

In Conjunction with



Peace and Conflict in the Middle East

Instructor: Prof. Mira Sucharov

Course Description

This course offers a conceptual and theoretical analysis of the contemporary Middle East through an exploration of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process. Using the lens of political science and international relations (IR) theory, we will address such questions as what is nationalism? How is identity created? What is the role of historical memory in shaping foreign policy? How do international conflicts start, sustain themselves, and ultimately end? What are the basic issues at stake for the actors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? And why, despite continued efforts at peacemaking, are the parties still “at war?”

While the conflict often leads to impassioned debate, we will make an effort to address the issues through an explanatory – rather than moral – lens. The course will not attempt to argue that one party is right or wrong; instead, we will, according to the aims of social science, attempt to *understand and explain why each set of actors act the way they do* – in the context of a broader understanding of international relations.

To this end, we will make use of the excellent website “bitterlemons.org,” billed as an “Israeli-Palestinian crossfire.” Yet, again, we will analyze these debates in order to *understand the experience of each side* in the conflict, rather than to adjudicate between them.

Readings: The following books are required for the course:

Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 4th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2005). (I have referred to it as Textbook in the reading list.)

Mira Sucharov, *The International Self: Psychoanalysis and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005). – Noted as “Textbook” in class schedule below.

Other readings, and schedule of topics, are indicated below. Articles are available online with their relevant URL indicated.

Class Schedule:

Class 1 Introduction

Sucharov, chapter 1

Textbook, pp. 1-15.

Class 2 The Middle East on Campus

Jennifer Senior, "Columbia's Own Middle East War," *New York Magazine* (January 17, 2005)

<http://tinyurl.com/dyfrq>

Bitter Lemons ("The Academic Boycott of Israel"), May 16, 2005 (edition 16)

<http://tinyurl.com/9mwa9>

Film: *Discordia* (Ben Addelman and Samir Mallal, Canada 2004)

Class 3 The Conflict for the Actors: Narratives, Identity, Memory

Laetitia Bucaille, *Growing Up Palestinian: Israeli Occupation and the Intifada Generation*, pp. 111-150

Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), chapter 2.

David Horowitz, "Toughing it Out" (author of *Still Life with Bombers: Israel in the Age of Terrorism*), short essay available at <http://tinyurl.com/823kh>

Bernard Avishai, "Saving Israel from Itself: A Secular Future for the Jewish State," *Harper's* (January 2005). Available at: <http://www.harpers.org/SavingIsraelFromItself.html>

Sucharov, chapter 3

Class 4 History: 19th Century - 1948

Textbook, 17-30; 37-56; 67-92; 101-113

Yael Zerubavel, "The Mythological Sabra and Jewish Past: Trauma, Memory, and Contested Identities," *Israel Studies* 7, 2 (Summer 2002).

Ahmad H. Sa'di, "Catastrophe, Memory, and Identity: Al-Nakbah as a Component of Palestinian Identity," *Israel Studies* 7, 2 (Summer 2002).

Class 5 Arab-Israeli Wars and the (First) Intifada

Textbook, 126-132; 147-154; 174-178; 184-198; 211-236

Sucharov, chapters 4-6.

Class 6 IR Theory & Negotiation Theory

Sucharov, chapter 2

Karen Mingst, *Essentials of International Relations* (3rd edition, 2004 edition), chapter 3.

Roger Fisher and William Ury, "Getting to Yes," in David P. Barash, ed., *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*, pp. 70-76.

Omar M. Dajani, "Surviving Opportunities: Palestinian Negotiating Patterns in Peace Talks with Israel," in Tamara Cofman Wittes, ed., *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate* (Washington: USIP Press, 2005).

Aharon Klieman, "Israeli Negotiating Culture," in Wittes, ed., *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate*

Class 7 The Cold War (end of), The 1991 Gulf War, Madrid & Oslo

Textbook, 245-266

Sucharov, chapter 7

Class 8 Violence & Terrorism, Settlements, The Fence/Wall

bitterlemons.org ("Violence"), May 26, 2003 (edition 20)

<http://tinyurl.com/dq55y>

bitterlemons.org (“Settlements, Violence, Security”) August 1, 2005 (edition 27) <http://tinyurl.com/7txth>

Bitter Lemons (“The Fence/Wall Revisited”) December 15, 2003 (edition 45) <http://tinyurl.com/c9f86>

David Makovsky, “How to Build a Fence,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2004), pp. 50-64.
Film: *The Fence* (Alexandre Trudeau; Canada, 2004)

Class 9 The Refugee Issue & Jerusalem

Bitterlemons.org (“Refugees and the Right of Return”), December 31, 2001 (edition 5) <http://tinyurl.com/a65dg>

bitterlemons.org (“Jerusalem Update”), June 13, 2005 (edition 20) <http://tinyurl.com/73yat>
Amos Elon, “The Deadlocked City,” *New York Review of Books* (October 18, 2001) Available at: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/14624>

Class 10 Canada’s Role & The U.S. Role

bitterlemons.org (“The U.S. Role”) May 30, 2005 (edition 18) <http://tinyurl.com/85jrn>

Mira Sucharov, “A Multilateral Affair: Canadian Foreign Policy in the Middle East,” in *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*, eds. David Carment et al., (Don Mills, ON: Oxford, 2003).

Michael Scott Doran, “Is Palestine the Pivot?” *Foreign Affairs* (16 March 2005).

<http://tinyurl.com/dsbz4>

Class 11 Conclusion: Looking Beyond Oslo

Textbook, pp. 281-301; 314-343; 352-378

Bitterlemons.org “Disengagement and Beyond” (August 15, 2005 Edition 29)

<http://tinyurl.com/ceeld>

Bitterlemons.org “Who Started the Current Conflict?” (December 27, 2004; Edition 47)

<http://tinyurl.com/9cqfc>

Sucharov, chapter 8

FINAL EXAM - The final exam will test material covered in the readings during the whole semester.

Some suggested news sites are:

Globe and Mail www.globeandmail.ca

The New York Times www.nytimes.com

The Washington Post www.washingtonpost.com

BBC <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

CNN www.cnn.com

PBS www.pbs.org

Ha’aretz www.haaretz.com

The Jerusalem Report Magazine www.jrep.com

The Alternative Information Center <http://www.alternativenews.org>

Electronic Intifada <http://electronicintifada.net>

The Jordan Times <http://jordantimes.com>

Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre <http://jmcc.org>

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research <http://pcpsr.org>

NOTE: The Israel Policy Forum www.israelpolicyforum.org has a “media summary” updated daily, with links to Middle East-related articles from various news sources.