

Understanding, Advocating and Inspiring (Power of Persuasion)

HIS 130

A Comprehensive Israel Education Curriculum
The David Project: Center for Jewish Leadership
American Jewish University Campus in Israel
Young Judea Year Course

Course Description

In a time where ideological attacks on the state of Israel are on the rise, The David Project: Center for Jewish Leadership presents a comprehensive Israel Education curriculum, which is intended to instill students with an understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the advocacy and organizational skills needed to support Israel on campus and in the general community, and with a sense of Jewish purpose and pride in the land of Israel and the Jewish People.

Throughout the course, students will view many examples of video footage from the Israeli, Palestinian and world media, participate in class debates over contemporary issues, and simulate the making and delivery of pro-Israel campaigns on the college campus. Students will learn to respond to some of the most common allegations and threats facing Israel, such as the Apartheid accusation, the origin and predicament of the refugees and the emerging Iranian threat. They will also explore the notion that Israel is not only about the Arab-Israeli conflict and strengthen their sense of pride in Israel's accomplishments as a modern democratic state.

Course Goals and Objectives

Defending Israel on a college campus is not easy and requires courage. The premise of the course is that not only is it important to understand effective responses to anti-Israel sentiments; it is equally important to get hands-on advocacy practice, whether through writing an op-ed article, responding on a talk-back site, speaking up in the classroom, or holding pro-Israel demonstrations on campus. The course includes a variety of role-play exercises, close analysis of effective (and ineffective) advocacy, and actual simulations of potential pro-Israel campaigns.

The Israel education curriculum is ultimately about empowering student leaders and Israel activists on college campuses, and providing them with the knowledge, skills and courage to speak up and support Israel.

Assessments

Grades will be determined through the following four measures:

- Participation and attendance: 20%
- Debates and exercises: 20%
- Mid-semester evaluation (quiz or paper): 10%
- Final case study presentation (simulating a pro-Israel campaign on campus): 50%.

Course Syllabus

Lessons 1 and 2 – Introduction & Physical Dimension

The introduction begins with a discussion on the importance of studying the conflict. It focuses on an analysis of why anti-Israel bias is on the rise and addresses what can be done to regain support for Israel. Students learn key concepts that are fundamental to arriving at a more fair and honest understanding of the conflict. They are introduced to three dimensions along which the conflict will be analyzed: physical, historical, and moral.

The physical dimension examines the conventional framing of the conflict in regard to land, resources, and people. Through the use of comparative maps, graphs, and analysis, students learn that the conflict is not only a local one between Israel and the Palestinians but primarily a regional one between Israel and its neighbors.

Readings:

Poem by John Godfrey Saxe, “The Blind Men and the Elephant”:
http://www.constitution.org/col/blind_men.htm

Professor Ruth Wisse’s “Open Letter to Harvard Students”:
<http://www.myisraelsource.com/content/ruthwisse>

Fox Interview with Dennis Ross on Camp David:
http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,50830,00.html

Outline of Israel’s history taken from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:
<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/Facts+About+Israel+-+History.htm>

Article from Middle East Forum: “The Smoking Gun: Arab Immigration into Palestine, 1922-1931”. <http://www.meforum.org/article/522>

Lessons 3 and 4 – Historical Dimension: Land and People

These lessons examine two of the most prevalent allegations against the State of Israel; that the Jews which settled in Israel were European colonialists and that they displaced the indigenous Palestinian Arabs. Topics explored include: the undeniable historical connection of Jews with Eretz Yisrael, emotional/religious ties to the land, the history of modern Zionism, immigration patterns of both Jews and Arabs and the necessity of a Jewish homeland.

Class discussion addresses nation state creation vs. the creation of the state of Israel. General historical conditions for nation state development are analyzed, and nation state creation in the Middle East is explored.

Readings:

Background on Zionism: “Zionism – Definition and Early History”
<http://www.mideastweb.org/zionism.htm>

Proclamation of Independence for the State of Israel
http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm

Lessons 5 and 6 – Historical Dimension: Refugees & 'Occupation'

The first part of this presentation will question and deconstruct the allegation that Jews and Israel are the cause of the Palestinian refugee problem. Two questions are asked; how did the Palestinian Arabs become refugees and what is presently perpetuating their suffering. Class discussion will explore the history of other refugee populations, the circumstances under which the Arabs fled, the Partition Plan of 1947 and the war of 1948. We will also address the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands, the concept of ethnic cleansing, the state of the Muslim population in Israel, and the role of the UN in governing the Palestinian refugee situation.

The second part will introduce and analyze the 'occupation' accusation and the common allegation by Arab spokespersons that 'occupation' is a legitimate justification for terrorism. The undeniable history of Jews in ancient cities such as Shechem, Hebron and Jerusalem is explored and the circumstances surrounding the Six Day War are analyzed. Students review Israel's offers of land in exchange for peace as well as Arab leaders' responses to these offers. Among the core messages is the understanding that territories and settlements are not the real issue.

