Palestine Under The British Mandate: Origins, Evolutions and Implications, 1890 - 1949

This course examines how and with what consequences British interests at the time of the First World War identified and pursued control over Palestine, the subsequent forms such projections took, the crises which followed and their eventual consequences. Particular themes will be explored through analytical discussions of assigned historiographic materials, chiefly recent primary research-based journal literature.

**Learning Objectives:** Students will be encouraged to evaluate still-contested historical phenomena such as British undertakings with Zionism, colonialist relationships with Arab Palestine, institution-making and economic development, social and cultural transformations, resistance and political violence. This will be understood in the broader context of Middle Eastern politics in the era of late European colonial imperialism. Consonant and particular local experience in Palestine will also be addressed, exploring the effect of British Mandatory administration, especially in ethnic and sectarian-inflected questions of status, social and material conditions, identity, community, law and justice, expression and political rights. Finally, how and why did the Mandate end in a British debacle, Zionist triumph and Arab Palestinian catastrophe, with what main legacies resulting?

On the basis of these studies students will each complete a research essay from the list below, along with a number of smaller critical exercises, and a final examination.

**Course Work and Assessment:** Course marks will be compiled as follows: Term paper, 40%; final examination, 40%; course work 20%. The latter will be comprise attendance, contribution to class discussions and working atmosphere, and short document, article and book analyses in class.

**Course Texts:** although class sessions will be based on discussing selected items of historical literature relating to particular themes in each topic, the following survey works provide a useful preparatory overview:


**Our Ten Discussion Topics are:**

1. **History, Palestine and the Mandate Period:**

Preparatory Reading Materials: Segev pp. 1-10; Krämer, Chapter 8.


2. **A Changing Palestine Before the British: Identity, Space and Emerging Modernity.**

Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 4.


3. **Britain, the First World War and the Conceptualization of a Post-Ottoman Order.**

Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 7; Segev, Chapters 3 and 4.


4. **Institutionalizing, Yet Qualifying, the Jewish National Home: Britain Shapes the Mandate, 1918-1925.**

Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 9. Segev, Chapters 5, 6 and 8.


Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 11.


Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 8; Segev, Chapters 8-10.


Preparatory Readings: Segev, Chapter 9.

Ben Ze’ev, Na’am, ‘“I Came Naive from the Village’; on Palestinian Urbanism and Ruralism in Haifa under the British Mandate, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 47, 2 (2020).


8. **Political Violence, Advancement of and Resistance to Imperial, Zionist and Palestine Arab Desiderata, 1920-1939.**

Preparatory Reading: Krämer, Chapters 10 and 12. Segev, Chapters 14 and 20.

Chazan, Meir, ‘The Dispute in Mapai over “Self-Restraint” and “Purity of Arms” during the Arab Revolt,’ *Jewish Social Studies*, 15, 3 (2009).


9. **From the Peel Commission to UNCSOP: Britain and the Disposal of the Mandate, 1937-1947.**

Preparatory Readings: Krämer, Chapter 13; Segev, Chapters 21 and 22.


10. **The Mandate’s Demise: the Denouement of 1948 and Its Implications.**

Preparatory Readings:


**Research Essays.** Students must complete one, to be submitted no later than class session 13. The following eleven titles, with attached reading suggestions are recommended for students to choose from, although they may originate a title and sources of their own, by agreement with the course instructor.

1. **What are the principal interpretative, theoretical and methodological debates and challenges on the origins, character and course of the Mandatory period in Palestine?**


2. Which Constituencies Defined the Cultural, Social and Political Space of Palestine Before 1918, and With What Implications for Subsequent Debates on Their National Status?

Alroey, Gur,  
*An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 2014).

Ben-Bassat, Yuval, and Ginio, Eyal (eds.)  

Brownson, Elizabeth,  
‘Colonialism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Teaching History in Mandate Palestine,’  

Campos, Michelle U.,  
*Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine*, (Stanford; Stanford University Press, 2011).

Idem.,  
‘Between “Beloved Ottomania” and “The Land of Israel”: The Struggle over Ottomanism and Zionism among Palestine’s Sephardi Jews, 1908-1913,”  

Fishman, Louis,  
*Jews and Palestinians in the Late Ottoman Era, 1908–1914: Claiming the Homeland*, (Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

Gerber, Haim,  
*Remembering and Imagining Palestine: Identity and Nationalism from the Crusades to the Present*, (Basingstoke; Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Gilbar, Gad, (ed.)  

