

Sociology/Judaic Studies 218: Sociology of Modern Israel. Fall 2009. Southern Connecticut State University
Dr. Martin Laskin

Course Description: This course will examine the social factors, pre-statehood through the present, which have influenced and continue to influence the emergence of Israeli Society as a new social and cultural entity in the Middle East. When appropriate corresponding and parallel topics relating to American Society will be examined in order to compare and contrast these two societies.

The key issues to be examined in the context of this course will be:

- 1) the origins of Israel in the situations of Jewish Diaspora, Emancipation, and Enlightenment.
- 2) Zionism as a social movement composed of religious, cultural, socialist, and revisionist trends.
- 3) The immigration of diverse Jewish communities to Israel and the subsequent establishment of these groups as ethnic communities.
- 4) Arab-Israeli society.
- 5) The social dynamics of gender, ethnic, religious and social class groups.
- 6) The impact of the politics and conflicts of the Middle East region on Israeli Society

This course is designed to accommodate students with a previous knowledge of Judaica and Israel as well as those whose knowledge is minimal at best.

Course Requirements:

Midterm Exam based upon assigned readings and class lectures from weeks one through seven. 25%

Final exam based upon assigned readings and class lectures from weeks eight through seven 25%

Written research paper- details to follow. 25%

Attendance and participation in class discussions 25%

Course Outline:

Week one: Diaspora, Emancipation, Enlightenment The Jewish condition.

Week Two: The Zionist Response

Week Three: **Visions of Jewish Utopia.** American Exceptionalism

Week Four: **Zionist Colonization.** The American Frontier

Week Five: **The waves of Aliyot.** America as a land of immigrants.

Week Six: **Forming an Israeli identity.** Americans and the melting pot.

Week Seven: **Indigenous peoples- Palestinians.** American Indians.

Week Eight: **Synagogue and State.** Church and State.

Week Nine: **Israeli Civil Religion.** American Civil Religion.

Week Ten: The effect of the military on Israeli Society.

Week Eleven: Education in Israel.

Week Twelve: Unique community forms: Kibbutz, Moshav

Week Thirteen: Micro Sociology- a sociology of everyday life in Israel.

Week Fourteen: Presentation of Papers.

Required main text: Garfinkle, Adam Politics and Society in Modern Israel: Myths and Realities. M.E. Sharpe Inc. 2000. (second edition)

Required Readings by week:

1. Walter Laquer. "The Forerunners" in *A History of Zionism* pp.40-83.
2. Theodor Herzl. "The Jewish State" in Hertzberg pp.204-223
Leo Pinsker. "Auto Emancipation" in Hertzberg pp.181-198
3. Garfinkle. Ch. 1,2,3,
4. Ilan Troen. "Frontier Myths and Their Applications in America and Israel: A Transnational Perspective. *The Journal of American History* Vol. 86 No.3 (Dec 1999, pp.1209-1230.
5. Garfinkle Ch.4
6. Garfinkle pp.135-142.

7. Rekness, Elie. The Arab Minority in Israel: An Analysis of the “Future Vision” Documents. American Jewish Committee (April 2008)
8. Garfinkle ch.5
A. Ravitzky. “Religious and Secular Jews in Israel: A Kulturkampf?” (Israel Democracy Institute, 2000).
- 9 Zerubavel, Yael, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and The Making of Israeli National Tradition*. (University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 3-36, 39-59, 84-113, 147-191.
10. To be assigned.
11. To be assigned
12. Readings from Spiro, *The Kibbutz*.
13. To be assigned
14. Presentation of Papers.