

**HIST 3261 3.0**  
**CREATING ISRAEL: THE ZIONIST IDEA, 1870-1948**

Monday, 11:30-2:20 pm; BC 322

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Office hours, 754 York Research Tower, Monday 10:00 am- 11:00 am or by appointment

***Course Description***

One of the most consequential and controversial events of the twentieth century is the emergence in 1948 of the State of Israel, the first Jewish state since antiquity, under the auspices of the Zionist movement. Drawing on both religious tradition and the concepts of secular modern nationalism, it promised to remedy Jews' political and social ills— above all, antisemitism, assimilation, and the lack of self-determination – by undoing their 2000 year “exile” from their ancient homeland. Its goals and methods to establish a Jewish national home in Ottoman (later, British) Palestine and radically to reshape Jewish culture and identity met with both fervent support and vehement opposition among Jews and non-Jews.

By reading major voices for Zionism and their critics, we study the context for the emergence of Zionism as a Jewish national movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, arguments for and against it made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the conflicts and debates among Zionist thinkers over their ideas and visions. We also examine efforts to realize these ideas. Topics include ideological antecedents to Zionism; Jewish nationalist and anti-nationalist alternatives to Zionism; Zionism as a secular rebellion against tradition; Zionism as messianic movement; the rejection of Diaspora Jewish culture and the creation of a new, Zionist culture; the revival of Hebrew; the place of Arabs and “Arab Jews” in Zionist culture; the movement for a bi-national Arab-Jewish state; the Palestinian critique of Zionism; historians' controversy over the 1948 Arab-Israeli War; the relationship of Israel to the Jewish Diaspora.

***Readings***

The following books are recommended for purchase online or wherever sold:

1. Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism. The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*. New York: Basic Books, 1981
2. Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea. A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997
3. Jacob Lassner and S. Ilan Troen, *Jews and Muslims in the Arab World: Haunted By Pasts Real and Imagined*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007 (recommended reading)

Unless otherwise indicated, all readings (including from the above books) will be made available by the instructor or are available online or through the library's e-resources.

## *Assignments*

1. Attendance and participation: 10%
2. Weekly multiple-choice quizzes based on readings (lowest quiz grade will be dropped): 15%
3. Take-home Midterm exam (electronic submission due 27 February): 25%
4. Document Analysis & Discussion (essay) in its historical context, 1200-1800 words (electronic submission due 27 March): 20%  
A one-page proposal listing the primary source you will analyze, a tentative thesis, and a list of at least 3 academic (peer-reviewed) secondary sources is due 6 March.  
**NOTE:** Essays will **NOT** be accepted and graded without submitting this proposal by 6 March and receiving the instructor's approval.
5. Final exam (TBD): 30%

**Please note:** Style, structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation count in addition to content in papers. Students are urged to visit the Centre for Academic Writing for help in preparing their essays. The instructor is also happy to provide assistance and guidance.

**Grading Scheme:** The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+=9, A=8, B+=7, C+=5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75-69, etc.).

## *Class Schedule*

**Week 1, 9 January**  
**NO CLASS**

**Week 2, 16 January**

1. Introduction: Zion and the Jews

E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*.  
Introduction, 1-13

“The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel” (1948)

[http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Dec\\_of\\_Indep.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Dec_of_Indep.html)

2. The “Precursors”: the antecedents of Modern Jewish Nationalism

“The Forerunners,” in Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 40-70

### *Primary Sources*

Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, "Seeking Zion" (1862) in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 111-114

Peretz Smolenskin, “It is Time to Plant” (1875-77) in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 142-145

Recommended: Zvi Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*, 1-58

**Week 3, 23 January**

1. 1881 and its aftermath

“The Forerunners,” in Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 70-83

*Primary Sources*

Leo Pinsker, "Auto-Emancipation" (1882) in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 181-198

"Manifesto of the Bilu (1882)" in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 588-589)

2. Life in Ottoman Palestine

Jonathan Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter*, 15-38

Menachem Klein, "Arab Jew in Palestine," *Israel Studies* 19/3 (Fall 2014): 134-153 (recommended)

**Week 4, 30 January**

Political Zionism

“Herzl: The Breakthrough,” in Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, 88-100

*Primary Sources*

Theodor Herzl, “The Jewish State” (1896) in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 204-226

“Protest Against Zionism” (1897) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 603-604

**Week 5, 6 February**

1. Cultural Zionism

“Ahad Ha’am: The Spiritual Dimensions of the Jewish State,” in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 112-125

Alan Dowty, “Much Ado about Little: Ahad Ha-am’s “Truth from Eretz Yisrael,” Zionism, and the Arabs,” *Israel Studies* 5: 2 (2000): 154-181

*Primary Source*

Ahad Ha’am, “The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem” (1897) in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 262-269)

2. Autonomism

Robert Seltzer, “Ahad Ha’am and Dubnow: Friends and Adversaries,” in Jacques Kornberg, ed., *At the Cross Roads: Essays on Ahad Ha’am*, 60-73

*Primary Source*

Simon Dubnow, "Cultural Autonomy," (1901) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 397-399

**Week 6, 13 February**

1. Socialist Zionism

"Borochoy: Zionist Marxist," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 125-139

"Gordon: Labor and Redemption," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*, 151-158

*Primary Sources*

A. D. Gordon, "People and Labor," in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 372-4

Ber Borochoy, "Program for Proletarian Zionism," (1906) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 626-628

2. Creating the "New Jew": Body, Art, Culture and Language

"Ben Yehuda: Language and Nation," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, 83-87

"Nordau: The Jews and the Crisis of Western Civilization," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* 101-111

