

ISRL330/JWST334/HIST377:

Mizrahi Identity in Israel

Fall 2023

MW 11:00am - 12:15pm

KEY 0116

Office hours: Thursday 1:00 pm-2:00pm

Instructor: Shay Hazkani

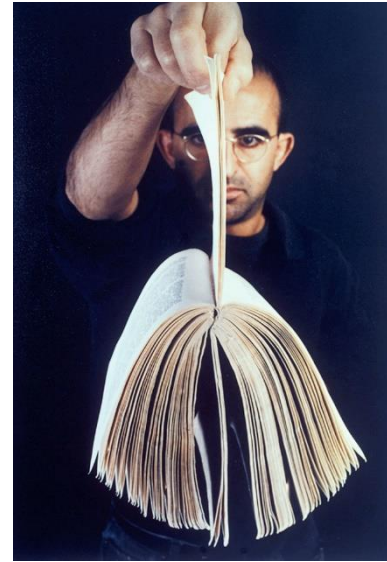
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Course Summary:

In 1997 Meir Gal, an Israeli-born artist of Mizrahi descent, presented his latest artwork “Nine Out of Four Hundred: The West and the Rest,” an image in which he is holding his high school textbook on the history of the Jewish people by the 9-page section of the book devoted to the history of Jews from Arab lands. The image was intended to critique what Gal believes is the attempt by Israel to systematically erase the complex identity and rich history of Mizrahi Jews who immigrated to Israel, while downplaying their continued struggle against racism and search for equality in Israel. Indeed, it is impossible to understand Israeli society today without examining the Mizrahi experience. Jews of Mizrahi origin represent a major part of Israeli society and Ashkenazi-Mizrahi relations continue to be a major source of tension in Israeli society and politics. This course examines Israeli history through a Mizrahi lens. It also takes a closer look at the Mizrahi struggle for equality through its various milestones: the 1959 Wadi Salib Revolt, the Black Panthers Movement in the 1970s, the emergence of the Israeli Sephardi-Orthodox party Shas, and the new wave of Mizrahi activism in the 21st century.



Learning Outcomes. At the end of the semester, students in ISRL330 will be able to:

1. Understand the Mizrahi experience in Israel, both historically and contemporary.
2. Evaluate the influence the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide on the Israeli society at large.
3. Contextualize the Mizrahi struggle for equality and against racism in Israel in terms of other global struggles for civil rights and equality.
4. Understand the concepts of historiography and historiographical debates.
5. Understand how to read and interpret primary sources.
6. Improve your analytic writing skills.

Readings:

The required readings for this course are available on ELMS. If you do not have general familiarity with Jewish history, the history of Israel or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is highly recommended that you read the following textbooks:

Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History* (Brandeis University Press, 2012)
James L. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 4th edition).

Responsibilities:

The final pages of this syllabus contain important information on class policies, including attendance, disability services, and classroom climate. See “The Fine Print,” below.

Academic integrity is assumed at all times. **Please note that the university now uses the Turnitin platform.** Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with immediately and firmly. For more on the Code of Academic Integrity, see: <http://shc.umd.edu/>

Please note that you must cite any sources you use in your submitted work, either with footnotes or in-line citations. If you are unfamiliar with academic citations, I am happy to send you some guidelines.

Here are the different components of the final grade, followed by details.

Participation and Argument Posting	20
4 Short Responses	30
Film Analysis	10
Midterm	15
Final	25

1. Attendance: Students arriving more than 20 minutes late will be considered absent. Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade. Excused absences require documentation from a university or a medical authority. Please see below for university policies on absences. Students who will be absent for religious holidays must notify the instructor by email at least one week before the scheduled absence.

2. Participation and Argument Posting (20 pts): In order to earn the highest grade for participation, students must read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them in class on a regular basis.

Before each meeting starting **September 6**, students are required to submit a short online post via ELMS (2-3 sentences), explaining what is the main argument for **each** of the assigned readings, or the main take-away if the argument is not clearly specified. Submissions must be made before we meet for class. Do not worry if you miss a few posts, but do try to submit as many of these posts as you can. You do not need to post on weeks for which you are writing a short response (see below).

Classroom discussions will provide an opportunity for students to express evidence-based opinions (that draw on class reading materials and news coverage). While disagreements will inevitably arise, this classroom must be a place of mutual respect, where students can feel safe to express their thoughts. Offensive behavior will not be tolerated. Please make sure to turn off cell phones before class begins.