Jacobson Abigail,  
‘A City Living through Crisis: Jerusalem During World War I,’  
Kark, Ruth,  

Kark, Ruth and Oren, Michael,  

Khalidi, Rashid,  

Kimmerling, Baruch, and Migdal, Joel,  

Kushner, David,  

Lehmann, Matthias,  

Mandel, Neville J.,  

Shafir, Gershon,  

Yazbak, Mahmoud,  

3. **What Motivated British Interests in the Future of Palestine During the First World War and Why With So Many Apparent Contradictions?**

Bar-Yosef, Eitan,  

Burman, John,  

Charlwood, D.  

Cohen, Michael,  

Fisher, John,  

Fromkin, David  

Gilmour, David,  


Immanuel, Jon, *Britain, the Bible, and Balfour: Mandate for a Jewish State, 1530–1917*, (Lanham, MD; Lexington Books, 2019).


Lewis, Geoffrey, *Balfour and Weizmann: the Zionist, the Zealot and the Emergence of Israel*, (London; Continuum Press, 2009).


4. **How Far Did Zionist Pursuit of the Jewish National Home Entail Inevitable Cultural, Economic and Territorial Exclusion for Arab Palestinians Between 1917 and 1937?**


Bernstein, Deborah *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine*, (Albany; SUNY Press, 2005).


Goren, Tamir, Efforts to Establish and Arab Workers’ Neighbourhood in British Mandatory Palestine,’ *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42, 6 (2007).


Kimmerling, Baruch, *The Economic Relationship Between the Arab and Jewish Communities in Mandatory Palestine*, (Cambridge, MA; Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1979).


5. What Were the Most Salient Characteristics of British Administration In Mandatory Palestine and Its Significant Evolutions, If Any, Up to 1945?


Kroizer, Gad, ‘From Dowbiggin to Tegart: Revolutionary Change in the Colonial Police in Palestine During the 1930s,’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 32, 2 (2004).


Pedersen, Susan, ‘The Impact of League Oversight on British Policy in Palestine,’ in Miller, Rory (ed.), *Palestine, Britain and Empire: The Mandate Years*, (London; Ashgate, 2010).


6. Evaluate the Main Centrifugal and Centripetal Aspects, Convergences and Cleavages, in Arab Palestine’s Polity, Society and Culture During the Mandate.


7. What Challenges, Addressed How Successfully, Faced Attempted Zionist Community and Cultural Formation in Mandatory Palestine Up to 1939?


Avineri, Shlomo, Arlosoroff, (London; Peter Halborn, 1989).


Mann, Barbara, A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv, and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space, (Stanford; Stanford University Press 2006).


Rothbard, Sharon, *White City, Black City – Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa*, (Cambridge, MA; Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2015).


Simmons, Erica *Hadassah and the Zionist Project*, (Lanham, MD; Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).


8. Why and With What Effects Did Arab Palestine Rise in Armed Rebellion against Britain Between 1936 and 1939?


Chazan, Meir, ‘The Dispute in Mapai Over “Self-Restraint” and “Purity of Arms” During the Arab Revolt,’ *Jewish Social Studies*, 15, 3 (2009).


Ghandour, Zeina, A Discourse on Domination in Mandate Palestine: Imperialism, Property and Insurgency, (London; Routledge, 2009).

Hughes, Matthew Britain’s Pacification of Palestine: The British Army, the Colonial State, and the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939, (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2019).


9. **How and How Far Did the Second World War Shift Political and Economic Realities and Perceptions of What Could and Should Be Done in Palestine?**


Herf, Jeffrey, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, (New Haven; Yale University Press, 2009).


Scharfman, Daphna, *Palestine in the Second World War: Strategic Plans and Political Dilemmas – the Emergence of a New Middle East*, (Eastbourne; Sussex Academic Press, 2014).


Wildangel, Renee, ‘More Than the Mufti: Other Arab-Palestinian Voices on Nazi Germany, 1933-1945, and their Post-War Narrations,’ in Gershoni, Israel, (ed.), *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion*, (Austin; University of Texas Press, 2014).

Zertal, Idith, *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1998)


11. Why Did Para-Militarized Zionist Pressures After 1944 Force Britain to Abandon the Palestine Mandate?


Miller, Rory, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish state in Palestine, 1945-1948*, (London; Frank Cass, 2000).

To what comparative extent was the course of Zionism to 1952 a fulfillment of or a liberation from imperialist and colonialist projections?


Vital, David, *Zionism, the Formative Years*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1982).

Idem., *Zionism, the Crucial Phase*, (Oxford University Press, 1987).