

Dr. Jason Lustig
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 Office hours: 1:00pm-2:00pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Seminar Meetings: Tuesdays 2:00pm–5:00pm

***The Jewish Nation, Invented or Imagined?
 History and the Politics of Peoplehood***

Classical Zionism declared the Jewish people a nation in need of a state, “a people without a land for a land without a people.” Today, some claim that Jewish nationhood was a fiction created with political goals in mind. This course considers the nature of nations; are they real or imagined, “organic” or invented? We will begin by considering recent scholars who have identified nations as a social construct, not historical reality. In the process, we will examine the ways in which history has been brought to bear by those seeking to foster national consciousness.

Why approach these questions through the lens of Jewish history? Jewish history serves as a useful prism to explore the ties between the modern practice of history and the development of nationalisms. The Jews’ ambiguous status—are they a nation, a people, a religion?—provides an excellent case study for the exploration of nationhood and history’s role in group consciousness, because the range of national, religious, and social responses to the problems of continued Jewish existence in modern times provide opportunities not only to realize the diverse possibilities for fostering group identity but also the ways in which history can be “used and abused.” In sum, this course will examine the role of the study of the Jewish past in the construction of Jewishness, and through it the relation between history in general and the construction of group identities.

After examining the historical and theoretical underpinnings of nationalism and the case of Jewish nationalism in particular, we will read works of history as primary sources and study historians’ place in both the development and more recent critiques of nationalism. We will explore case studies of twentieth-century Jewish historians whose scholarly work served political aims in an era of great debates over Jewish nationalism, as well as the relationship between current debates in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and questions of history. In this seminar, we will investigate the case of Jewish history and nationalism with the goal of opening up a dialogue about the real-world impact of history and historians. We will try to assess how and to what extent historians of the Jews impacted Jewish nationalism of varied types along with contemporary ethnic-political conflicts, and also the broader nature of the relationship between history and nationalism and its legacy.

Course Requirements:

Course grade will consist of:

1) Preparation and active participation, 40%

- Active participation means posing questions and contributing to in-class dialogue in a manner that demonstrates that you have actively read the assigned material and sought to understand it within the context of the course.
- *Attendance is required.* Each absence will lower your grade. *Two unexcused absences provide grounds for a zero for your participation grade. Note that the seminar meetings count as 40% of your total grade!* If you are ill, please email me before class. You will be asked to provide a note from your health care provider. If you have *any* questions about this attendance policy, ask me.

2) Eight weekly reading response papers, 20%

- A weekly 2 page reading response (two full pages, double-spaced) that synthesizes and critiques the assigned readings, posing a question or topic for further discussion relating to the overall theme of the seminar. You are expected to write a response for 8 out of the 10 weeks of the course.
- Please print out and bring to class.

3) Research paper (12–15pp), 40%

- A substantial research paper on a topic of your choosing related to the seminar topic. Topics must be approved. The paper will demonstrate your ability to formulate a research topic, to locate and make use of primary and secondary sources, draw conclusions from historical material, and to compose a strong and significant piece of writing with a strong thesis, argument, and evidence to prove your point. Successful completion of this requirement includes:
 - i. Selection of a historical question and appropriate primary sources (**week 3**)
 - ii. Creation of an annotated bibliography and research plan (**week 5**)
 - iii. Submission of a research abstract, a 1 page summary of the research question and proposed thesis (**week 7**)
 - iv. Submission of a paper draft for peer review (**week 8**)
 - v. Presenting your research findings to the seminar (**week 10**)
 - vi. Submission of a final draft, including footnotes (Chicago Manual of Style) and bibliography

There will be three options for your research paper. They are:

- a. Select a historical era, event, or figure. Examine a group of historical books and papers that relate to it, and analyze how the historical narratives relate to nationalism.
- b. Select a particular historian of the nineteenth or early twentieth century, and read a number of his or her books and articles. What was this person's perspective on Jewish nationalism, and how was it related to his or her oeuvre and vice-versa?
- c. You may also develop your own original research topic. The topic must be submitted and approved by week three.

Office hours: I recommend that you attend office hours at least once this quarter. This is an opportunity to come in and talk about the class discussions as well as your papers and receive feedback on your writing.

Email Policy: I use email to send out course information including any updates to the readings/syllabus, notes and questions relating to the weekly readings, and information relating to assignments. I ask that you check your email regularly. If you send me an email, I will try to get back to you within 24 hours, but I cannot guarantee an immediate response. Please do not email me at 2am the night before an assignment is due and expect an immediate answer.

Academic integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at UCLA. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person—be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner—without proper acknowledgment of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.

Violations of University policies on academic integrity may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, or in suspension or dismissal from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification.

Disability: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at UCLA and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you, please see me or have the OSD contact me immediately. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

Course Schedule

Week One

What is a Nation?

