This course explores the Israeli political system, its institutional characteristics and components, and its main political dilemmas. The course aims to provide knowledge about Israeli political history and society. Topics included will be the origins and the development of the political system, electoral histories, and government formation. Attention is given to the dynamics between institutional arrangements and social cleavages in Israel and their interrelated effects. The course also discusses some of the main socio-political issues and tensions resulting from the dual definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, religion and politics, and the effects of armed conflicts on politics and society. The course requires no previous knowledge about Israel.

Examination and Grading: Students will have a mid-term exam (25%), short assignment(s) (15%), and write a final examination (60%). Class participation in encouraged and may count up to an additional 10% bonus of the final grade. Students will also send weekly reflection paragraphs on the subjects and readings discussed in class.

Students are advised to follow the Israeli daily Haaretz: [www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com)

There is no grading curve in this course.

Course textbooks:

1. Historical Background

Primary Sources:
The First Zionist Congress. 1897. The Zionist Congress, In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 21.

Additional recommended reading:
Hertzl, Theodor. [1896]. The Jewish State; The Old New Land (Altneuland) [1902].

2. **International and Geographical Dimensions, and the Beginning of Internal Conflicts**
   - Balfour Declaration. 1917. In *Israel in the Middle East*, p. 29.
   - The Biltmore Program. 1942. In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 54-55.

Class ‘Toward Jewish Statehood’:
Readings from *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 56-83, 87-92.

3. **Introduction to the Israeli Constitutional System**
     - Chapter 5: The Prime Minister and the Knesset, pp. 141-169.
     - Chapter 6: Political Parties and Interest Groups, pp. 171-191.
     - Chapter 7: The Electoral Process and Voting Behavior.

Suggested reading:


   - Readings from *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 102-179.

Additional recommended reading:


5. **The 1964-1977 Period: The Growth of Political Blocks, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War and its aftermath**

   The formation of a Center-Right-Wing Bloc. In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 179-183.
   The Six Days War. In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 208-226
   The Yom Kippur War. In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 258-286

   Additional recommended reading:

6. **1977-1980: From the Political Overturn to the Camp David Accords**

   Menachem Begin. 1977. In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 179-183
   *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 301-305, 312-314.

   Additional recommended reading:

7. **The 1980s Stalemate and the first Intifada I: Political Deadlock in the Face of Ideological Polarization and Radicalization**

   Domestic Issues In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 412-418.

   Additional recommended reading:
8. **The 1980s Stalemate and the first Intifada II: Political Deadlock in the Face of Ideological Polarization and Radicalization**


Additional recommended reading:


9. **The Turbulent 1990s I: The Gulf-War, Madrid, Oslo, and Rabin’s Murder**


Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Oranization, In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 490-493, 502-505


Additional recommended reading:


10. **The Turbulent 1990s II: The Gulf-War, Madrid, Oslo, and Rabin’s Murder**

Israel Supreme Court, In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 450-456.


Ehud Eiran. Revolution and Counterrvolution: The Israeli Supreme Court from the 1980s Onwards, In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 484-487.
Additional recommended reading:


Micha Feldman. The Ethiopian Emigration, In *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 421-422.


Additional recommended reading:


Additional recommended reading:
