

CPO 4000 / JST 3930 / Fall 2024

ISRAEL: RELIGION AND POLITICS

Dr. Sohn

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., and Fridays, 2:15 – 3:45 p.m., usually in person as well as via Zoom, telephone, or email ([Zoom](#) requires registration and UF email)

Course Description

The course addresses religion and politics in Israel beginning with religious Zionism, historically, and addressing several themes in the 20th and 21st centuries. Preliminary course themes include religious-secular relations; orthodox communities; women in orthodoxy, women's agency, and orthodox women's movement; secular women's movement and religion; Israel as a Jewish and democratic state; law and religion; freedom of religion and conscience, and other rights questions pertaining to religion; and religion and state.

The course is an undergraduate seminar. Discussion and spoken assignments are an important part of the grade. The course includes a focus on texts. Students will read, write, and speak about texts, developing analytical skills in each area. Experience with this sort of work is not required to take the class; we will develop these skills throughout the course of the semester.

There is no political litmus test in this course. Students are encouraged *not* to bring their own opinions to the classroom. Later in the semester, after some disciplined work on the texts and their arguments on their own terms, we will begin to bring in student personal experience (if preferred – not required) and some opinions as relate to analytical arguments (rather than opinion as purely normative). For more on the professor's pedagogical approach to teaching these materials, students can read the following (it is not required): [Inclusiveness, Pedagogy, Identity, Ideology, and the Epistemology of the Professor \(e-ir.info\)](#) by Patricia Sohn (2023). Students will be asked, likewise, to introduce themselves to the class; they can include that information they think useful to fostering a collaborative communication environment in the classroom for the semester (usually, LS or other class status at UF, major, minor, language study, study or travel abroad, study or experience related to the topics and themes of the course, and reason for taking the course).

Texts

- Steven Mazie, *Israel's Higher Law: Religion and Liberal Democracy in the Jewish State* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006).
- Michal Raucher, *Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2020).
- Motti Inbari, *Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- E-Reserves reader (free with your UF information, and UF VPN or on campus access) including readings from Haim Cohn, Shimon Shetreet, Pinhas Shifman, Walter Homolka, Menachem Elon, Menachem Honfung, Woods [Sohn], and Jonathan Fox.

Assignments

10%	Attendance
10%	Ad Hoc Daily Participation
7.5%	Individual Presentation
7.5%	Round Table Panelist
15%	Journal (1 – 2 pages)
20%	Abstract (1 – 1.25 pages)
30%	Final Essay (1 – 6 pages)

Assignment descriptions and parameters can be found at the Assignments tab in Canvas. See also:

10% Attendance

The attendance grade is a composite of daily attendance, which is taken in Canvas. The running grade throughout the semester appears in the student's Gradebook. Grades at or above 84% will not affect the grade. Grades below 84% will reduce the grade by 0.5 points for every 10 points on a 100-point scale. Low attendance is likely to be followed by a low Ad Hoc Daily Participation grade, since that grade can only be achieved while being present. Students who are not cleared for campus, or who have serious infections such as Strep, Covid, etc., are asked, if possible (e.g. it is not required), to stay home and to join the class through Zoom with full attendance credit. A doctor's note is preferable but is not always required; the key is to be in contact with the professor and get approval for it in advance. Participation may be possible through Zoom if preferred, and if a student is well enough to participate.

10% Ad Hoc Daily Participation

Ad Hoc participation indicates a student's active engagement in the classroom, preparedness to discuss readings, appropriate comments, willingness to keep comments to the texts, and sensitivity to other students' comments. Notes will be made in the "comment" section on this page for days with particularly high participation, or days with inappropriate participation. For most students, this component helps the overall grade rather than hindering it. Please ask if there are any questions.

7.5% Individual Presentation

The individual presentation will be 5-7 minutes. It can be live-in-class, or it can be a prepared statement with slides using Voice Thread (free account at [https://elearning.ufl.edu/supported-services/voicethread/Links to an external site.](https://elearning.ufl.edu/supported-services/voicethread/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site.)). Please send the Voice Thread, if using it, by 8 a.m. the day of the presentation. The student must be in class to present the Voice Thread presentation.

