Course Objective:
The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of many communal conflicts worldwide and is in many respects a normal example of its kind, although it does have unique features; to paraphrase Tolstoy, every national conflict is unhappy in its own way.

This conflict is of special interest to many for a number of reasons:
- It has proved, over the last century, especially intractable and appears intractable for the near future;
- It has garnered more international attention, and more attention in U.S. policy, than probably any other communal conflict; and
- Many people in the U.S. and worldwide feel an affinity to one side or the other in the conflict;
- Although this is normal for communal conflicts, different participants and observers tell such different ‘narratives’ of the history and rights and wrongs of the dispute that discussions about it often consist of more demonization than explanation.

This course provides an introduction to the sources, trajectory, and current status of the conflict. We will pay special attention to the competing narratives of three groups of actors—Israelis, Palestinians, and the surrounding Arab countries, as well as factions within each of these—and attempt to explain, from each group’s point of view, why they have acted and do act as they do.

Prerequisite: None.

Course Outline:
I. Basic Concepts
II. Trajectories of the Conflict and of Narratives about It
III. Current Policy Issues

Requirements:
1. There are about 19 sessions with reading assignments to be completed before class.

The course format is mixed lecture and seminar depending on topic and your initiative. All participants are expect to treat each other with respect per Lehigh’s Principles of our Equitable Community:
https://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/initiatives/PrinciplesEquity_Sheet_v2_032212.pdf
2. Two simulations, most likely on the last two class meetings, in which class members will attempt to formulate future policy of Israel toward the Palestinians, and of Palestinians toward Israel.

3. Two exams, a midterm on March 5 and a final on the date set by the Registrar.

4. No electronic devices except laptops (for note-taking or in-class research).

Grading:

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Extra credit opportunities:

Class members who attend a non-course lecture, at Lehigh or elsewhere, on a topic related to this course and submit a reaction paper qualify for credit equal to 1% of the final course grade. See the memo on our CourseSite under ‘Assignments.’

There is also an XC assignment that allows you to contribute to improving Lehigh’s library holdings. See under ‘Assignments.’

There is a semester limit of 5% on XC.

Intellectual Integrity:

The Department of International Relations Policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism is hereby incorporated into this syllabus (under ‘Assignments’). See also the Provost’s policy statement.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact the Office of Academic Support Services, University Center C212 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must provide documentation from the Academic Support Services office seven days before any exam for which accommodations are requested.

Textbooks:


Schedule and Reading Assignments:

The schedule shown is tentative. Events and new resources will emerge during the semester, so you will receive syllabus updates as we go along. Our progress may also vary from day to day. Class members are responsible for keeping up with our actual progress.
Many session listings include questions that you may want to keep in mind while preparing. These are not meant to be exhaustive or to constrain class discussion.

* = reading item on CourseSite or accessible via URL; contact me promptly if you discover a corrupt file or other problem with a document. Films are on reserve at Fairchild; you can watch them solo or in groups.

I. Basic Concepts: Identity, Nations, Nationalism, and Communal Conflict


-Do “ethnic groups” and “nations” really exist? What does it mean to say that nations are “constructed” or that they are “imagined communities?”

-How do we know a nation when we see one?

-Why is nationalism so pervasive?

-Why does nationalism matter?

*Course syllabus (this document);
*Memos on preparation for exams and for XC assignments;
SAFS, ix-x, 1-6.


*Benedict Anderson, “Imagined Communities,” in Hutchinson and Smith, 69-76.


*Walker Connor, “When is a Nation?” in Hutchinson and Smith, 154-59.


Also of interest (not assigned):


-Both Israeli and Palestinian nationalists claim ancient roots, albeit partly or largely unverifiable, roots for their national identities. Why?

-Modern Zionist/Israeli nationalism began earlier than Palestinian and solidified from an elite to a mass movement more rapidly. Why? Also, how has this mattered to the conflict?

-How important are the distinctions between Jewish and Israeli identity?

-How important are the distinctions between Palestinian, Syrian/South Syrian, Arab, and Muslim identity?


Also of interest (not assigned):
Khalidi, rest of book.

3. Tues. January 27: Communal Conflict [74]

- Of Van Evera’s catalogue of potential causes of conflict, which seem most relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of partition as a solution to severe communal conflicts?
- Why has it been the favored solution of participants and observers of Palestine/Israel before 1948 and again now?
- What alternatives could be considered for communal conflicts broadly and for Palestine/Israel in particular?


