

**Cultures of Israel and Palestine**  
**Fall 2010**  
**JWST 4050/ANTH 4050/5050**

**Professor Caryn Aviv**     [caryn.aviv@colorado.edu](mailto:caryn.aviv@colorado.edu)

**Course: M-W-F 2:00-2:50pm, Office hours: by appointment, Office: Macky 220**

**Course Description:**

The Middle East is a complicated zone of enduring political conflict and violence between Palestinians and Israelis. Some argue that the conflict is a religious clash of cultures. Others see the region through the lens of nationalism and political hegemony: a contest for control over land, borders, sovereignty, and resources. Simultaneously, Israelis and Palestinians wrestle with significant internal differences and debates about their own communities and futures. This course explores the thick and intertwined threads of identity, history, collective memory, culture, trauma, and loss - themes that bind Palestinians and Israelis together and often threaten to tear them apart.

The class is organized around 4 framing questions and clusters that will guide our conversations:

- What are the historical relationships and core issues between and among Palestinians and Israeli Jews that have led to roughly 110 years of struggle and conflict?
- In what ways do Israeli and Palestinian collective narratives about identity, history, and memory intersect, echo one another, and diverge?
- What are some new and emerging theoretical ideas and frameworks to think about Palestinian cultures and identities? About Israeli cultures and identities?
- What have been some efforts at the level of elite politics and grassroots democratic organizing, to resolve long-standing conflict and violence between these two groups?

**Texts (all available at the CU Bookstore):**

- Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix, edited by Robert I. Rotberg, Indiana University Press, 2007.
- The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories, by Neil Caplan, Wiley Blackwell, 2009
- I Saw Ramallah, by Mourid Bhargouti, Anchor Books, 2000.
- Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism, by Rebecca L. Stein, Duke University Press, 2008.

- Journal articles online in Blackboard

### **Class Policies:**

- We meet for 41 classes this semester. Please sign the attendance sheet that I will pass around each day. Attendance is worth 10% of your overall grade. The more classes you attend, the better your final attendance grade.
- Please turn off your phones during class. If I see texting during class, I will politely ask you to leave class for the day, and you will not earn attendance points.
- You can use your laptops to write notes, but if you are on facebook or any other website during class, I will politely ask you to leave, and you will not earn attendance for the day. Tuition and time are valuable commodities, why waste yours (tuition) and mine (time)?
- I communicate by email outside of class, and don't have an office space yet, so please feel free to contact me at [caryn.aviv@colorado.edu](mailto:caryn.aviv@colorado.edu) if you'd like to set up an appointment or for any other reason.
- Please feel free to bring a snack if you get hungry or fatigued by 2pm in the afternoon.
- **Bring your assigned text/article for each day as we often do close text study of key arguments. Paired textual analysis is a core element of the course. Be prepared to dive into texts with a partner and 'talk back' to the texts and each other.**
- **Disabilities:** If you qualify for educational accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Disability Services is located in Willard Hall 322, 303-492-8671 and on the web at [www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices)).
- **Sexual Harassment:** CU's policy on sexual harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention. It can involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or promises or creates an environment that is hostile or offensive. Harassment may occur between members of the same or opposite gender and between any combination of members in the campus community: students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, the workplace, or a residence hall. Any student who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Additional information including campus resources available to assist those who believe they have been sexually harassed can be obtained at: [www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/](http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/)

### **Evaluation:**

- Attendance: required to earn 10% of your overall grade.

- 4 in-class pop quizzes: 15%
- 4 page critical film analysis of a recent Israeli or Palestinian film (see guidelines below) 25% of your overall grade
- Mid-term in-class essay: 25% of your overall grade – please bring your laptops that day.
- Final in-class essay: 25% of your overall grade – please bring your laptops that day.