Students will send a rank order preference list, 1 to 3, of their preferred chapter or article for presentation to the professor by the end of Week II. Every effort will be made to assign students to one of their top choices. If a student would like to present on a reading in Week II, III, or IV, please send the preference list earlier.

Presentations should explain the central argument of the chapter or article and provide a schema of the argument or text, imagining a non-expert audience. What is the argument? What is major evidence used to support the argument? How does the argument fit together? Why is it important? The individual presentation will include a question-and-answer session. Non-presentation students should prepare questions in advance. Presenting students should prepare answers to topical and thematic questions that can be anticipated.

7.5% Round Table Panelist

Students will be assigned to a ROUND TABLE for the purposes of the round tables, as well as some in-class group activities. Students will be provided with a question prompt for the Round Table one week prior to the round table. Each round table will be a summary discussion of one of the primary class texts. Each student will answer the question prompt in 2 minutes; presentations will be timed. Please work with your study group to ensure that there is not overlap in themes or topical material being covered in the students' answers within one round table. PowerPoint slides are not required; if you prefer to use them, please send them by 8 a.m. of that class day within Canvas email. Students may present live-in-class, or using a prepared presentation using [Voice Thread](#). The round table will include a question-and-answer session. Non-round table students should prepare questions in advance. Round table students should prepare answers to topical and thematic questions that can be anticipated.

15% Journal (1 @ 2 pages)

2 pages, plus footnotes and reference list; personal engagement. Please use Chicago Manual of Style, 1" margins, 11- or 12-point font, and Garamond, Times Roman, or Palatino font. Use formal writing and analytical distance to explain the central argument and examples of major evidence of the text. Reflect using personal engagement as well; can use personal experience, a text or theory from another course, something from the news, or the like. One external source is allowed for this assignment for the personal engagement component. Note, students can submit early, but not

late. Students choose the reading that he or she will address under certain time constraints. See below for more assignment details.

- 2 pages each. This assignment is the student's opportunity to engage with the course readings on a personal level. Include only information that would be appropriate for me to read. Please use footnotes and give a formal reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. ***Paragraphs must be 5 – 7 sentences each, strict limit.*** No short paragraphs, even for introduction or conclusion.
- Submit an abstract on Canvas on or before 11:59 p.m. of the day that we are scheduled to discuss the chapter or article in the Reading Schedule. Students can submit journal assignments early but not after the reading is scheduled in the reading schedule. Assignment due dates are distributed roughly evenly throughout the semester. They cannot be on the same chapter or article, but they may address another chapter (in addition) in a book already addressed in another written assignment. They may not be on a book for which the student is doing an individual presentation, but they can be on a book for which the student is on a round table.

20% Abstract (1 @ 1.25 pages)

1.25 pages, plus footnotes and reference list; analytical distance. Please use Chicago Manual of Style, 1" margins, 11- or 12-point font, and Garamond, Times Roman, or Palatino font. Use formal writing and analytical distance to explain the central argument and examples of major evidence of the text.

- 1.25 pages each Longer or shorter will reduce points. The goal is to strive for concise, direct, and active voice while remaining substantive; the length is part of the assignment. Explain the central argument/contention (or take-home message) of the assigned readings, drawing upon three (3) major pieces of evidence used in the reading to support that argument/contention. In this assignment, the student is working to develop analytical distance and analytical neutrality or clarity. In some ways, it is the opposite of personal engagement. Please use footnotes and give a formal reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements on Canvas. ***Paragraphs must be 5 – 7 sentences each, strict limit.*** No short paragraphs, even for introduction or conclusion.
- Submit an abstract on Canvas on or before 11:59 p.m. of the day that we are scheduled to discuss the chapter or article in the Reading Schedule. Students can submit journal assignments early but not after the reading is scheduled in the reading schedule. Assignment due dates are distributed roughly evenly throughout the semester. They cannot be on the same chapter or article, but they may address another chapter (in addition) in a book already addressed in another written assignment. They may not be on a book for which the student is doing an individual presentation, but they can be on a book for which the student is on a round table.

