The course will examine the Israeli-Palestinian conflict largely from an ideological perspective, as reflective of two competing, and to some extent, constructed nationalist narratives. In particular, the role of religion (Islam and Judaism, respectively) as a basis of corresponding proto-nationalist identities will be considered, likewise, the extent to which religion has informed both Zionist/Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms, for instance, by way of legitimizing respective claims to what is a contested territory. Notably, both nationalisms are considered as case studies of the role of religion vis-à-vis nationalism in a phenomenological sense. Related to this, other nationalisms will be considered, particularly those where religion has come to constitute a defining aspect of respective national identities (such as has been evident of late, for instance, with many of the various populist movements that have emerged worldwide over the last few decades).

Our Approach

The course will largely be based on the assigned readings, and related discussion and written assignments (some formal, some not), though occasionally there will be what might be deemed mini-lectures by way of providing some basic background as might prove necessary. Each week, one or two (depending on how many students we have!) students will be expected to take the lead on the related topic, via a formal presentation, one that ideally highlights the main points, but which also poses questions designed to generate further, meaningful discussion. Detailed directions regarding assigned readings and related assignments will be provided on blackboard, under “Course Materials and Assignments.” There is also a detailed course schedule on blackboard, under “Course Information.”
Required Text & Readings

For this course, you are required to purchase the following two texts indicated below. All additional readings will be made available as pdf files on-line as we go along.

ISBN: 978-0192840981

J. Christopher Soper and Joel S. Fetzer, *Religion and Nationalism in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018),


Evaluation & Requirements of Students

**In-class participation:** Ultimately, this course is first and foremost about participation, as a good deal of what we will be doing is discussing assigned readings. Needless to say, participation in the academic activity of each course is a significant component of the learning process and plays a major role in determining overall student academic achievement. Critical then is that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings! Otherwise, it will be difficult to take part in discussion in a meaningful way. Having said that, I do recognize that some students are more naturally talkative than others! (-: Hence why I will occasionally solicit comments from students and why any final determination regarding your performance in this regard will be based more on, shall we say, quantity than quality (the latter meaning, by the way, not that you arrived at the same understanding of the reading that I did, but rather that it demonstrates a serious engagement with it). Participation will count for 20% towards your final mark. Please note that periodically I will appraise you of how you are doing in this regard, though you are certainly encouraged to consult with me if you are not sure where you stand.

**Blackboard discussion:** In connection with the assigned readings—and in preparation for class discussion—you will be required to post summaries/take-aways on blackboard in the respective discussion forums created for that purpose. In most cases, you will also be expected to respond to other students’ postings and/or my feedback on yours. Among other things, my feedback will provide guidance as to how you are doing with these kinds of assignments, though as always, you are more than welcome to consult with me if you are unsure regarding your performance in this regard. Blackboard discussion will count for 20% towards your final mark.

**In-class presentations:** Every student will be responsible for leading discussion for one class. We will sort out who goes when are first class, but basically the point is to summarize the assigned readings, identify main theses/points, and then pose a series of questions designed to generate discussion (and regarding which, you should have some thoughts yourself!) While not required, you might certainly include visual aids—for instance, handouts highlighting key points and/or
structuring discussion—such as the room’s technology allows. Your in-class presentation will count for 25% towards your final mark.

**Final paper:** You are required to do one essay for this course, on a topic of your choice, though it should correspond to the subject-matter of the course, defined rather broadly. (For instance, it is conceivable that the paper might examine a region other than the Middle East as a kind of case study of the phenomenon being examined in class! The main thing is that it should deal with nationalism and religion in a phenomenological sense—meaning, for instance, that you cannot do a paper aimed at providing an historical overview of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict! Conversely, a paper on the role of religion in the formulation of Lebanese identity would be acceptable.) You will be developing your paper in stages over the course of the semester, related to which there will be a series of smaller assignments, the deadlines for which will be indicated when assigned. Please note that these smaller paper-related assignments are absolutely required! Failure to turn them in on time will result in significant deductions from the final mark on your paper.

