Syllabus

Israel: Politics and Society - 1771

Last update 13-09-2013

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor) and 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Israel Studies: Society and Politics

Academic year: 1

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Gideon Rahat

Coordinator Email: msgrah@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 10:15-11:30 room 4324 Social Sciences

Teaching Staff: Prof Gideon Rahat
Course/Module description:
An Introductory course that provides the foundations for understanding Israeli politics by analyzing Israeli society, political institutions and political behavior.

Course/Module aims:
To analyze the properties of the Israeli regime, the main cleavages in Israeli society, the major political institutions, and several main social and behavioral features.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
- List the main cleavages in Israeli Society and their political implications.
- Identify the main political institutions in Israel and analyze their role.
- Identify some of the main properties of Israeli political culture and patterns of political behavior in Israel
- Define the character of Israeli democracy
- Compare between Israeli politics and politics in other countries.

Attendance requirements(%):
100%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lecture

Course/Module Content:
The course outlines the main characteristics of Israeli politics and society and the relationship between them. The introductory part presents a general background and examines the debate concerning Israel’s democracy. The second part describes and analyzes the main cleavages in Israeli society: Jewish-Arab/Palestinian, religious-secular, Ashkenazi-Sepharadi, new immigrants-veteran immigrants/Sabre, Doves-Hawks and the socio economic cleavage. The next part inspects Israels political institutions: the three branches of government; the electoral system; the political parties and the party system; and interest groups. We will then turn to examine some of the main social and behavioral features of Israeli democracy: political culture; electoral behavior; religion and politics; and gender politics. The course concludes with a discussion on whether Israeli politics and
society are comparable to other democracies, or whether Israel is unique.
1. Introduction: The Israeli Political System

2. Democracy in Israel

Israeli Society: Social Cleavages in Israel
3. Introduction: Social Cleavages in Israel
4. The Jewish/Arab-Palestinian Cleavage
5. The Intra-Jewish Communal Cleavage
6. The Religious-Secular Cleavage
7. The Cleavage between New Immigrants and Veteran Immigrants/Natives
8. Social Cleavages: A Summary

Political Institutions
9. The Executive Branch
10. The Legislative Branch
11. The Constitutional Setting
12. The Judicial Branch
13. The Electoral System
14. Political Parties
15. Party System
16. Interest Groups

Selected Issues
17. Political Culture and Electoral Behavior
18. Religion and Politics

19. Gender Politics

20. Are Israeli Politics and Society Comparable or Unique?

Required Reading:

1. Introduction: The Israeli Political System


2. Democracy in Israel


Israeli Society: Social Cleavages in Israel

3. Introduction: Social Cleavages in Israel


4. The Jewish/Arab-Palestinian Cleavage


5. The Intra-Jewish Communal Cleavage


6. The Religious-Secular Cleavage


7. The Cleavage between New Immigrants and Veteran Immigrants/Natives


8. Social Cleavages: A Summary


Political Institutions

9. The Executive Branch


(9a) Basic Law: The President of the State
http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic12_eng.htm

(9b) Basic Law: The Government
http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic14_eng.htm

10. The Legislative Branch


(10a) “Basic Law: The Knesset”
http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic2_eng.htm


11. The Constitutional Setting


(11a) “Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty”
http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic3_eng.htm

http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic4_eng.htm

(11c) “The Existing Basic Laws: Summary”
http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/eng_mimshal_yesod2.htm


12. The Judicial Branch


(12a) “Basic Law: The Judiciary”
http://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic8_eng.htm

(12b) Menachem Hofnung, “The Unintended Consequences of Unplanned


13. The Electoral System


14. Political Parties


15. Party System


16. Interest Groups


(16a) Yael Yishai. “Civil Society in Transition: Interest Politics in Israel,” The Annals


Selected Issues

17. Political Culture and Electoral Behavior


(17a) Uri Ram, "Citizens, Consumers and Believers: the Israeli Public Sphere Between Capitalism and Fundamentalism," Israel Studies vol. 3, no 1, 1998, pp. 24-44. ERESERVE 001229209


18. Religion and Politics


19. Gender Politics


ERSERVE 001229208


20. Are Israeli Politics and Society Comparable or Unique?


Additional Reading Material:
none

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 90 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:
The final version would appear about a week before the course starts