

Many Israels

Summer 2023, 4 credits in Israel Studies
CRN 40019
Mon/Wed, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
8:00-8:30 informally/debrief

Faculty: Nancy Koppelman
M.A., History
Ph.D., American Studies
koppelmn@evergreen.edu

Dear students,

Because of its subject matter, this course has been criticized by people who know nothing of its content or aims. I am compelled to make sure that those who wish to learn are able to take full advantage of what this course offers. Therefore, in order to gain entry into this course:

Register on your own. After you register, I will contact you to ask for the following information. If you do not provide this information within a week of my request for it, you will be dropped from the course:

- a. A paragraph explaining your motives for taking the course.*
- b. A reference from someone who can vouch for your motives, and the reference's contact information.*

If you want to ask questions about the course before you decide whether to register, please contact me at koppelmn@evergreen.edu.

I have taught this course four times. I can say with confidence that if you attend, you will learn things that you don't know now. Thank you for your consideration..



Course Description: Israel is a distinct nation, yet there are many Israels. In 1948 the country was founded in conflict and its status is still debated today. Students will be encouraged to understand contemporary dynamics in light of the past; the emphasis is on developing a historical understanding of Israel. We'll learn about the origins of the Jewish people in the ancient world, the Jewish diaspora, the development of Zionist thought and of Palestinian nationalism, and about competing interests that ensued between peoples in the context of history. Texts and films will illustrate diverse experiences and claims, and provide useful perspectives from which to consider possibilities for the future. Our approach is thematic; each week's content builds on what came before. Students will write weekly papers about the topics under study: religion, immigration, the state, Zionism, land disputes, the environment, and contemporary onlookers and visionaries. We will not be able to examine all the Israels in which people have been invested. This is, in part, a function of the topic itself, and reflects the central premise of **Many Israels**.

This course is designed to enrich understanding. Students of all backgrounds and political perspectives are invited to engage in searching, honest, and respectful learning, exploration, and discussion. The course's aim is not to persuade but to inform so that attendees will be better equipped to make up their own minds about its many topics.

Class Format: This class will be held on Zoom twice each week. Before our meetings, students will complete reading and writing assignments, view pre-recorded lectures and films, and receive support on Canvas. All texts, films, and pre-recorded lectures will be available on Canvas; there are no additional costs. Our meetings will be devoted entirely to discussion. Cameras must be ON during class sessions so as to imitate in-person conditions. Students will be required to have reliable access to the internet.

Writing: Students will write weekly papers of 4-5 pp. about the topics under study. With the exception of the first week's assignment, papers are due on Sundays by 12:00 noon.

This is our working schedule. Synchronous class time are Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and will be devoted to discussions. For those who wish it, I'll stay till 8:30 to debrief and chat informally.	
Dates	Theme
Week 1 June 24 & 26	Religion: History of religious authority, religious liberty and diversity, religious and secular Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Israel, Jerusalem, religion in contemporary Israel
Week 2 July 1 & 3	Immigration: Before and after statehood, American interest in Palestine, Ministry of Absorption, Immigration from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Russia
Week 3 July 8 & 10	The State: Palestinian political identity, Zionism(s), 1948 declaration of independence and war/Nakba, The Knesset, Supreme Court, Israeli Defense Forces, democratic and Jewish [?], international relations
Week 4 July 15 & 17	The Land: Land as territory, land under the Ottoman Empire, land negotiations/thefts/conflicts, settlements, strategic concerns, land as environment
Week 5 July 22 & 24	Contemporary Onlookers and Visionaries: International interest in Israel/Palestine ("onlookers"), Palestinian/Israeli partners ("visionaries")