3. Four (4) Short Responses (30 pts): Throughout the semester, you are required to submit four (4) 700-1000 word responses that discuss all the readings for that week (for **both Monday and Wednesday**), while making a clear thesis argument. In your response paper, you are also required to analyze the primary sources assigned for that week (if there are ones) while integrating them with rest of the readings. This will be discussed further in class. Responses must be posted **before** we meet for class, **and at least two must be submitted before the midterm (or you will be marked down)**. During the first week of class, you'll need to choose the four weeks for which you plan to submit a response. Note that only 2-3 students will be able to submit a response for any given week. A schedule for submission will be available for students to select on a first come, first serve basis via ELMS. If you wish to change the week for which your assignment is due, you need to find another student to switch dates with. The last date to submit responses is **December 4**.

4. Film Analysis (and Extra Credit Option) (10 pts):

You are required to write one 700-1,000 words analysis of an assigned film during the semester (but you still need to watch all of them!). The analysis has to be based on the other assigned readings for that week. You may also use readings from previous weeks if they are relevant. The assignment must be submitted before we meet for class to discuss the specific film. Please note that the last option to submit this assignment is December 6. If you wish, you can get **up to extra 5 points in your final grade for leading a 15-minute discussion of the film in class**.

5. Midterm (15 pts): The multiple-choice midterm on October 16 will review basic concepts about Mizrahi Jews, Palestine, Zionism, and Israeli history.

6. Final Take-Home Exam (25 pts):

The final exam will be available via ELMS two days before the due date (submissions permitted by midnight). You are welcome to review and draw upon class notes, and readings, but the questions will be analytical in nature. In other words, you will not be called upon to summarize what we have learned in class, but rather to write short compositions, synthesizing the material while presenting a main argument. We will discuss this further in class. The word limit for the exam is 2,000

Grading of papers:

Papers will be graded on the basis of how well they meet the qualities for an A paper: Clearly articulated argument stated in first paragraph; Specific topic sentences that

advance a claim; Argument supported by textual evidence both explicated and smoothly integrated into prose; Nuance; Minimal spelling and grammar mistakes. Please refer to the grading rubric on ELMS.

Grade Component	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Attendance	Attend class on a regular basis	Attend all class with the exception of excused absences.
Participation and Quizzes	Come to class after reading the secondary sources and submitting discussion questions. Be ready to review them in class.	Come to class after reading the secondary sources and submitting discussion questions. Be ready to make analytical observation about the texts that exceed description.
Four Short Responses and Final	Present a main argument at the outset; incorporate all primary and secondary sources.	Present an original non-descriptive main argument at the outset; use the primary sources as an anchor for your analysis.

Follow news from Israel AND Palestine:

- www.haaretz.com
- www.972mag.com/
- www.jadaliyya.com/
- www.ynetnews.com
- www.tabletmag.com
- www.timesofisrael.com

Course Plan and Course Readings:

Week 1: Intro

August 28: No readings

August 30:

Shay Hazkani, “All Roads Lead to Palestine,” from *Dear Palestine: A Social History of the 1948 War*, 4-23.

Primary Source: “Zionism and Its Early Arab Opponents” (Herzl, Ridda)

Primary Source: “Statement by the Lubavitcher Rebber on Zionism”

Primary Source: Vladimir (Zeev) Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall” (1923)

Week 2: Indigeneity and Settler Colonialism

September 4: Labor Day. No class

September 6:

Gershon Shafir, "Theorizing Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine," in Edward Cavanah and Lorenzo Veracini, eds., *Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 339-351.

Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, "'But if I don't steal it, someone else is gonna steal it' – Israeli Settler-Colonial Accumulation by Dispossession," *Middle East Report* 302 (Spring 2022).

[Alan Dowty, "Why Israel isn't a settler colonial state," Stroum Center for Jewish Studies.](#)

Ran Aharonson, "Settlement in Eretz Israel — A Colonialist Enterprise? 'Critical' Scholarship and Historical Geography," *Israel Studies*, Volume 1, Number 2, Fall 1996, pp. 214-229.

The Activist Take: ["Plant a tree in Israel: The truth about JNF-KKL";](#) [When Settler Becomes Native;](#)

Week 3: Ethnic Relations in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine

September 11:

Michelle Campos, "Between 'Beloved Ottomania' and 'The Land of Israel': The Struggle over Ottomanism and Zionism among Palestine's Sephardi Jews, 1908–13." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 4 (2005), pp. 461–483.

Film: *1913-Seeds of Conflict*. Director: Ben Loeterman (2013).

September 13:

Marcelo Svirsky, "The Marginalization of the Mizrahim: Jewish Syndicalism in the Context of Settler-Colonial Zionism in Palestine before 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 52:1 (2023), pp. 43-67.

Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2016), pp. 16-40.

Week 4: Enter Palestine Violence, 1929-1949

September 18:

Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham, Massachusetts : Brandeis University Press, 2015), xi-xvi, 52-56 188-206.

Primary Source: "Eliyahu Eliachar, A Jew in Palestine before the Royal Commission," in Moshe Behar and Zvi Benite Ben-Dor, *Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought: Writings on Identity, Politics, and Culture, 1893-1958* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2013), pp. 120-130.

