Narratives and Realities:
Inside the Israeli Palestinian Conflict (48779)

Course Instructor: Dr. Gershon Baskin
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Summer Semester: July 2 – 23, 2019

Sun, Thu: 8:00 - 18:00 | Tue 13:00 – 16:00*
45 Academic Hours, 3 Academic Credits

This course can be taken as a single course or as a component of the 9-credit program Coexistence in the Middle East (CME), which is comprised of the following three courses:

- Narratives and Realities: Inside the Israeli Palestinian Conflict
- Israel in Changing Middle East: An Interactive View of the Post-Arab Spring
- Religion in the Holy Land: Faith’s Role in Peace and Conflict

Since these courses are designed to complement each other we strongly recommend that participants enroll in all three courses.

* Class hours will vary according to field trips and course activities. One two-day field trip is scheduled from Thursday 9:00 to Friday 17:00 for each CME course.

Course Description

This course offers a unique insight to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through exposure to a wide range of narratives, realities, and initiatives in the homeland shared and claimed by both sides. By visiting key sites and engaging with different actors, participants will acquire a broader understanding about the conflict, its complexity, and its possible evolutions or solutions.

During the course, the conflict will be personalized through first-hand contact and interaction with a wide variety of places, people and senior representatives of different positions, ideas and disciplines, highlighting the human dimension of the conflict. With the insight gained, participants will not only be able to understand the differences, but above all, appreciate the many similarities that all parts share as human beings.
Site Visits and Meetings

Through multiple field trips and encounters, this program offers the opportunity to gain first-hand access to key places and regional actors. Subject to the availability of guest speakers, participants will have the opportunity to meet with:

- Arab & Jewish government officials
- Israeli and Palestinian NGO activists
- Members of the spectrum of political parties
- Military staff and residents of disputed areas
- Academics and professional figures

Field trips and encounters will be finalized at a later date. As a reference only, participants may refer to the tentative itinerary for the Coexistence in the Middle East program. Please note that field trips in the itinerary are split among all three CME Summer Courses.

List of Topics to be explored

The following list of topics might be updated due to the dynamic character of the Middle East and our intention to focus on the current issues in the region:

1. Introduction: Context and Perspectives
2. The Israeli and Palestinian Narratives
3. Core Issues: borders and settlements, Jerusalem, refugees and security
4. Realities from the West Bank between Settlers and Palestinians
5. Diversity, Democracy and Politics
6. Peace Process and Conflict Resolution
7. Hamas and Gaza
8. Examples of Coexistence

Grading & Course Requirements
Participants who do not require academic credits will be exempt from these requirements and will be able to obtain an active participation certificate.

- **25% Reading and class participation**
- **25% Peace and coexistence organization research**
- **50% Term Paper** - The essay will not exceed 3000 words. Students will be encouraged to work in small teams and engage in field related work. Paper outlines will be presented in the last two weeks of classes. **Papers must be submitted no later than two weeks after the last class.**

It is mandatory for students to attend all classes, guest lectures, field trips, etc. Failure to attend classes will result in a student being denied the right to partake in the final assignment and receive a final grade in the course. Students who have a justified reason to miss class (illness, mourning, etc.) must contact their instructors and the Department of Summer Courses and Special Programs, and complete the material that they have missed. Students who have missed class due to illness must obtain a signed and stamped sick note from a physician and submit it to the Dept. of Summer Courses and Special Programs immediately following their return to class. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence. The Department reserves the right to refer the issue to an Academic Committee. In some cases, the Academic Committee may decide, in light of the requirements of the course, that it is not possible to make up the missing coursework.

**Earning Graduate Credits for this course**

- Graduate students are expected to inform the Rothberg International School – rissummer@savion.huji.ac.il – of their interest in earning graduate credit for their summer course(s).
- Graduate students must complete a 15-page, double-spaced seminar paper with bibliography for the course in place of the course's standard final assessment (in most cases, an exam). The topic and bibliography for these papers must be chosen in conjunction and agreement with each course instructor. Students must approach course instructors by the end of the first week of the course and arrange a time to meet and define their paper topic and bibliography.
- The seminar paper must make use of at least five scholarly sources (books or academic articles), in addition to internet resources.
The graduate seminar papers must be submitted within 2 months following course completion in order for the graduate student to fulfill requirements for this course.

# Course Outline and Readings

## READING LIST

### The Most Important Readings (from the list below, the following are the most important for this course):

- Baskin, Gershon In Pursuit of Peace in Israel and Palestine, Vanderbilt University Press, December 2017. **Overseas Library E327.172 B315**
  - Israeli Declaration of Independence. Google it: [http://ecf.org.il/media_items/848](http://ecf.org.il/media_items/848)
  - Palestinian Declaration of Independence. Google it: [https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/12](https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/12)
  - Prime Minister Netanyahu’s Speech, Bar Ilan University 2009. Google it: [https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/70](https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/70)
  - File of Gershon Baskin Jerusalem Post Articles (PDF). Google it: [https://www.jpost.com/Author/Gershon-Baskin](https://www.jpost.com/Author/Gershon-Baskin)
Due to the dynamic character of the Middle East and the intention to focus on the current issues in the region, the topics and readings are subject to change. Content and dates may also vary according to the availability of guest speakers.

