

University of Michigan
Department of Middle East Studies

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Fall 2023
M/W 11:30-1:00

Office hours: W: 2:00-3:00 in office; also - call or text cell, or email to set appointment on Zoom.

THE LAND OF ISRAEL / PALESTINE THROUGH THE AGES

The territory called by contemporaries either the Land of Israel or Palestine has played a unique role in both Western and Near Eastern civilizations. To this day it is a volatile region suffused with conflict and violence, which plays a pivotal role in American politics and global affairs. At the same time, it is the bedrock of some of the highest cultural and religious achievements in human history. This course aims to unpack this seemingly incomprehensible contradiction, to study the history of Israel/Palestine, and to explore the ancient roots of modern contentions. We will outline the historical process and analyze the various factors (political, economic, cultural, etc.) which shaped it; we'll get acquainted with both the nations that ruled the land and the people that inhabited its cities and villages. Sometimes we'll be following the route of bloody battles. At others, we'll be focusing our attention on individuals and groups who produced some of the greatest masterpieces of all time. **This course also fulfills the Race & Ethnicity Distribution Requirement**; and so, the precarious story of this land will here serve also as a laboratory to examine the interrelation between race, ethnicity, and religion across three millennia.

The classroom of this course is designed as a modern, 21st century learning environment that will challenge your senses and mind from multiple directions. Slides, video-clips, museum visits, and other electronic resources will hopefully combine for a unique experience of modern people seeking to understand the past.

Learning Tools

(1) Text book (available electronically on Canvas):

M. Avi-Yonah (ed.) *A History of Israel and the Holy Land*.

Avi-Yonah's book, although an excellent textbook for our topic, is nevertheless quite biased toward the Zionist, traditional narrative of the land's history. As such, the book represents the difficulties embodied in studying the history of a territory, which is in the midst of a current conflict between two nations. Keep this in mind when you use this book; use caution and critique. In class and with the help of the reading material in the course pack we will strive to complicate and problematize the story presented by Avi-Yonah.

(2) Electronic Course Pack; available online at -

<https://courses.lsa.umich.edu/israel-palestine/>

Additional Articles: Eliav's Academia site -

<https://umich.academia.edu/YaronEliav>

The course pack is a central piece of this class's intellectual experience. It is a manifestation of my view that sees recorded history as the often one-sided written product of society's "winners," thus requiring the historian to present a more complete and complex picture than that offered by any particular resource, whether ancient or modern. To achieve this goal, the course pack encompasses a wide variety of ancient sources – archaeological, artistic, cartographic (maps), and epigraphic, in addition to the more traditional literary documents. This combination is meant to lay the groundwork for a highly challenging interdisciplinary learning opportunity which on one hand could be very rewarding but on the other requires careful and thorough preparation.

(3) Slides (available online at - <https://image-database.nes.lsa.umich.edu/>)

Every lecture will be accompanied by a series of slides. These visual items are not meant to just illustrate the lecture, but rather they are an integral part of the learning material, both the pictures themselves and the information associated with them. Most (but not all!) of the slides taught in class can be accessed through the course slide database. Use this tool to help you prepare for assignments and exams and to expand your knowledge.

(4) Video clips and short movie – **Subscribe to Eliav's YouTube channel**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt9GEyVD6-6RzgMhgrtXE6A>

During the course we will watch various short video clips from Israel and Palestine and one longer documentary movie (Paul in Athens). These videos are also an integral part of the course material and will assist you in getting a first-hand understanding of sites, regions, and events associated with the history we are studying.

(5) Course Facebook group –

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/828381597184772/>

Exchange of opinion and debate on Middle East, as well as for earning extra credit.

Schedule and Readings

AY = Avi-Yonah;

course-pack (=website) Readings

Academia – article on Eliav's Academia website

Youtube – clips on Eliav's youtube channel

- Aug. 28 Introducing the course
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- Aug. 30 The Geographical Context I – the Mediterranean and the Middle East
 - # 1-4
 - Academia: "Judaea, the Palestinian Coast, the Galilee, Idumaea, and Samaria," 259-261.
- Sep. 4 LABOR DAY – No class.
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- Sep. 6 The Geographical Context II – Israel/Palestine and their Natural Resources
 - Video #1
-
- Sep. 11 History Begins in the Present I – The Current Situation in Israel and Palestine: Borders, Politics, and Armies
 - Youtube:
 (1) Apostle Paul in Athens, A City of Gods – Trailer (Student version)
 (2) Paul in Athens – Behind the Scenes
-
- Sep. 13 History Begins in the Present II – Religion, Economics, and Cultures
-
- Sep. 18
ofHistory History Without Words: From the Pre-History of the Land to the Dawn
 - AY: 9-35
-
- Sep. 20 Conquering or Settling in Peacefully: Archaeology, Bible, and Modern Scholarship
 - AY: 36-65
 - #11-16
-
- Sep 25 YOM KIPPUR – No Class

