**Syllabus – Sociology 3XX – Jerusalem, Messianism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

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The Israel-Palestine conflict has been cast by the Palestinian nationalist movement as a struggle between the indigenous Palestinian Arab population against European white settler colonialists who arrived in the late 1800s as a result of a new political movement called Zionism. Claims to indigeneity and entitlement to the specific place called Jerusalem and present-day Israel frequently omit or manipulate the temporal order of significant actors and events. These factors complicate and interrogate the post-colonial narrative.

This course aims to reveal how place, temporality, and narrative are used to stake a claim of entitlement to Jerusalem. The vehicle for this entitlement has traditionally been through organized religion, with the Judaic concept of Messianism adopted and altered by Christianity and Islam, respectively, to usurp political power and to distinguish themselves from their predecessors. Messianism is always attached to Jerusalem in that a holy place is necessary to usher in an anointed leader who will bring about perpetual world peace and prosperity.

A sociological long view reveals that the competition for Jerusalem and present-day Israel began with the Jews for geostrategic dominance and social control. The social purpose of organized religion is first examined using theories of Emil Durkheim and Max Weber to enable interpretation of the motivations behind social actions as “religious” by members of all three Abrahamic faiths. We then use historical readings to understand the timeline of events, and examine the birth and development of Messianism, or the notion of an anointed leader who will bring everlasting peace and harmony *specifically in Jerusalem/Holy Land/Jerusalem*.

**P L A C E**

**Week 1: Significance of Place**

Erlich, Avi. 2010. Introduction and Chapter 1: Land and Intellect. In *Ancient Zionism: The Biblical Origins of the National Idea*. Simon and Schuster.

Livingstone, E. A. Livingstone E. A. 2014. ‘Jerusalem’. in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by E. A. Livingstone. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-3062>

**O R G A N I Z E D R E L I G I O N**

**Week 2: It’s all about the group**

Durkheim, É., and J. W. Swain. 2012. Excerpt, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Dover Publications.

Weber, M. 1993. Excerpt, *The Sociology of Religion*. Beacon Press.

**N A R R A T I V E S**

**Week 2: What conflict? Competing Narratives**

Henze, Matthias. 2017. ‘When Was the Old Testament Written? A Brief Timeline’. Pp. 15–30 in *Mind the Gap*, *How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*. 1517 Media.

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. n.d. ‘Israel in Maps’. Retrieved 15 September 2020 (<https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Maps/Pages/Israel%20in%20Maps.aspx>).

Lecture by S. Abu Sitta on Palestinian lands in the late 1800s

Abu Sitta, S. n.d. ‘Palestine Land Society’. Retrieved 19 September 2020 (<http://www.plands.org/en/articles-speeches/speeches/2020/the-survey-of-western-palestine-revisited>).

<http://www.plands.org/en/maps-atlases/maps/palestine-1596>

**T I M E: WHO DID WHAT, WHEN?**

**Week 3: Whose Jerusalem – Jewish Era**

Goldhill, Simon. 2008. ‘Chapter 2: The Center of Jewish Jerusalem’. Pp. 45–91 in *Jerusalem: City of Longing*. Cambridge, Mass., UNITED STATES: Harvard University Press.

**Week 4: Whose Jerusalem – Christian Era**

Goldhill, Simon. 2008. ‘Chapter 1: The Center of the Christian World’. Pp. 1–44 in *Jerusalem: City of Longing*. Cambridge, Mass., UNITED STATES: Harvard University Press.

**Week 5: Whose Jerusalem – Islamic Era**

Goldhill, Simon. 2008. ‘Chapter 3: The Center of Muslim Jerusalem’. in *Jerusalem: City of Longing*. Cambridge, Mass., UNITED STATES: Harvard University Press.

**M E S S I A H**

**Week 8: Competing Messianisms – Jewish Messiahs**

Henze, Matthias. 2017. ‘Jesus, the Messiah of Israel’. Pp. 53–86 in *Mind the Gap*, *How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*. 1517 Media.

**Week 9: Competing Messianisms – Christian Messiah**

Henze, Matthias. 2017. ‘Did Jesus Abolish the Law of Moses?’ Pp. 115–46 in *Mind the Gap*, *How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*. 1517 Media.

**Week 10: Competing Messianisms – Muslim Mahdi/Messiah**

Krstić, Tijana. 2011. ‘In Expectation of the Messiah: Interimperial Rivalry, Apocalypse, and Conversion in Sixteenth-Century Muslim Polemical Narratives’. Pp. 75–97 in *Contested Conversions to Islam*, *Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. Stanford University Press.