POLS GU4433
Israeli Politics 20 Years After Rabin's Assassination

Fall 2016
Class meets M 10:10-12 in 501 IAB
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Course Description
20 years after the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, democracy is still thriving in Israel. The more than six decades of Israel's democratic system of government, under intense external and internal pressures, have been facilitated by four major characteristics of its society and politics. First, a cultural aspect: a commitment to a national coalescent orientation on the part of the majority of Israeli population, stemming from sentiments of Jewish solidarity and from the tradition of multi party democratic politics inherited from the Yishuv, the Jewish community in Palestine prior to 1948. Second, a structural aspect: multiplicity of crosscutting social cleavages that provide for the diffusion of tensions stemming from internal social conflict. Third, an economic aspect: availability of external resources such as US foreign aid programs, German reparations and Jewish donations. Those made it possible to allocate resources beyond what was extracted from society. And, forth, a political aspect: oligarchic inclinations of political elites composed of professional politicians, whose common interests have been to avoid ideological controversies and political confrontations among themselves.

In the early days of the state a serious concern was raised: can Israel survive as a democracy facing the difficulties resulting from mass immigration, meager resources, internal divisions and external threats to its very existence? By the early 1970s, such concerns largely dissipated. The Israeli body-politic has proven cohesive enough to overcome tensions stemming from fragmented party politics, deep social and cultural cleavages, fundamental ideological schisms and an involvement in protracted conflicts with neighboring states and the Palestinians. After Rabin's assassination in 1995, concerns about the future of Israel as a democracy resurfaced. Still, in absolute terms and by comparative standards Israel continues to run a democratic system of government. This course introduces students to this political system, with its unique history, institutions and challenges.

Course objectives

The course has three major objectives. First, we will analyze the major features of Israel's political system and compare it to other democratic countries, and in particular to the American system. Second, we will examine the question of democracy under stress - the politics of a state striving to be Jewish and Democratic. This question has been particularly pertinent since Rabin's assassination. Third, we will relate the theories studied in class to day-to-day contemporary Israeli politics (students will be expected to be up-to-date concerning the current events in Israeli politics and to lead parts of the discussion in class).

Course assignments
- Active participation in class discussions and team-based learning assignments.
- A midterm exam, focused on the following topics: cleavages, multiculturalism in common public spaces, questions of legitimacy in Israeli politics, political institutions in Israel (Knesset, Supreme Court, Executive, electoral threshold etc.) and the tension between representation and governance in Israeli democracy.
- A weekly discussion leadership + TBL (in groups – signup sheet)
- Midterm presentation of research proposal
- Pop quizzes throughout the semester, of which the best 5 would count towards your final grade.
- A final paper and final presentation – A formal academic paper of 15 pages double-spaced, font 12. The paper will develop a research question related to one of the topics in Israeli politics discussed in class. Special permission for additional topics may be given. Instructions on how to develop research projects will be given during the semester.

Breakdown of final grade

Participation (reading, discussion leadership, midterm presentations)		25%
Quizzes		10%
Midterm Exam		30%
Final paper + Final presentations	25%+10% =	35%

Course Outline and Readings

September 12 (week 1) - Introduction, Syllabus, Course Overview, A Few Words on How to Develop a Research Paper, Sign Up Sheet for Discussion Leadership

September 19 (week 2) - **Toward Statehood: The Zionist Movement and the Jewish Community in Palestine Prior to 1948**
D. Horowitz & M. Lissak, "Authority without Sovereignty: The Case of the National Center of the Jewish Community in Palestine", *Government and Opposition*, 8, 1 (Winter 1973): 48-71.
A. Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Generation*, Chaham House, N.J., 1989: 1-29.