- Sep. 27 From Tribal Societies to Monarchies – The Philistines, the Israelites, and their Neighbors.
- AY: 66-75
 - Video #2
 - #17-21
- Oct. 2 David and Jerusalem in the First Temple Period
- Academia: "Jerusalem," Entry in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (mainly p. 113 – Topography and Early Beginnings)
- Oct. 4 In the Shadows of the Eastern Superpowers: The Northern Israelite Kingdom and the Southern Judaeen Kingdom
- AY: 76-109
 - # 22-23, 30-32
- Oct. 9 The Persian Rule and the Rise of Judaism
- AY: 109-113
 - #35-37
- Oct. 11 Turning West – The Hellenistic Period
- Academia: "Judaea, the Palestinian Coast, the Galilee, Idumaea, and Samaria," 262-263
 - AY: 114-125
 - #42-45
- Oct. 16 FALL STUDY BREAK
- Oct. 18 Rise and Fall of the Maccabean State
- Academia: "Judaea, the Palestinian Coast, the Galilee, Idumaea, and Samaria," 263-265
 - AY: 125-143
 - #46-47
- Oct. 23 The Roman Period: From Herod to the Big Revolts
- Academia: "Judaea, the Palestinian Coast, the Galilee, Idumaea, and Samaria," 265-268
 - AY: 143-175
 - Video #3
- Oct. 25 Christianity in the Holy Land (1): Jesus
- Oct. 30 Christianity in the Holy Land (2): Paul and the Rise of Byzantine
- Youtube – Paul in Athens
 - Paul in Athens – Exercise Idolatry (on Movie's website)

- Nov. 1 Judaism in Late Antiquity
 - Academia: “Jews and Judaism 70-429 CE”
- Nov. 6 From Cross to Crescent – The Islamic Conquest
 - AY: 194-209
 - #70-71
- Nov. 8 *Jund Urdunn* and *Jund Filastin* – The Land as Part of the Early Islamic
 Kingdoms
 - AY: 209-234
 - Video #4
- Nov. 13 The “Jerusalem Kingdom” of the Crusades
 - AY: 235-249
 - #79-82
 - Video #5
- Nov. 15 From Saladin to Baybars – Drawing the Crusades “Back to the
 Ocean”
 - AY: 249-271
- Nov. 20 The Mamluks and the Ottomans
 - AY: 272-322
- Nov. 22 Zionism
 - #96
- Nov. 27 The British Mandate
 - AY: 323-331
 - #95, 97-100
- Nov. 29 1948-1967: Independence and Nakbah
- Dec. 4 1967-Present: Two Generations of Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts
 - AY: 332-359
 - #101-105
- Dec. 6 Back to the Present: Is There Hope for Peace in Israel/Palestine?

Assignments and Requirements

- (1) **Pre-Class Preparation**: Before each class, read thoroughly assigned pages in textbook and on course pack/website & watch assigned video clips.
- (2) **Weekly (short) Assignment**: Prepare in writing whatever assignments are given for a particular week (assignments are announced every Sunday and are due Thursdays at 3PM, before the beginning of sections).
- (3) **Mid-Term**: Take the midterm on one of two possible dates (review sheets will be provided).
 - Date 1 – Mon. Oct. 23rd 7:15-9:15 PM
 - Date 2 – Tues. Oct. 24th 7:15-9:15 PM
- (4) **Paul in Athens Exercise**: Due Nov. 5th at 5PM (submit on Section Canvas)
- (5) **Term Paper**: Due Nov. 29th, 5PM (submit on Section Canvas; topics and instructions will be provided)
- (6) **Final**: Take Home Exam – submitted electronically on Section Canvas by Dec. 19, 5PM.
- (7) **Extra Credit – Blogging on Israel/Palestine**: There are two routes to receive extra credit in the class, each will add 1.5% to the final grade. You can do one or both, up to 3% EC (= a third of letter grade):
 - (a) 3 weekly posts and 3 responses on the class Facebook page
 - (b) 6 comments on class videos on youtube.

NOTE: Extra credit contributions must be spread throughout the semester; only one submission per week will count!

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Grading will be based on:

- (1) Attendance and participation in **section** – Arriving on time, staying throughout, coming prepared and participating (10%) (5% per attendance; 5% per preparation and participation).
- (2) Weekly assignments (10 %)
- (3) Mid-term (25%)
- (4) Paul in Athens exercise (10%)
- (5) Term Paper (15%)
- (6) Final exam (30%)

GRADE SCALE: (The number represents minimum % for the grade; there will be no rounding up):

| Grade | Minimum % |
|-------|-----------|
| A+ | 98 |
| A | 93 |
| A- | 90 |
| B+ | 87 |
| B | 83 |
| B- | 80 |
| C+ | 77 |
| C | 73 |
| C- | 70 |
| D+ | 67 |
| D | 63 |
| D- | 60 |
| E | 50 |
| F | 40 |
| | |

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All aspects of academic integrity are highly respected and strictly enforced in this class. Violations (such as, but not limited to plagiarism, copying and pasting from electronic sources without a reference, offering answers that are not your own in exams and coursework) will be penalized with (1) a zero grade in that portion of the course and (2) a report to the Dean of Students, which may lead to further penalization. A second offense will result in a failing grade in the course.