**Guidelines for your film analysis: Four page film analysis, due on MONDAY, OCTOBER 25 by 2pm via email. We do not have class that day, but your papers will be due by class-time in lieu of not meeting. Please check in and clear your film selection with me no later than Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>.**

Who doesn't like to watch films? Here's your opportunity to watch a film (either documentary or feature film) by/about Israelis and or Palestinians, and think about how the film dovetails with what you're learning in class. The film should somehow directly or obliquely engage the themes of this course – i.e, conflict and contestation over memory, land, history, legitimacy, etc. Please check out the media reserve holdings at Norlin Library (you can do a search for "Israeli" and/or "Palestinian" and find lots of stuff), or use the same search terms to rent a DVD via Netflix.

Your film analysis must accomplish three goals:

- Your paper needs to have some sort of argument that you state clearly in the opening introduction of your paper. Provide a brief overview of the plot and an initial discussion of how the film engages the questions of this course. How does the film explore issues of Palestinian or Israeli (or both) identities, history, and society? What are the central questions, dilemmas, or themes of the film? By the end of your analysis, I'd like you to think and write about what makes this particular film "Israeli" or "Palestinian." Saying that it's about people who live there is not sufficient.
- You must engage at least TWO sources from the course texts to enhance your argument and discussion of the key tensions, themes, and/or characters in the film. You might want to focus your analysis here on relationships between characters, the challenges or transformations they face, or how individual characters are portrayed and developed. Try to paraphrase the argument or use short quotes from the reading to demonstrate your point and how the text relates to the ideas raised by the film, don't just mention the reading in passing.
- At the end of your paper, provide a thorough and rigorous critique of the film and an explanation of why you liked or disliked it. Did you think the film was compelling, successful, moving, or a snooze? Did you empathize with the characters' stories and experiences? Did you think the writers or directors had a specific ideological agenda? Your critique could discuss aesthetics, substantive issues raised, plot/character development, the quality of acting or writing, etc. Be as creative and honest here as you want to be.

## **Course Topic and Reading Schedule**

### **Week 1: Getting Started**

Monday, August 23: go over syllabus and if there's time, an in-class text study – poem by Yehuda Amichai

Wednesday, August 25: Introduction to Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (PDF online)

Friday, August 27: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2: Problems in Defining the Conflict, Chapter 2: Defining the Conflict, Nonetheless in *Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories*

### **Week 2: Palestine under the Ottoman Empire**

Monday, August 30: Herzl and Nordau, Chapter 7 "The Young Workers" from *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (PDF online)

Wednesday, September 1: Rashid Khalidi's Chapters 2: Cultural Life and Identity in Late Ottoman Palestine (PDF online)

Friday, September 3: Chapter 3: Background to 1917: Origins of Conflict, *Israel-Palestine Conflict*, and The Hidden Question: Yitzhak Epstein (PDF online)

### **Week 3: Zionist Utopian Visions**

Monday, September 6: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Wednesday, September 8: "Zionism's Gender: Hannah Meisel and the Founding of the Agricultural School for Young Women", *Israel Studies*, 6/3 (Fall 2001), 135-165, and S. Ilan Troen's "Covenantal Communities," from *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Zionist Settlement* (PDF online)

Friday, September 10: NO CLASS 2<sup>nd</sup> day Rosh Hashanah

### **Week 4: Life in Palestine During The British Mandate**

Monday, September 13: Israel-Palestine Conflict, Chapter 4: Arabs and Jews under the British Mandate

Wednesday, September 15: Palestinian Press in Mandatory Jaffa: Advertising, Nationalism, and the Public Sphere (PDF online)

Friday, September 17: Tel Aviv: Vienna on the Mediterranean, from S. Ilan Troen's *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Zionist Settlement* (PDF Online)

### **Week 5: Theories of History, Narrative and Memory regarding 1948: Part One**

Monday, September 20: *Israel-Palestine Conflict*: Chapter 6: *Shoah, Atzma'ut, Nakba*, watch brief excerpt from "A Nation is Born"

Wednesday, September 22: Chapter 1 from *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*: "Israeli-Jewish Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Evolution, Contents, Functions, and Consequences," by Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salvendy

Friday, September 24: PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN, NO CLASS.

### **Week 6: History, Narrative and Memory: Part Two**

Monday, September 27: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*: Chapter 4: "Arab and Palestinian Narratives of the 1948 War"

Wednesday, September 29: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*: Chapter 5: "Zionism's Encounter With The Palestinians: The Dynamics of Force, Fear, and Extremism"

Friday, October 1: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*: Chapter 6: "Conflicting Narratives or Narratives of a Conflict: Can the Zionist and Palestinian Narratives of the 1948 War Be Bridged?"