1. **Introduction: Context and Perspectives**

We will begin our discussion by asking some of the basic questions surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: What is this conflict about? Who are the parties at odds? What type of a conflict is it? When did the conflict begin? We will review a number of approaches to use for exploring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict throughout the course.


2. **The Israeli and Palestinian - Between Narratives and History**

Narrative is defined as “a story or account of events, experiences, or the like, whether true or fictitious.” The Israeli and Palestinian narratives follow this definition and are characterized by significant disagreements on historical facts, interpretations and the perceived intentions of each party. Narratives stand at the core of the conflict and serve as an elusive obstacle to its resolution. Understanding the two narratives is a key to understanding the dynamics of this conflict. However, understanding narratives is not a substitute to understanding history itself. This section will attempt to push you toward both reading narratives and deciphering history.
3. **Core Issues: borders and settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, and security**

We will discuss the core issues of the conflict including borders, settlements, refugees, security, water and Jerusalem. We will seek to understand the positions of each side and find possible bridging formulas that may lead to a future agreement.


4. Realities from the West Bank: Between Settlers and Palestinians

This section will be dedicated to understanding the realities of daily life in the West Bank in the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. We will visit the security barrier/fence and analyze the dilemmas of balancing security with freedom of movement. We will also meet Israeli and Palestinian residents of the West Bank and understand the realities of living in a disputed territory.


5. Diversity, Democracy and Politics

Aside from the meta-narratives (i.e. the “Israeli” and “Palestinian” narratives), different communities and political camps reflect different ideas and priorities regarding the issues of the day and how they should be managed. Both Israeli and Palestinian societies contain political as well as communal diversity based on their variety of ethnic, religious and ideological groups. We will attempt to explore these competing visions and to better understand possible scenarios for the future.
6. **Between Peace Process and Conflict Resolution**

Two decades of the “peace process” created a de-facto reality of increased friction. Despite a number of attempts to solve the conflict via negotiations, track II engagement and civic society initiatives, it appears that the two sides are still “stuck” in a conflict that may not dissipate soon. In this section, we will explore both the political efforts for peace-making as well as the role and perspective of civil society groups in the attempt for reconciliation. We will ask why that process has failed and what, if anything, can be done to revive it.

**On the Peace Process:**

**On Civil Society and the Role of NGOs**
7. Hamas and Gaza’s Disengagement

We will travel south and visit the communities surrounding Gaza. We will explore the post-disengagement realities and the current status-quo between Israel and the Hamas-led government in Gaza. We will attempt to explore life in the shadow of conflict in both Sderot and Gaza, and engage with residents and officials. We will end the day in Kfar Hanokdim, overlooking the Dead Sea (overnight in a Bedouin tent).


8. **Examples of Coexistence**

In this section we will explore life beyond the conflict and ask whether co-existence can actually exist. We will meet civil society activists who work to build a bridge in a reality of conflict and attempt to understand whether their path can help change and challenge the political reality.


**Additional suggested bibliography**


Tamimi, Azzam (2007), *Hamas: A History from Within*, Olive Branch Press, **Main Library JQ 1830 A98 H3778 2007**


Ben-Ami, Shlomo (2006), *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*, Oxford University Press. **Overseas Library E327.56 B456; E-BOOK**


• Flapan, Simha (1979), Zionism and the Palestinians, Harper & Row, Overseas Library E327.56 F585

• The Geneva Accord FREE BY GOOGLE

• The Ayalon-Nussiebeh Agreement http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=2304

http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=2304

http://reut-institute.org/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=2304

Online News Sources


• Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com

• BBC, www.bbc.co.uk

• Financial Times, www.ft.com

• The Times, www.timesonline.co.uk

• The Economist, www.economist.com

• Haaretz (Israel, newspaper), www.haaretzdaily.com

• Y-Net – Yedioth Ahranot (Israel, newspaper), http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0,7340,L-3083,00.html

• The Jerusalem Post (Israel, newspaper), www.jpost.com

• The Forward (Jewish daily newspaper), www.forward.com

• Electronic Intifada (U.S.-based) https://electronicintifada.net

http://www.electronicintifada.net

• The Israel Policy Forum (U.S.-based), www.israelpolicyforum.org

• The Alternative Information Center (Israeli-Palestinian news site) www.alternativenews.org

• Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre (Palestinian research institute), www.jmcc.org

• Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (Palestinian research institute), www.pcpsr.org

• +972 Independent reporting and commentary from Israel and Palestine (ezine), http://972mag.com

• Middle East Research and Information Project, http://www.merip.org
• Foreign Policy Magazine’s Middle East Channel,  
• Al-Jazeera (Arab world, news site),  http://english.aljazeera.nethttp://english.aljazeera.net/  
• al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt, newspaper),  
  http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/  
• Jordan Times (Jordan, newspaper),  
• Daily Star (Lebanon, newspaper),  www.dailystar.com.lb  
• Now Lebanon (Lebanon, news site),  
• Middle East Times (Egypt, newspaper),  www.metimes.comhttp://www.metimes.com/  