Zionist Political Thought

Department of Political Science, Stern College
Spring 2017
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This course will consider the fundamental ideas and debates underlying modern Zionism and the state of Israel. The course will look at the different intellectual currents of modern Zionism—including Political Zionism, Cultural Zionism, Labor Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, and Religious Zionism—and also chart their impact on modern Israel. Questions to be discussed include: How did Zionists conceive of the relationship between religion and state? What were their views on economics, international relations, and education? The course will focus on works by political thinkers and politicians such as Theodore Herzl, Ahad Ha’am, A.D. Gordon, Ber Borochov, Rav Kook, Vladimir Jabotinsky, David Ben Gurion, and Menachem Begin. The course will conclude with an in-depth study of Israel's Declaration of Independence.

Course goals: This course aims to provide students a detailed grasp of the major currents of Zionist political thought and to allow them to critically engage in debate about the meaning of Zionism within both Judaism and Western thought. The course also aims to strengthen the writing skills and reasoning ability of students.

Text:

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*

Requirements: Weekly Response Papers & Presentations 30%  
Long Essay 30%  
Final Exam 40%

Disabilities:

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of
Disability Services, (646) 592-4132, rkohn1@yu.edu, during the first week of class. Once you have been approved for accommodations, please submit your accommodation letter to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations.

Class Schedule:

Week 1 (Jan. 24 & 26): **Introduction & Sources of Modern Zionism**
Readings: Arthur Hertzberg: Introduction to *The Zionist Idea*


Week 3 (Feb. 7 & 9): **Leon Pinsker**

Week 4: (Feb. 14 & 16): **Political Zionism: Theodore Herzl**

Week 5: (Feb. 21 & 23): **Cultural Zionism**

Week 6: (Feb. 28 & March 2): **Labor Zionism and Zionist Economics**

Week 7: (March 7, No Class March 9): **Revisionist Zionism**

Week 8 (March 14 & 16): **Religious Zionism**

Week 9 (March 21, March 23): **David Ben Gurion**
Readings: Anita Shapira: *David Ben Gurion*, excerpts

Week 10 (March 28 & 30): **The Begin Revolution**
Readings: Menachem Begin: *The Revolt*, excerpts

Week 11 (April 4 & 6): **Menachem Begin’s Zionist Legacy**
Readings: Hillel Halkin, Meir Soloveichik et al.: *Menachem Begin’s Zionist Legacy*

Week 12 (April 20) & Week 13 (April 25 and 27): **Israel’s Declaration of Independence in Comparative Perspective**: Readings: drafts of the Israeli Declaration of Independence, drafts of the American Declaration of Independence, French Declaration of the Rights of Man

Week 14 (May 4, 9): **Conclusion & Review**