

HIST402: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

College of Graduate and Continuing Studies, Norwich University

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Course Description

This eight-week online undergraduate course provides an engrossing exposure to the themes and complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Its focus is historical and conceptual, and requires students to apply their learning through critical evaluation of contemporary events and conditions. Participants will learn the conflict's history and grapple with recurring obstacles to peace, including practical issues of security as well as abstract issues of culture, identity, and religion. Students will be challenged and required to view the conflict from both national communities' perspectives and to critically analyze different models for resolving the conflict.

A unique feature of the course is its attention to diversity within both the Israeli and Palestinian political communities. In particular, the course identifies and assesses differences between religious and secular Zionists, and between Hamas and the secular Palestinian movement (chiefly represented by Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organization). Students will find great disagreement within both national communities over Final Status issues like borders, refugees, security arrangements, and the status of Jerusalem. Students will also discover diversity in the ideologies that Zionists and Palestinians associate with their respective states. What does it mean to be an Israeli? What does it mean to be a Palestinian? Ultimately, how these questions are answered is crucial to determining whether peace is possible and - if so - what it might look like. (3 credits)

Prerequisites: Background in Political Science, International Studies, or Middle East Studies is helpful but not required. Students who already know a lot about the conflict are likely to learn many new things by taking this course, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex and multi-faceted issue.

Course Outcome

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to effectively:

- CO1 - Critically evaluate the historical origins of the conflict.
- CO2 - Analyze the "Final Status" issues of borders, settlements, security, refugees, and Jerusalem.
- CO3 - Critically evaluate political diversity within both the State of Israel and the Palestinian movement.
- CO4 - Critically evaluate how the ideas, historical narratives, and practical interests of each side affect the search for peace.
- CO5 - Synthesize learning about history, contemporary issues, and social scientific concepts in order to evaluate potential solutions to the conflict.

Course outcomes will be assessed during the following activities:

CO1 - Critically evaluate the historical origins of the conflict.

- [Week 01 Discussion](#), [Week 02 Discussion](#), (Quiz 01)

CO2 - Analyze the "Final Status" issues of borders, settlements, security, refugees, and Jerusalem.

- [Week 07 Discussion](#), [Week 08 Discussion](#), (Quiz 01 & Quiz 04)

CO3 - Critically evaluate political diversity within both the State of Israel and the Palestinian movement.

- [Week 05 Discussion](#), [Week 06 Discussion](#), (Quiz 05 & Quiz 06)

CO4 - Critically evaluate how the ideas, historical narratives, and practical interests of each side affect the search for peace.

- [Week 07 Research Paper](#), [Week 02 Discussion](#), (Quiz 03)

CO5 - Synthesize learning about history, contemporary issues, and social scientific concepts in order to evaluate potential solutions to the conflict.

- [Week 07 Research Paper](#), [Week 08 Discussion](#)

Weekly Outcomes

Week	Topic	Requirements
Week 01	Introduction & Core Issues: Introduction to major themes and Final Status issues	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 02	From the First World War to the Founding of Israel: History from early 20th century to 1948-49 War	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 03	The 1967 War and the Emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organization: Israeli conquest of the West Bank and Gaza; The rise of Arafat and Palestinian nationalism	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 04	From Oslo to Intifada - A Decade of Dashed Hopes: Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy from the end of the Cold War to the 9/11 Attacks and the "War on Terrorism"□	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 05	Palestinian Political Diversity: The Hamas-Fatah schism and civil war; Palestine: Can it coexist with Israel?; Islamism vs. secularism in Palestinian life and politics	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 06	Diversity within Zionism: Religious vs. Secular Zionism; Zionism as "redemption of land" vs. Zionism as "redemption of people"□; Settlers, Security Hawks, and Peaceniks	Weekly Discussion & Ongoing Discussion
Week 07	Peace and Conflict in the 21st Century: The UN Roadmap, the Palestinian schism, the revival of Netanyahu, the growth of settlements, Gazan Wars, Palestinian appeals to the international community, and the onset of a Third Intifada	Weekly Discussion, Ongoing Discussion, & Research Paper
Week 08	One or Two States? Considering Different Models for Peace: Are two states possible? How about one...or three?	Weekly Discussion &

