



Detailed Course Syllabus

Modern Israel: History, Politics and Theology of Jewish Statehood

Academic Year: 2025/2026	Semester: Spring
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Study Program	Specialization / Major in	Year of Study 2025/26
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I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Name	Modern Israel: History, Politics and Theology of Jewish Statehood		
Abbreviation	Modern Israel	Code	
Status		ECTS	
Prerequisites	None		
Total Course Workload			
Teaching Mode	Total Hours	Teaching Mode	Total Hours
Lectures	30	Seminars	15
Class Time and Place	Start Mondays 17:20		

II. TEACHING STAFF

Course Holder

Name and Surname	Boris Havel		
Academic Degree	Ph.D., assistant professor	Academic Degree	Ph.D., assistant professor
Contact E-mail	boris.havel@fpzg.hr	Telephone	----
Office Hours	According to the published timetable		Office Hours

Course Collaborator

Name and Surname			
Academic Degree		Professional Title	
Contact E-mail		Telephone	
Office Hours	According to published timetable		Office

Course Collaborator

Name and Surname			
Academic Degree		Professional Title	
Contact E-mail		Telephone	
Office Hours	According to published timetable		Office

III. DETAILED COURSE INFORMATION

Teaching Language English

Course Description The aim of this course is to introduce students to the most important topics in contemporary Jewish and Israeli history, through an interdisciplinary study of religion, history and politics. In this course, Israel is understood to mean 1) the Israeli and later the Jewish people, 2) the Israeli religion - primarily Judaism, but also Christianity as a branch within Judaism, and 3) the Land of Israel. The latter includes the emergence of the Zionist movement, the restoration of the Jewish state in Palestine, and its development and current political circumstances. Christian Muslim understanding of Jews, Judaism and Zionism is also addressed in the course.

Expected Educational Outcomes

1. Understand basic concepts of Israeli/Jewish historiography.
2. Recognize basic processes in Israeli/Jewish history from the beginnings of the Zionist movement to present-day Israel.
3. Recognize the reasons for the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to studying the history of modern Israel.
4. Distinguish the basic characteristics, specificities and themes of Israeli historiography in key historical periods.
5. Critically analyze and interpret sources.
6. Present a clear and structured oral presentation on a selected topic.
7. Participate in class discussions.
8. Acquire necessary skills for continuing studies, independent work and professional development.
9. Adhere to ethical principles in academic work.

Textbooks and Materials (Note: all required readings will be provided to the students in PDF form)

Required

1. **Goldwater, Raymond** (2009). *Pioneers of Religious Zionism: Rabbis Alkalai, Kalischer, Mohliver, Reines, Kook and Maimon Jerusalem: Urim Publications* (selected chapters).
2. **Gorenberg, Gershon** (2006). *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977*. New York: Henry Holt and Company (selected chapters).
3. **Havel, Boris** (2014). Haj Amin al-Husseini: Herald of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Contemporary Islamic World. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*. (5) 3: 221-243.
4. **Havel, Boris** (2018). Jerusalem in Early Islamic Tradition. *Miscellanea Hadriatica et Mediterranea*, (5) 1: 113-179.
5. **Havel, Boris** (2023). The Catholic Church, Jews, the Shoah and the State of Israel: Interpretations and Responses. *Scandinavian Jewish Studies*, (34) 2: 21-34.
6. **Lewis, Bernard** (2010). *Faith and Power: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (selected chapters).
7. **Morris, Benny** (2008). *1948: A History of the First Arab-Israeli War*. New Haven i London: Yale University Press (selected chapters).
8. **Oren, Michael B.** (2002). *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*. London: Penguin Books (selected chapters).
9. **Sachar, Howard M.** (2001). *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (selected chapters).
10. **Spero, Shubert and Yitzchak Pessin**, eds. (1989). *Religious Zionism: After 40 Years of Statehood*. Jerusalem: Mesilot & The World Zionist Organization (pp. 13-15; 40-58; 82-99).

11. **Spero, Shubert** (2013). *New Perspectives in the Theology of Judaism*. Brighton: Academic Studies Press (selected chapters).
12. **Stav, Arieh**, ed. (2001). *Israel and a Palestinian State: Zero Sum Game?* Shaarei Tikva: Ariel Center for Policy Research (selected chapters).
13. **Troen, Ilan S** (2024). *Israel/Palestine in World Religions: Whose Promised Land?* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan (selected pages).

Supplementary

Examination and Grading

To Be Passed	Exclusively Continuous Assessment	Included in Average Grade
Prerequisites to Obtain Signature and Take Final Exam	Class attendance, seminar presentation, written in-class mid-term exam. Student must achieve a minimum of 61 points (61%).	
Examination Manner	Written exams and seminars. Mid-term exam 40 points (40%), Final exam 50 points (50%) and seminar activity 10 points (10%) of the final grade.	
Grading Manner	1 (F): 0-60 points 2: 61-70 points 3: 71-80 points 4: 81-90 points 5: 91-100 points	

Detailed Overview of Grading within ECTS

ACTIVITY TYPE	ECTS Student Workload Coefficient	GRADE PERCENTAGE (%)
Class Attendance		obligatory
Seminar Presentation		10%
Mid-term Exam		40%
Total in Class		50%
Final Exam		50%
TOTAL ECTS (Classes + Final Exam)		100%

Midterm Exam Dates

According to the published timetable

Final Exam Dates

According to the published timetable

IV. WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Lectures

Week	Topic
1.	Introduction to the Course, method and sources
2.	Revelation in Jewish political and legal thought (March 2)
3.	History as revelation in Jewish political thought (March 9)
4.	Messianism in Jewish political thought (March 16)
5.	Early Islam and Muslim-Jewish relations (March 23)
6.	Christian anti-Judaism and secular European antisemitism (March 30)
7.	Early Zionism: background, theory, goals (April 6)
8.	Mid-term Exam (April 13)
9.	Jewish secular and Jewish religious understanding of Zionism before 1948 (April 20)
10.	State of Israel after 1948; politics and institutions of Israel (April 27)
11.	Six-Day war of 1967 and its effects on Jewish, Christian and Muslim community (May 4)
12.	Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria; religious Zionism (May 11)
13.	Israeli-Palestinian processes after 1993 (May 18)
14.	Theological issues in modern Israeli political debate (May 25)
15.	Final Exam (June 1)

Seminars

Week	Topic
1.	Introduction to the Course, method and sources
2.	Concept of revelation in Jewish, Christian and Muslim theology
3.	History and historicity in Jewish, Christian and Muslim theology
4.	Jerusalem as holy city
5.	Perception of Jews in early Christian and Early Muslim traditions
6.	Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Hajj Amin el-Husseini
7.	Israel Eldad's three sources of Zionism
8.	Mid-term Exam
9.	Zionism as secular national revolutionary movement
10.	Political parties of Israel
11.	Middle East after 1967
12.	Emergence of religious Zionism
13.	Unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip 2005, Charter of Hamas
14.	Today's Middle East: main topics and themes
15.	Final Exam

Exercises