Readings:

House Resolution 185 – Regarding the creation of refugee problems in the Middle East, North Africa and the Persian Gulf:

http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_cong_bills&docid=f:hr185ih.txt.pdf

UNRWA-Refuge of Rejectionism, by Barry Rubin, Asaf Romirowsky and Jonathan Spyer.

http://www.gloriacenter.org/index.asp?pname=submenu/articles/2008/rubin/5_8.asp

Dore Gold's "From 'Occupied Territories' to 'Disputed Territories'"

<http://www.jcpa.org/jl/vp470.htm>

Lesson 7 – The Moral Dimension

Students analyze the notion of Israel hatred as a proxy for anti-Semitism. Topics include the phenomenon of hate education and incitement in the Arab world and the impact of inaccurate and incomplete reporting of events in the media.

Students analyze and assess the impact of generalizing and drawing conclusions from isolated instances in the media. They compare and contrast Israel's misdemeanors with the crimes of other regimes. The idea of strict comparative standards as a basis for assessing Israel's behavior is a guiding principle.

Readings:

Charles Jacobs' article "Why Israel and Not Sudan is Singled Out?"

<http://web.israelinsider.com/Views/1518.htm>

Efraim Karsh's book review on bi-nationalism, "A Trojan Horse?":

<http://www.bostonreview.net/BR26.6/karsh.html>

Speech by Alan Dershowitz to Australian/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council

http://www.aijac.org.au/resources/speeches/dershowitz_speech.html

"Media Relations" from The Jerusalem Center for Communications and Advocacy Training

http://members.tripod.com/~animzmirot/media_help/how_to_deal_with_the_media.htm

"Graffiti on History's Walls," by Mort Zuckerman

http://www.jewishworldreview.com/mort/zuckerman_new_anti_sem.php3

"We Were Brought up to Hate" by Nonie Darwish from the Telegraph (December 12, 2006).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/02/12/do1205.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/02/12/ixop.html>

Steven Erlanger's "In Gaza, Hamas's Insults to Jews Complicate Peace," from the New York Times (April 1, 2008):
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/01/world/middleeast/01hamas.html>

Alan Luxenberg's "Ten Things Students Need to Know about Israel and Palestine," from the Foreign Policy Research Institute (April 2008).
<http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/1304.200804.luxenberg.originsisraelpalestine.html>

Lesson 8 – The Palestinian Narrative

This lesson introduces and analyzes the Palestinian narrative. Current events such as the "siege" over Gaza and Operation "Cast Lead" are analyzed through the lens of the pro-Palestinian perception. The lesson includes the viewing and analyzing of video footage of Hamas and Palestinian Authority spokespeople discussing the plight of Palestinians throughout history until the present day.

Readings:

Joseph Massad, "Return or Permanent Exile: Palestinian Refugees and the Ends of Oslo" -
http://www.radioislam.org/historia/zionism/massad_refugees.html

Edward Said on "Occupation is the Atrocity"
<http://mediamonitors.net/edward34.html>

Lesson 9 – Responding to the Apartheid Accusation

On many college campuses the apartheid analogy is evoked in order to slander and defame the Jewish state by falsely equating it with South African apartheid. The presentation not only dissects this misleading claim but also exposes the real institutionalized racism perpetrated by other Middle Eastern regimes.

Lessons 10 and 11 – Fundamentals of Israel Activism I

This lesson shifts the focus from theory to practice. Key questions regarding advocacy are considered: Why are most Jews silent about Israel, why is advocating for Israel important, and why supporting Israel is everyone's business? Students review the notion that "ideas win wars" and moral courage is introduced as a key component of advocacy and standing up for Israel.

The lesson continues with a discussion of the characteristics of effective advocacy. Four key concepts are presented, the Big Truth theory, going on the offensive, going beyond reason, and the characteristics of effective campaigns.

The lesson concludes with the learning of ARM (Address, Reframe, Message), an advocacy technique that enables constructive engagement and discussion in a hostile environment, and focuses the discussion on the broader and more relevant issues regarding the conflict.

Readings:

Mandy Katz's "The Re-Branding of Israel" from Moment Magazine (May/June 2008).
<http://www.momentmag.com/Exclusive/2008/2008-05/200805-Branding.html>

Ilana Diamond's "It's Lonely Being Pro-Israel on Campus" from the *Jerusalem Post* (April 15, 2008):

http://www.jhvonline.com/print_this_story.asp?smenu=112&sdetail=4511

Visit Honest Reporting's Big Lies interactive online program.