September 20:

[Recorded Lecture: Hillel Cohen: "Haters, Love Story: on the relations between Mizrahi Jews and Palestinian Arab'," Oxford University](#)

Shay Hazkani, *Dear Palestine*, 176-206.

Film: Khirbet Khizeh (1978). Director: Ram Loevy

Week 5: Mizrahi Jews in Ashkenazi Imagination

September 25: Class cancelled for Yom Kippur (Jewish holiday)

September 27:

Aziza Khazzoom, "The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel," *American Sociological Review* 68, no. 4, pp. 481-510.

Yaron Tsur, "Carnival Fears: Moroccan Immigrants and the Ethnic Problem in the Young State of Israel," *Journal of Israeli History* 18(1) (1997), pp. 73-104.

Shay Hazkani, "Rank and Bile," *Haaretz*, 28 August 2015

Primary Source (video): Sa'adia: Roots in the Homeland. Director: Ze'ev Rav-Nof and Irina Karbitsinska (1951). Please also look at the plot summary posted on ELMS.

Week 6: Why They Left the Arab World?

October 2:

Norman Stillman, "Middle Eastern and North African Jewries Confront Modernity: Orientation, Disorientation, Reorientation," in Henry E. Goldberg, *Modern Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 59-69.

Ella Shohat, "Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab Jews," *Social Text* 21.2 (2003), pp. 49-71.

October 4:

Yehouda Shenhav, "The Jews of Iraq, Zionist Ideology, and the Property of the Palestinian Refugees of 1948: An Anomaly of National Accounting," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (Nov. 1999) Vol. 31:4, pp. 605-630.

Avi Shlaim, *Three Worlds: Memoirs of an Arab-Jew*, Chp 7 (New York: Oneworld Publications, 2023).

Esther Meir-Glitzenstein, "The spy who was hanged twice over," Point of no Return Blog, 11 February 2022.

Primary source: Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [The Truth About the Refugees](#).

Primary Source: Excerpt from "The Forgotten Refugees Educational Unit" by JIMENA

Week 7: Transit Camps

October 9:

Orit Bashkin, *Impossible Exodus: Iraqi Jews in Israel* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017), pp. 21-66.

October 11:

Bryan K. Roby, *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel's Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle, 1948-1966* (New York: Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015), pp. 1-13, 47-66, 86-109.

Week 8: The Wadi Salib Revolt

October 16: MIDTERM

Sami Shalom Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 62-80.

October 18:

Shay Hazkani, "'Our Cruel Polish Brothers': Moroccan Jews between Casablanca and Wadi Salib, 1956–59," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* n.s. 28, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2023), pp. 41–74

Primary Source: David Sitton, "A Call for Deepening 'The Mizrahi Consciousness' among Us," in Behar and Ben-Dor, *Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought*, pp. 214-223

Primary Source: Avraham Abbas, "From Ingathering to Integration: The Communal Problem in Israel," in Behar and Ben-Dor, *Modern Middle Eastern Jewish Thought*, pp. 203-221.

Week 9: Integration and Alienation in Development Towns and Slums

October 23:

Avi Picard, "The Reluctant Soldiers of Israel's Settlement Project: The Ship to Village Plan in the mid-1950s," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49:1 (2013), 29-46.

October 25:

Moshe Naor and Abigail Jacobson, "Between the Border of Despair and the 'Circle of Tears': Musrara on the Margins of Jewish-Arab Existence in Jerusalem," *Jewish Social Studies*, Volume 28, Number 2, Spring/Summer 2023, pp. 75-98

Film: *The Ancestral Sin*. Director: David Deri (2017).

Primary Source: Erez Bitton, "Moroccan Wedding," "Zohra al-Fasiya's Song," "Sulika's Qasida" in Ammiel Alcalay, *Keys to the Garden: New Israeli Writing* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996), pp. 267, 269.

Week 10: Black Panthers and the (ongoing?) Rebellion against Mapai

October 30:

Sami Shalom Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 81-140.

Primary Source: "Black Panthers Demand???" [English]; "To The Inhabitants Of The Slums All Over The Country - Come In Masses To Solve Your Problems [English]"

Film: *The Black Panthers (in Israel) Speak*. Directors: Eli Hamo and Sami Chetrit (2003).

November 1: Mizrahi and the Judicial Overhaul

TBA.

Rotem Shtarkman and Yifat Reuven, 'Israel's Judicial Coup Belongs to Religious Zionism – Which Is Mostly Ashkenazi', *Haaretz*, 23 August 2023.

Ariel David, "The Deep Roots of Israel's Judicial Coup Trace Back to Shas," *Haaretz*, 29 July 2023.