*Primary Sources*

Max Nordau, "Jewry of Muscle" (1903) in and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 616-617

Haim Nahman Bialik, "The City of Slaughter" (1903), reprinted in *Prooftexts* 25, vol.1-2 (2005), 9-29

**20 February, NO CLASS – Winter Reading Week**

**Week 7, 27 February**

\*\*\* Mid-term due

1. The "New" *Yishuv*: Early Colonization Efforts

Derek Penslar. *Zionism and Technocracy: the Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine*, 80-102

*Primary Source*

Arthur Ruppin, "The Picture in 1907"

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/Ruppin1907.html>

2. The "Arab Question" and the "Zionist Question"

Neville Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War One*, 32-57

*Primary Sources*

Yitzhak Epstein, "The Hidden Question, August 1907," in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World* 631-634

**Week 8**, 6 March

\*\*\*Document analysis essay proposal due

1. World War I and Zionist Diplomacy

David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace*, 173-199, 263-301

*Primary Sources*

James Balfour "The Balfour Declaration" (1917) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 661-662

The Council of the League of Nations, "Mandate for Palestine" (1922), in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 670-671

2. Jabotinsky and Revisionist Zionism

"*Jabotinsky: Integralist Nationalism and the Illusion of Power*," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, 159-187

*Primary Sources*

Jabotinsky, "On the Iron Wall" (1923), "On Militarism" (1929) in Eran Kaplan and Derek Penslar, eds., *The Origins of Israel: A Documentary History*, 257-269

**Week 9**, 13 March

Religion and Zionism

"*Rabbi Kook: The Dialectics of Redemption*," in Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* 187-197

Israel Kolatt, "Religion, Society and State during the Period of the National Home" in Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, Anita Shapira, eds., *Zionism and Religion*, 279-299

*Primary Sources*

The Mizrahi, "Manifesto" (1902), *The Jew in the Modern World*, 613

Kook, "Lights of Rebirth" (1910-1930) in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 427-431

R. Zadok Hacoheh Rabinowitz, "The Zionists Are Not Our Saviors," (c. 1900) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 608-610

Nathan Birnbaum, "Contra Zionism" (1919) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 648-650

**Week 10**, 20 March

Society and Politics in British Mandatory Palestine

Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete*, chs. 21-23 (pp.447-521)

Ezra Mendelsohn, "Zionist Success and Zionist Failure. The Case of East Central Europe Between the Wars," in Reinharz and Shapira, eds., *Essential Papers on Zionism*, 171-190

Film: The Land of Promise (1935)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDoD6W2z01s>

**Week 11**, 27 March

\*\*\*Document analysis essay due

1. Two Peoples, One Land: Arab-Jewish Confrontation

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, 144-175

Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: The Zionist Resort to Force: 1881-1948*, 173-186, 194-206

*Primary Sources*

"Response to the Arab Riots" (1930) in Eran Kaplan and Derek J. Penslar, eds., *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948*, 218-228

2. The 1948 War: The Birth of Israel and the Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Problem

Alan Dowty, *Israel/Palestine*, 81-103

Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians of 1948: the Underlying Causes of Failure," in Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine*, 12-36

Benny Morris, "Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948," in Rogan and Shlaim, eds. *The War for Palestine*, 37-56

Efraim Karsh, "Were the Palestinians Expelled?" *Commentary* (July-August 2000), 29-34

*Primary Sources*

Hashomer Hatsair, "The Case for a Bi-national Palestine" (1945) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, eds., 702-5

Moshe Shertok. "Bi-nationalism is Unworkable" (1947) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 705-6

UN General Assembly, "Resolution on Palestine" (1947) in Flohr and Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, 706-707

**Week 12**, 3 April

Conclusion, Discussion and Review

**Course policies**

**Participation and attendance:** grade is based on confirmed attendance and participation in discussions. Students are expected to attend each class.

**Readings:** All readings, unless otherwise noted, are mandatory and should be done before class meetings so that you can participate in discussions. They will serve as preparation for the exams and written assignment.

**Lateness:** All assignments must be submitted by deadlines announced in class. Submissions will be penalized 2% per day late up to a full grade (e.g. lowered from A to B) for each week of lateness unless an extension has been granted by the instructor.

**Missed tests and exams:** Students are to explain to the instructor why they have missed a test or exam and, when relevant, to provide any necessary documentation, e.g. doctor's note. Make-up tests and exams will be administered at the mutual convenience of teacher and student.

**Use of Websites:** Students may **not** use websites as sources for their papers without the express consent of the instructor as websites often contain inappropriate or inaccurate information. This does not apply to articles and books accessed through the library's e-resources. When in doubt, consult with your instructor.

**Office hours and email etiquette:** I encourage you to come to my office hours. During the semester, I receive a very large volume of email daily. I try to respond to email within 24-48 hours. In your email to me, please be sure to fill in the subject line with the course number and to sign your email with your full name.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to do their own work and to cite sources appropriately. Plagiarism and cheating will be **punished** in accordance with university policy. For more information about what constitutes plagiarism and university policy concerning academic integrity, please consult the following website:  
[http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic\\_integrity/index.html](http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html)

**Courtesy:**

Students are expected not to conduct private conversations or to pursue private pursuits during class time. Here is not the place to multi-task, i.e. to listen to class discussion while attending to personal affairs. **Please close cell phones, Ipods, etc. and refrain from using the internet and other means for private and non-academic purposes, e.g. Facebook, surfing the net and communicating with others (e.g. email, instant messaging, text messaging).** Such activities invariably distract the instructor and your classmates.