

Summer 2024  
Mondays & Thursdays, 12:00-2:00  
Online Synchronous

Israeli Sociology

Jewish Studies

Middle Eastern Studies

Diaspora Studies

Israel/Palestine Studies

# Mizrahim in Israel: History, Politics, and Culture

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What is the significance of the designation “Mizrahi” in Israel today? Does it refer to people who share a common geographical and ethnic origin or does it indicate a shared worldview that draws upon Middle Eastern Arabic culture? What are its relations with other terms, such as “Sephardi,” “Oriental,” or “Levantine”? What kind of political membership does it entail? Does it possess a certain cultural, religious, or political vocabulary? And, ultimately, does the diasporic concept of “Mizrahiyut” (mizrahiness) undermine national homogeneity or rather facilitate and enable its enforcement?



One of the immediate regional impacts of the 1948 war in Palestine/Israel was the arrival of 750,000 Middle Eastern and North African Jews in the newly-established State of Israel. “Mizrahim” has now become a common socio-political term describing Israeli Jews whose ancestors lived for many centuries in the territories that in the 20th century became Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. This course offers a systematic study of the historical developments that shaped pivotal social and political moments, from the Yemenite Children Affair (1950’s), the Wadi Salib Riots (1959), the Black Panthers Movement (1971), the establishment of Shas party (1984), the Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow Coalition (1996), to *Tor Ha-Zahav* (2016), and others. Students are invited to explore the long debates around the term Mizrahim and the identities and histories it claims to represent, by working closely with scholarly articles and monographs (critical Mizrahi scholarship, as well as studies about Mizrahim), political statements, personal testimonies and memoirs, poetry and fiction, music, theatre, and cinema.