Week 11: Religiosity, Popular Culture and Militarism

November 6:

André Levy, “Happy Mimouna: On a Mechanism for Marginalizing Moroccan Israelis,” *Israel Studies*, Volume 23, Number 2, Summer 2018, pp. 1-20.

Ihsan Yilmaz and Nicholas Morieson, “Religious populism in Israel: The case of Shas,” *Populism & Politics*, European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS). March 30, 2022 (14 pages).

Batia Siebzeher and David Lehmann, “The Past, Present and Future of Shas,” *Tel Aviv Review of Books*, Autumn 2019 (8 pages).

November 8:

Dana Grosswirth Kachtan, “Acting Ethnic”— Performance of ethnicity and the process of ethnicization,” *Ethnicities* 2017, Vol. 17(5), pp. 707–723.

Yagil Levy, “The rebellion of Israel’s second army”, *972 Magazine*, 26 December 2022 (10 pages).

Film: *Forever Pure*. Director: Maya Zinshtein (2017)

Week 12: The Rise of a New Middle Class

November 13:

Yali Hashash, “We Are All Jews: White Trash, Mizrahi and Multiple Marginality within Hegemony,” forthcoming in Yali Hashash, *Whose Daughter Are You?: Ways of Speaking Mizrahi Feminism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, TBP).

November 15:

Uri Cohen and Nissim Leon, “The new Mizrahi Middle Class: Ethnic Mobility and Class Integration in Israel,” *Journal of Israeli History* 27 (2008), pp. 1:51-64.A

Nissim Mizrahi and Hanna Herzog, “Participatory destigmatization strategies among Palestinian citizens, Ethiopian Jews and Mizrahi Jews in Israel,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35:3, 418-435.

Week 13: The Yemenite Children Affair

November 20:

Malin Fezehai, “The Disappeared Children of Israel,” *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 2019

Yaacov Lozowick, “Opinion: Israel's Missing Yemenite Kids Were Abducted, Families Believe. The Archives Tell a Different Story,” *Haaretz*, 6 May 2019.

Film: [Neviim: Operation Amram 1-12](#) (make sure you turn-on English translation)

November 22: Thanksgiving Recess. No class

Week 14: Mizrahi Feminism

November 27: :

Henriette Dahan Kalev, “Breaking Their Silence: Mizrahi Women and the Israeli Feminist Movement” in Peter Y. Medding, ed., *Sephardic Jewry and Mizrahi Jews, Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, pp. 193-209.

Claris Harbon, "Coloring the Closets of Transparency: The Endless Struggles of One Feminist Mizrahi Lawyer," in Carolyn L. Karcher (Ed.), *Reclaiming Judaism From Zionism*, PP. 61-73.

November 29:

Sigal Nagar-Ron and Pnina Motzafi-Haller, "'My Life? There Is Not Much to Tell': On Voice, Silence and Agency in Interviews With First-Generation Mizrahi Jewish Women Immigrants to," *Qualitative Inquiry* vol. 17 no. 7 (September 2011), pp. 653-663.

Week 15: From the "Mizrahi" in Cinema to Mizrahi TV

December 4:

Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (1989; New Edition, 2010, IB Tauris), pp. 109-150.

December 6:

Itay Harlap, *Television Drama in Israel: Identities in Post-Tv Culture* (New York : Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), pp. 103-126

Video clip (watch at home): scene from *Zaguri Imperia* (2014)

Film: *Sh'Chur*. Director: Shmuel Hasfari (1994)

December 11: TBA

The Fine Print

Academic integrity:

The UMD Honor Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council:

<http://www.shc.umd.edu>

Attendance and absences:

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Consistent attendance offers students the most effective opportunity to gain command of course concepts and materials. Events that justify an excused absence include: religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.

Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation. The notification should be provided either prior to the absence or as soon afterwards as possible. In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor during the schedule adjustment period. All other absences must be reported as soon as is practical. The student must provide appropriate documentation of the absence.

The university's policies on medical and other absences can be found at:

<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Communication about this course:

Faculty and advisors use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date, and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student, and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

Emergency protocol:

Should the University be closed for an extended period of time, students will be notified by email with regard to future plans. As a general rule, on the first day after a closure of any length, students should come to class prepared to address the material that was to be discussed on the first canceled class. During this class session, we will work out a plan for continuing the semester in abbreviated form. In cases of unusually extended cancellations, the process of rescheduling the semester will take place over email.

Accessibility and accommodations:

Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. NB: You are expected to meet with your instructor in person to provide them with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain your instructor's signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. You and your instructor will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or dissup@umd.edu

Diversity:

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Course evaluations:

Course evaluations are a part of the process by which the University of Maryland seeks to improve teaching and learning. Your participation in this official system is critical to the success of the process, and all information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. (Instructors can only view group summaries of evaluations and cannot identify which submissions belong to which students.)

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