

GV525-6-SP Israeli Politics 2024

Lecturer and Module Supervisor

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Room: 5.017

Academic Support Hours: Monday 12:30-14:30pm

Module Administrator

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Module available for Study Abroad students: Yes No
 AVAILABLE ON LISTEN AGAIN: Yes No

Assessment: This module is assessed by 100% coursework

INSTANT DEADLINE CHECKER

Must be submitted by 04:30pm on the day of the deadline.

Assignment Title	Due Date	Coursework Weighting*	Feedback Due
Research Essay	Week 26 – 29/3/24	65	Week 29 – 26/4/24
Online Exam	Week 26 – 29/3/24	35	Week 29 – 26/4/24

MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module provides a range of theoretical angles and empirical evidence to understand the Politics of Israel. The module focuses on the political institutions of Israel, major political events and developments, as well as political behaviour, party politics, public opinion and voting.

MODULE AIMS

This module offers an introduction to the **domestic** politics of Israel in a comparative perspective, including issues of internal cultural diversity, religion and politics, fragmentation of the political party system, and coalition governance.

The goal of this module is to introduce students to the political institutions, parties, and voting behaviour in Israel. Students will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the state of Israel as a democracy, understand the Israeli political structure, and discuss the electoral arena. The focus of this course will be on four political markets: The Jewish-Secular (roughly 50% of the population), the Jewish-Religious (roughly 15% of the population), the Ultra-Orthodox (roughly 15% of the population), and the Non-Jewish (roughly 20% of the population). In addition, the module will cover three main cleavages that affect Israel's

politics: General Left-Right, Liberal-Conservative (both economically and culturally), and East-West (Ashkenazi-Mizrahi), as well as Gender politics.

In the first part of the module, we will discuss the political institutions of Israel – The legislature (the Knesset), the government, political parties and their organizations. Other political institutions are important to decision-making and public policy, they will be discussed throughout the module. In the second part of the module, we will discuss political outcomes of the institutional structure. Specifically, the module will review how Israeli parties and voters have changed since the 1950s, from a hegemonic pseudo-social-democratic party system to mostly economic liberal and culturally conservative party system.

It is important to note that this is *not* a module on the Israeli–Arab conflict, nor is it a module on the history of Israel. While the module is not focused on the Israeli–Arab conflict or on Palestinian politics, understanding of the domestic Israeli political process is essential for understanding the wider conflict and possible solutions to it.

MODULE OUTCOMES

At the end of this module students will:

1. Gain a comprehensive understanding of the Israeli political system and political behaviour in Israel.
2. Learn to evaluate and analyse a variety of issues related to political parties, electoral rules, voting behaviour, and public policy in Israel.
3. Acquire the tools to compare and contrast the politics of Israel in a comparative perspective.

Key Skills

By following this module, students will gain the following skills:

- Read and analyse the appropriate materials that contain required information and data to answer questions about political issues in Israel and other countries.
- Explore, organize, and analyse publicly available information, and distinguish between academic and journalistic information.
- Write analytical memorandums about political issues.

MODULE STRUCTURE AND TEACHING

This module will be delivered with a two-hour weekly seminar. Attending the lectures, reading the assigned materials, and participation in the class/online discussion are required and essential for satisfactory progress. There will be a Moodle site assigned to this module, and all relevant materials – lecture notes, class exercises, (link to) readings – will be placed there.

Week	Topic
Week 16	Introduction
Week 17	The Israeli Parliament (The Knesset) in comparative perspective
Week 18	The Israeli Government in comparative perspective
Week 19	The Israeli Judicial System in comparative perspective
Week 20	Political Parties in Israel: Organization, Origins, and Change
Week 21	Topics in Israeli politics: Peace and Security
Week 22	Topics in Israeli politics: Religious–Secular Relations
Week 23	Topics in Israeli politics: Ethnic Identities
Week 24	Topics in Israeli politics: Gender and Politics
Week 25	The On-Going Political Crisis (2019-present)

What we expect of you during lecture and classes:

- To attend all lectures and classes after having done the required reading.
- To pay attention and take notes as necessary.
- To think about the readings and lectures notes before the class and be ready to discuss them: try to identify the key assumptions in the texts; map the structure of the argument; underline the conclusions. Highlight to yourself points you don't understand. (If you don't understand it, there's great likelihood others have not understood it either, so don't be shy to ask.) Ask yourself whether you agree with the text, whether you can identify weaknesses or gaps in the argument, and what could someone who disagrees with it argue against it.
- To offer your participation as required (answering questions, asking questions etc.). Learning about and discussing these texts is a communal endeavour and it is a matter of good citizenship to contribute. Further, part of what we want you to achieve, and what we mark you for, is clear and confident oral presentation. You are expected to answer questions, raise new points, and contribute to the progression of discussion in class.