### **Week 7: The Residual Impact of the Holocaust on Israeli Jewish Cultural Memory**

Monday, October 4: Excerpt from Yehiel Dinur's poetry from *Star Eternal*, and *Reader, Writer, and Holocaust Literature: The Case of Ka-Tzetnik*, *Israel Studies* - Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2007, pp. 109-133, by Galia Glasner-Heled (both PDFs online)

Wednesday, October 6: watch "Summer of Aviya"

Friday, October 8: Discussion of "Summer of Aviya"

### **Week 8: "Others Within": Mizrachim and Palestinian Israeli Citizens**

Monday, October 11: Mizrahi Immigration to Israel in the 1950s – Henriette Dahan Kalev and Mizrahi and Russian Challenges to Israel's Dominant Culture: Divergences and Convergences, by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, *Israel Studies*, Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2007. (PDFs online)

Wednesday, October 13: The Evolvement of an Arab-Palestinian National Minority in Israel, Elie Rekhess, Israel Studies, Volume 12, Number 3, Fall 2007 (PDF online), watch 500 Dunams Over the Moon

Friday, October 15: **Mid-term: In class essays**

**Week 9: The War of 1967 and its legacies**

Monday, October 18: Chapter 1: The Avalanche, excerpt from "The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements," by Gershom Gorenberg (PDF online)

Wednesday, October 20: Chapter 2: Creating Facts, excerpt from "The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements," by Gershom Gorenberg (PDF online)

Friday, October 22: Jerusalem as an Israeli Problem: A Review of Forty Years of Israeli Rule over Arab Jerusalem, by Menachem Klein, Israel Studies, Volume 13, Number 2, Summer 2008 (PDF online)

**Week 10: Palestinian Experiences of Displacement and Occupation post-1967: "I Saw Ramallah"**

Monday, October 25: NO CLASS, PROFESSOR AT A CONFERENCE

Wednesday, October 27: "I Saw Ramallah" Edward Said's preface and Chapter 1: The Bridge

Friday, October 29: Chapters 2-3: This is Ramallah and Deir Ghassanah

**Week 11: "I Saw Ramallah"**

Monday, November 1: Chapters 4-5: The Village Square and Living in Time

Wednesday, November 3: Chapters 6-7: Uncle Daddy and Displacements

Friday, November 5: Chapters 8-9: Reunion and The Daily Day of Judgment

**Week 12: The Brief Romance/Disappointments of the Oslo Peace Accords**

Monday, November 8: Itineraries in Conflict: Introduction

Wednesday, November 10: Itineraries in Conflict: Chapters 1 and 2 (Regional Routes and Consumer Co-existence)

Friday, November 12: Itineraries in Conflict: Chapter 3 (Scalar Fantasies: The Israeli State and the Production of Palestinian Space)

### **Week 13: Citizenship Discourses within Israel**

Monday, November 15: Itineraries in Conflict: Chapter 4 (Culinary Patriotism: Ethnic Restaurants and Melancholic Citizenship), watch short doc in class about Abu Ghosh: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJ0g-ryP2wQ>

Wednesday, November 17: Itineraries in Conflict: Chapters 5 and Postscript (Of Cafes and Terror, Oslo's Ghosts)

Friday, November 19: Watch episode of "Arab Labor"

### **Week 14: NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK**

### **Week 15: Theories of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation – scholarly and political approaches**

Monday, November 29: Israel-Palestine Conflict, Chapter 11 (Writing about the Conflict)

Wednesday, December 1: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict*: Chapter 9: The Psychology of Better Dialogue Between Two Separate But Interdependent Narratives

Friday, December 3: Israel-Palestine Conflict: Chapter 12: Confronting the Obstacles

### **Week 16: People to People**

Monday, December 6: Watch Encounter Point

Wednesday, December 8: guest lecture with Boulder resident Bruce Shaffer about Encounter Programs

Friday, December 10: In class final essay