Georgetown University  
The Arab-Israeli Conflict 1917-2010  
Spring Term 2011  
Class 444: Monday, Wednesday 2:40-3:55 pm  
Room ICC 104  

Syllabus

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Course Description:

This course deals with the most central issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict in both historical and contemporary terms. The first and briefest part of the course deals with the growing clash between the Zionist Yishuv and Arabs of Palestine. It will follow its path since World War One from acceptance to discord and into a long-term conflict. We will begin by examining the roots of Jewish and Arab nationalisms, rival claims to Palestine, and growing conflict during the period of the British Mandate, including the growing involvement of Arab states.

The second and main part of this course will cover the years 1947-1985, analyzing the causes and effects of six wars between Israel and the Arab states; those of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1969-70, 1973 and 1982, and the circumstances that made possible the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1979. This stage of the course will also examine the impact of regional and global factors, such as inter-Arab rivalry and the Cold War.

The third part of the course, time allowing, will begin with Israel’s withdrawal from most of the Lebanese territories (1985) that was followed by the Palestinian intifada of 1987-1993 and then deal with the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles of September 1993 (the Oslo Agreement) and the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement of 1994. The course concludes with an examination of the evolution of the conflict since the mid-1990s; topics to be included in the last few class meetings are the 2000 Camp David Summit, the Israeli separation fence, the main issues that need to be resolved (Jerusalem, territorial borders, Arab and Jewish refugees, security arrangements), the involvement of Hizballah and war of 2006, and the rise of Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Not every unit (one – sixteen) represents a class session. Some units represent two, or even three class sessions.

Course Requirements:

Mid-term exam (20% of final grade). Exam date: Monday February 28.  
Essay, eight to ten-pages 1½ lines space (20% of final grade, topics to be announced). Due date: Wednesday, April 20.
**Final examination** (60% of final grade) most likely: during the first half of May. No date is known yet.

**Class attendance is mandatory.**

**Principal Texts:** the first three books should be bought by the students.

1. Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner, *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (5th Edition, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007). [Includes texts of documents]. The 2009 & 2010 editions are definitely good, but the pages numbers may change very slightly. Please use common sense to identify the right pages – the topics we need for each class are mentioned in the syllabus below. Even the 2005 & 2006 editions are usable, with the same adjustments of pages.

**Recommended:**


**Documents:**
Students will be expected to read at home the documents mentioned in the curriculum. If only possible please bring to class the documents mentioned. The intention is to read and analyze some of them together.

**Sequence of Lectures and Reading Assignments:**

1. An introductory Discussion: Who are the Jews and Arabs? What are the sources of modern Jewish, Arab and Palestinian-Arab Nationalism?

   **Required reading:**

   Bickerton and Klausner, 1-33.

   Tessler, 7-126.

   **Recommended:**


2. WWI: Agreements, Declarations, Successful Jewish-Arab Post-War Negotiations and Yet: A Conflict in Palestine is Born 1915-1920

Required Reading:

Bickerton and Klausner, 34-41 (Covers period ending with "Post-War Settlement": the Weizmann-Feisal agreement of January 1919 and the King-Crane Report).

Documents:


Recommended Reading:


Tessler, 126-157.


Required:

Bickerton and Klausner, 41-53.

Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 157-246. See the map on p. 247. This is a heavy load. If you do not manage to read all try to read as much as you can, and take notes in class.

Documents:

Bickerton-Klausner pp. 62-64; or Laqueur & Rubin, pp. 48-49, 60-64 (Churchill White paper 1922; the 1937 Peel Commission; the 1939 White Paper).

Recommended:

Comment: Stein provides by far the best analysis of the land issue in Mandatory Palestine ever published. It is based on the original British Mandatory documents, on internal documents of the Jewish institutions that dealt with land purchase and on other primary sources. However, due to its volume it cannot be required reading.

4. The Second World War and Beyond 1939-1948; Civil War and the End of the Mandate

Required:


Tessler, pp. 246-271.

Documents:

Bickerton and Klausner, 89-95 (Rudolf Hess on the “Final Solution” for the Jewish problem; Declaration of May, 1942 at the Biltmor Hotel, mainly articles 5&7; The Zionist Case: Golda Meir; The Palestine Arab Case: Jamal Husseini [pay attention to the approach of each to the opposite side]; UNSCOP’s Plan of Partition, mainly articles 1-5, 10, 11). Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 68-72 (Adolph Hitler’s meeting and agreement with the Grand Mufti of Palestine, al-Haj Amin al-Husseini, Nov. 1941); pp. 95-96 (UN General Assembly “Partition Resolution”, Nov. 1947 ).

Tessler, p. 247 (Jewish land ownership by 1947).

Recommended:


Audio-Visual:

PBS Production: The Fifty Year War Part One: the UN Special Committee on Palestine – UNSCOP – June-August 1947; the struggle in the UN over the Partition Plan; the Jewish-Arab civil war; Pres. Harry S. Truman versus Secretary of State Marshall; the Jewish and Arab calculations on the eve of the Arab invasion of Palestine.
5. 1948-49: Creation of Israel, the Arab Invasion, the First Arab-Israeli War and the Genesis of the Refugees Problem

Required:

Bickerton and Klausner, 96-108.

