PSCI 3700.003, *Government and Politics of Israel* —revised
Department of Political Science, University of North Texas
Syllabus, spring 2010

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**
Prof. Elizabeth A. Oldmixon
Office: WH 155; Mailbox: WH 125
Telephone: 940.565.4761
Office Hours: M 9.00a-11.00a, W 2.00p-3.00p
Email: elizabeth.oldmixon@unt.edu – I will email you using your University account.

**CLASS INFORMATION**
Meeting time: 11.00a-11.50a MWF
Meeting place: Wooten Hall 115
ecampus.unt.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
This course investigates the government and politics of modern Israel. We begin with an exploration of the historical and intellectual foundations of the state, and then we examine Israel’s political institutions and processes. Finally, we discuss some of the governing and policy-making challenges faced by Israel. Two major themes should be kept in mind. The first is that security concerns are paramount—in spite of expectations to the contrary. The second is that while Israel is a Jewish state, it is incredibly diverse—including on the basis of religion. As with security concerns, diversity has a profound effect on the political life of Israel. Students should be warned: this is not a class on Middle East politics. Regional and international forces cannot be separated completely from this topic, but they are considered only insofar as they affect the internal politics of the state.

**CLASS PROCEDURE**
Class meetings are intended to blend lecture and discussion. If the latter is to prove valuable, you will need to complete the assigned readings on time and to attend class with questions and observations in mind. Students should be aware that lectures are not intended to restate the material that appears in the textbooks, nor will every topic covered in the readings necessarily be discussed in class. Thus, the best way to earn a high grade in this course is to attend class regularly and to complete the assigned readings well before the day of an exam.

**BEING IN TOUCH**
My office hours are listed above, but I am usually around. Feel free to stop by any time, but understand that on occasion I will be unavailable. When emailing me, please put “PSCI 2300” in the subject line. If you write me M-F, I should get back to you within 24 hours. If I don’t, please feel free to send me a reminder. If you write over the weekend, you may have to wait until Monday for a reply. A note on etiquette: please sign your emails with your name, and please include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can’t go wrong with “Hi Dr. Oldmixon”.) Leaving a phone message is the least reliable way to reach me.

**REQUIRED READING**


* The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at her discretion.
Additional readings will be available online. You may wish to keep up with Israeli news. The Blackboard page has various news outlets linked for your pleasure.

**Grading**

Final grades will be based on the number of points accumulated on of the following elements:

*Examinations* (60% of your final grade, 30% for each exam): Exams will be in class closed book in format. They will include a mixture of objective questions, short answer questions, and essays.

*Research Project* (30% of your final grade): Each student is required to write a research paper, on the topic of their choice – provided it is related to Israeli politics. Students are encouraged to discuss their papers with the instructor well before the due date. Papers are due in class on April 30. They will also have to be turned in electronically. Additional details will be provided.

*Participation* (10% of your final grade): Students will receive positive credit for quality contributions to class discussions and negative credit for poor contributions. The instructor will periodically call on people at random. Students who are unable to respond of absent will lose credit. With that being said, each student gets one “pass,” where they can decline to participate without penalty.

*Extra Credit*: Students should not expect or ask for extra credit. If extra credit is offered, it is only when it can be made available to everyone in the class. Note the grading criteria, and plan accordingly for your success.

*Record Keeping*: Keep all copies of your returned exams and assignments, in order that discrepancies can be demonstrated and corrected. Grades will be posted on Blackboard in a timely fashion. Discrepancies with the grade records must be resolved within two weeks of their posting and students must be able to produce their assignments and exams. Students wishing to have an assignment re-graded must return it to the professor within two of the day on which it was returned, and include a memo explaining the nature of their dispute.

Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following schedule: A, 90-100%; B, 80-89%; C, 70-79%; D, 60-69; F, below 60%.

**Course Schedule**

The dates for subjects are approximate. You should plan to have all the readings completed for a topic by the date we begin class meetings about it.

Part I: The Development and Context of Israeli Politics

- Introduction – January 20-22
  Dowty, chapters 1, 2
- Zionism and State Formation I – January 25, 27, 29
  S.Y. Agnon, *The Lady and the Peddler* (1943)
  Dowty, pp. 34-50
  Mahler, pp. 13-20, 53-62
  Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation* (1882)
  Herzl, *A Solution of the Jewish Question* (1896)
Ahad Ha’am, *The First Zionist Congress* (1897)

Zionism and State Formation II – February 1, 3
Dowty, pp. 51-60
Mahler, pp. 20-44
The Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, No. 4 (October 24, 1915)
The Balfour Declaration (1917)
The Mandate for Palestine (1922)
UN Resolution 181 (1947)
Proclamation of the State of Israel (1947)

Social and Economic Life – February 5, 8, 10
Mahler, pp. 62-78, chapter 3
Dowty, chapter 5
The Status Quo Agreement (1947)
The Law of Return (1950)
Jewish Religion and Israeli Nationality: The Brother Daniel Case (1962)