Also of interest (not assigned):


II. Trajectory and Narratives

4. Thurs. January 29: Israeli Master Narrative: Film Discussion

-Given that there are always dissenters from even a broadly agreed ‘master narrative’ of a national identity or a communal conflict, is the concept useful?

-This film is a (rather successful) Hollywood commercial product, not a product of any official or unofficial Israeli nationalist group. Does that matter?

-The tone and accuracy of the portrayals of various events in this film are arguable.

One is worth special note: the roles of internal and external Arab leaders in coercing Palestinians to fight or to flee is arguable, but Nazi refugees played no role. Why might this have been included?

-What does this film omit?

Otto Preminger, dir., Exodus (1960), 208 mins. Note the length and allocate time accordingly.

Also of interest (not assigned):
Baruch Agadati, dir. This is the Land (1935, re-edited 2010). Documentary. Originally used for fund-raising.

Michael Elkins, dir. The Edge of Danger (1955), 19mins. Documentary. The agricultural settlements are the border and the country.


5. Tues. February 3: Palestinian Master Narrative: Film Discussion

-Sulieman is a member of the Christian minority among Palestinians. He also lives in Israel, not as a refugee. Are either of these important to how he sees the conflict?

-The film is composed of a number of episodes separated in time. Does this affect how the reader understands the narrative?

-Is it fair to say that both films, and narratives of the conflict generally, are more concerned with Israeli behavior than with Palestinian? If so, why might this be?

Elia Sulieman, dir., The Time That Remains (2009), 109 mins.
Also of interest (not assigned):
Includes interviews of Israelis unaware that they live on sites of former Palestinian villages as well as reporting on a disputed 1948 massacre.

6. Thurs. February 5: The Formative Years, 1880s-1940s [42]

- Who were the main actors, the goals of each, and the most important actions of each and their consequences?
- To what extent are the events of this period agreed, at least among these three authors, versus distinct narratives?
- How much do you think the different narratives may have mattered to choices of actors at the time? To the self-identities of Israelis and Palestinians today? To how they, or third parties, might view appropriate responses to the conflict today?

SAFS, 7-45.
RR, 571-74.
You will find it necessary throughout the course to consult the maps in SAFS, the timelines in SAFS, xiii-xviii, and in RR at the start of each chapter, and the glossary in RR, 585-605.

7. Tues. February 10: The Formative Years: Documents [26]

- For each document, try to identify the affiliations of the author(s), their intended audience(s), and what they wanted from those audiences.
- Also try to identify and interpret key passages in each document. E.g., the most famous clause in any document about this conflict is probably the Balfour Declaration’s “…. it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities …. ” Which communities? Why aren’t political rights mentioned?
- Bring RR to class; we’ll work in groups on the documents.

*Faisal-Weizmann Agreement, January 3, 1919 United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL),
http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/5BFF833964EDB9BF85256CED00673D1F

Thurs. Feb. 12—No class

8. Tues. February 17: Partition, 1945-1949 [70]

-Continue to attend to agreed facts versus narratives.
-How did British attitudes toward the Zionist project and toward the Arabs of Palestine evolve between 1917 and 1947?
-How did the Holocaust influence the Zionist project?
-Which actors and what concerns determined the choice of partition in 1947?
-Why was Israel so successful in the 1947-1949 wars?
-Why did it take so long (Morris, 1987) for Israelis to begin to question the national myth that Israel bore no responsibility for displacement of Palestinians?

SDFS, 46-84.


League of Arab States, “Declaration of a Provisional Palestinian Civil Administration,” March 22, 1945, in RR, 87-89.

Also of interest (not assigned):


-What were the goals of Israel during this period?
-What were the goals of the Arab states in this period?
- Why did Palestinian aspirations rely more on assistance from Arab states than on their own action during this period?
- What were the goals of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France, and how did they matter to the options of Israel, Arab states, and Palestinians?

SAFS, 85-117.


- Why did the 1967 war occur, and what accounts for Israel’s success?
- How, exactly, did the situations of Palestinian Arabs change? In what ways was the impact different for those in pre-1967 Israel, in East Jerusalem, in the remainder of the West Bank, in Gaza, and in Jordan?
- How did the Israeli government, right- and wing factions in Israeli society, the Arab states, and different Palestinian factions understand the meaning of the outcome?

