



Teaching the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Campus: One Professor's Reflections

Dr. Michal Raucher

Michal Raucher is an associate professor of Jewish Studies at Rutgers University and a JTS Fellow. She has been teaching an undergraduate course on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for 10 years. Michal has a background in religion, gender studies, anthropology and bioethics. As a Fulbright Fellow, Dr. Raucher conducted research on the reproductive ethics of Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jewish women in Israel. Her first book, which is based on this research, was published by Indiana University Press in 2020. It is titled, *Conceiving Agency: Reproductive Authority among Haredi Women*. She is currently writing a book, tentatively titled *The New Rabbis* about the ordination of Orthodox Jewish women in America and the redefinition of rabbinic identity. Dr. Raucher is also conducting interviews with Jewish women in America who have had abortions.

"Revenge"

Taha Muhammad Ali

translated by Peter Cole, Yahya Hijazi, and Gabriel Levin

At times ... I wish
I could meet in a duel
the man who killed my father
and razed our home,
expelling me
into
a narrow country.
And if he killed me,
I'd rest at last,
and if I were ready—
I would take my revenge!

*

But if it came to light,
when my rival appeared,
that he had a mother
waiting for him,
or a father who'd put
his right hand over
the heart's place in his chest
whenever his son was late
even by just a quarter-hour
for a meeting they'd set—
then I would not kill him,
even if I could.

*

Likewise ... I
would not murder him
if it were soon made clear
that he had a brother or sisters
who loved him and constantly longed to see
him.
Or if he had a wife to greet him
and children who
couldn't bear his absence
and whom his gifts would thrill.
Or if he had
friends or companions,
neighbors he knew

or allies from prison
or a hospital room,
or classmates from his school ...
asking about him
and sending him regards.

*

But if he turned
out to be on his own—
cut off like a branch from a tree—
without a mother or father,
with neither a brother nor sister,
wifeless, without a child,
and without kin or neighbors or friends,
colleagues or companions,
then I'd add not a thing to his pain
within that aloneness—
not the torment of death,
and not the sorrow of passing away.
Instead I'd be content
to ignore him when I passed him by
on the street—as I
convinced myself
that paying him no attention
in itself was a kind of revenge.

Nazareth
April 15, 2006

“The Diameter Of The Bomb”

Yehuda Amichai

The diameter of the bomb was thirty centimeters
and the diameter of its effective range about seven meters,
with four dead and eleven wounded.
And around these, in a larger circle
of pain and time, two hospitals are scattered
and one graveyard. But the young woman
who was buried in the city she came from,
at a distance of more than a hundred kilometers,
enlarges the circle considerably,
and the solitary man mourning her death
at the distant shores of a country far across the sea
includes the entire world in the circle.
And I won't even mention the crying of orphans
that reaches up to the throne of God and
beyond, making a circle with no end and no God.

1976

Media Assignment
Fall 2023: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Prof. Michal Raucher

Throughout the course, we have sought to analyze conflicting claims of truth, justice, history, and ownership. We have primarily considered how Israelis and Palestinians tell their narratives about common historical events. Because students will engage with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through news media after leaving my course, it is a goal of mine to prepare you for reading the newspaper and engaging in contemporary discussion about the conflict with the same critical analysis you have used all semester.

This assignment evaluates a student's ability to:

1. Identify the elements of a newspaper article that can indicate its perspective.
2. Compare multiple articles about a singular event in terms of the narrative they tell about the event.
3. Analyze how these elements construct a narrative about Israelis, Palestinians, and the conflict itself.
4. Reflect on your bias regarding certain news outlets and how you might participate in the "hostile media effect."

Each News assignment is composed of three parts:

1. **Select 3 articles** that were published since October 7th
 - a. Articles should all be about the topic that has been assigned to you.
 - b. Articles should come from news outlets in different columns below.
 - c. Articles should NOT be editorials or Op-Eds. They should be in the news section.
 - d. Articles should be from the same 24 hour period. As we know, the war is unfolding fast, and sometimes a paper gets something wrong the first time and gets more information later.
2. **Fill out a rubric** for each of the 3 articles.
3. **Analysis:** In 300-400 words, analyze the articles by answering the following questions:
 - a. Do these articles seem to have a particular perspective/opinion on the event? If so, what is that opinion and how do you know it?
 - b. Based on your reading of these articles, what do you know for sure about this event? What are the questions you still have about the event after reading these articles?
 - c. How has reading different articles about this event helped you understand it differently?
 - d. Pick one of the articles and answer: if someone were to only read this one, what would they know/think about Israel/Palestine?
4. **Extra credit: Engage with a personal account.** Watch coverage/read a post about the event/issue from a citizen journalist who is either in Gaza, Israel, or the West Bank. In your reflection, share the link to the video or post and add a couple of sentences about how this primary source affects your understanding of the event.

