

JUDS 1717-S01
Fall 2014
Professor Rachel Rojanski
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Thursday 4:00-6:20
Office hour: Tuesday 4:00-5:15pm
Or by appointment

American Jews and Israel: From AIPAC to J Street



Course Description

Recent events in Gaza have emphasized not only the importance of the reciprocal relations between Israel and the US, but the significance of the ties between American Jews and Israel too. This course will explore the ways in which the connections between Israel and American Jewry has evolved.

Beginning with the development of American Jewish political life, we will focus primarily on the place of the emerging State of Israel in the shifting terrain of communal politics. Topics for discussion will include the organizations that were founded in connection with Israel, the political views and movements that consolidated in reaction to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and on-going struggles on American campuses to mediate this relationship.

Reading List

Zvi Ganin, *An Uneasy Relationship: American Jewish Leadership and Israel 1948-1957*. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2005.

Peter Beinart, *The Crisis of Zionism*, NY, Times Book Henry Holt and Co. 2012.

These books are available for purchase at the Brown Bookstore. A library copy has also been put on reserves.

- There is also an on-line course pack of required readings to be found on OCRA.
- OCRA password is: ISRAM

Course Requirements:

- 1) **Reading** : All readings are required.
- 2) **Class Preparation**: All lecture sessions will draw directly on the reading for the day. Students are encouraged to participate in discussions and to ask questions. Please come prepared to class.
- 3) **Written Assignments and Calendar of Submission**
Over the semester, students will have to submit three papers.

Paper #1

A response paper (1500 words) on the book

An Uneasy Relationshi: American Jewish Leadership and Israel 1948-1957 by Zvi Ganin.

The paper should focus on questions of loyalty and dual loyalty, commitment to Israel versus commitment to the interests of America and American Jews, and the right of American Jews to criticize Israel or demand the Jewish states take into account the interests the Jews in America.

Paper due: Oct. 2, by 5pm.

Paper #2

A response paper (1500 words) on the book

The Crisis of Zionism, New York, 2012, By Peter Beinart.

This book approaches the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the point of view of a young American Jew, and discusses the meaning of the State of Israel for the author as a Jew, whose family was uprooted from its previous countries of residence as a result of anti-Semitic persecutions, including the Holocaust.

This is a very critical book, and students are welcome to agree with or reject the writer's argument.

In your response paper you are requested to discuss the main arguments of the book from your own critical point of view. What does the State of Israel mean to Jews in America, and what pushes them or gives them the right to criticize/support, agree/disagree with Israeli policies.

Paper due: Nov. 13, by 5PM

Final Paper

Each student will choose a case study where American Jews stood alongside Israel side or criticized it.

Students should consult the professor before choosing the topic, and compiling the readings. Students are also encouraged to submit a draft before submitting the final paper. I will read your draft and give you my comments so that you can correct it before submitting the final version.

Please come to see me during office hours. If you have a conflict and can't make it, I'd be happy to schedule an appointment at a different time.

Resources for the final Paper

Rambi: Index to Articles in Jewish Studies:

http://aleph.nli.org.il/F/NSCDUKQVUGF84KYD36ASNA3T15QYT39J4FFKVHLR8NH7UNF21R-03518?local_b

AIPAC: www.aipac.org

J Street: <http://jstreet.org/>

American Jewish Committee: <http://www.ajc.org/>

Date due: Dec. 14.

Grading:

Active participation and Reading: 15%

Two papers 50% (each paper 25; 20X2=40)

Final paper: 35%

Weekly schedule

Sept. 4: Introduction

Sept. 11

Jewish Politics in America, Beginnings, Developments and Meanings

Readings:

Jonathan Frankel, Prophecy and politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917, Cambridge & London, 1981. Pp. 484-547.

Daniel Elazar, *Community and Polity: The Organizational Dynamics of American Jewry*, Philadelphia and Jerusalem (Revised Edition), 1995. pp. 90-110.

Sept. 18

The Emergence of the State of Israel: Ben Gurion and the American Jewish Committee

Readings:

Zvi Ganin, Truman, American Jewry and Israel, 1945-1948, NY 1979. pp. 20-34, 80-147.

Sept. 25

No Class: Rosh HaShana (Makeup class on Dec.11)

Oct. 2

Paper #1 due today

The Blaustein Ben-Gurion Understanding; The American Jewish Committee and Israel

Readings:

The Ben-Gurion Blaustein Statement (OCRA)

Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee 1906-1966*, Philadelphia, 1972, pp. 265-330.

Oct. 9

AIPAC: The Israeli Lobby in Washington

Readings:

I.L Kenen, *Israel' Defense Line: Her Friends and Foes in Washington*, Buffalo, NY, 1981, pp. 66-131.

Oct. 16

American Jews and Israel during the 1950s and early 1960s

Readings:

Yosef Gorni, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought, The quest for Collective Identity*, NY 1994, pp. 39-106

Oct. 23

1967 and its aftermath

Readings:

Yosef Gorni, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought, The quest for Collective Identity*, NY 1994, pp109-149.

Marshall Sklare, "Lakeville and Israel: The six day War and its Aftermath", *Commentary*, 11967 pp. 67-73

Oct. 30

1973: A Year of War and Change

Reading:

Moshe Davis, *The Yom Kippour War, Israel and the Jewish People*, NY 1974, pp. 1-95.

Nov. 6

"Are We One": American Jews and Israel During the late 1970-80s

Readings:

Naomi W. Cohen, "Dual Loyalties: Zionism and Liberalism", in Alon Gal (ed.) *Envisioning Israel, The changing Ideals and Images of North American Jews*, Detroit, 1996, pp. 271-287

Jerald S. Auerbach, "We are One? Menachem Begin and the Long Shadow of 1977", *Ibid*, pp.288-303.

Steven Cohen, "Did American Jews Really Grow More Distant from Israel, 1977-1983 – A Reconsideration", *Ibid*, pp. 304-325

Chaim I. Waxman, "Weakening Ties: American Jewish Baby Boomers and Israel" *Ibid*, pp. 326-345.

Nov. 13

Visiting Israel: Birthright and Other Trips

Reading:

Jasmin Habib, *Israel Diaspora and the Routes of National Belonging*, Toronto, 2004, pp. 37-119; 123-139.

Paper #2 Due today

Nov. 20

J Street: The New Israeli Lobby?

Reading

Jermy Ben Ami, *A new Voice for Israel: Fighting for the Survival of the Jews*.
NY, Palgarve Macmillan, 2012, pp. 32-123

Nov, 27: Thanksgiving

Dec. 4

. Open Hillel, BDS and American Jews

Discussion based on the online materials

Dec. 11

Makeup Class:

Final paper due: Dec. 14