

San José State University
Political Science Department

POLS199
Israeli Democracy: Politics and Society – Constitutive Dilemma

Gayil Talshir PhD
Head, Center for Advanced Public Policy Training
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Mon/Wed 12:00-1:15pm
class number 50962
3 units

Fall 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Gayil Talshir
Office Location: Clark Hall 402F
Telephone: 408-924-8335 during office hours
Email: gayil.talshir@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 13.15-14.15 pm
Class Days/Time: Mon/Wed 12:00-1:15pm
Classroom: HGH 116

Course Format

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. are available on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking messages on Canvas to learn of any updates.

Course Description

This course explores the constitutive dilemma of Israeli politics and society in a comparative perspective. Is Israel more Jewish or More Democratic? Is it one nation/one People? Why is it the most representative party system in the world and is it a threat to democracy? What are the relationships among Political, Social, Economic and Cultural Inequalities? Why cannot Jews have Civil Marriage in Israel? Do social cleavages (ethnic, national, religious, lingual and cultural) overlap, thus enhancing exclusion, or intersect? Is it a 'Villa in the Jungle'? How did 'The Start Up Nation' become the leading OECD state in children poverty (second only to the US) and what does it mean to future economic growth? Does the Left/Right divide mean the same in Israel and other democracies? Why does Israel have no constitution and is the 'National Law' passed as a basic law threatens its democracy? Is Civil Society part of Politics? Can one be critical of Israeli policies without being antisemitic? How did the Rightwing governments of the last generation reshape the dominant ideology of Israeli Politics?

These and other question are discussed in the course, providing a thick analysis of the only democracy in the Middle East which is under political social and ideological transformation. Put in comparative analysis, we study the features of the crisis of advanced democracies through the case study of Israeli politics and society in an engaging course with case studies, simulations and debates.

Short Bio of Instructor

Gayil Talshir received her PhD from Oxford University at 1998. She is a Prof. of politics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the head of the Center for Advanced Public Policy Training. She is also the head of the MA Program in Public Policy for Top Government officials in Israel, and the President's Program for Academic Leadership. Her research interests are: the crisis of advanced democracy, the interrelationship between civil society and the party system and Israeli politics in comparative perspective. She is part of the IPSP (international social progress project) and a visiting scholar at San Jose University for 2017.

Course Goals

The Political Science Program Learning Outcomes are

- **Breadth**
Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- **Application**
Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- **Disciplinary methods**
Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.
- **Communication Skills**
Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to

apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

- **Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

- Comprehending processes that shaped Israeli democracy
- Understanding the interactions of the security, economic, social and cultural arena in Israel
- Analyzing constitutive dilemma of contemporary Israeli politics and society
- Being able to form, express and defend views on Israeli politics and society

Required Texts/Readings

In the course we will use the cutting edge 2 volumes 'Handbook of Israel: Major Debates' 2016. Other sources, materials and articles will be provided as we go along.

https://sjsu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_ebrary_pqbrary11283212&context=PC&vid=01CAL_SJO&search_scope=EVERYTHING&tab=everything&lang=en_US

other, more basic materials on Israel are available at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Learning is an active process. The assignments in this course are designed to engage students with the issues, encourage them to form their own views and be part of the on-going debates. The assignment will include a short quiz, oral presentation of a topic of your choice, discussions and simulations in class and of course reading and active participation in class.

Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

Evaluation is based on the following ingredients:

- Presence and active participation (+bonus up to 5 points) 10%
- Team short presentations 5x3=15%
- Dilemma position paper (7 minutes) presented in class 20%
- Quiz 5%
- Final exam 50%

The final examination is a closed book in-class exam, held on December 19, 9:45am-12:00pm

Grading Information

Determination of Grades

- Extra credit opportunities will be announced throughout the semester. Extra credit points are added to your total score and have the same weight as other scores. There is a limit of 5% extra credit points you can earn in this course.

Final letter grades are based on this scale

A only	95-100
A minus	90-94
B plus	85-89
B only	80-84
B minus	75-79
C plus	70-74
C only	65-69
C minus	60-64
D plus	55-59
F	<55

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

POLS 199 / Israeli Democracy – Fall 2017, Course Schedule

The schedule, and the syllabus, are subject to change with fair notice through Announcements in class and on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Dates	Topics	Case Study	Assignment
Aug 23	Introduction + case study	Nuclear Dilemma	Start-up quiz (no grade)
Aug 28, 30	7 wonders of Israel		
September 6, 11	Zionism: from Religion to National Movement	Nationalism arises: Political Zionism, Socialist Zionism, Cultural Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, Religious Zionism	
September 13	Simulation: 1904 Zionist Congress	Public debate on the cultural quest	Role playing 5 ideological streams
September 18, 20, 25, 27	Israel's wars and peace	War of Independence, ^ days war, October 1973 War, Peace with Egypt, Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process	Presenting war/peace events
October 2	Multi-cleavages society: multiculturalism revisited	US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, France, Spain, Israel	Comparative multicultural dilemma from world democracies
October 4, 9, 11	Ethnic, national, religious interplay	Mizrahi-Aschkenazi Arab-Israeli, Secular-ultra-orthodox	
October 16, 18	Economics	From egalitarianism to unequal start-up nation	Start-up nation optional task
October 23, 25, 30 Nov 1	Politics and democracy	Party system, ideological families, Left/Rightwing governments	
November 6	Dilemma 1: justice – economic equality vs. politics of recognition: Shas	SHAS	Comparative dilemma from the US

Dates	Topics	Case Study	Assignment
November 8	Dilemma 2: Arab Israelis or Exiled Palestinians?	The 5 year plan	
November 13	Dilemma 3: Melting pot vs. Multiculturalism	Public Education	
November 15	Dilemma 4: Jewish AND Democratic?	IDI Democracy Index	Jewish National Law rhetorical rope pulling
November 20	Dilemma 5: anti-democratic legislation?	Jewish National State Basic Law	
November 27	Dilemma 6: Social protest vs institutional reform	2011 social protest between Arab Spring and 99%	Europe Vs US democracies
December 4	Dilemma 7: Israel-Middle East	Villa in the Jungle?	Comparative dilemma
December 6	Dilemma 8: Israel and US special relationship?	Iran, Syria and the moderate Arab states	
December 11	Dilemma 9: Crisis of Democracy?		
December 19	9:00am-12:00pm		Final exam + quiz