Palestine: A Settler Colonial Analysis

Ethnic Studies 198

University of California, Berkeley
Spring 2018
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Course Description:
This 2-unit course will examine key historical developments that have taken place in Palestine, from the 1880s to the present, through the lens of settler colonialism. Our discussions will focus in particular on the following questions: What new insights and perspectives emerge from a settler colonial analysis? What is the source of contemporary conflicts over land and political power in Palestine? What connections have scholars drawn between Zionism and settler colonialism? What might decolonization mean in this context, and how might it open the possibility for justice and equality for all peoples in the region? Our analyses will utilize a comparative approach with an emphasis on scholarship in settler colonial studies. Class time will be devoted to lecture, documentaries, and open discussion and debate about these issues and the relevant scholarly literature.

Course Learning Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students will have:
- Been introduced to Palestine’s history from the 1880s to the present
- Acquired a basic understanding of settler colonialism in comparative contexts
- Developed a set of vocabularies specific to the colonial and settler colonial analytics
- Gained the analytical skills and knowledge necessary to undertake research on Palestine and its history
- Learned to engage in informed debate about this history and these concepts and vocabularies
- Researched, formulated, and presented a range of political alternatives to the current situation that aim to achieve justice for all

Required Texts and Other Materials:
All readings will be uploaded to bCourses under the ‘Pages’ tab.
Weekly Readings are a required and essential part of the course that will be accompanied with weekly reading responses.

Alongside your readings we will include other relevant materials that will enable you to further your understanding of each week’s topic. These may include primary documents, documentaries, readings, maps, presentations, reports, and so forth.

Grading and Assignments:
Final grades will be calculated as follows:
Participation: 20%  
Assignments (11): 60%  
Final Presentation: 20%

Note: Receiving less than 70%, missing more than 2 classes, or failing to complete the final presentation will result in a NP.

Participation. Points for participation will be based on your engagement during class. Given that we are limited in class time, intend to cover 130+ years of history, and will be grappling with new theories and concepts, you will be expected to be fully present — both physically and mentally — during class. Courses like this are very rare at US universities, so we hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions, make comments, and engage with different ideas. In order to do so, it is essential that you complete the assigned readings each week. You will be expected to have completed the readings before class, to arrive to class on time, and to contribute to class discussions. Significant tardiness will result in the docking of points.

Assignments. You will have to complete a total of 11 assignments for this course. All assignments will range from 1-2 written pages, and will include a variation of research, reflection, and answering specific questions or prompts.

Reading Responses. You will have to complete a total of 7 reading responses, as indicated on the class schedule. These will be in response to specific questions uploaded to bCourses the previous week, where further instructions will be provided. For the other 4 weeks of class instruction you will be asked to prepare responses to assigned reading response questions for class discussion, however these responses will not be submitted written responses.

Village Profile & Documentary Response. Further details and instructions will be given in advance, and uploaded to bCourses, with ample time to complete them.

Documentary Reflection. For this assignment, you are asked to select one documentary from those linked to in bCourses, which we have not watched in class, and respond to the following questions:

a. How does this documentary relate to the materials we have covered in our readings and in class? Does it correspond to, contradict, or provide new information to that which we have covered? Include a brief summary of the documentary.

b. How does the documentary frame the subject matter? E.g. nationalist, biblical/religious, security/defense, human rights/international law, occupation (as divorced from settler colonialism), etc.

c. What would differ if the subject matter utilized a settler colonial framework? Demonstrate your command of settler colonialism’s core attributes through a critical analysis of the documentary.

d. Personal Reflection. Does anything stand out to you? Resonate with you on a personal level? No limitations, just reflect!
Attend an event. Multiple events relating to Palestine are held in Berkeley each semester, both on campus and off. You are asked to attend one of these events and write a summary of the event, as well as a reflection. Responses should touch upon each of the questions mentioned above for the Documentary Reflection. If you are unable to attend an event, a 2-page reflection on one of the documentaries, lectures, or readings uploaded to bCourses will be an adequate substitute.

Final Proposal & Presentation. This course will culminate in small group presentations that will be presented during the final class. This will enable you to demonstrate your understanding of the situation in Palestine, and, significantly, formulate alternatives to it. You will have a lot of freedom for this presentation, as you will be asked to consider a wide range of possible solutions beyond the ones that are typically proposed. You will have the opportunity to draw upon literature specific to Palestine and/or literature pertaining to other colonial contexts. Decolonial alternatives are seldom discussed in the Palestinian context, so what we will be doing here is very unique, and hopefully fruitful as well! Proposals will be due by ---, but you are highly encouraged to discuss this with me in advance.

Additional Policies:

Community Agreement. Given that our subject matter tends to be contentious, at our first class meeting we will together establish a community agreement, agreeing upon rules that will enable us to engage with the content of the course, and each other, productively and respectfully. Is it crucial that our classroom remains a place for open scholarly inquiry and debate, and that we respectfully engage diverse points of view.

