This course syllabus may be changed or modified by the instructor before and during the semester. Please use MyCourses to access the most recent document.

POLI 347: Arab-Israel Conflict, Crisis, Peace  
Fall 2019  

Professor: Daniel Douek, PhD (daniel.douek@mcgill.ca)  
Course Meetings: Wednesdays and Fridays 11:35AM-12:55PM, EVO420 109  
Office: Ferrier 460 Office Hours: TBA  

Teaching Assistants: TBA  

Course Description:  
The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the most intractable and multifaceted prolonged conflicts in modern times. Its divisions have cut across the international, domestic, communal, and religious levels, among others. Its key actors have often shifted: from pre-1948 violence between Jews and Arabs in British Mandatory Palestine, to the civil war that Israelis call the War of Independence and Palestinians call the Naqba (disaster). From 1948 until the end of the Cold War, the conflict played out primarily as a rivalry between Israel and the Arab states, including wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982. Since the First Intifada of 1987-93, the Palestinian struggle for independence from Israeli military rule in the West Bank and Gaza has re-emerged as the conflict’s fulcrum, and non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah have overshadowed the Arab States as the main combatants. Meanwhile, the rivalry between Israel and Iran – which is a Middle Eastern, but not an Arab country- has become one of the most dangerous contemporary global flashpoints. There have also been attempts to negotiate peace: successful ones, such as between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Jordan; and failures, most notably between Israel and Palestine. To this day, flare-ups of violence between these various actors continue to claim lives and to threaten wider war. We will study all of this, exploring the conflict’s many layers and relating it to broader International Relations concepts.  

Please Note: The Arab-Israeli conflict resonates deeply with many people, who are often strongly aligned with one side or another in the conflict; in recent years this has caused friction at many universities, including McGill and neighbouring Concordia. Disagreements and debates about the conflict, both in class and during TA conferences, are a valuable part of learning, and are welcome, so long as they are in good faith and expressed with civility; however, personal attacks, bigotry, insults, or slurs are at all times and in all ways unacceptable.  

Required Readings:  
*Course-pack available for purchase at the bookstore.  
Additional readings available on MyCourses or via hyperlink. See also Indiana University Press’s online database, Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace, for additional primary documents.
Recommended readings are not mandatory; they are intended to give you further perspective, and to serve as suggested sources for your research essay.

Requirements

Come to class prepared: Do all the assigned readings before class. This is important in order for you to be able to follow the lectures, which will build on (rather than just review) the readings, and for participation in your conferences.

Attend class and take notes: The lectures will not be recorded, and they will go far beyond the material in the textbook, so you will need to absorb and retain the lecture contents in order to succeed.

Check the course website regularly: I will post announcements and other key features of the course on MyCourses. I will remind you about this in class, but it is your responsibility to keep up with any and all online aspects of the course.

Keep up with the news: You’ll get more out of this class if you read the news regularly. Good news sources on the Middle East include Al-Jazeera, Haaretz, New York Times, BBC World, the Nation, the Financial Times, The Guardian, Washington Post, the Economist, Foreign Policy, among others.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION (10%): This includes attendance and participation in conference discussions and reflects both quality and quantity. Please note: You will lose the entire 10% if you have more than 3 unjustified conference absences.

IN-CLASS MIDTERM (20%): The midterm exam will be held in class on 11 October.

RESEARCH ESSAY (35%): The essay should be 10-12 double-spaced pages. I will post suggested essay topics on MyCourses on the week of 1 October. The essay is due in class on 20 November. You are welcome to choose your own essay topic, but in that case, make sure to get your TA to approve the topic beforehand. I will post an essay-writing guide on MyCourses, which you should follow carefully, and which will contain information about how to choose a topic and organize your essay.

FINAL EXAM (35%): To be scheduled by the University during the final exam period in December.

PLEASE NOTE: Late work submitted without a doctor’s note will be accepted with a penalty of 10% per day late. Excuses without a doctor’s note will not be accepted.

Make-up assignments will be offered only if a student misses an exam for a valid medical reason backed up by a doctor’s note. Please note that I cannot change the grading scheme if you are unhappy with your grade and wish to be granted special permission to complete a supplementary assignment for extra credit, or to have future work count for a greater percentage of your final grade. This would be unfair to the rest of the class.

It is the student’s responsibility to complete course work on time – printer issues and other technical malfunctions will not be taken as a valid excuse. Make sure to back up your work regularly.
Fair Warnings: Lateness is disruptive. Please do not arrive to class late. You may take notes on a laptop computer but be sure to switch off your ringer and put away all cell phones and other electronics before the start of class. Texting and using social media in the classroom is incredibly disruptive for students and teacher alike; I ask you all to refrain from electronically distracting yourselves, and in return, I pledge to make our class as riveting as I possibly can.