SAFS, 118-55.
*Sari Nusseibeh with Anthony David, Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2007), 91-103. Professor, former PA official, considered a soft-liner on relations with Israel.
League of Arab States, “Fourth Arab Summit Conference” (Khartoum Resolutions), September 1, 1967, in RR, 241-42.

- How did Israeli territorial gains in 1967 change dynamics within and between Israeli, Palestinian, and Arab states societies?
- How did the 1970 civil war in Jordan affect these dynamics?
- How did Israel’s failure to win a decisive victory in the 1973 war affect them?
- How did the P.L.O. seek global recognition and what were the consequences?
- Compare trends in U.N. GA and S.C. resolutions, PLO manifestos and programs, and Arab League resolutions

SAFS, 156-94.
League of Arab States. “Seventh Arab Summit Conference” (Rabat Resolutions), October 29, 1974, in RR, 342-44.

Monday March 2, 4:00-5:15, IR Commons Room—Review session

12. Tues. March 3: In-class document working groups (no new reading)

We will assign groups in advance:


13. Thurs. March 5: Midterm Exam

Take home portion of midterm due, 1:10 P.M.
14. Tues. March 17: Camp David and Lebanon [63]

- What changed to make it possible for President Sadat to seek peace with Israel?
- Why didn’t the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations or the treaty take on the Palestinian issue?
- What changes were there in direct Israeli-Palestinian relations and in Israeli and Palestinian internal debates about the issue?
- What were the causes and consequences of the Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and (especially) 1982?
- What effect did the Sabra and Shatila massacres have on internal Israeli politics? On other issues?

SAFS, 195-230.

15. Thurs. March 19: The First Intifada to Oslo [59]

- What accounts for the divisions with Israeli and within Palestinian society, and what implications did they have for the prospects for peace?
- What were the causes of the First Intifada?
- What international and local factors contributed to the Oslo Accords? Did the Intifada help or hurt?

SAFS, 231-68.

During the 20th century (this may be changing some now), the dominant artistic form among Israelis, including for expression of identity or nationalist ideas, was folk music, while among Palestinian and Arab intellectuals it was poetry.

-Can particular songs or poems be classified as:
  -laments for losses of national territory or values?
  -accusations of blame (internal or external) for such losses?
  -aspirations for future gains?
  -celebrations of gains?
  -more than one of these at once?

-To what extent do expressions in the two communities speak to their own community, vs. to each other?


-Why couldn’t Israel and Syria reach a peace agreement?
-Why could Israel and Jordan do so when they could not before?
-What factors hindered implementation of Oslo?
-What were the consequences of the slow and partial implementation of Oslo?


18. Tues. March 31: Failure of Permanent Status Negotiations [62]

-Why did the permanent status negotiations of 2000-2001 fail? What was the relative importance of:
  -Intransigence by government or leadership figures of community?
  -Internal divisions within either community?
  -Mistrust due to failures of the Oslo process up to that point?
- Nationalist narratives that encouraged distrust, hostility, or maximalist aims?
- Mishandling or obstructionism by other parties such as the United States, Arab states, or others?
- Other factors?

SAFS, 331-60.
*Khalil Shikaki, A Palestinian Perspective on the Failure of the Permanent Status Negotiations (Ramallah: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, January 2004), 3-22.

Thurs. April 2—no class

19. Tues. April 7: Document analysis
We will do these in three groups.


20. Thurs. April 9: The Second Intifada

SAFS, 361-96.
21. Tues. April 14: Film discussion

Eran Riklis, dir., *Lemon Tree* (2008), 106 mins.

Also of interest (not assigned):
Uri Barbash, dir., *Beyond the Walls* (1984), 103 mins.

22. Thurs. April 16: Film discussion

James Miller, dir., *Death in Gaza* (2004), 80 mins. Director killed by Israeli forces during filming.

Also of interest (not assigned):
Annemarie Jacir, dir., *Salt of this Sea* (2008), 109 mins.

23. Tues. April 21: The Second Lebanon War and the Arab Spring

SAFS, 397-441.

Thurs. April 23—No Class

IV. Current Policy Issues
24. Tues. April 28: Simulation of Israeli Policy toward the Palestinians

The class will take the roles of Israeli party leaders and other decision makers attempting to formulate policy toward the Palestinians.