The final paper, which is due **December 20th**, should be no less than 1500-2000 words (roughly between 5 and 6 pages double-spaced), should have a proper bibliography and citations (footnotes), and will count for 35% towards your final mark. Read your sources closely, argue logically, and back up your arguments with citations (footnotes) to indicate whence you got your information. Make sure also to include a proper introduction and conclusion. Concerning sources, you should have at minimum five for your essay, all of which must be proper articles or books. (And yes, you can use the readings assigned for class!) By the way, this does not mean that you cannot use the internet, and indeed, many proper academic articles and books can be accessed electronically. These should be distinguished, however, from internet sources like Wikipedia, blogs, well, let’s just say most of what you might come up with via a basic google search. Don’t worry! I will be providing much guidance and feedback along the way in order to ensure that you are doing a proper search and coming up with proper sources.

In terms of format, all final papers should be typed using a standard 12-point font (e.g., Times New Roman). Double-space the text, use one-inch margins on all sides, and number each page. Make sure to check for spelling, grammar and punctuation, as these will affect your final grade. On the title page, include the title, your name, the date, and a word count. Again, a bibliography and footnotes are absolutely required, and both should be properly formatted (regarding which, again, I will be providing extensive guidance and feedback as needed!). **Warning! The absence of either (properly formatted) will result in a serious deduction of points!** Overly short essays (less than the required 1500 words) will also result in a serious deduction of points!

**Late work:** Please note also that the late submission of assignments is heavily discouraged. There will be a seven-day grace period after assigned deadlines, during which late submissions will be accepted, but with a ten-point deduction. No assignments will be accepted after the grace period, resulting in that assignment receiving a zero. This includes the smaller, final essay-related assignments!
Grading:

- In-class participation 20%
- Blackboard discussion 20%
- In-class presentation 25%
- Final paper 35%

Attendance Policy

Please note that no electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops) are allowed in class. Please note also that the following will negatively affect your participation mark: Coming to class late, leaving class early, sleeping in class, talking, doing work for other courses, walking in and out of the room, playing on your phone or any other electronic device.

Special Needs

Any student who has a documented learning disability, handicapping condition, or any other special need is advised to promptly contact Disability Services and bring a letter indicating accommodations needed. Please do this at the beginning of the semester.

Late Work & Making Up Work

If you are not in class for any reason, it is your responsibility to get the information you missed. Please set up a “buddy” system at the beginning of the semester and exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates so that you can call them about the materials covered in class and any updated information. It is imperative that you do assignments on time, not least given that the idea is that they prepare you for class discussion—i.e., posting a summary of assigned readings after we’ve done them becomes something of a moot point in that regard. In any case, late work will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day, except in the case of a valid excuse (such as an illness verified by a doctor’s note). Extensions will only be granted in emergency situations and must be requested in writing before the due date of the assignment.

On Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one’s own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with me. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC’s Web site, www bmcc.cuny.edu. For more information, please see the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity: http://web.cuny.edu/academics/info-central/policies/academic-integrity.pdf
Office Hours

Office hours are another useful tool, and you are strongly encouraged to come see me with any questions or concerns you might have. If you cannot see me during the scheduled office hours (which, a reminder, take place on the BMCC campus), please do not hesitate to make an appointment. Please also feel free to e-mail me with any questions or concerns you might have. I will do my best to respond as promptly as possible!
Course Schedule (Tentative!)

Week 1 (August 30th) – Nationalism from a historian’s perspective- both real and constructed

Steven Grosby, Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction
Benedict Anderson’s “Imagined Communities” in Nationalism, pp. 89-96
John Hutchinson’s “Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration” in Nationalism, pp. 122-131

Week 2 (September 6th) – Nationalism and religion

J. Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer’s “A Theory of Religion and Nationalism” in Religion and Nationalism in Global Perspective, pp. 1-31
Francis Robinson’s “Islam and Nationalism” in Nationalism, pp. 214-217
Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski’s “The Roots of Supra-Egyptian Nationalism” in Redefining the Egyptian Nation, pp. 1-31

Week 3 (September 13th) – Compartmentalizing religion in national identity – Zionism and Judaism

J. Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer’s “Israel: Unstable Civil-Religious Nationalism” in Religion and Nationalism in Global Perspective, pp. 73-109
Richard Libowitz’s “Zionism: Introducing the Topic,” Shofar, pp. 2-7
Eliezer Don-Yehiya’s “Zionism in Retrospective,” Modern Judaism, pp. 267-276

Week 4 (September 20th) – Liberal Ottomanism versus Islamic Ottomanism

Michelle Campos’ Ottoman Brothers, Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early 20th Century Palestine, pp. 59-92, 224-244
Julia Phillips Cohen’s “Between Civic and Islamic Ottomanism: Jewish Imperial Citizenship in the Hamidian Era,” IJMES, pp. 237-255
Hamit Bozarslan’s “The Ottomanism of the Non-Turkish Groups: The Arabs and Kurds after 1908,” Die Welt des Islams, pp. 317-335

