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 write a mid-term paper and give a brief presentation (30%) and write a final examination (60%). Class participation in encouraged and may count up to 10% of the grade. Students are advised to follow the Israeli daily Haaretz: www.haaretz.com

1. Historical Background
Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel.

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

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:


Chapter 15: The Ingathering of the Exiles, pp. 250-278.
http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/1950_1959/Law%20of%20Return%205710-1950

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


Chapter 5: The Jewish Fear and Israel’s Mother of all Victories, pp. 86-114,

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


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


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


9. **The Turbulent 1990s I: The Constitutional Revolution**


Suggested reading:


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


Chapter 8: The Road to Marid, pp. 173-200.

Chapter 9: Oslo: The Glory and the Agony, pp. 201-239.


Suggested reading:


Introduction, pp. 1-12.


Suggested reading: