



Princeton School of Public and International Affairs
Undergraduate Seminar – Spring 2023
SPI 491 – U.S. Policy and the Israel-Palestine Conflict
Time: Tuesday, 1:30-4:20 PM
Room: TBD
Instructor: Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer

The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has continued for over 100 years and has eluded a peace settlement. Since the 1967 Arab-Israel war, the United States has been active in advancing ideas and promoting peace negotiations. Significant issues divide the parties, including borders, security, refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, and governance, among others. Differences over narratives – historical and current – make it challenging to find common ground. This seminar will examine the conflict and the conflict resolution process, focusing on the narratives of Israelis and Palestinians and on U.S. policy. Students should emerge from the course well-versed in the intricacies of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the conflict resolution process.

Grades:

Grades will be based on weekly reading responses (20%), class participation (20%), and three take-home assessments (20% each).

Academic Integrity:

All academic work must uphold the University's commitment to academic integrity.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all seminar classes and to keep current with the assigned reading and assignments.

Academic Resources:

- Reference Librarians (<http://library.princeton.edu/hours/information>) can help make a research plan, find sources (electronic and print) and provide research guidance.
- The Writing Center (<http://writing.princeton.edu/center>) offers free one-on-one conferences with experienced writers trained to consult in any discipline.
- The McGraw Center (<https://mcgraw.princeton.edu/>) offers one-on-one consultations useful to develop reading strategies, project management skills, and note-taking tactics.

Policy on Electronic Devices:

Please do not use laptops and cellphones in class. Studies now conclusively show that they detract from learning -- for you and those around you. If you have an academic accommodation that requires the use of an electronic device, please be in touch with me.

Office hours: By appointment; contact me by email to schedule.

Books recommended for purchase:

- Abdel Monem Said Aly, Shai Feldman, and Khalil Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis: Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East*, 2nd Edition (Bloomsbury, 2022).
- Daniel Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2011* (Cornell University Press, 2013).

Schedule:

Jan. 31: Narratives - Birth of the conflict, Zionism and Palestinian nationalism

Required reading:

- (1) Paul Scham, "Competing Israeli and Palestinian narratives," in Joel Peters and David Newman, eds., *The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (London, Routledge), 33-44.
<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203079553.ch3>
- (2) Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salomon, "Israeli-Jewish Narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Evolution, Contents, Functions, and Consequences," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, 19-46.
- (3) Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories* (Wiley-Blackwell), 3-38.
- (4) Sami Adwan, et.al., eds., *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine* (PRIME and The New Press), ix-xvi.
- (5) Colin Schindler, "Origins of Zionism," in *Routledge Handbook*, 11-19.
- (6) Ahmad Samih Khalidi, "The Palestinian national movement: From self-rule to statehood," in *Routledge Handbook*, 20-30.

Documents:

- (1) Husayn-McMahon Correspondence, 1915.
- (2) Sykes-Picot Agreement, 2016.
- (3) Balfour Declaration, 1917.
- (4) League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, 1922.

Recommended:

- (1) Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 15-100.
- (2) Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 164-215 and 243-275.

(3) Film: "1913: Seeds of Conflict.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3e6CN9uMIU>

(4) Film: "The Complex History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

Promises & Betrayals." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VBIBekw3Uk>

Feb. 7: The shape of the conflict: Mandate and partition

Required readings:

(1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapters 1 and 2.

(2) Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 56-100.

(3) Rashid Khalidi, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*, 55-95.

Documents:

(1) Peel Commission Report, 1937. (Excerpts)

(2) White Paper, 1939.

(3) UNSCOP Report, 1947.

(4) UN General Assembly Resolution 181, 1947.

(5) UN General Assembly Resolution 194, 1948.

Recommended:

(1) Benny Morris, "Revisiting the Palestinian Exodus of 1948," in Rogan and Shlaim, 37-59.

(2) Efraim Karsh, "Benny Morris's Reign of Error, Revisited: The Post-Zionist Critique," *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2005, 31-42.

(3) Video: Tom Segev lecture, <https://youtu.be/4FFXPff4otA>

Feb. 14: From Palestinian-Israeli to Arab-Israeli conflict

Required readings:

(1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 3.

(2) Neil Caplan, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 131-177.

(3) Richard Parker, "The June 1967 War: Some Mysteries Explored," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, no. 2 (1992), 177-197.

Documents:

(1) Eisenhower Doctrine, 1957.

(2) PLO Covenant, 1964.

Feb. 21: First take-home assessment due (7-10 pp)

Feb. 21: From war to war, 1967-73: The Palestinians return to the stage

Readings:

(1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapters 4 and 5

(2) William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*, Third Edition (Brookings and University of Californian Press, 2005), 55-173.

Documents:

- (1) UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)
- (2) Rogers Peace Plan, 1969
- (3) UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 (1975)

Feb. 28: The United States and peacemaking: Camp David and the Reagan Plan

Readings:

- (1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 6
- (2) Quandt, *Peace Process*, 177-289.

Documents:

- (1) Camp David Accords, 1978.
- (2) Prime Minister Menachem Begin's autonomy plan.
- (3) Reagan Plan and talking points.
- (4) Basic Law: Jerusalem the Capital of Israel, 1980.

March 7: Madrid and Oslo: The perfect harvest

Readings:

- (1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 7
- (2) Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 15-58.
- (3) Speeches at the Madrid Peace Conference by President George H.W. Bush, Secretary of State James A. Baker III, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and Head of the Palestinian Delegation Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi.
- (4) Speeches at the Oslo Accords signing ceremony by President William Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Documents:

- (1) Letter of Invitation to the Madrid Peace Conference, 1991.
- (2) Letter of Assurances to the Israelis, 1991.
- (3) Letter of Assurances to the Palestinians, 1991.
- (4) The Oslo Accords, 1993.
- (5) Hamas Covenant, 1988, revised 2017.