Required Textbooks

Textbooks required for this course include:

- **Dowty, A. (2017). *Israel/Palestine (4th ed.)* . Malden, MA: Polity Press.**
Print ISBN-13: 9781509520787
- **Caplan, N. (2010). *The Israel-Palestine conflict: Contested histories* . Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.**
Print ISBN-13: 9781405175388.
- **Farrell, S. & Milton-Edwards, B. (2010). *HAMAS* . Malden, MA: Polity Press.**
Print ISBN-13: 9780745642963.
- **Morris, B. (2001). *Righteous victims* . New York: Vintage Books/Random House.**
Print ISBN-13: 9780679744754.

*See the [Required Readings](#) page for additional weekly course readings.

Course Components

Quizzes

Each week, students must take a 10-question quiz on the assigned readings. Quizzes will be in multiple choice and true/false format. Quizzes are an essential part of evaluating student engagement with and comprehension of the readings. Over the 8-week duration of the course, 80 quiz questions will be presented (2 points each).

Weekly Discussions

Discussions are an essential part of this course. Each week, students will be required to participate in discussions particular to that module's readings and lecture.

NOTE: All discussion posts (both Weekly and Ongoing) should be crafted with care and quality. Proofread before posting and put the same care into your posts that you would put into an essay or term paper. Poor punctuation and grammar, excessive typos, or excessively colloquial or unprofessional diction will detract from your grade. You may earn a maximum of 30 points per module, or an 8-week total of 240 weekly discussion points.

Ongoing Discussions

In addition to the weekly discussions that are an essential part of the course, student must also participate in a series of ongoing discussions. These discussion prompts remain open for comment for the entire duration of the course. They ask big, thematic questions that transcend any single course module. By the end of the course, each ongoing discussion prompt/thematic question will have produced an 8-week conversation that reveals the evolution of student learning and understanding.

Each week, students are required to contribute substantively to a minimum of THREE of the ongoing discussion prompts. A substantive post applies new learning, evidence, or analysis in an original and coherent fashion, expressed in a short, well-written paragraph. For example, you may explain how

your thinking about an ongoing discussion topic has evolved as you have continued with the course lectures and reading. Or you may simply continue engaging your peers on very complex issues in ways that build upon and enrich what has been said in previous weeks. The ongoing discussion prompts are deceptively simple. In fact, there is no way that one can adequately address such major questions in just one module. This complexity and the necessity to consider these issues for the entire duration of the course is the major motivation for including this separate category of discussion questions alongside our narrower and more module-specific weekly discussions.

The **Ongoing Discussion** prompts are as follows:

- What does it mean to be an Israeli?
- What does it mean to be a Palestinian?
- How does the diversity of viewpoints within both the Israeli and Palestinian nations complicate efforts to achieve peace?
- What is the relative significance of these two forces in driving the conflict?
 - practical security concerns
 - religion, ideas, and ideology
- When it comes to resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, what is *just* and what is *attainable*? Consider and comment on this from both sides' perspectives, as well as from your own perspective. Will a tradeoff between the two phenomena of justice and attainability be necessary? If so, for whom? For Israel, for the Palestinians, or for both?

Additional Ongoing Prompts that the Professor May Use Include:

- What are the Pros and Cons of a Two-State Solution?
- What are the Pros and Cons of a One-State Solution?
- It has been said that the Palestinians 'never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.' Do you see any evidence of this in the story of the emergence of Israel or in the ongoing conflict and peace process?
- Who or what are the most significant obstacles to peace?
- Which issues lend themselves to compromise? Which issues do not? Why?
- Is it possible for Israel to be both Jewish and democratic?

Research Paper

Students must write a research paper on a topic of their choosing. The topic must be cleared with the professor by the end of Week 3 in the form of a written proposal that will be graded. Student proposals must include a one- or two-paragraph explanation and an annotated bibliography of at least three preliminary scholarly sources. The proposal should include a **question that drives the research paper and a preliminary thesis**. The thesis is the paper's argument. For example, you may begin with a question such as "Why did the Israeli Labor Party lose power after the assassination of Yitzak Rabin?" Your preliminary thesis might posit that *Palestinian terrorism played into the hands of the Likud Party, thus helping Benjamin Netanyahu defeat Shimon Peres*. Of course, your thesis might change depending on what your research reveals! The annotated bibliography should consist of a few sentences for each source listed that explain the source's main argument and potential contribution to your research.