Part II: Political Institutions and Processes

The Constitutional System – February 12, 15, 17
Dowty, chapter 4
Mahler, chapter 4

Parties and Interest Groups – February 19, 22, 24
Mahler, chapter 6
Dowty, chapter 6

Electoral Politics – February 26, March 1, March 3
Mahler, chapter 7

Midterm Exam – March 5

Government Institutions – March 8, 10, 12
Mahler, chapters 5, 8

Spring Break – March 15-19

Part III. Major Social Divisions
Ethnic Differences – March 22, 24
Dowty, chapter 7

Religious Differences, March 26, 29, 31
Revisit Mahler, pp. 62-78
Dowty, chapter 8
Etgar Keret, *Rabin’s Dead* (2001)

National Differences – April 2, 5, 7, 9
Dowty, chapter 9
A.B. Yehoshua, *Facing the Forests* (1963)

IV. Foreign Policy

The Domestic Context – April 12, 14
Maher, chapter 9

The Palestinians, the West Bank, and Gaza – April 16, 19, 21
Mahler, chapter 10
Dowty, chapter 10
Mahmoud Darwish, “The Appeal of the Palestinian People on the Fiftieth Anniversary of al-Naqba”

The Peace Process – April 23, 26, 28
Dalia Ravikovitch, “Hovering at a Low Altitude”
Mahler, chapter 11

Research Paper due – April 30

V. The End

Concluding Thoughts – April 30, May 3, 5
Dowty, Epilogue
CLASS POLICIES AND CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

Excused Absences: Excused absences are absences that result from a verifiable, documented emergency or unavoidable legal or University obligation.

Attendance: Students who miss class are solely responsible for getting the notes, for all in-class announcements, and for any other consequences of non-attendance.

Make-Up Examinations: Failure to take an exam on time on the scheduled date will normally result in a zero. Make-up examinations are given at the discretion for the instructor, and only for excused absences. Students needing to miss an exam for any reason must request a make-up exam and provide documentation at least one week prior to the scheduled exam. If that is not possible, students much produce documentation demonstrating the emergent nature of their absence, such as a police report or physician's letter (not a receipt).

Late Assignments: Assignments are due without exception at the beginning of class on the due date. If class has started, the assignment will be considered late. Assignments will be penalized a ½ of a letter grade if tuned in late but on the due date and a full letter grade for each day thereafter. Please note that assignments may be turned in early. Students fearing that they might be late may email them to the TA as PDF documents or fax them to the instructor at 940.565.4818.

Classroom Behavior: The instructor will endeavor to create a classroom environment in which give and take is a regular part of class. This will be based on mutual respect and courtesy. Therefore:

- Do not fall asleep in class. It’s rude and distracting.
- Cell phones, pagers, or all other potentially disruptive electronic devices must be silenced. Laptops may only be used to take notes.
- Students should not send text messages, have side conversations, or read irrelevant materials during class.
- Class starts at 11am and ends at 11.50am. Students should plan to be on time and stay for the entire period. We’re all busy, so let’s respect each other’s time.
- Students who violate the standards of behavior in the UNT Student Handbook or are otherwise disruptive are subject to an array of sanctions, such as dismissal from lecture, dismissal from the class, grade reduction, and referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Religious Holidays
In accordance with UNT Policy 15.2.5 (www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/15_2_5.html), students will be excused from class or other activities for the observance of religious holidays, for religions whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. The student is encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible regarding the absence.

Statement of ADA Compliance
In accordance with UNT Policy 18.1.14 (www.unt.edu/policy/UNT_Policy/volume3/18_1_14.html), the Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the sixth class day (beginning of the second week of classes).

Academic Integrity

I. Categories of Academic Dishonesty
A. Cheating. The use of unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise, including but not limited to:
   1. use of any unauthorized assistance to take exams, tests, quizzes or other assessments;
   2. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments;
   3. acquisition, without permission, of tests, notes or other academic materials belonging to a faculty or staff member of the University;
   4. dual submission of a paper or project, or re-submission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor;
   5. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage on an academic assignment.
B. Plagiarism. Use of another’s thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student’s intent, including but not limited to:
   1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation.
   2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials.
C. Forgery. Altering a score, grade or official academic university record or forging the signature of an instructor or other student.
D. Fabrication. Falsifying or inventing any information, data or research as part of an academic exercise.
E. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty. Helping or assisting another in the commission of academic dishonesty.
F. Sabotage. Acting to prevent others from completing their work or willfully disrupting the academic work of others.

II. Available Academic Penalties
The following academic penalties may be assessed at the instructor’s discretion upon determination that academic dishonesty has occurred. Admonitions and educational assignments are not appealable.
A. Admonition. The student may be issued a verbal or written warning.
B. Assignment of Educational Coursework. The student may be required to perform additional coursework not required of other students in the specific course.
C. Partial or no credit for an assignment or assessment. The instructor may award partial or no credit for the assignment or assessment on which the student engaged in academic dishonesty, to be calculated into the final course grade.
D. Course Failure. The instructor may assign a failing grade for the course.