March 14: Spring break

March 21: Camp David, Intifada, and the Rashomon tales of peacemaking

Readings:

- (1) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapters 8, 9, and 11
- (2) Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 105-153.
- (3) Akram Hanieh, "The Camp David Papers," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Winter 2001), 75-97. <https://www.palestine-studies.org/sites/default/files/attachments/jps-articles/jps.2001.30.2.75.pdf>
- (4) Jeremy Pressman, "Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?" *International Security*, Volume 28, Number 2, Fall 2003, 5-43.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4137467.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aeeba10ce7549abc0da40e63664a6973f&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1

- (5) Lior Lehrs, "Peace Historiography and the Competing Narratives of the 1993 Oslo Channel," *Ottawa Dialogue*, Policy Brief No. 4, March 2022, 1-12. <https://ottawadialogue.ca/news-events/resource/policy-brief-4-peace-historiography-and-the-competing-narratives-of-the-1993-oslo-channel/>

Documents:

- (1) Clinton parameters, 2000.
- (2) Moratinos document, 2001.

March 28: Second take-home assessment due (7-10 pp)

March 28: The peace process in hibernation, 2001-2008

Readings:

- (1) Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 154-240.
- (2) Michael Shamir and Tammy Sagiv-Schifter, "Conflict, Identity, and Tolerance: Israel in the Al-Aqsa Intifada," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 27, 4, 2006, 1-27.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3792396.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A269a6f29c1b71391b94c11eb31570049&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1

- (3) Elia Awwad, "Perceiving the 'Other' in the al-Aqsa Intifada," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, Vol. VIII, Issue 2, 1-8. <https://pij.org/articles/893>
- (4) Elie Podeh, *Chances for Peace: Missed Opportunities in the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (University of Texas Press, 2015), 324-357.
- (5) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 9.

Documents:

- (1) The Arab Peace Initiative, 2002.
- (2) President George W. Bush Rose Garden speech, 2002.
- (3) Bush letter to Prime Minister Sharon, 2004.

- (4) Weissglas letter to NSA Condoleezza Rice, 2004.
- (5) Annapolis Conference, 2007.

April 4: Obama I and Obama II – Billiard ball diplomacy

Readings:

- (1) Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 241-267.
- (2) Ilan Goldenberg, “Lessons from the 2013-2014 Israeli-Palestinian Final Status Negotiations,” *Center for New American Security*, March 2015.
- (3) Ben Birnbaum and Amir Tibon, “The Explosive Inside Story of How John Kerry Built and Israel-Palestine Peace Plan – and Watched it Crumble,” *The New Republic*, July 2014.
<https://newrepublic.com/article/118751/how-israel-palestine-peace-deal-died>
- (4) Michael Herzog, “Inside the Black Box of Israeli-Palestinian Talks,” *The American Interest*, February 27, 2017. <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2017/02/27/inside-the-black-box-of-israeli-palestinian-talks/>
- (5) Uri Friedman, “Martin Indyk Explains the Collapse of the Middle East Peace Process,” *The Atlantic*, July 3, 2014.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/indyk-netanyahu-and-abbas-loathe-each-other/373922/>

Documents:

- (1) President Obama’s speech about the Arab world, 2011.
<https://www.npr.org/2011/05/19/136466323/transcript-obamas-speech-about-the-arab-world>
- (2) UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016).
- (3) Secretary of State Kerry’s remarks on Middle East peace, 2016.
<https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/full-text-john-kerry-2016-israel-mideast-peace-speech-transcript-233014>

April 11: Trump’s “sledgehammer” – End of American peacemaking?

Readings:

- (1) Daniel Kurtzer, “Trump’s Middle East Legacy: Arms, Autocrats, and Annexations,” in Julian Zelizer, ed., *The Presidency of Donald J. Trump: A First Historical Assessment* (Princeton University Press, 2022), 279-297.
- (2) Steven Cook, “Trump’s Middle East Legacy Is Failure,” *Foreign Policy*, October 28, 2020.
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/28/trumps-middle-east-legacy-is-failure/>
- (3) David Schenker and Robert Satloff, “Middle East Policy from Trump to Biden: Views from Inside the State Department’s Near East Bureau,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 10, 2021.
<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf/view/16563/en>
- (4) Said Aly, Feldman, and Shikaki, *Arabs and Israelis*, Chapter 12.

Documents:

(1) "Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People," 2020.

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Peace-to-Prosperity-0120.pdf>

April 18: Lessons learned and unlearned**Readings:**

(1) Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* (U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2008), 25-74.

(2) Kurtzer, et.al., *The Peace Puzzle*, 268-276.

(3) House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, February 12, 2020.

<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/2020/2/the-middle-east-peace-process-an-analysis-from-former-u-s-negotiators>

April 25: What now - Peace plans and the conflict resolution process**Readings:**

(1) Joel Peters, "Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Issue," in E. Matthews, ed., *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Parallel Discourses* (Routledge, 2011), 21-35.

(2) Jad Isaac, "A Palestinian Perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Settlements, Territory, and Borders," in Matthews, 67-89.

(3) Lior Lehrs, "Jerusalem on the Negotiating Table: Analyzing the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks on Jerusalem (1993-2015)," *Israel Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, Fall 2016), 179-205.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.2979/israelstudies.21.3.09.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A2eb745de1653ae4c825d30da2934756a&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1

(4) <https://vimeo.com/307296216>

<https://vimeo.com/313421421>

<https://vimeo.com/313427367>

<https://vimeo.com/314494230>

May 9: Third take-home assessment due (7-10 pp)