

DGSE1001

History of Modern Israel and the Holocaust

Dr. Sheila Gyllenberg

Day and time of course:

Oct. 14 – Dec. 16, 2026
Wednesdays, 16:00-19:00

Email: Sheila@biblecollege.co.il

School year: 2026-2027

Course Description

This course will give an overview of the History of the State of Israel from the vision to establish a nation-state for the Jewish people to the present. The course will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of establishing a Jewish nation-state, both in Jewish and Christian thought. It will overview the years of the Holocaust and their influence on the establishment of Israel. The course will bring to life the key players and events that made the vision a reality. It will give an overview of the history of the State of Israel during the first 78 years of its existence: institutions, immigration, conflicts and successes. The course will discuss the tensions in Israeli Society: religious and secular, Jews and minorities, democracy and theocracy.

Learning Outcome

1. The students will understand the history of the Jewish people in the diaspora and the Land of Israel.
2. The students will be able to present a framework of key events and people that led to the establishment of the State of Israel.
3. The students will be able to explain the effect the Holocaust had on the establishment of the state and the Jewish community in Israel.
4. The students will be able to contextualize issues in Israeli society.

Course Structure

The lessons will be held through a Zoom format, consisting of lectures and interactive discussions between all participants. There will be 10 three-hour (with breaks) live zoom lectures. Recordings will be available to registered students.

Main Texts

- PDF Articles for each week (available at the course's website)
- Gilbert, Martin. *Israel: A History*. (Doubleday, 1998).

Requirements and Grading

Active participation during all lessons and fulfillment of reading assignments for next lesson (all ten articles/chapters are available at the course's website); each week, students must report the percentage of the material read. If a student misses a live zoom, they should report whether or not they listened to the recording of the lecture.	20%
Reading Assignments: Students must choose <i>two books</i> , one from each list below and submit <i>two written reports</i> consisting of a personal reflection for each of the books; <i>300 words</i> for each book; uploaded to itsLearning by Jan 8, 2027 .	30%
Final Paper: Students must choose one topic from the list below and write a paper consisting of various perspectives on the chosen subject, together with a personal reflection. <i>2000-3000 words</i> , using <i>at least 5 bibliographical citations</i>); uploaded to itsLearning by Jan 22, 2027	50%
Total Grade	100%

Reading Reports (choose *two books* for reading assignment, one from each list):

- Please choose one book from list A:

Crombie, Kelvin. *For the Love of Zion*. (Hodder and Stoughton, 1991)

Gorny, Gurion-Arie, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882–1948* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage* (Beacon Press, 2006)

- Please choose one book from list B:

Netanyahu, Benzion. *The Founding Fathers of Zionism*. (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2012).

St. John, Robert. *Tongue of the Prophets*. (N. Hollywood, CA: Wilshire Book Company, 1952)

Kollek, Teddy and Kollek, Amos. *For Jerusalem: A Life*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978)

Meir, Golda. *My Life*. (Jerusalem: Steimatsky, 1975.)

Class dates and topics for each lesson

Date	Topics	Reading Assignment
Oct 14	Overview of the History of the Jewish People from 70 CE to 1880. Part 1: Jews in the Land of Israel and the Diaspora in the Late Roman, Byzantine, Early Arab and Crusade/Ayyubid periods Part 2: Jews in the Land of Israel in the Mameluke and Ottoman Periods Part 3: Jewish in the Diaspora from Medieval Times to Enlightenment	Sacher, the Course of Modern Jewish History, 36-90
Oct 21	Replacement theology and restoration theology. Part 1: Overview of Christian Theology from Pseudo-Barnabas to Luther Part 2: Restoration theology –Cromwell and British Christian Zionism, German Templers Part 3: the First Aliya	Laqueur (1972), 441-504.
Oct 28	Zionism in Europe 1) Jewish thinkers in the Enlightenment 2) Zionism – Herzl and other leaders in the late 19 th century 3) Practical Zionism in the early 20 th Century	Sachar, A History of Israel, 3-88.