30% Final Essay (1 @ 6 pages)

- 6 pages, plus footnotes and reference list. Each student will write one 6-page essay in response to a choice of essay prompts. Use Chicago Manual of Style in-text citations and full reference page. There is no final exam for this course. Students will be asked to distinguish between analytical distance and personal engagement with the materials, and to demonstrate both. When in doubt, analytical distance should come first. Students may draw in some part upon their abstracts and journals, as appropriate to answering the essay prompt that the student chooses. Essays are limited to the readings from class except for a short personal engagement section for which 2 outside sources are allowed (e.g., academic articles, chapters, books, newspaper articles, etc.). Please use footnotes and give a formal reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. Footnotes MUST use the word processing program's footnote function, and reference list must be on a separate page at the end; footnotes and reference list cannot be combined in any way. Please use Times Roman, Palatino, or Garamond font, 11- or 12-points font size, 1" margins, and double-space all written assignments. **Paragraphs must be 5 – 7 sentences each, strict limit.** No short paragraphs, even for introduction or conclusion.

READING SCHEDULE

Notes:

- *Student name will be listed after Week 3 next to an assigned reading for individual presentation, and for Round Table. The Round Table group also functions as your study group for some in-class group activities.*
- *Generally speaking, students with last names beginning A-N will be responsible to speak about the readings assigned for Tuesdays in a substantive way; and students with last names beginning O-Z about the readings assigned for Thursdays. There will be a few exceptions, and all students are welcomed to speak regarding both sets of readings. We may come back to discuss a reading on a day for which it is not assigned after the first time that we discuss it. Thank you!*
- *Several films are available on e-reserves for free viewing with your UF information and UF VPN, or on campus access. They are not required but may be interesting to some students.*
- *E-reserves readings should be free. Free access is available with your UF information and UF VPN, or on campus access. If not, please contact me or 392-HELP (UF Computing Help) right away.*

Weeks 1 through 5

[Israel's Higher Law: Religion and Liberal Democracy in the Jewish State by Steven Mazie](#)

Week 1

Introductions

Thursday, Lecture via Voice Thread; professor will be away at a conference. Link will be here.

No office hours Week 1 except by Zoom appointment (please use email to contact)

Week 2

Tuesday, Mazie, Chapter 1

Thursday, E-Reserves readings:

- Student last name beginning O-Z: Pinhas Shifman, "Family Law in Israel: The Struggle between Religious and Secular Law" in *Israel Law Review* (1990)
- Student last name beginning A-N: Shimon Shetreet and Walter Homolka, *Jewish and Israeli Law -- An Introduction*, pages 3-15

By the end of Week 2, please send your top 3 preferences to Dr. Sohn via email, ranked first to third, for: (A) Individual Presentation (by chapter or e-reserves article); and (B) Round Table/Study Group (by book)

Week 3

Tuesday, Mazie, Chapter 2

Thursday, Mazie, Chapter 5

Week 4

Tuesday, Mazie, Chapter 6

Thursday, E-Reserve reading: Menachem Elon, "The Religious and Cultural Aspects of the Question of the Status of Jewish Law in the Jewish State" in *Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles* by Menachem Elon

Week 5

Tuesday, Mazie, Chapter 8

Thursday, Mazie, Chapter 9

- ***ROUND TABLE ONE, Mazie***

Weeks 6 through 10

Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women by Michal Raucher

Week 6

Tuesday, E-Reserves reading: Shetreet and Homolka, *Jewish and Israeli Law -- An Introduction*, pages 37-67

Thursday, E-Reserves reading: Woods [Sohn], Chapter 3 from *Judicial Power and National Politics*

Week 7

Tuesday, E-Reserves reading: Jonathan Fox, Chapter 3 from *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State: A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data*