Readings:

- Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 1-7, 53-62
- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 1-49
- Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp. 1-18

Primary sources:

- Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?"
- Johann Gottfried Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man (Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit)*, pp. 447-451

Week Two

Are the Jews a Nation? Jewish Identity and Nation in Modern Times

Primary sources:

- "Answers to Napoleon (1806)," in *The Jew in the Modern World* pp. 152-156
- Theodor Herzl, "A Solution of the Jewish Question," in *Israel in the Middle East* pp. 16-21
- Elmer Berger, *The Jewish Dilemma*, pp. 1-58 (The Myth of a 'Jewish People')
- Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (1935), pp. 227-252 (The Nationhood of Israel, Nationalism as a Cultural Concept)

Week Three

History and Nation-Building

Assignments Due:

** Due in class: Research proposal (returned week four) **

Readings:

- Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival*, 3-30
- Anthony Smith, *Chosen Peoples* pp. 1-9, 166-217, 254-261 (Introduction, Ethnohistory and the Golden Age, Nationalism and the Golden Age, Conclusion)
- Pat Geary, *Myth of Nations*, 1-40

Sources:

- Simon Dubnow, "Let us Seek and Investigate" (*Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* VII 2008), pp. 343-382

- Gershom Scholem, "Reflections on Modern Jewish Studies (1944)," in *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time* ed. Avraham Shapira, pp. 51–71

Week Four

What is Jewish Nationalism?

Readings:

- Gideon Shimoni, *Zionist Ideology* pp. 3-51 (The Social Origins of Jewish Nationalism)
- Howard Sacher, *History of Israel* pp. 36–63 (Herzl and the Rise of Political Zionism)

Primary sources:

- Ahad Ha'am, "The Spiritual Revival," in *Ahad Ha'am: Selected Essays*, pp. 239–292
- Simon Dubnow, "Autonomism, the Basis of the National Program," in *Nationalism and History* pp. 131-143
- Max Nordau, "Speech to the First Zionist Congress," in Herzberg, *The Zionist Idea* pp. 235–241

Week Five

History, Counter-History, and Memory

Assignments Due:

** Due in class: Annotated bibliography and research plan **

Readings:

- Amos Funkenstein, "History, Counterhistory and Narrative," in *Perceptions of Jewish History* pp. 22–49
- Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* 1–14

Primary sources:

- Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, pp. 60–78, 114–146, 192–213 (The Fall of Masada, The Rock and the Vow, Masada and the meaning of Death)
- Yigal Yadin, *Masada: Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* (selections TBD)
- Nadia abu el-Haj, "Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem," *American Ethnologist* 25:2 (1998), 166-188

Week Six

Diaspora Nationalism

Readings:

- Koppel Pinson, "The National Theories of Simon Dubnow," in *Jewish Social Studies* 10.4 (Oct. 1948), 335–358

Primary sources:

- Simon Dubnow, "The Sociological View of Jewish History (Introduction to the *Weltgeschichte*)" (1925), in *History and Nationalism*, 336–353
- Simon Dubnow, "Jewish history, an essay in the philosophy of history," in *History and Nationalism* pp. 253–325
- Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, pp. 9–12, 39–241 (introduction, The Jewish Colonies in Poland and Lithuania; The Autonomous Center in Poland at Its Zenith, 1501–1648; The Inner Life of Polish Jewry at its Zenith; The

Autonomous Center in Poland During its Decline, 1648-1772; the inner life of Polish Jewry during the period of decline)

Week Seven

Zionism

Assignments Due:

** Due in class: Research paper abstract **

Readings:

- Uri Ram, "Zionist Historiography and the Invention of Modern Jewish Nationhood: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur," in *History and Memory* 7.1, pp. 91–124
- Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile, History and the Nationalization of Jewish Memory," in *Journal of Levantine Studies* 3.2 (2013), 37–70
- Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots* pp. 13–38 (The Zionist Reconstruction of the Past)

Primary sources:

- Ben-Zion Dinur, *Israel and the Diaspora*, 1–76
- Yitshak (Fritz) Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain* vol. 1, pp. 1–38 (introduction)
- Jewish Agency Executive, "Proclamation of the State of Israel, May 14, 1948," in *Israel in the Middle East* pp. 72–74

Week Eight

History and Conflict I

Assignments Due:

** Due in class: Paper draft **

Readings:

- Meir Litvak, "A Palestinian Past: National Construction and Reconstruction," in *History and Memory* 6.2 (1994), 24-56
- Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, 1–34, 177–210 (Contrasting Narratives of Palestinian Identity, The 'Disappearance' and Reemergence of Palestinian Identity)

Primary sources:

- Palestinian National Charter (1964), in *Israel in the Middle East* pp. 243–246
- "Reflections on Al-Nakba," in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28.1 (1998), pp. 5–35
- David Burkay, "Founding National Myths: Fabricating Palestinian History," in *Middle East Quarterly* 2012 pp. 23–30

Week Nine

History and Conflict II

Readings:

- Anita Shapira, "Politics and Collective Memory: The Debate over the 'New Historians' in Israel," in *History and Memory* 7.1 (1995), 9–40
- Benny Morris, "The New Historiography: Israel Confronts Its Past" (Tikkun)

- Mustafa Kabha, "A Palestinian look at the new historians and post-Zionism in Israel," in Benny Morris ed. *Making Israel* (2007), 299–318

Primary sources:

- Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 353–370
- Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (selections TBD)

Week Ten

Conclusion: The Invention of Peoplehood?

Readings:

- Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*
- Derek Penslar, "Shlomo Sand's *The Invention of the Jewish People* and the End of the New History," in *Israel Studies* 17.2 (2012), pp. 156–168
- Anita Shapira, "The Jewish People-Deniers," in *The Journal of Israeli History* 28.1 (2009), pp. 63–72
- Israel Bartal, "Inventing an Invention," *Haaretz*, 6 July 2008
- Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, pp. 77–103