- What can be done to reduce terrorism (and Israeli retaliatory actions)?
- What should be done about the ‘wall?’ About settlements in the West Bank?
- Some Palestinians now favor a ‘one-state’ solution in the expectation that they will eventually be in the majority. What should Israel do about this?
- Some in Israel and in the U.S. favor a ‘West Bank first’ strategy of supporting Fatah at the expense of Hamas. Should Israel follow this path?

Although negotiations are incomplete, we will assume the commonly expected coalition—Likud, Kulanu, Israel Beitenu, Habayit Hayehudi, Shas, and UTJ [67 seats]. We will not assume anything about ministerial assignments.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu (head of Likud) [considered to control 30 seats] (chair): Warren.
Moshe Kahlon (head of Kulanu; in coalition) [10]: Wheaton.
Avigdor Liberman (head of Israel Beitenu; in coalition) [6]: Berger.
Naftali Bennett (head of Habayit Hayehudi; in coalition) [8]: Coopersmith.
Aryeh Dery (head of Shas; in coalition) [7]: Correll.
Yaakov Litzman (head of UTJ; in coalition) [6]: Ferradji.
Ayman Odeh (head of Joint List) [13]: Gelman.
Isaac Herzog (head of Labor/Zionist Union) [considered to control12 seats]: Haik.
Tzipi Livni (head of Hatnuah/Zionist Union) [12]: Isreal.
Yair Lapid (head of Yesh Atid) [11]: Kawa.
Zahav Gal-On (head of Meretz) [5]: Peterson.
Eli Yishai (head of Yahad) [0]: Quackenbos.
U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry: Seitz.
Israeli religious settlers: Skaroff.
Israeli secularists: Skibbens.

Haaretz; overall, the best Israeli daily. Secular, center/left.
http://www.haaretz.com/
Jerusalem Post; secular, center/right.
Daily Star (Beirut)
Washington Post

New York Times

Map of Israeli settlements 2014.

Map of occupation of West Bank.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bank_Areas_in_the_Oslo_II_Accord#/media/File:Restricted_space_in_the_West_Bank,_Area_C.png

Map of land Avigdor Lieberman proposed to transfer from Israel to a Palestinian state.

Map of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert peace plan, 2008.


Also of interest (not assigned):

25. Thurs. April 30: Simulation of Palestinian Policy toward Israel

The class will take the roles of Palestinian and Arab leaders attempting to formulate policy toward Israel.

-What can be done to reduce (Israeli and Palestinian) violence?
-Must the conflict between Fatah and Hamas be resolved before negotiating with Israel? What about the internal divisions within Hamas and Fatah?
-Should the Palestinians insist on a settlement freeze before negotiating with Israel?
-The Palestinian Legislative Council has not been a viable forum for formulation of policy. Could it become one?
-Should Palestinians be seeking a two-state solution, or hold out for a one-state solution in expectation that they will eventually be in the majority West of the Jordan River?
-What can or should Palestinians look for from outside powers such as the U.S. or Arab states?

Palestinian Authority (since 2013, State of Palestine) President Mahmoud Abbas (Fatah) (chair): Skibbens.
PA/SoP Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah (Fatah): Warren.
Former PA security head Mohamad Dahlan (Fatah): Wheaton.
Marwan Bargouthi (Fatah): Berger.
Former PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad (Third Way): Coopersmith.
Ramadan Shallah (Palestinian Islamic Jihad): Correll.
Nayef Hawatmeh (head of DFLP): Ferradji.
Bassam al-Salhi (head of Palestinian People’s Party): Gelman.
Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mesh'al: Haik.
Former PA Prime Minister Ismael Haniyeh (Hamas): Isreal.
Head of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades Marwan Issa (Hamas): Kawa.
Palestinian businessman Bashar Masri: Peterson.
U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry: Quackenbos.
Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry: Seitz.
Saudi Foreign Minister (Prince) Saud al Faisal: Skaroff.

*PCPSR, “Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 55,” April 8, 2015. Main findings and questions 13, 14, 17, 18/1, 19, 42, 43, 45-49, 52-54.


**Also of interest (not assigned):**


“Veteran Leader Khaled Meshaal Re-elected as Head of Hamas,” Agence France-Presse, April 2, 2013.


Khaled Abu Toameh, “Jerusalem is Awaiting Our Sacrifices Until it Returns to Us Void of Settlers,’ Fatah Declares,” Jerusalem Post, August 9, 2009. Resolutions voted at Fatah Assembly.