Students with disabilities: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a very serious offence. If you have any questions whatsoever about what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me at my office hours or email me. The University also has a comprehensive set of guidelines about how to avoid plagiarism, including a warning about consequences. Read the statement below:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

« L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/). »

Also:

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue). »

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
SCHEDULE OF COURSE READINGS

Week 1 (4 & 6 Sept.): Introduction
Syarkin, Marie. “David”
Caplan, Ch. 1-2, “Problems in Defining the Conflict,” and “Defining the Conflict, Nevertheless,” pp. 1-38
Recommended:

Week 2 (11 & 13 Sept.): Conflict Origins & Background
Caplan, Ch. 3 “Background to 1917,” pp. 41-55

Week 3: (18 & 20 Sept.): British Mandate to Independence/Nakba (TA Conferences Begin)
Recommended:
Benny Morris, “Revisiting the Palestinian exodus of 1948,” in Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (eds), The War for Palestine (Cambridge, 2001), 37-59
Herbert Sidebotham, “British interests in Palestine,” in Walid Khalidi, From Haven to Conquest, 125-142
Week 4: (25 & 27 Sept.): The 1956 and 1967 Wars
R.B. Parker. 1993. The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East, pp.3-58, available via the library website as an e-book
Recommended:
Michael Oren, “Did Israel want the Six Day War?" The Jerusalem Post 14/5/07

Week 5: (2 & 4 Oct.): Palestinian Militancy and the 1973 War
Caplan, Ch. 8, “Back to the Core: Israel and the Palestinians,” pp. 160-177
Recommended:

Week 6 (9 & 11 Oct.): Camp David Peace Talks and Midterm

9 Oct.: Camp David Peace Talks, 1977-79

11 Oct.: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

Week 7: (16 & 18 Oct.): Nuclear Deterrence and Israel’s 1982 Invasion of Lebanon

**Recommended:**

**Film:** Waltz with Bashir

**Week 8 (23 & 25 Oct.): Role of the US: The “Israel Lobby” Debate**

**First read:** Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, “The Israel Lobby” *London Review of Books* 23 March 2006.

**Then read:** Noam Chomsky, “The Israel Lobby” *ZNet Magazine*, March 2006.
Paul D. Miller. 2014. “Evangelicals, Israel, and US Foreign Policy” *Survival* Vol.26 No.1 pp.7-26

**Recommended:**

**Week 9: (30 Oct. & 1 Nov.): Diplomacy and External Actors During the Cold War**


**Recommended:**

Week 10: (6 & 8 Nov.): The First Intifada and the Oslo Peace Processes
Caplan, Ch. 10, “From Boycott to Mutual Recognition”

Recommended:

Week 11: (13 & 15 Nov.): The Second Intifada and the Gaza Wars

Recommended:
Charles Smith: “Israeli-Palestinian/Arab Negotiations and Agreements, 1993-1999,” in Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
Ross, The Missing Peace, pp. 256-349
Film: The Gatekeepers (available on Netflix)

Week 12 (20 & 22 Nov.): Israel, Iran and Hezbollah
Levitt, Matthew. 2015. Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God (Georgetown University Press), Chapters 1 and 12
Daniel Douek. 2018. “What Will Be the Endgame Between Israel and Iran?” Globe and Mail (May 11)
Amos Harel. 2018. “Why Iran Thinks It Has an ‘Insurance Policy’ Against an Israeli or U.S. Strike” Ha’aretz (17 August)

Recommended:

Byman, Daniel, and Bilal Saab. 2015. “Hezbollah Hesitates?” *Foreign Affairs* 21 January


**Week 13 – 27 November: Palestine and Israel – Two States or One State?**


WINEP, “Imaging the Border” - “Is Peace Possible?” Interactive Map. [http://www.ispeacepossible.com/howTo.htm](http://www.ispeacepossible.com/howTo.htm)

**Recommended:**

Yuval Diskin, “The changing face of the Middle East presents new opportunities for Israeli-Palestinian peace,” Ha’aretz 6 July 2014


Oren Yiftachel, “Colonial Deadlock or Confederation for Israel/Palestine?” Insight 87, 2013

Ari Shavit, “The old Mideast peace paradigm is dead; this is the new one,” Haaretz 3 July 2014


Final Class: (29 November) – The Conflict in the Era of Trump

Entous, Adam. 2018. “Israeli, Saudi, and Emirati Officials Privately Pushed for Trump to Strike a “Grand Bargain” with Putin” New Yorker (9 July)
Zonszein, Meirav. 2018. “Anti-Semitism doesn’t bother Benjamin Netanyahu if it comes from his political allies” Washington Post (13 July)