September 26 (week 3) - **Immigration, Political Culture and Israel's Society**
E. Ya'ar "Change and Continuity in Israeli Society The Test of the Melting Pot", Israel Studies, 10(2), Summer 2005: 91-128

Y. Yonah, "Israel As a Multicultural Democracy: Challenges and Obstacles", *Israel Affairs*, Taylor & Francis Group, 11(1), January 2005: 95-116.
* Watching *The Gatekeepers*

October 3 (week 4) – **Political Institutions 1: Parliament, Executive and the System of Government**
Gregory S. Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State*, Rowmen & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Oxford 2004, Chapter 4: The Constitutional System and Parliamentary Government: 117-39, and Chapter 8: The Machinery of Government: 221-47.
N. Chazan, "The Knesset", *Israel Affairs*, 11(2), April 2005: 392-416
D. Korn, *The Presidentialization of Politics: The Power and Constraints of the Israeli Prime Minister*, 2010

October 10 (week 5) – **Political Institutions 2: Israel's Legal System and the Supreme Court**
M. Edelman, "The Judicialization of Politics in Israel", *International Political Science Review*, 1994, 15: 177-86.
Gregory S. Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State*, Rowmen & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Oxford 2004, Chapter 5.
Translation of Israeli Basic Laws (and several other important laws) can be found at:
        https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Politics/basictoc.html

October 17 (week 6) - **Elections and Voting**
R. Y. Hazan (1997), "Executive-Legislative Relations in an Era of Accelerated Reform: Reshaping Government in Israel", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 22: 329-50.
M. Shamir & A. Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel", *American Political Science Review*, 1999, 93(2): 265-277.
* Individual meetings about final research paper / NO discussion leadership that week
* 6 minute in class presentations of research proposals

October 24 (week 7) - Midterm Exam

October 31 (week 8) - **Parties and Interest Groups**
G. S. Mahler**, *Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State***, Rowmen & Littlefield Publishers Inc. Oxford 2004, Chapter 6: Political Parties and Interest Groups: 171-91
J. Mendilow, *Ideology, Party Change and Electoral Campaigns in Israel*, State University of New York, 2003, Introduction: 1-25.
Y. Yishi, "Bringing Society Back In: Post-Cartel Parties in Israel", *Party Politics*, 2001, 7(6): 667-687
* Individual meetings about final research paper / NO discussion leadership that week

November 7 – no class (Academic Holiday before Election Day)

November 14 (week 9) – **The State/Religion Issue: Judaism in the Jewish State**
A. Cohen & B. Susser, 'From Accommodation to Decision: Transformation in Israel's Religio-Political Life', *Journal of Church and State*, 1996, 38: 817-39.
G. S. Mahler**, Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State**, Rowmen & Littlefield Publishers Inc. Oxford 2004, Chapter 2: Zionism, Religion and the Domestic Political Environment: 53-88.

November 21 (week 10) – **The Socio-Economic Cleavage in Israel and the Protest Movement of the Summer of 2011**
Oz Almog, "Shifting the Centre from Nation to Individual and Universe: The New "Democratic Faith" of Israel", in E. Karsh (Ed) *Israel: The First Hundred Years*, Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2002: 31-42.
B. Zilberfarb, "From Socialism to Free Market – The Israeli Economy 1948-2003", *Israel Affairs*, Taylor & Francis Ltd, 11(1), January 2005: 12-22

November 28 (week 11) – **Public Policy in Israel**
D.Korn**,** *Public Policy in Israel: Perspectives and Practices*, Lexington Books ,2002, Introduction: 1-6.
D. Nachmias & O. Arbel-Ganz, 'The Crisis of Governance: Government Instability and the Civil Servics', *Israel Affairs*, 11(2), April 2005: 281-302.
E. Don-Yehiya, 'Public Policy and Management of Major Political Cleavages' in D.Korn (ed**)** *Public Policy in Israel: Perspectives and Practices*, Lexington Books, 2002: 9-30

December 5 (week 12) - **The Future of Israel as a Jewish State**
J. M. Sharp (2012) *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*. Congressional Research Service.
Ofira Seliktar, *Divided We Stand: American Jews, Israel and the Peace Process*, Praeger Publishers (USA) 2002, 207-210.
A. Arian. *Security Threatened*. Ch. 10: Conclusions. Cambridge University Press
Y. Alon. *Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders*

December 12 (week 13) - Conclusions; Final presentations in class; Final papers due

Columbia University Statement on Academic Integrity

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

Possible further reading

K. Goldstein & Z. Gitelman, "From "Russians" to Israelis?" in A. Arian & M. Shamir (eds), *The Elections in Israel – 2003*, Transaction, New Brunswick (US) & London (UK): 245-60.