The research paper itself is due at the end of Week 7 and must be 5-7 double-spaced pages. Students must provide citations and a bibliography. Students may use MLA, APA, or the Chicago Manual style guides; uniformity and professionalism are key whichever one you choose. Points may be deducted for poor or slipshod citations.

Regarding sources, papers must draw upon a minimum of **five** scholarly sources, meaning books or articles from scholarly journals. News media and websites should be used as a supplement to, not as the principal sources for, student research. Some topics may merit an exceptional concentration on media sources. Such cases should be discussed directly with the professor.

Papers will be graded on *content, clarity, and coherence*. **Content** speaks to the originality, quality, and depth of your evidence, analysis, and argumentation. **Clarity** speaks to how easy it is to decipher your main points and to how well your paper flows. Do you write well? Does one have to re-read sentences or entire sections to understand them? Do you use clear language and explain logic that may not be self-evident to a reader? Are there typos and other copy-editing errors that confuse the reader? **Coherence** blends principles of content and clarity. Do all parts of your paper work well together? Does the introduction match the conclusion? Does one idea flow naturally from the next? Are there tangents? Is there material included that is superfluous or that has no clear value-added? Is the significance of all of your content - particularly data - made clear to the reader? Can you defend the value and necessity of every sentence in your paper?

[Discussion Groups](#)

Before submitting your first discussion post, please review the [Grading Guidelines and Rubrics](#) for more information about what is expected in regard to discussion postings and online etiquette.

[Late Work](#)

It is important that writing assignments and discussion posts be completed on time. Extensions of deadlines will be given only for serious extenuating circumstances. In the absence of such extensions, assignments may be downgraded for lateness at the discretion of the instructor. You must contact your instructor ahead of time to request an extension.

Late papers will be accepted with one-third of a letter grade deducted for each 24-hour period of tardiness. No papers will be accepted more than SIX days after the due date.

[Grades](#)

The following table shows the graded assessment types contained within this course and the assigned weighting to determine the final course grade.

Graded Assessment Types	Points	Weights (%)
Weekly Quiz (20 points/quiz)	160	16%
Weekly Discussions (30 points/discussion)	240	24%
Ongoing Discussions	250	25%
Research Paper Proposal with Annotated Bibliography	100	10%
Research Paper	250	25%
Total	1000	100%

Letter grades for the course will be based on the following grading scale.

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Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A	93-100%	4.0
A -	90-92.9%	3.7
B +	87-89.9%	3.3
B	83-86.9%	3.0
B -	80-82.9%	2.7
C +	77-79.9%	2.3
C	75-76.9%	2.0
C -	73-74.9%	1.7
D +	70-72.9%	1.3
D	67-69.9%	1.0
D-	63-66.9%	0.7
F	0-62.9%	0.0

For complete information on the Grading Policy for Bachelor Degree students, please refer to the [CGCS Online Catalog](#) (Sub-Section of Catalog on "Grades.")

[Academic Honesty and the Norwich University Honor Code](#)

A student must submit work that represents the student's own original analysis and writing. Copying another's work is not appropriate. If the student relies on the research or writing of others, the student must cite those sources. Words or ideas that require citations include, but are not limited to all hardcopy or electronic publications, whether copyrighted or not, and all verbal or visual communication when the content of such communication clearly originates from an identifiable source. While students are encouraged to seek editing feedback, extensive revisions of one's work by another person is considered a lack of academic honesty, as it is representing another student's work as one's own.

For more information see:

[Academic Dishonesty](#)

[Academic Integrity](#)

[Norwich University Honor Code](#)

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[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/ADA](#)

Please consult [Appendix H: University Policy - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) for instructions on obtaining an accommodation.

Disclaimer: Please note the specifics of this Course Syllabus are subject to change. Students are responsible for abiding by any such changes. Your instructor will notify you of any changes.

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