Yoav Gelber, “The Israeli-Arab War of 1948” [pdf], in Jewish Virtual Library Publications, Israel Studies: Table of Contents

Documents:

Bickerton and Klausner, pp. 109-111 (Israel’s Proclamation of Independence; UN General Assembly Resolution 194, Dec. 11, 1948). Food for thought: 1. Why was it not implemented in 1948-49? 2. Sixty two years later: what are the obstacles on the way of agreeing to it by both sides? 3. Between 1948 and 2011: have more recent refugees been added to the list? 4. Do you know of similar large-scale refugee problems in Europe after WWI and WW2 and in India 1947-48?

Internet-Google: both documents are to be found there too.

Recommended:


Audio-Visual:

PBS: The Fifty Year War Part Two: the 1948 War and its immediate aftermath

6. 1949-1956: From Secret Negotiations to a Second Arab-Israeli War: The Sinai Campaign and its Aftermath

Required:

Bickerton and Klausner, 112-128.


Documents:

Bickerton and Klausner,128-132 (Nasser Justifying Nationalization of Suez Canal; Anthony Eden on Nasser; Abba Eban in the UN explaining the war; Nasser’s response to the Anglo-French Ultimatum, Nov. 1956).
Audio-Visual:

PBS The Fifty Year War, Part Three (Nasser explains his 1952 revolution; attempts at an Israeli-Egyptian settlement; cross-border terrorist attacks from Egypt and Jordan and an Israeli reprisal: the massacre in Qibyah; Israeli sabotage in Cairo; the Soviet arms deal with Egypt; Nasser nationalizes the Suez canal; The Sinai campaign).

Recommended:
Itamar Rabinovich, *The Road Not Taken* (Oxford University Press, 1991), 209-222


7. The Road to the Six Day War and the 1967 Turning Point

Required:


Bickerton and Klausner, 133-150.


Documents:


Laqueur & Rubin, 149-150; 152-155 (Nasser’s speech and Heikal’s article in al-Ahram leading to the Six Day War);

Recommended:


Audio-visual:

PBS, 50 Year War: the Soviets deceive Egypt; Nasser’s brinkmanship; American equivocation (President Johnson, Secretary of Defense McNamara, others) and Israeli fears of a new Holocaust; General (Ret.) Moshe Dayan to Defense, the three hour war and total Arab defeat; The Soviets gear up for a massive areal strike on Israel, the US responds by alerting the Sixth Fleet; a ceasefire in a transformed Middle East; the Three “Nos” of Khartoum and a new stalemate.

Food for Thought for Next Class: Having retained the Sinai, the Golan and the West Bank and Gaza after the UNSC issued Resolution 242: was Israel in breach of a binding Security Council resolution?

8. Resolutions 242 and 338 in light of the UN Charter

Required Documents:

Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 217-218; 310: UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, ().
Or: in the internet.

OR: the UN Charter in the internet. Please photocopy Article 25; Chapter VI Articles 33, 36; Chapter VII Articles 41, 42, 44.
Apply the UN Charter’s above mentioned clauses to UNSC 242 (Nov. 22, 1967), then to UNSC 338 (Oct. 22, 1973). Are both Resolutions binding and therefore actionable? Neither? One of them only? Why?

In class we shall read a corrective letter in the matter sent to Dr. Amatzia Baram by Eugene V. Rostow, Dean of Yale Law School 1955-1965 and, in 1967, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs under President Lyndon B. Johnson.

9. 1968-73: The War of Attrition; The Rogers Plan; the New PLO and its Radical Flank-the Popular Front; the Jordanian-PLO Crisis, and the Yom Kippur (October) War of 1973

Required:


Bickerton and Klausner, 153-173.
Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 399-464 (ending with Black September); 474-481 (the 1973 war and the Israeli-Egyptian disengagement agreements). See also the map of the Israeli-Egyptian Disengagement of Forces Agreement, p. 482.

**Documents**

Bickerton and Klausner, 173-176: The PLO Covenant of 1968 (mainly Articles 1-3, 6, 9, 15, 19, 20, 21, 27,28); Arab Heads of State Declaration at Rabat, 1974.

**Recommended:**


William B. Quandt, pp. 72-104.

**Audio-Visual:**

*PBS 5: [Pt. 2, beginning]* Nasser’s death; Sadat turns to the US, offers an arrangement with Israel and is rejected; the preparations for the war; The Egyptians and Syrians attack, Israel’s total surprise; Egypt deceives Syria; super-powers involvement-Kissinger saves the 3rd Egyptian Army; Ceasefire and the 101 km negotiations;

*PBS 6: [Pt. 1, after 1.37 hours]* The War of Attrition; the Palestinian National Charter; the Israeli failure in Karameh; Palestinian designs on the Hashemite Kingdom and Black September 1970 sucking in Syria, US, Israel, Nasser’s Egypt (interviewed: the King, Palestinian leaders; Henry Kissinger; Pres. Nixon; Syria Minister of Defense; Israel’s Airforce commander; Sudan’s Numeiri. Missing: Nasser. Why?). The slaughter of the Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich 1972 and Israel’s reprisal.