Week 5 (no in-person meeting) – Compartmentalizing religion in national identity – Arabism and Islam

Erik Freas’ Muslim-Christian Relations in Late Ottoman Palestine, Where Nationalism and Religion Intersect, pp. 19-32
Elizabeth Thompson’s “Rashid Rida and the 1920 Syrian-Arab Constitution”
Israel Gershoni’s “Rejecting the West: The Image of the West in the Teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood, 1928-1939,” pp. 370-390
Week 6 (no in-person meeting) – The centrality of Jerusalem

Erik Freas’ “Introduction” through “Jerusalem is Ground Zero” in Nationalism and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, pp. 1-48
Arieh Bruce Saposnik’s “Wailing Walls and Iron Walls: The Western Wall as Sacred Symbol in Zionists National Iconography,” The American Historical Review, pp. 1653-1681

Week 7 (October 11th) – The Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount – Secular or Religious?


Week 8 (October 18th) – The Six Day War – Zionism as religious redemption

Erik Freas’ “The Six Day War and Its Aftermath” and “Jewish Fundamentalism” in Nationalism and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, pp. 97-112, 139-159
Mordechai Inbari’s “The Role of the Temple Mount Faithful Movement in Changing Messianic Religious Zionists’ Attitude Toward the Temple Mount” in Next Year in Jerusalem, pp. 247-264
Lilly Weissbrod’s “Religion as National Identity in a Secular Society,” Review of Religious Research, pp. 188-205

Week 9 (October 25th) – The Six Day War – The failure of Nasserism and secular Arab nationalism

Shadi Hamid’s “The End of Nasserism: How the 1967 War Opened Space for Islamism in the Arab World,” Brookings Institution
G.E.K.’s “Arab Nationalism and ‘Nasserism’,” The World Today, pp. 532-542
Patrizia Manduchi’s “Arab Nationalism(s): Rise and Decline of an Ideology,” Oriente Moderno, pp. 4-35
‘Abd ar-Rahman al-Bazzaz & Sylvia Haim’s “Islam and Arab Nationalism,” Die Welt des Islams, pp. 201-218

Week 10 (November 1st) – “Religiousizing” the landscape

Erik Freas’ “Archaeology and Creating Facts on the Ground” in Nationalism and the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, pp. 113-138
Wendy Pullan and Maximilian Gwiazda’s “Designing the Biblical Present in Jerusalem’s ‘City of David’” in Memory Culture and the Contemporary City, pp. 106–125
Week 11 (November 8th) – Political Islam – replacing Arab nationalism or Islamizing it?

Craig Larkin and Michael Dumper’s “In Defense of Al-Aqsa: The Islamic Movement Inside Israel and the Battle for Jerusalem,” *Middle East Journal*, pp. 31–52

Week 12 (November 15th) – A comparative approach-Islam and other national identities

J. Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer’s “Malaysia: Unstable Religious Nationalism” in *Religion and Nationalism in Global Perspective*, pp. 133-160
Shahram Akbarzadeh’s “Political Islam in Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan,” *Central Asian Survey*, pp. 451-465

Week 13 (November 22nd) – “Othering” on the basis of religion

David Shiper’s *Arab and Jew, Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, 138-177
Glen Bowman’s “Nationalizing the Sacred: Shrines and Shifting Identities in the Israeli-Occupied Territories,” *Man*, pp. 431-460
Erella Grassiani’s “Moral Othering at the Checkpoint: The Case of Israeli Soldiers and Palestinian Civilians,” *Critique of Anthropology*, pp. 373-388

Week 14 (November 29th) – Romanticist national identity and religion

Dieter Düding’s “The Nineteenth-Century German Nationalist Movement as a Movement of Societies” in *Nation-Building in Central Europe*, pp. 19-49
Anna M. Królíkowska’s “The Question of the Persistence of Romantic Nationalism in Poland with Regard to its Religious Aspects,” *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, pp. 441-459

Week 15 (December 6th) – Populism and religion today

*The Economist*, “Russia’s Reactionary Turn, The Cult of War,” March 26, 2022
Bill Park’s “Populism and Islamism in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies*, pp. 169-175

Week 16 (December 13th) – Wrapping Up

Final Paper due – December 20th