How can we explain the persistent and relentless antagonism between Jews/Israelis and Arabs, both in Palestine and in neighboring Arab countries, whose roots go back to medieval times—if not before? Though we will begin our study in ancient times, the focus of this course will be the 20th century and our own. In addition to trying to understand the ongoing conflict from both the Arab/Palestinian and Jewish/Israeli perspectives, we will frame our discussions around a handful of interconnected central questions or issues:

- Is it a religious conflict between Islam and Judaism in which both sides are motivated by deep-seated suspicions and hatreds that ultimately rest on divine mandates, revelations or sacred scriptures?
- Is it an ethnic conflict between competing groups reflecting constantly changing demographic patterns?
- Is it a conflict motivated by nationalist desires in which rival armies want to establish a state in the same geographic location?
- Is it a war of self-defense in which a new state is defending itself against its neighbors whose objective is to destroy it?
- Is it a war of territorial expansion in which one state seeks to expand its borders at the expense of its neighbors?
- Is it an imperial war that reflects the rivalries and colonial aspirations of several European countries in the 19th and 20th centuries—and more recently the United States and Russia—in the Middle East?
- Is it the inevitable consequence of the difficult transition from traditional societies to modern states, all moving at different speeds, aiming at different targets, and hence on a collision course at the outset?
- Is the conflict in essence the collision of two sets of historic and moral rights to the same land? And, if so, does this mean the conflict will never be resolved?

Not all these questions can be answered. But understanding their role in events unfolding in the Middle East is crucial if we are to find a way to bring some measure of peace and stability to the region, now in a state of upheaval, and to the Israelis and Palestinians in particular.

To get a broader perspective on the conflict, we’ll be viewing several films throughout the semester.

REQUIRED BOOKS [Books Available At the UWM Virtual Bookstore]
Eric Gartman, *Return to Zion: The History of Modern Israel*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2015 [Used copies available on Amazon; order well in advance]

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS
--Regular attendance is very important. Sometimes missing class is unavoidable, but if you miss more than two classes, it is your responsibility to contact me to arrange to make up a missed class (typically a two or three page paper or written version of a class activity). Absences that are not made up will affect your final grade.
--Students are expected to have read all assignments before coming to class.
--Students with special needs should contact me at the beginning of the course so appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
--Feel free to contact me, by phone or email, for any reason; if necessary.

GRADING
Attendance and Participation: 25%
Two Reflection Papers (3 or 4 pages each), Weeks #6 & #11: 25%
Study Group Presentations, beginning Week #4: 25%
Final Research Paper, 5 or 6 pages, due Week #15: 25%
CLASS SCHEDULE, READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

*Week #1 – Intro & Logistics/Reading/Assignments/Getting on the Same Page*
[1/22] Reading: *Return to Zion* [hereafter RTZ], Preface, pp xi – xiii; Introduction, pp 1 - 4
*Side by Side* [hereafter SBS], “The Dual Narrative Approach,” pp ix - xvi

*Week #2 – A Pillar of Fire on the Road to Zionism*
[1/27 & 1/29] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 1 & 2, pp 5 – 33
*The Israel-Arab Reader* [hereafter TIAR], Bilu Manifesto, pp 3 – 4 and TIAR, Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, pp 4 -9

*Week #3 – Vladimir [Zeev] Jabotinsky and the British Mandate*
[2/3 & 2/5] Reading: RTZ, Chapter 3
SBS, Chapter 1
*The Iron Wall* [Handout]

*Week #4 – Palestine Between the Wars*
[2/10 & 2/12] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 3 & 4
SBS, Chapter 2
TIAR, Sir Henry McMahon Letter, pp 11 -12; The Sykes-Picot Agreement, pp 13 -16; The Balfour Declaration, p 16; The Churchill White Paper pp 25 – to the bottom of p 28
Articles on CANVAS

**Study Group #1—Monday, February 10**

*Weeks #5 & #6 – World War II and The Holocaust*
[2/17 to 2/26] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 5, & 6
SBS, Chapter 3
Articles on CANVAS and/or Handouts

**First Reflection Paper Due Week #6—February 24 OR 26**

*Week #7 - Israel’s War of Independence and the Arab’s Al–Nakbah*
[3/2 & 3/4] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 7 & 8
SBS, Chapter 4
TIAR, State of Israel Proclamation of Independence, pp, 81 – 83
Articles on CANVAS and/or Handouts

**Study Group #2—Monday, March 2**

*Week #8 – Modern Roots of the Conflict and the Suez Campaign*
SBS, Chapter 5
Article on CANVAS on Palestinian Nationalism
Week #9 – The Six-Day War
SBS, Chapter 6
TIAR, Law of Return, p 87
Articles on CANVAS & Handouts Distributed Week #8

Study Group #3—Monday, March 23

Week #10 – The Yom Kippur War: Its Antecedents and Consequences
[3/30 & 4/1] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 13 & 14
SBS, Chapter 7

Study Group #4—Monday, April 1

Week #11 – Camp David Accords, The Lebanon War and The First Intifada
[4/6 & 4/8] Reading: RTZ, Chapters 15 & 16
SBS, Chapter 8
TIAR, Hamas Charter, pp 340 – 347 [Articles 6, 9, 13, 14, 22, & 32]

Study Group #5—Monday, April 6
Second Reflection Paper Due Week #11—April 6 OR 8

Weeks #12 & #13 – The Art of Negotiation: Oslo Peace Process
[4/13 to 4/22] Reading: RTZ, Chapter 17
The Gatekeepers [Award winning Documentary Film about Israel’s domestic security agency, the Shin Bet, also known by the acronym ‘Shabak’—Sherut haBitajyon haKlali “General Security Service”, Israel’s FBI]

Study Group #6—Monday, April 13

Week #14 – The Unraveling of Oslo, the Second Intifada
[4/27 & 4/29] Reading: RTZ, Chapter 18
SBS, Chapter 9
TIAR, Obama’s Cairo Speech, From “The second major Source . . .” pp 555 to 557

Study Group #7—Monday, April 27

Week 15 – The Future of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict
SBS, Teachers’ Personal Trajectories, pp 393 -398
Two Articles by Micah Goodman on CANVAS

FINAL PAPER DUE WEEK #15—May 4 OR 6

Major/Minor in Jewish Studies This course is part of the Jewish Studies major and minor. The major offers two tracks: Hebrew Studies and Jewish Cultural Studies (which does not require Hebrew language). With its combination of core courses and electives, the Jewish Studies program allows students to create a course of study that can focus on religion, culture, Israel, Holocaust, media, or immigration. A dynamic and innovative major, Jewish Studies prepares students to work in our multicultural world. For more information on the Jewish Studies major and minor, please the coordinator, Dr. Rachel Baum, rbaum@uwm.edu; 229-5156.

Religious Studies If you are thinking about a major or a double major in Religious Studies, please contact Peter Paik, Director, at pypaik@uwm.edu.