Attendance: Due to the seriousness of the subject and the amount of material that the course will cover during the semester, we stress that only students who can commit to class attendance enroll in the course. As mentioned above, students who miss more than 2 classes unexcused will receive an automatic NP.

Electronics Policy. No electronic devices may be used during class. Note: those with appropriate DSP accommodations are exempt.

Late Assignments. Late assignments will receive partial credit, unless there is a valid, documented reason as to why you were unable to complete the assignments on time.

DSP Accommodations. If you require any accommodations for this course, please notify us promptly so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

Auditing. No auditing is permitted. This course is only open to those students currently enrolled or on the waitlist.
Class Schedule
Subject to change as class needs arise

Week 1
Course Introductions: Syllabus Overview, Expectations, Community Agreement

Week 2
Understanding Settler Colonialism in Comparative Contexts: Distinct, Structural, Eliminatory

- Reading:
  - Evelyn Nakano-Glenn, *Settler Colonialism as Structure: A Framework for Comparative Studies of U.S. Race and Gender Formation*
  - Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native*
- Assignment Due:
  - Reading Response
- In-class visuals:
  - Selections from *Racism: A History, The British Empire in Colour*

Week 3
Contextualizing Zionism: Anti-Semitism, Nationalism, Imperialism, and Colonialism in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century

- Reading:
  - Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State)*
  - Victor Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest*
- Guest lecturer:
  - TBA
- Assignment Due:
  - Reading Response

Week 4

- Readings:
  - Ze’ev Jabotinsky, *The Iron Wall & The Ethics of the Iron Wall*
  - Patrick Wolfe, *Purchase by Other Means: Dispossessing the Natives in Palestine*
  - Nur Masalha, Selections from *Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*
- Assignment due:
  - Reading Response
- In-class visuals:
  - Select films from the Hebrew University’s Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive
  - Selections from *The Diaries of Yossef Nachmani*
• Images from the Palestine Poster Archive and Walid Khalidi’s *Before Their Diaspora*

**Week 5 |**


- Readings:
  - Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*
  - Nur Masalha, Selections from *Politics of Denial: Israel and the Palestinian Refugee Problem*
- Assignment due: Village Profile
- In-class visuals:

**Week 6 |**

**The Character of the Zionist Settler-State, 1948 – 1966 and Settler Hierarchy in Palestine 48’**

- Readings:
  - Sabri Jiryis, *The Legal Structure for the Expropriation and Absorption of Arab Lands in Israel*
  - Ella Shohat, *Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims*
- Assignment Due:
  - Reading Response
- Guest lecturers:
  - TBA

**Week 7 |**


- Readings:
  - Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar *Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer*
  - Daniel Siedelmann: *East Jerusalem: The Myth of Benign Occupation Disintegrates*
- Assignment Due:
  - Documentary Response
- In-class visuals:
  - Selections from: *Censored Voices, The Gatekeepers, Occupied Palestine, The Law In These Parts*

**Week 8 |**

- Readings:
  - James Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*
  - Gail Pressberg, *The Uprising: Causes and Consequences*
- Assignment Due:
  - Reading Response
- In-class visuals:
  - *The Wanted 18*

Week 9 | Spring Break

Week 10 | The Oslo Accords: Entrenching Colonialism, Outsourcing Occupation, 1993 – 2000

- Readings:
  - Edward Said, *The Morning After*
  - Leila Farsakh, *The Political Economy of Israeli Occupation: What is Colonial about It?*
- Assignment due:
  - Reading response

Week 11 | Intifadat Al-Aqsa, or ”Al-Aqsa Uprising,” the Matrix of Control, and the Neoliberal Turn, 2000 – Present

- Reading:
  - Adam Hanieh, Chapter 5, *Class and State in the West Bank: Neoliberalism Under Occupation*, in Lineages of Revolt
- Assignment Due:
  - Reading Response
- In-class visuals:
  - *Checkpoint, Rebel Architecture: The Architecture of Violence*, more TBA

Week 12 | Reservation Gaza: Siege, Caloric Counting, and “Humanitarian Warfare,” 2007 – Present

- Readings:
 o Trude Strand, *Tightening the Noose: The Institutionalized Impoverishment of Gaza, 2005-2010*


 o Selections from *Breaking the Silence, This is How We Fought in Gaza: Soldiers' testimonies and photographs from Operation “Protective Edge”* (2014)

 ● Guest lecturer:
  o TBA

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**Week 13 |**

**Decolonial Horizons: Decolonization in the Settler Colonial Context**

 ● Readings:
   o Linda Tabar and Chandni Desai: *Decolonization is a global project: From Palestine to the Americas*
   o Ghada Karmi: *The One State Solution*

 ● Guest lecturer:
  o TBA

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**Week 14 |**

**Decolonial Horizons: Presentations**

 ● FINAL PRESENTATIONS