

Israeli Media Research: Politics, Culture, and Identities

Mr. Oren Meyers

The course explores how the Israeli media represent major social and cultural issues that are central to Israeli public life. As the basis for discussing these issues, the first section of the course presents prominent communication research theories. Next, the course probes the application of those theoretical perspectives within the Israeli context, through a survey of current research on Israeli media (in English) and their social impact. Major discussion themes consider the ways in which the Israeli media represent and influence the shaping of Israeli national identity, social gaps within Israeli society, gender identity, competing interpretations of collective memories and more.

Course Requirements

1. During the semester, students are expected to routinely follow the news media (television, radio, print or internet news), with special attention to the journalistic coverage of Israel and the Middle-East.
2. The students will read all the mandatory assigned readings from week to week in preparation for classroom discussions and debates on the issues raised.
3. Additional suggested readings on each topic are marked with *. Each student will choose one additional reading from the list, or a different relevant reading s/he located on their own and will present it in class. A choice of reading that does not appear on the list is welcomed, but it requires my approval. Students' presentations will be circulated via email prior to our meeting.
4. A final exam will be given at the end of the semester to test your knowledge and understanding of the reading material, the lectures and class discussion.

Calculation of the class final grade:

Participation in class discussion: 10%

Class Presentation: 10%

Final exam: 80%

Syllabus and Reading List

Weeks 1-2: Introduction: why study media? Major communication research schools; communication research within the social sciences; communication research and the journalistic practice

Fiske, J. (1990). *Introduction to communication studies*. London: Routledge, chapter 1.

Weeks 3-4: The development of Israeli media: a historical perspective

Caspi, D. & Limor, Y. (1999). *The in/outside: the media in Israel*. Creskill, NJ: Hampton, pp. 63-123.

Doron, G. (1998, January). The politics of mass communication in Israel, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

*Tsfati, Y, & Livio, O. (2003, March) Israeli journalists give low grades to the Israeli media. *The 7th Eye (Ha-ayin Hashviit)*.

Weeks 5-6: Israeli media and Israeli society: from local to global explorations

Ethnic and religious identities

Avraham, E. (2003). *Behind media Marginality: how media routines distort the coverage of social groups and places*. Lexington, chapters 1-3

*Cohen, J. (2000, v. 3, n. 2). Politics, alienation and the consolidation of group identity: The case of synagogue pamphlets, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

Sexual and gender identities

First, A. (1998, v. 38, n. 11-12). Nothing new under the sun? A comparison of images in Israeli advertisements in 1979 and 1994, *Sex Roles*.

*Herzog, H. (1998, v. 3, n. 1). Women and the media more than a looking glass: women in Israeli local politics and the media, *Harvard International Journal of Press\Politics*.

Kama, A. (2000, v. 38, n. 4). From Terra incognita to terra firma: The logbook of the voyage of Gay men's community into the Israeli public sphere, *Journal of Homosexuality*

*Meyers, O. (2001, v. 3). Middle Eastern body building: the construction of Dana International, *torquere*.

The globalization of Israeli culture

Azaryahu, M. (2000, v. 5, n. 1). Mclsrail? On the "Americanization of Israel," *Israel Studies*.

*Lemish, D. (forthcoming). Spice Girls' talk: a case study in the development of gendered identity.

Weeks 7-8: The shaping of Israeli national identity: the media and other agents

Journalistic narratives

Nossek, H. (v. 4, n. 1-2). The narrative role of the Holocaust and the State of Israel in the coverage of salient terrorist events in the Israeli press. *Journal of Narrative and Life History*.

*Meyers, O. (2002, v. 5, n. 3). Still photographs, dynamic memories: an analysis of the visual presentation of Israel's history in commemorative newspaper supplements, *The Communication Review*.

Collective memories

Zerubavel, Y. (1995). *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapters 1-2.

*Katriel, T. (1994, v. 80, n. 1). Sites of memory: discourses of the past in Israeli pioneering settlement museums, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

Weeks 9-10: Israeli media and Israeli politics

Elections

Arian, A., Weimann, G., and Wolfsfeld, G. (1999). Balance in election coverage. In A. Arian and M. Shamir (Eds.). *The elections in Israel 1996*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

*Weimann, G. and Cohen, J. (1999). When Lazarsfeld and Merton met Carville and Finkelstein (in Israel, 1999). Paper presented to the conference on Canonical Texts in Communication Studies. Jerusalem, 1999.

Other political activities

Wolfsfeld, G. (1984, v. 61). The Symbiosis of Press and Protest: an Exchange Analysis, *Journalism Quarterly*.

*Liebes, T. and Ribak, R. (1991, v. 2). A mother's battle against TV news: A case study of political socialization. *Discourse and Society*.

Weeks 11-12: Covering the Arab-Israeli conflict: local and international perspectives

Liebes, T. (1997). Reporting the Arab-Israeli conflict: how hegemony works. London: Routledge. Chapters 1-3.

*Wolfsfeld, G. (1997, v. 14, n. 1). Fair weather friends: the varying role of the news media in the Arab-Israeli peace process, *Political Communication*.

Zelizer, B., David, P. & Gudelunas, D. (2002, v. 3, n. 3). How bias shapes the news: challenging The New York Times' status as a newspaper of record on the Middle East, *Journalism*.

*Roeh, I. & Cohen, A. A. (1992, v. 42, n. 2). One of the bloodiest days: a comparative analysis of open and closed television news, *Journal of Communication*.