D. Hacohen, *Immigrants in Turmoil*, Syracuse University Press, 2003, Chapter 8: Immigration During 1948-1998 and its Ramifications on Israeli Society: 251-63.

T. Horowitz, "The Integration of Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union", *Israel Affairs*, Taylor & Francis Group 11(1), January 2005: 117-36.

M. Lissak, "The Unique Approach to Military-Societal Relations in Israel and its Impact on Foreign and Security Policy", in S.Sofer (ed), *Peacemaking in a Divided Society: Israel After Rabin*, Frank Cass, London 2001: 235-55.

Y. Peri, *Telepopulism: Media and Politics in Israel*, Stanford University Press, California, 2004, Introduction; 1-10.

J. T. Shuval, "The Structure and Dilemmas of Israeli Pluralism" in B.Kimmerling, *The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries & Frontiers*, State University of New York, 1989: 216-36.

Zvi Zameret, *The Melting Pot in Israel*, State University of New York, 2002, Chapter 14: Summing Up: Israel – From a "Melting Pot" to a Pluralistic State: 155-160.

Y. Yishi, "Legislators and Interest Groups: Some Observation on the Israeli Scene", *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 1997 3(2): 89-111.

V. Bogdanor, "The Electoral System, Government and Democracy", in E. Sprinzak & L. Diamond (eds) *Israel Democracy Under Stress*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder and London 1993: 83-106.

A. Brichta (1998), 'The New Premier-Parliamentary System in Israel', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 555: 180-92.

A. Lijphart, "Israeli Democracy and Democratic Reform in Comparative Perspective", in E. Sprinzak & L. Diamond (eds), *Israel Democracy Under Stress*, Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder and London 1993: 107-23.

Y. Peres & S. Shemer, 'The Ethnic Factor in Elections' in D. Caspi, A. Diskin & E. Gutmann (eds), *The Roots of Begin's Success*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1984: 89-111

A. Arian & M. Shamir, "On Mistaking a Dominant Party in a Dealingnment System" in A. Arian & M. Shamie (eds), *The Election in Israel – 2003*, Transaction New Brunswick (USA) & London (UK) 2005: 13-31.

G.Goldberg (1998), "Trade Unions and Party Politics in Israel: The Decline of Party Identification", *The Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, 23(1): 51-70.

G. Rahat, "Intra-Party Politics" www.idi.org.il/sites/english/ResearchAndPrograms/elections09/Pages/Intra-PartyPolitics.aspx

I. Englard, 'Law and Religion in Israel', *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, 1987, 35: 185-208.

Chaim I. Waxman, "Religio-Poilitics and Social Unity in Israel: Israel's Religious Parties" in Robert O.Freedman (Ed), *Israel's First Fifty Years*, Florida University Press Gaineville 2000: 162-79.

D. Bernstein & S. Swirski, "The Rapid Economic Development of Israel and the Emergence of the Ethnic Division of Labour", *British Journal of Sociology*, XXII (March 1982), No. 1

Ofira Seliktar, "The Changing Political Economy of Israel: From Agricultural Pioneers to the "Silicon Valley" of the Middle East", in Robert O.Freedman (ed), *Israel First Fifty Years*, Florida University Press, Gaineville, 2000: 197-218.

D. Peretz & G. Doron, *Government and Politics of Israel*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc. 1997, Chapter 7: Government Administration and Public Policy: 208-43.

I. Sharkansky, "Israel's Political Economy" in E.Sprinzak & L. Diamond (eds), *Israel Democracy Under Stress*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder and London, 1993: 153-70.