

POLITICAL SCIENCE 121B
POLITICS OF ISRAEL
Summer II, 2012

Dr. David Forman-Barzilai

Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course will be dedicated to a thematically and chronologically interdisciplinary study of the State of Israel. Using a critical approach and a comparative examination we will focus on Israel as a unique and yet common phenomenon of a modern democratic nation state. Unique in its Jewish character and its ideological foundations as well as its history and contemporary challenges, Israel gives us ample opportunity and exiting raw material for political and historical understanding. Small in size but second only to the United State in media coverage, Israel is continually in the limelight and has had an extraordinary impact on the world. We will examine thematically Israel's political system and governmental branches, economy, legal system, social structure and tensions, the relation between State and religion, its national security and international relations. We will also acquire knowledge about the main historical landmarks and their significance and follow and examine contemporary day-to-day events. In addition to the studying of Israel it is designed to use Israel as a case study for a comparative and critical examination of the political realm at large.

Procedures:

It is important that you address the issues discussed critically and reach independent insights and opinions. Please address the reading assignments attentively and come to class ready to raise and discuss questions. As for the requirements, they are three:

1. You have to present a chapter in class and subsequently write a small report on your subject. For the presentation in class, you should have a handout with the main ideas and arguments. In addition, **2. you are asked to submit a one page report each Monday (three out of the five weeks of the course) summarizing the week's news in Israel.** The short report should include a summary of current political events and refer to topic of the last week as well. Resources for this report can be found on the web in Israeli newspapers, such as Haaretz and the Jerusalem Post, as well as in traditional American media. The use of resources and information on the WWW is strongly recommended. Here are a few of the many sites:

<http://www.haaretzdaily.com>

<http://info.jpost.com>

<http://info.jpost.com/C002/Supplements/Elections2003/>

<http://jewishhistory.huji.ac.il/>

<http://www.israel.org/mfa>

Finally, 3. you will write a short research paper on a topic of your choice related to the politics of Israel. Details about this assignment will be given in a prompt during the third week of class.

Evaluation:

Evaluation:

- A. 3 Newspaper reports - 30%
- B. Presentation - 30%
- C. Final Paper - 40%

Textsbook:

Mahler, G.S., *Politics and Government in Israel*, Rowman, 2010

Course Outline:

WEEK 1:

SUBJECT: General Introduction: History, method and context

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, 1-10

WEEK 2:

I. SUBJECT: Palestine 1517 - 1948, the Zionist Movement and the formation of Israel

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, 13-84

II. SUBJECT: The Economy, the Social Structure and the Elites

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 85-114

WEEK 3:

I. SUBJECT: Israeli Government - The Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial Branches

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 117-169

II. SUBJECT: Political Parties and Interest Groups

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 170-191

WEEK 4:

I. SUBJECT: The Electoral System and the Machinery of Government

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 193-247

II. SUBJECT: Demographic Challenges and Foreign Policy

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 251-329

WEEK 5:

SUBJECT: The Arab (Palestinian)-Israeli Peace Process

READING ASSIGNMENTS: Mahler, pp. 331- 366

Final Paper is due on Wednesday, September 8, by 4PM, on line at dfb@ucsd.edu

Students' Presentations:

	Week2	Week3	Week4	Week5
Tuesdays	August 14	August 21	August28	September 4
Thursdays	August 16	August 23	August 30	September 6