**10. 1974-1979: The Road to Camp David and Israeli-Egyptian Peace**

**Required:**


**Documents:**

Laqueur and Rubin, pp. 405, 407, 408: the Camp David Framework for Peace: photocopy only. A. The West Bank & Gaza, only clauses 1a; B. Egypt-Israel; C.2,3,5,6. pp. 409, 410 (Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty).

Bickerton and Klausner, 198-201: Camp David agreement-the same clauses; the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

**Recommended:**

Bickerton and Klausner, 195-198: speeches at the UN by Arafat and Tekoa.


William B. Quandt, pp. 187-206 (the end of the war and the Americans saving the Egyptian 3rd Army).


**Audio-Visual:**

*PBS 7:* The 1975 civil war in Lebanon and terrorist raids from Lebanon into Israel; the Israeli-Lebanese Christian alliance.

*PBS 8:* Sadat’s peace initiative (Nov. 1977) and Begin’s acceptance; Israeli fears of a trap; Sadat’s visit to Israel; amp David and the peace agreement. Interviewed: Sadat, Begin, Pres. Carter, Sharon, Arab reactions, Sadat is assassinated.

**11. The 1982 Lebanon War and its Aftermath: Sharon’s “Grand Strategy” and its collapse**

**Required:**

Bickerton and Klausner, 205-219.


**Documents:**
Laqueur & Rubin, pp. 446 (12th Arab Summit Conference [in Fez], Sept. 1982, only p. 446, beginning with “Out of the conference’s belief in the ability of the Arab nation…” and including articles 1-8).

Bickerton and Klausner, 229-230 the same 1982 Fez Summit, points 1-8.

**Food for Thought:** can you identify a vaguely-implied Arab promise to recognize Israel?


**Recommended:**


**Audio-Visual:**

*PBS 9:* The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the massacre of Sabra & Shatilah, Israeli anti-Government demonstrations; the PLO evacuating Beirut; the US gets involved (interviewed: Arik Sharon, Arafat among others).

12. 1987-1996: From the Intifada to Madrid and Oslo

**Required:**

Bickerton and Klausner, 219-229; 237-258.


**Documents:**


**Recommended:**

*Ephraim Inbar, "Israel's Small War: The Military Response to the Intifada," Armed Forces and Society 18, 1 (Fall 1991), 29-50.*


**Audio-visual:**

*PBS 10:* King Hussein and Foreign Secretary Shimon Peres on the London agreement; Secretary of State George Schultz tries to help; Prime Minister Shamir standing on his hind legs. The Intifada breaks out in Dec. 1987, Arafat caught by surprise. Israeli attempts at suppression; The Intifada is dying, with US encouragement Arafat is pushed to imply an end to terrorism and recognition of Israel, but short of expected by US. Saddam invade Kuwait (Augt. 1990), the Gulf War and missiles on Tel Aviv & Haifa. The Madrid Middle East conference of 1991 and the stalemated Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Washington, DC; the “Track Two” avenue to Israeli-PLO recognition in Oslo and its convoluted outcome; the Israeli-Jordanian peace, Oct. 26, 1994.

*PBS 11:* a new (and failed) attempt at a peace agreement with Syria; Oct. 1998 American crushing pressure at Wye Plantation on PM Netanyahu to give more territory to Arafat.

13. From Oslo to Camp David 2000 and the Second ("Al-Aqsa") *Intifada*

**Required:**

Bickerton and Klausner, 272-292; 304-334.


**Documents:**

Laqueu & Rubin, 549-550: PM Barak on his principles before the Camp David conference – see the five points, middle of page 550.

551-553: US President Bill Clinton After the [Failed] Camp David peace Talks. Read carefully, analyze: whom does the President accuse of the failure of the talks, albeit by implication?


567- 572: the Palestinian response to Clinton’s proposal, January 2, 2001. What seems to be the greatest reservations on their part?
**Recommended:**


14. **2000-2010: The February-March 2002 Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and Arab League Peace Plan. The “Quartet” Failed Road map to Peace; Sharon’s Withdrawal from and Hamas Takeover in Gaza; Arafat's death; Hizballah in Lebanon; the peace strategy of President Obama 2008; the debacle; the peace-strategy of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton 2010.**

**Required:**

Bickerton and Klausner, 343-378.


The Clinton Strategy – a source will be provided.

**Documents:**

Laqueur & Rubin, 583-584: Arab league Beirut Declaration, March 28, 2002. Analyze: why was it ignored by the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon?

589-591: President G.W. Bush letter to PM Sharon, April 14, 2004: is there in this letter any contradiction to the Clinton proposals?

**Recommended:**


Emmanuel Dubois, “Operation ‘Cast Lead’ in Gaza: Analysis and Prospects”, in *European Strategic Intelligence & Security Center* (ESISC), March 1, 2009

15. **OPTIONAL: Time Allowing**

**The Historiography of the 1948 War**

**Required Reading:**


16. Conclusion