

**POL 136**  
**The Arab-Israeli Conflict**  
**Spring 2011**  
**Term Paper—Suggested Topics and Instructions**  
Professor Zeev Maoz

The purpose of the term paper is to evaluate your competence in applying theoretical constructs and approaches in the study of world politics to the analysis issues, processes, and events in the Middle East. This document provides a list of sample topics for the term paper. Students who wish to select topics from this list are welcome to do so. Those who wish to write the paper on different topics not in the list are required to write a one-page paper outline and submit it to the TA in the course, Jonathan (Seth) Snyder, by the date of the midterm. Following the list of topics there are general instructions on how to write a successful term paper.

**A. Suggested Topics for the Term Paper**

- A Comparative Analysis of the Strategies of the Palestinian and Zionist Movements in Pre-1948 Palestine
- Inter-Arab Politics prior to and during the 1948 War: How did they affect the process and outcome of the war?
- Competing Narratives in the 1947-48 War: How Do they affect the Prospect of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in 2006?
- The Interrelations between Pan-Arabism and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
- The Effects of the Palestinian Resistance Movement on Palestinian-Arab Relations: Comparing Black September (1970-71) and the Civil War in Lebanon, 1974-90
- Water Disputes in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Source of Escalation or an Incentive for Peace?
- The Effects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict on the Israeli Economy
- The Effects of the Arab-Israeli Conflict on Arab Economies
- Was the Arab-Israeli Conflict a Cause of Unity or Discord in the Arab World?
- The impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the domestic politics of the Arab states
- Is the Arab-Israeli Conflict a Cause of Unity or of Political Polarization in Israel?
- Israel's Strategy of the Periphery: Success or Failure?

- Did Arab Para-Military Organization Perform Better against Israel in violent Confrontations than Arab States?
- Leaders and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: How Was the Conflict Shaped by the Personality and Beliefs of Arab and Israeli Leaders (Compare at least one Arab/Palestinian leader to an Israeli Leader)
- The Effects of Superpower Rivalry on the Arab-Israeli Conflict during the Cold War
- Factors Influencing Arms Races in the Arab-Israeli Conflict
- The economic incentives of peace: how did economic factors affect conflict resolution efforts in Arab-Israeli Conflict?
- The Use of Terrorism by the Palestinians: Causes and Implications
- Secret Negotiations in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Did they Help Stabilize Relations?
- The Effects of Domestic Instability in Israel and the Arab-States on the Arab-Israeli Conflict
- How did the Arab-Israeli Wars shape the political structures of regimes in the Middle East?

### 1. General Structure of the Paper

The paper is based on the application of a specific theoretical topic covered in the class discussions and the readings to one or more historical cases, issues, or aspects of Middle East politics. A good structure of the paper is the following

- Introduction.** The introduction lays out the specific research questions, the context of the paper (e.g., national movements, conflict theory, political economy, alliances and international organizations, etc.), and provides a brief overview of the paper. In general, it is a good idea to write the introduction at the end after you have finished the research and spelled out your findings and conclusions. This way, if the paper has a central theme, it is useful to point it out at the outset.
- Theory.** This section lays out the theoretical framework that guides the case study. It discusses the relevant theoretical literature and derives from it a set of hypotheses that are researched in the next sections.
- Narrative of the Historical Case/cases.** Brief description of the facts and the historical processes you are studying. Be sure to discuss the actors, the problems, and the facts that are relevant to your analysis, and not provide unnecessary information.

- d. **Analysis.** This section applies the concepts, approaches, ideas, and methods entailed in the theory you are using on the historical case/cases. Be sure to relate the analysis of the case to specific hypotheses that you had specified in the theory section. The key question here is whether and how do the facts of the case either support or contradict the hypotheses. Also, it is useful to say something about if and how the theory helps explain seemingly inexplicable aspects of the historical case.
- e. **Conclusion.** This section summarizes your findings and whatever other conclusions you derived from the research. You can also point out shortcomings or advantages in the theory on the basis of your study of the case. If there are policy implications, please mention them.

## 2. Technical Matters

- Bibliography and references. Be sure to use sources and cite them correctly. Use the APA style or the APSA style for citations and references. Look up any of the APSA journals (*American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, etc.) for examples.
- Style. Spend some time thinking on *how* to organize your paper, how to present your arguments, how to support them, and how to conclude. A well written paper makes for a better grade than a poorly written one.
- Questions. I encourage creativity in writing, but to be on the safe side, check with me any ideas that you think are not really of a standard form that you want to put in your paper

**Good Luck**