Thursday, Raucher, Chapter 1

Week 8

Tuesday, Raucher, Chapter 2

Thursday, E-Reserves reading: Sohn, Chapter 15 from Christine Hayes, editor, *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law*

Week 9

Tuesday, Raucher, Chapter 4

Thursday, Raucher, Chapter 5

Week 10

Tuesday, Raucher, Chapter 6

Thursday, E-Reserves reading: Woods [Sohn], Chapter 10 from Austin Sarat and Stuart Scheingold, *The Worlds Cause Lawyers Make: Structure and Agency in Legal Practice*

- **ROUND TABLE TWO, Raucher**

Weeks 11 through 15:

[*Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises by Motti Inbari*](#)

Week 11

Tuesday, Inbari, Chapter 1

Thursday, Inbari, Chapter 2

Week 12

Tuesday, Inbari, Chapter 3

Thursday, E-Reserves reading: Hofnung, Chapter 7 in *Democracy, Law, and National Security in Israel* by Menachem Hofnung

Week 13

Tuesday, Inbari, Chapter 4

Thursday, E-Reserves reading: Haim H. Cohn, "The Spirit of Israel Law" in 9 *Israel Law Review* (1974)

Week 14

Tuesday, Inbari, Chapter 5

Thursday, Inbari, Chapter 6

- **ROUND TABLE THREE, Inbari**

Week 15

Tuesday, Inbari, Chapter 7

Conclusions

Additional Assignments Dates (see also "Assignments" tab in Canvas):

Thu Sep 19, 2024	Journal (1)
Thu Oct 10, 2024	Abstract (1)
Tue Nov 19, 2024	Individual Presentation (1)
Tue Dec 10, 2024	Final Essay (1)
Throughout Semester	Daily Ad Hoc Participation

Student Learning Outcomes

What you learn from this course will depend upon what you put into it. Reading all texts from cover to cover is crucial to success. Written and spoken assignments will assist the student in consolidating his or her own analysis and ideas regarding the course themes and materials. Students who successfully complete the course with an A+ will learn the following. Students will be able to:

1. Identify main features, themes, aspects, facts, and debated facts regarding the relationship between religion and politics in Israel, including religion and state, and religion and society.
2. Identify and explain several primary theories regarding religion in Israel, and the relationship between religion and politics in Israel.
3. Identify and explain several primary aspects (e.g., facts) and theories regarding the relationship between religion and secularism in Israel.
4. Identify main religious and secular communities in Israel.
5. Identify and explain primary components of Israel's legal order in institutional and quasi-constitutional terms with particular attention to religious freedom.
6. Synthesize and develop your own argument regarding the benefits and drawbacks of the theories that we address, and your own potential framework or theory in regard to the question of religion and politics in Israel.

RELEVANT COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

CLASS DEMEANOR

Students are asked to conduct themselves as adults and budding scholars, professionals, and intellectuals in this classroom. It is expected that students in the classroom will range a wide spectrum in terms of origins, experience, and political ideas. Informed Americans can maintain a wide range of legitimate political thought in both academic terms, and in terms of our political freedoms to freedom of thought and expression. Expression is somewhat constrained in the classroom, as for most of the semester it is limited to analysis of texts and author arguments. That said, students are allowed to maintain their own political ideas and are not required to *believe* any of the arguments stated in readings or in class, including those of the professor. That given, students are asked and expected to treat one another with respect and flexibility, allowing respect for our various locations in ideational and experiential terms, as well as in training and academic experience. This respect will be particularly important in classroom discussions, but it may come in handy in other moments as well.

Please do not come tardy to class. If you do, please sit near the door and make as little disruption as possible when entering. On-going disruptions to the classroom will affect the participation grade.

THE UNIVERSITY'S HONESTY POLICY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

IN-CLASS RECORDING:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled

students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private 2 conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.

Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

CAMPUS RESOURCES:

- **Health and Wellness**

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273 4450.

• Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information. Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.