in Palestine: A Self-Enforcing System”

Course Materials

Readings

- Anne More “Killing with kindness: funding the demise of a Palestinian state” International Affairs, 2005
- Badil “Palestinian refugees in exile. Country Profile” p. 3-8; 14-43
- Balfour Declaration (1917) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp
- Dimi Reider 'Jewish nationalism and the new Palestinian politics in Israel' +972 17 March 2015
- Farsakh, “Independence, Cantons or Bantustans: Whither the Palestinian State?” p 1-16
- Hamid Rashid “What is the PLO?”90-109
Henriette Chacar 'A new activism, a new politics, a new generation of Palestinians in Israel' +972 11 March 2015

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2.html


http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011

Khalaf Salah (Abu Iyad) My Home My Land 29-40

Leila Farsakh, “Independence, Cantons or Bantustans: Whither the Palestinian State?” 59 Middle East J. (No. 2, Spring 2003)


Nadim Rouhana “The Intifada and the Palestinians of Israel: Resurrecting the Green Line” Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Spring, 1990), pp. 58-75

Naomi Klein “Loosing the Peace Incentive: Israel as Warning” in The Shock Doctrine p 423-443

Nuri Pelit on Palestinians in Israeli Textbooks:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWKPRC_oSg


Oren Ytfachel "Neither Two States Nor One:The Disengagement and “Creeping Apartheid” in Israel/Palestine” in The Arab World Geographer/Le Géographe du monde arabe 8, no 3 (2005) p 1-5
http://www.geog.bgu.ac.il/members/Yiftachel/new_papers_eng/Yiftachel%20in%20the%20world%20orders.pdf
- Ronald Krebs, "Israel’s bunker mentality", http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/136593/ronald-r-krebs/israels-bunker-mental
- Salaita, Steven George, Beyond Orientalism and Islamophobia: 9/11, Anti-Arab Racism, and the Mythos of National Pride
- Sara Roy, Ch. 17 “Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine” 293-308
• The Economist, ‘A Nation of Tribes’, http://www.economist.com/node/160840