Religion, Culture and Identities in Israel

Israel is a society that grew largely on the basis of Jewish immigrant populations of various backgrounds from Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere. The immigrants brought with them different languages, cultures, and political and religious ideologies. After the state was established, there was some hope that this would result in a national amalgam, but the immigrants interacted with the veteran population and its institutions, and with one another, in a variety of ways that produced its current multicultural texture. The course will discuss the history of immigration, the various policies of immigrant settlement, the way that the social sciences conceptualized and studied immigration, and the ongoing debates about culture, religion, and identity. Special attention will be paid to the interaction between identities defined by ethnicity and those growing out of diverse religious experiences and ideologies, including how emerging differences have made an impact upon and are contested within the Israeli public sphere today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (to be completed on dates outlined in Calendar, below)

Two mid-term tests (20% each)
An exercise relating to demography (20%)
A final exam-paper (40%)

REQUIRED READINGS


*Articles and chapters from books: these items are on electronic reserve- Ares [they may appear in Ares in a different alphabetical order from the list below]*


ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ISRAELI SOCIETY:

Jerusalem Post (English language daily): http://www.jpost.com/

CALENDAR, TOPICS AND READINGS

Jan 8-10 (1) Jewish History after emancipation: religious, ethnic and secular identities; Goldberg, “State Formation”; Oz, 191-217.

Jan 15-17 (2) Cultural Variation among Jews: Europe, the Middle East and Elsewhere; Deshen and Zenner; Oz, 3-23.

Jan 22-24 (3) Ethnic and Religious Patterns in the pre-state period; Doleve-Gendelman; Zohar


Feb 5-7 (5) Forms of settlement and subdued identities in the first generation: Willner; Cohen; Oz, 25-48.


Feb 19-21 (7) Religion and Identity in the Aftermath of the Six-Day War; El-Or and Aran; Oz, 101-123. Exercise relating to demography due on Feb. 19

Feb 26-28 (8) Critical revision in the study of Israeli society: Bernstein; Lewis,

Mar 4-6 (9) Evolving forms of Middle Eastern Religiosity: Bilu and Ben-Ari; Willis. 2d mid-term test on March 4

Mar 18-20 (10) Developments in the realms between Nationalism and Religion; Gabriel; Oz, 49-73.


Apr 1-3 (12) Immigration from the Soviet Union and its successor states: Remennick; Bram; Oz, 219-241

Apr 8-10 (13) Arabs in Israel; Forte; Oz, 75-84, 155-180.

Apr 15-17 (14) Liberal forms of Jewish Identity, and Review: Goldberg, “Conceptual and Pragmatic”; Sered; Oz, 125-153

April 22 Final Essay due