Assessment: This module is assessed by 100% coursework

INSTANT DEADLINE CHECKER

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Each student is assessed by two coursework assignments. All assignments should be submitted via FASER.

1. Research essay (65%): During the second half of the module students will write a *Research essay* (up to 2500 words), in which you choose a salient policy issue in Israel and research its origins, development over time, relation to parties and election, and other aspects. The essay is due on 29/3/24 at 4:30 PM. More details will be provided after week 20. Students need to choose their issue of interest as early as possible and report the choice to the instructor.

2. Online test (35%): During week 26 students will have to complete an online exam. The exam will include 20-30 multiple choice questions, completed in the Moodle page of this module. This exam will cover **all** the information studied in the module, including lectures, readings, discussions, and activities. During the term students will practice answering questions similar to the questions on the exam. **This is an individual exam and students are not allowed to take the exam together or compare their answers.**

READING (*The list is provisional and subject to change.)

The full reading list is available on [Talis](#), here you can see the required readings for each week of the module.

Week 16 Introduction

- Anita Shapira (2021), **Political History of Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.
- Orit Rozin (2021) **State and Society Building in Early Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society

Week 17 The Israeli Parliament (The Knesset) in comparative perspective

- Chen Friedberg & Reuven Y. Hazan (2021) **The Legislative Branch in Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.
- Matthew S. Shugart (2021) **The Electoral System of Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 18 The Israeli Government in comparative perspective

- Itzhak Galnoor & Dana Blander (2018) **The Executive Branch and Attempts to Strengthen It** in The Handbook of Israel's Political System.
- Ofer Kenig (2021) **The Executive Branch in Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 19 The Israeli Judicial System in comparative perspective

- Itzhak Galnoor & Dana Blander (2018) **Does Israel Have a Constitution?** in The Handbook of Israel's Political System.
- Gregory Mahler (2021) **The “Constitutional” System of Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 20 Political Parties in Israel: Organization, Origins, and Change

- Itzhak Galnoor & Dana Blander (2018) **Political Parties: Can We Get Along Without Them?** in The Handbook of Israel's Political System.
- Reuven Y. Hazan (2021) **Parties and the Party System of Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 21 Topics in Israeli politics: Peace and Security

- Oren Barak (2021) **Israel's Policy in and toward the West Bank and the Gaza Strip** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.
- Shamir, Michal., & Shamir, Jacob. (2007). "The Israeli—Palestinian Conflict in Israeli Elections." *International Political Science Review*, 28(4), 469-491.
- Yakter, Alon, and Liran Harsgor. "Long-Term Change in Conflict Attitudes: A Dynamic Perspective." *British Journal of Political Science* 53, no. 2 (2023): 460–78.

Week 22 Topics in Israeli politics: Religious–Secular Relations

- Itzhak Galnoor & Dana Blander (2018) **Religion and State: Between Social Conflict and Political Accommodation**. In The Handbook of Israel's Political System.
- Michael Freedman (2020) "Vote with your rabbi: The electoral effects of religious institutions in Israel." In Electoral Studies.

Week 23 Topics in Israeli politics: Ethnic Identities

- Itzhak Galnoor (2021) **Arab Citizens in the "Jewish" State of Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.
- Sammy Smootha (2021) **The Jewish Ethnic Divide and Ethnic Politics in Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 24 Topics in Israeli politics: Gender and Politics

- Reut Itzkovitch-Malka (2021) **Gender in Israel** in The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society.