Publications to choose from

**List provided by Dr. Liora Halperin, University of Washington

Israeli Publications	American Jewish Publications	Palestine focused	other
Arutz Sheva("Channel 7") (right wing, Religious Zionist)	Jewish Currents	Palestine Chronicle	Al-Jazeera Middle East
YNet News (Israeli center-right)	The Forward (liberal/progressive)	Electronic Intifada	New York Times
The Jerusalem Post (ranges between center and right)	Tablet Magazine (ranges between center-right and right)	Jadaliyya, (more academic, produced by Arab Studies Institute)	Vox News
Haaretz com ("The Land"): (ranges between liberal and left)	JNS (Jewish News Syndicate)(right)	Arab American News	
972 Magazine (leftist)	The Algemeiner (right)		

Some citizen journalists for extra credit:

Gaza	Israel	West Bank
Bisan: @wizard Bisan1	Oren Ziv: @oren ziv	Issa Amro: @issaamro
Motaz Azaiza: @motaz azaiza	Sally Abed: @sallyabed78	
Yousef Mema: @joegaza93		
Sara Al Saqqa @sara alsaqqa		

Supplemental Texts

Viser, Matt. 2003. "Attempted Objectivity: An Analysis of *The New York Times* and *Ha'aretz* and Their Portrayals of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict." *Press/Politics* 8(4): 114-120.

Waxman, Dov. *The Israeli Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

Shoman, Samia, "Beyond Two Sides" in *Social Justice in Israel/Palestine*. Ed. Mira Sucharov and Aaron Hahn Tapper 2019 (22-30)

Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*. (Columbia University Press, 2009)

Poetry

Note: We will not cover these poems during the webinar, but we wanted to share some additional poetry that Prof. Raucher taught during her course for your own further reading.

Wildpeace by [Yehuda Amichai](#)

Not the peace of a cease-fire,
not even the vision of the wolf and the lamb,
but rather
as in the heart when the excitement is over
and you can talk only about a great weariness.
I know that I know how to kill,
that makes me an adult.
And my son plays with a toy gun that knows
how to open and close its eyes and say Mama.
A peace
without the big noise of beating swords into ploughshares,
without words, without
the thud of the heavy rubber stamp: let it be
light, floating, like lazy white foam.
A little rest for the wounds—
who speaks of healing?
(And the howl of the orphans is passed from one generation
to the next, as in a relay race:
the baton never falls.)

Let it come
like wildflowers,
suddenly, because the field
must have it: wildpeace.

Think of Others by Mahmoud Darwish

As you prepare your breakfast, think of others
(do not forget the pigeon's food).
As you conduct your wars, think of others
(do not forget those who seek peace).
As you pay your water bill, think of others
(those who are nursed by clouds).
As you return home, to your home, think of others
(do not forget the people of the camps).
As you sleep and count the stars, think of others
(those who have nowhere to sleep).
As you liberate yourself in metaphor, think of others
(those who have lost the right to speak).
As you think of others far away, think of yourself
(say: "If only I were a candle in the dark").

A Prayer for Sheltering Light by Devon Spier

I want you to know
Because maybe you don't
Maybe they didn't teach you
Or maybe they taught you the opposite
In home
In prayer
In school
I know I wasn't taught to even think of you
To surmise you
To know you have existed
That you exist
That you live
And love
And care
And breathe
But here it is
I have stopped imagining
Simple as day
On this hollow and deathly night:
If they came for you
Really
If they came for you
And yes they're coming
Again

I would not watch you burn
I would not take up the pitchfork of silent hallowed throwing flame
Rather
I would hold my candle to your candle
And I would make sure
With my life
That your life
And all the lives that flow through your life
Steadfastly
Luminescently
Remain
Alight.

What I Will by Suheir Hammad

https://www.ted.com/talks/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power

I will not
dance to your war
drum. I will
not lend my soul nor
my bones to your war
drum. I will
not dance to your
beating. I know that beat.
It is lifeless. I know
intimately that skin
you are hitting. It
was alive once
hunted stolen
stretched. I will
not dance to your drummed
up war. I will not pop
spin break for you. I
will not hate for you or
even hate you. I will
not kill for you. Especially
I will not die
for you. I will not mourn
the dead with murder nor
suicide. I will not side
with you nor dance to bombs
because everyone else is
dancing. Everyone can be
wrong. Life is a right not

collateral or casual. I
will not forget where
I come from. I
will craft my own drum. Gather my beloved
near and our chanting
will be dancing. Our
humming will be drumming. I
will not be played. I
will not lend my name
nor my rhythm to your
beat. I will dance
and resist and dance and
persist and dance. This heartbeat is louder than
death. Your war drum ain't
louder than this breath.