

**The Arab-Israeli Neighborhood  
Syllabus 2020**

**Instructor:** [Edwin Hirschfeld](#)  
**Meetings:** June 1-15, 2019  
**Classroom:** Israel and the  
Palestinian Territories  
**Office Hours:** Continuous, June 1-15

THE  
**DARROW**  
SCHOOL  
STUDY ABROAD INSTITUTE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is traveling to Israel and the Palestinian Territories to negotiate and draft a peace agreement between prominent Israeli and Palestinian think tanks. We will mediate between influential research centers that directly advise their respective governments on policy matters. Discovering this ancient land and immersing ourselves in its diverse cultures are both sweet and essential to our mission. We will tour the region, closely examine current peacemaking models, meet grassroots activists, interact with ordinary folk, and attend college seminars on geostrategy and conflict resolution. A variety of recreational activities and *very much fun* are of course part of the experience. No background on the subject is necessary.

*The Arab-Israeli Neighborhood* is strictly an academic endeavor which is staunchly unaffiliated and unaligned with any advocacy organizations, political agendas, or religious ideologies.

In order to mediate effectively, this course will chronicle Arab-Israeli relations predominantly (but not exclusively) defined by conflict, by presenting a comprehensive range of agendas and arguments regarding how Arab-Israeli relations developed, where they currently stand, and the multitude of future possibilities. Special focus will be applied to Israeli-Palestinian relations. All parties in the *Arab-Israeli Neighborhood* feature extraordinarily diverse cultures and historical narratives which we will examine to establish contextual background. As the course progresses students will be encouraged to develop their own critical thought, progressively becoming more discerning consumers of current events.

We will be conducting tête-à-tête sessions with Israelis and Palestinians (separately) to learn their perspectives firsthand. As the range of agendas and their mutual collision points become defined to us, we will attempt what the international community, including 13 successive U.S. Presidents have failed to accomplish – *solve the conflict!* As a team, we will try to reconcile them into an mutual agreement which we will draft.

Successful completion of the course will translate to a comprehension of:

- The detailed cast of characters (those involved and affected)
- The theater of interaction (the land, its geography, and shifting political borders)
- The range of competing narratives
- The range of options for resolving the conflict

- The complexities involved
- Why relations between the involved parties matter both regionally and globally

Our group will be divided into 6 teams, each assigned to one of six major points of contention for which they will design an agreement:

- Jerusalem / Al Quds / Yerushalayim
- Refugees
- West Bank Settlements / Communities in Judea-Samaria
- Security
- Borders
- Water

Collaborative design thinking will be our methodology. The design process requires the following sequential steps:

Identifying a problem → hypothesizing a solution → designing a prototype → testing the prototype → redesigning and testing as necessary → making the product.

The final project will be a finalized draft of the peace agreement to be published online and presented via teleconference to an outside audience. The document will be a compendium of each team's work. If both sides ultimately agree to the terms, we will culminate with a triumphant signing ceremony.

## SOURCES

1. [\*Side By Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine\*](#), by Sami Adwan (Editor), Dan Bar-On (Editor), Eyal Naveh (Editor), Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (Editor)
2. [\*The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict\*](#) by Martin Gilbert [paperback]
3. Supplemental sources to be announced as the course progresses.

## BASIS OF EVALUATION

### **Participation (25%)**

Frequent and thoughtful participation in group discussions and activities is not only expected and required, it is an indispensable resource which insists you elevate yourself and your colleagues by synthesizing and articulating thoughts based on sources we examine.

Respect and tolerance for all viewpoints will be our standard norm. Do not interrupt your colleagues during discussions. The instructor reserves the right to establish acceptable parameters in this regard, including asking individuals to leave the class or program in extreme cases of unacceptable behavior.

### **Homework (25%)**

Everyone is expected to be conversant in assigned reading, and up to date on work assigned by instructors or team leaders.

**Citizenship (25%)**

Punctuality, respect, personal hygiene, general adherence to rules, not separating oneself from the group, overall attitude - all these social criteria have a direct bearing on the entire group's learning experience.

**Final Project (25%)**

As noted verbatim previously: The final project will be a finalized draft of the peace agreement to be published online and presented via teleconference to an outside audience. The document will be a compendium of each team's work. If both sides ultimately agree to the terms, we will culminate with a triumphant signing ceremony.

**Appeals**

I strive to be accurate and fair in assessments, yet keep an open mind to my own (plentiful) imperfections. Students are encouraged to call any grading discrepancies to my attention. If persuaded, I will gladly adjust scores accordingly.

**Cheating & Plagiarism**

The discovery of cheating or plagiarism on any assignment in or outside the class will result in disciplinary action as per your school's regulations with no exceptions.

PROGRAM NORMS

**Respect**

Projects and discussions mostly concern controversial and deeply contentious issues. Due respect and tolerance for all individuals and their opinions will be the standard norm regardless whether or not we agree with them. This also applies to meetings we will conduct with external parties who are not participants in the course.

**Culture**

The college-preparatory component of the program is one which I take to heart. One of the course objectives is for you to be able to enter an undergraduate, college-level political science or history course having already been acclimated to the pace, responsibilities, and level of discourse you can expect. We will carry ourselves accordingly.

*This syllabus is subject to emendations at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes will be duly announced.*