<http://www.honestreporting.com/a/bigLies.asp>

"How to Recognize Unfair Reporting," from CAMERA.

http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=22&x_article=385

"The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," Harvard University Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Research Paper Series RWP07-012, Feb. 2007:

<http://ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP07-012>

"Propaganda, Lies, and Wire Service Articles," by Barry Rubin, June 22, 2008 (GLORIA Center, Herzliya, Israel):

<http://www.spme.net/cgi-bin/articles.cgi?ID=4168>

Lesson 12 – Fundamentals of Israel Activism II and Advocacy Exercises

The lesson starts off with defining the major characteristics and goals of effective Israel advocacy. While ARM is often suitable, there are many times when it is not. Students are presented with scenarios where a 30-second response is not appropriate. Groups are reminded to incorporate effective advocacy techniques such as: reframing the argument, setting the agenda, expressing compassion, maintaining a "passionate calm", and acting assertively. They also learn the notion of *positive advocacy* – the idea that Israel is not only about the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that there are many positive aspects and accomplishments that need to be communicated when advocating for Israel.

Readings:

Gil Troy on "Why I Am A Zionist"

<http://www.giltroy.com/zionismandisrael/WhyIamaZionist.htm>

Lesson 13 – Jewish Pride

Seemingly on a daily basis, we learn of innovations coming out of Israel that benefit much of mankind. In this lesson students will be introduced to the numerous developments that Israel has introduced to the world, with a particular emphasis on the fields of: High-Tech, the environment, medicine and *Tikkun Olam*. Additionally, students will appreciate how these various innovations have their roots in Jewish tradition and history.

:Readings

188 - 175 ,42 – 17 Defending Identity, Natan Sharansky – Pages

Divest and Conquer" – Alan Dershowitz, The Forward, may 31st, 2002"

Countering Divestment and Encouraging Investment in Israel – Israel on Campus Coalition – Pages 33 – 35

http://www.israelcc.org/NR/rdonlyres/ABD16B23-3CF9-4EC1-93E6-E3583BEE6B5D/0/icc_counter_divest.pdf

Lessons 14 and 15 – Yediat Ha'Aretz

Every part of the Land of Israel has been cried over, prayed over and fought over. In this presentation students will begin to develop a geographical and historical understanding of the Land of Israel. They will learn to orient themselves on the map of Israel and identify where various cities and regions are. They will appreciate that both ancient and modern Israel are located in the same place, and that there was continuous presence of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel throughout the millennia.

Students will examine the connection of the Jewish people to different cities throughout Israel that hold particularly special significance, through history and story. Among the cities focused upon are: Beit Lechem, Hevron, Be'er Sheva, Shechem, Teveria, Tzfat & Jerusalem.

Readings:

Battleground: Fact and Fantasy in Palestine, Samuel Katz – Pages 85 – 115

“Continuous Jewish Presence in the Holy Land”, Samuel Katz
<http://www.eretzyisroel.org/~samuel/presence.html>

“A State of Exile”, Yishai Fleisher – Yediot Achrnonot, Aug. 6th, 2007

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3433810,00.html>

“The Palestinian Authority and the Jewish Holy Sites in the West Bank: Rachel’s Tomb as a Test Case”, Nadav Shragai – Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs – December 2007

http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=2&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=377&PID=1852&IID=1923&TTL=The_Palestinian_Authority_and_the_Jewish_Holy_Sites_in_the_West_Bank:_Rachel%27s_Tomb_as_a_Test_Case

http://www.honestreporting.com/articles/reports/Denial_of_Religious_Rights_by_the_Palestinian_Authority.asp

Lesson 16 – Shivat Zion

Throughout the ages the Jewish people have yearned for *Zion* and made concrete efforts to return to her from all the lands of their dispersion. This session will enable the students to understand how the Jewish people maintained their connection to Israel throughout the nearly 2,000-year-long Exile. Additionally, students will trace the various *aliyot* of the last century, along with the central personalities who embodied the Jewish yearning to return to Israel.

The lesson describes the return of the varied Jewish populations to Zion that specifically occurred during the modern era. Students are introduced to the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate, and touch upon the difficulties imposed by the White Paper of 1939. The presentation goes on to highlight accounts of Jews from post-World War II Europe, Jews from Arab lands who were forced out of these countries around 1948 and Israel’s independence, Jews from Ethiopia and the marvels of those operations to airlift them to Israel, Jews from the former Soviet Union, and Jews from Western countries such as the U.S.A, Canada and the U.K.

Readings:

Jews and Power, Ruth Wisse – Pages 1 - 37

The Israelis, Donna Rosenthal – Pages 113 - 169

Lessons 17 and 18 – Conclusion and Case Studies

After recapping the main concepts covered in the curriculum, students will apply the knowledge and skills they learned in working on pro-Israel campaigns on the college campus. Case study topics will include responding to the Apartheid allegation, defeating initiatives of divestment against Israel and starting a pro-Israel organization from scratch.

The goal of these case studies, which will be presented to Young Judea students, staff members and outside guests, is to inspire others to make Israel's case in their immediate environment.

We will complete the course by discussing the next steps students intend to take in their ongoing, life-long process of developing as advocates for the state of Israel.