Week 25 The On-Going Political Crisis (2019-present)

- Gidron, Noam. "Why Israeli Democracy Is in Crisis." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 34 no. 3, 2023, p. 33-45. Project MUSE, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.a900431>.
- Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat (2023). **Four Elections in Two Years**. Chapter 1 in The Elections in Israel, 2019–2021. Edited By Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat.
- Liron Lavi, Naama Rivlin-Angert, Claretta Treger, Tamir Sheafer, Israel Waismel-Manor, and Michal Shamir (2023). **King Bibi**. Chapter 4 in The Elections in Israel, 2019–2021. Edited By Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat.

STUDY ABROAD ASSESSMENT – ZA/ZU/ZF variant

The same as above.

AVAILABLE ON LISTEN AGAIN: Yes No

MARKING CRITERIA

See the Department's marking criteria.

MARKING SCALE

>81% **Outstanding work that is at the upper limit of performance.**

70-80% **The normal range for first class work.** A first class essay shows a clear command of material, arguments and sources. It will show a clear understanding of underlying principles and a use of those principles in answering the question. If it is in an empirically oriented subject it will show control of empirical material, sound use of that material, its relation to appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks and development of argument. If it is in a theoretical subject it will show control of theoretical material, sound use of that material and development of argument. Where appropriate it will utilise empirical material to illustrate theoretical points. The essay will show independence of judgement.

60-69% **Upper second class work.** An upper second class essay shows a good knowledge of material, arguments and original and secondary sources. If it is in an empirically oriented subject it will show some relation between that material and appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks. If it is in a theoretical subject it will show some grasp of principles and development of argument. Where appropriate it will utilise empirical material. The essay will make a clear point or points and show some critical acumen.

50-59% **Lower second class work.** A lower second class essay shows a basic, clear and generally correct knowledge of material, arguments and sources, particularly original sources. It will correctly summarise empirical or theoretical material, show some understanding of the material and its importance and draw reasonably appropriate conclusions.

40-49% **Third class work.** A third class essay shows some knowledge of basic material. The use of material is only just adequate, or it might be otherwise adequate but ill judged or even mistaken in some significant way(s). There are no clear conclusions drawn from the material, none that could be drawn from the material or where drawn they are significantly flawed or irrelevant.

1-39% **Fail or unclassified.** Marks in this range are usually given when either the use of basic material is absent, flawed, fundamentally mistaken, the essay fails to address a set or otherwise defined question or the use of language is so poor as to make the essay incomprehensible.

0% **This mark is reserved for the non-submission of due work, or it may be awarded by the Dean in case of plagiarism.**

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the assessment (marking) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the module and is subject to change with advance notice.

How to submit your essay using FASER

You will be able to access the online submission system via your myEssex portal or via <https://FASER.essex.ac.uk>. FASER allows you to store your work-in-progress. This facility provides you with an ideal place to keep partially completed copies of your work and ensures that no work, even drafts, is lost. If you have problems uploading your coursework, you should contact ltt@essex.ac.uk. You may find it helpful to look at the FASER guide <http://www.essex.ac.uk/it/elearning/faser/default.aspx>. If you have any questions about FASER, please contact your administrator or refer to the handbook.

Under NO circumstances is your coursework to be emailed to the administrators or the lecturer. This will NOT be counted as a submission.

Coursework deadline policy for undergraduates

There is a single policy at the University of Essex for the late submission of coursework in undergraduate courses. Essays must be uploaded before 09.45 on the day of the deadline.

All coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of zero. The mark of zero shall stand unless the student submits satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that the student was unable to submit the work prior to the deadline. For further information on late submission of coursework and extenuating circumstances procedures please refer to <http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx>.

Essay feedback will be given via FASER.

ALL submissions should be provided with a coversheet (Available from Moodle).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious academic offence and whether done wittingly or unwittingly it is your responsibility. **Ignorance is no excuse!** The result of plagiarism could mean receiving a mark of zero for the piece of coursework. In some cases, the rules of assessment are such that a mark of zero for a single piece of coursework could mean that you will fail your degree. If it is a very serious case, you could be required to withdraw from the University. It is important that you understand right from the start of your studies what good academic practice is and adhere to it throughout your studies.

The Department will randomly select coursework for plagiarism checks and lecturers are very good at spotting work that is not your own. **Plagiarism gets you nowhere; DON'T DO IT!** Following the guidance on referencing correctly will help you avoid plagiarism. Please familiarise yourself with the University's policy on academic offences: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx>.