

History 4897G: Zionism

The History of Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel is one of the great success stories in the history of modern nationalism and the great success story in modern Jewish history. In this course, we will explore the origins and development of Zionism in the context of Jewish, European, and Middle Eastern History during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Because of the towering presence of Zionism in the recent history of the Jews, this course will provide a useful forum through which to inure students against the temptations of inevitability. Instead, we will explore the success of Zionism as a result of circumstances and the creation of a Jewish State as a last of a series of tortuous steps from the end of the nineteenth century through the second world war. After setting the rise of Zionism against the background of modern nationalism and pre-existing Jewish notions of peoplehood, we will underline the disparate and at times conflicting aims of Zionism: “normalizing” the Jews as a nation while creating a distinctly Jewish culture, encouraging Jews to leave the diaspora while trying to dominate diaspora Jewish life, searching for spiritual renewal in the Land of Israel while rejecting the age-old religious notions of spirituality, and balancing between the utopian aims of freedom and equality with the reality of the contentious relationship between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Throughout we will be attuned to the past and current debates regarding Zionism and the path to statehood.

Grading

Students will be expected to complete weekly reading assignments, participate actively in weekly discussions, and introduce one discussion. Readings will include several full-length works, articles, and translated primary sources. In addition, students will write four essays of increasing length and complexity (3, 5, 7-10, 10-15 pages). They will be assigned a topic for the first three essays, and design their own topic for the last paper based on their particular interests. The last essay will also give students an opportunity to explore a particular topic in greater depth.

More specifically, students’ final grade will be evaluated as follows:

Essay #1 (3-5 pages)	10%
Essay #2 (3-5 pages)	10%
Essay #4 (5-7 pages)	15%
Essay #4 (7-10 pages)	20%
In-Class Presentation	10%
Weekly Participation	35%

Required Readings:

Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*

Theodore Herzl, *The Jewish State*

Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*

Benny Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*

Pinsker and Political Zionism

The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook

The Political and Social Philosophy of Ze'ev Jabotinsky

Marc Raider and Miriam Raider-Roth eds., *The Ploughwoman*

Joachim Schlor, *Tel Aviv: From Dream to City*

Recommended Reading:

Michael Brenner, *Zionism: a Brief History*

Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

- Jan 4 Introduction: Zionism and the Jewish Political Tradition
- 11 Nineteenth Century Precursors
Reading: Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*
- 18 Zionism as a Response to Antisemitism
Reading: *Pinsker and Political Zionism*
- 25 Theodore Herzl: The Man and the Myth
Reading: Herzl, *The Jewish State*
- Feb 1 Ahad Ha'am: Secular Culture and the Invention of Tel Aviv
Reading: Steven Zipperstein, "Ahad Ha'am's Politics"
Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'am
Joachim Schlor, *Tel Aviv: From Dream to City*
- 8 Transformation through Labor: *Gordonia* and the *Kibbutzniks*
Reading: TBA
- 15 Winter Break – no class
- 22 Religious Zionism: Mizrachi and Rav Kook
Reading: *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook*
- March 1 The Limits of the Zionist Utopia: Woman and the *Yishuv*
Reading: *The Ploughwoman*
Dov Schwartz, "Women's Status and Identity in the Religious Zionist Movement"
- 8 Zeev Jabotinsky: Zionism in Interwar Europe
Reading: *The Political and Social Philosophy of Ze'ev Jabotinsky*
- 15 The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Origins, Dynamics, Debates
Reading: Alan Dowty, "Much Ado about Little': Ahad Ha'am's 'Truth from Eretz Yisrael'" (On reserve)
- 22 1948-1967 Struggle for Statehood
Reading: Benny Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*
- 29 Passover – no class
- Apr 5 Conclusion