Nov 4	1900-1918 Part 1: Second Aliya and the emergence of the Kibbutz and Moshav Movements. Part 2: WWI and the Jewish Brigade. Part 3: Ben Gurion and Chaim Weizmann	Hertzberg, 368-384, 546-589, 605-619
Nov 11	1919-1947 Part 1: The British Mandate, Mufti Amin el-Huseini, the Jewish Agency Part 2: The Third Aliya (1919-1921) and the Fourth Aliya (1924-1928), Hebrew university, Hebron Massacre. Part 3: Fifth Aliya (1929-1939), rise of Nazism in Germany, Settlement of the western Negev and the White Paper.	Gilbert, 36-162
Nov 18	Guest Lecturer: the Holocaust Part 1: Factors leading up to the Holocaust Part 2: Key events between 1939-1945 – ghettos, concentration camps, pogroms and death marches Part 3: Aftermath of the Holocaust – Emigration, Aliyah and Theological Crises	Dawidowicz, 3-106
Nov 25	1946-1963 Part 1: Illegal Aliya movement, Jewish Undergrounds, Part 2: War of Independence, Establishment of the State of Israel, Part 3: The 1956 Sinai Campaign, Jordanian and Egyptian Rule, Fedayeen incursions.	Gilbert, 153-358
Dec 2	1964-1981 Part 1: Founding of the PLO, the six-day war, Jerusalem reunited, the War of Attrition, Expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, Part 2: Yom Kippur War, Establishment of Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights, Part 3: Peace with Egypt, Founding of the Christian Embassy.	Gilbert, 349-495
Dec 9	1982-2006 Part 1: Operation Peace for Galilee, Lebanon and the Security Zone, Amal and Hezbollah, Fatah and Hamas, Part 2: the First Intifada, Kuwait, Iraq and the First Gulf War, Madrid Conference, Oslo Accords, peace with Jordan, Part 3: Second Intifada, Gaza withdrawal, Second Lebanese War,	Gilbert, 496-619
Dec 16	2007-2026 Part 1: Hamas takeover of Gaza and campaigns against Israel. Civil War in Syria. Hezbollah and Iran. Part 2: Oct 7 and Operation Iron Swords, Part 3: Israel Society today: demographics and democracy.	TBA

Research Assignments:

- 1) The effect of the Holocaust on Jewish perceptions of God and the Jewish religion
- 2) The effect of Israel's Wars on Evangelical perceptions of Israel
- 3) Perceptions of God's role in History among the early Zionist theorists
- 4) A subject of interest to the student (with permission of the instructor).

Bibliography

- Almog, Oz.** *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (University of California Press, 2000).
- Bregman, Ahron.** *Israel's Wars, 4th ed.* (Routledge, 2016).
- Caplan, Kimmy and Guy Ben-Porat (eds.).** *Israeli Judaism* (Brill, 2013)
- Crombie, Kelvin.** *For the Love of Zion.* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1991)
- Dawidowicz, Lucy.** *The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945.* (New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1975.)
- Friedländer, Saul.** *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (HarperCollins / Yale University Press, 2007)
- Gelber, Yoav.** *Palestine 1948* (Sussex Academic Press, 2006).
- Gilbert, Martin.** *Israel: A History* (Doubleday, 1998).
- Gorny, Gurion-Arie,** *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882–1948* (Oxford University Press, 1987).
- Hertzberg, Arthur.** *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader.* (Philadelphia: the Jewish Publication Society, 1997)
- Khalidi, Rashid.** *The Iron Cage* (Beacon Press, 2006)
- Kollek, Teddy and Kollek, Amos.** *For Jerusalem: A Life.* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978)
- Laqueur, Walter.** *A History of Zionism* (Schocken, 2003 ed.)
- Lavie, Smadar.** *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel* (Berghahn, 2014)
- Leventhal, Barry.** *Where Was God? Theological Perspectives on the Holocaust.* (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2023).
- Meir, Golda.** *My Life.* (Jerusalem: Steimatsky, 1975.)
- Netanyahu, Benzion.** *The Founding Fathers of Zionism.* (Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House, 2012)
- Reinharz, Jehuda and Shapira, Anita,** eds. *Essential Papers on Zionism.* (New York: New York University Press, 1996)
- Rozin, Orit.** *The Rise of the Individual in 1950s Israel* (Brandeis University Press, 2011)
- Sachar, Howard M.** *The Course of Modern Jewish History.* (New York: Delta, 1958.)
- , *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time. 3rd ed. Revised and updated* (Knopf, 2007)
- Shafir, Gershon and Yoav Peled,** *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)
- Shapira, Anita.** *Israel: A History* (Brandeis University Press, 2012)
- Shenhav, Yehouda.** *The Arab Jews* (Stanford University Press, 2006)
- St. John, Robert.** *Tongue of the Prophets.* (N. Hollywood, CA: Wilshire Book Company, 1952)