Palestinian Culture and Society  
MAAS 534  
Professor Rochelle Davis  
Thursday, 12:15-2:05  
Reiss Science Building 283  
Office Hours: Thursday 2:30-4

This course will offer an overview of Palestinian culture and society over the last one hundred years. Taking into consideration the historical and political events that have occurred in this period, we will proceed chronologically through three major periods: 1) pre-1948; 2) 1948-1967; 3) 1967-present. While historical and political events and trends of these periods will figure prominently into our material, what we will be most concerned with is how these events reflect on culture and society, and culture and society's role in shaping historical and political actions.

This chronological division also corresponds to the geographical status of the land and the people. In the pre-1948 period, Palestine was one geographical entity with a population of Muslims, Jews, and Christians, most Palestinian by citizenship, and many Palestinian and Arab by identity. The first section of the course will address this period, and we will read monographs by Rashid Khalidi on Palestinian Identity which focuses heavily on Jerusalem elite society and by Ellen Fleischmann about the women's movement amidst the political activities of the British Mandate period.

With 1948 marking the creation of the Israeli state, part of historic Palestine became Israel, and the remainder fell under the political rule of Jordan, and Egypt. And while a large portion of the Arab Palestinian population remaining in their homes, approximately half of the population became refugees in the West Bank (Jordan), Gaza and Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and even inside Israel. The Jewish population of historic Palestine became Israelis in the new state, which also accepted a small portion of the Arab population. The second portion of the course will look at the effects of the war on the population in the various places and regimes they ended up living in.

The third section of the course will focus on Palestinians lives after 1967 when the status of the land changed again with Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (as well as the Sinai and the Golan Heights) which resulted in additional refugee movements. And while the Israeli occupation has changed in form and practice over time, the occupation continues to demarcate the existence of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to the present day. At the same time, the refugees in the diaspora in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, continue to argue for and debate the right to return, guaranteed in international law, but denied them for the last 58 years. Here we will discuss the rise of political and military resistance movements (from the perspective of culture and society), the intifadas, Oslo peace accords, and the rise of religious movements.

The cultures, communities, and societies that Palestinians have developed over time in these places will be the focus of our exploration in this course. Subjects we will address will include Palestinian identity from late Ottoman times to the present, political activism, refugee movements, class (elite, urban, peasant, etc), secularism and religiosity, resistance, adaptations to political systems, labor, family, and migration. In addition to the academic and primary readings for the class, the class will be infused with poetry, cartoons, and videos.
READINGS

Books to buy or borrow
Rashid Khalidi: Palestinian Identity (Columbia UP, 1997)
Emile Habibi: The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist
Sahar Khalifeh: Wild Thorns
Rhoda Kanaanen: Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel (UCalifornia, 2002)
Maya Rosenfeld: Confronting the Occupation: Work, Education, and Political Activism of Palestinian Families in a Refugee Camp (Stanford, 2004)

Blackboard
Remaining readings listed in the syllabus will be available on Blackboard.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK FOR THIS CLASS

Assignments:
1) Discussion participation (which includes small weekly assignments) (30% of grade).
2) Two 9-10 page papers (20% of grade x 2 = 40%).
3) One final paper of 18-20 pages (30% of grade).

1. Discussion Participation and weekly assignments (30%):
This part of your grade is based on your participation in class discussion as well as your doing the small assignments related to each week’s readings. This may be just to come up with a discussion question, or it may be to write a short response to a reading or anything else I think will help you think about and deal with the material. I'll let you know the week before via email what those assignments are.

2. Two papers (40%)
You will turn in two 9-10 page (2250-2500 words) papers during the course. The broad topic is mentioned on the syllabus, so that when you are doing the readings, you can pay attention to the topic. But I will give you more detailed information the week prior to the paper being due. I expect a clearly thought-out, original, analytical paper. I don't want a paper that refashions the arguments and material that we have read. It needs to be well-written, well-organized, and spell-checked.

3. Final Paper (30%):
Substantial research paper on a topic of your choice. I expect a well-researched, intelligent, well-written, well-organized, spell-checked, and brilliant paper.
The topic for the final paper is due on October 26, via email.
The bibliography and outline for the final paper is due on November 30, via email.
The final paper is due December 15, 4:00 pm, via email and a hard copy handed in also. Paper should be 4500-5000 words.

***Late papers will be graded 1/3 of a grade down per day late, from the beginning of classtime on the day they are due.***
You and I are bound by these:

**Georgetown Honor Pledge**

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

[http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/site_map.html#The_Honor_System](http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/hc/site_map.html#The_Honor_System)

**Academic Freedom at Georgetown**

From the Faculty Handbook:

[http://www.georgetown.edu/facultysenate/FacHbk.pdf](http://www.georgetown.edu/facultysenate/FacHbk.pdf) (p 26)

Academic freedom is essential to teaching and research. Such freedom requires free inquiry, free expression, intellectual honesty, respect for the academic rights of others, and openness to change. The rights and responsibilities exercised within the academic community must be compatible with these requirements. All members of the faculty, in common with all other members of the community, share the responsibility for maintaining a professional atmosphere in which violations of academic freedom and responsibility are unlikely to occur. The University endorses the American Association of University Professor’s 1940 *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*, with clarifications that place it in the Georgetown University context (see Section XXI).
SCHEDULE

**August 31** – first class

**September 7** – Nationalism, identity, and Palestine before 1948
   Read Rashid Khalidi: *Palestinian Identity* (Columbia UP, 1997).

**September 14** – Political activism and society before 1948

**September 21** – 1948 War
   (All on Blackboard)
   Musa Alami: "The Lesson of Palestine" *Middle East Journal*, October 1949
   Middle East Journal, October 1949.
   Constantine Zurayk: Selections from *The Meaning of the Disaster*.

**September 28** Managing refugees and living as refugees
   (All on Blackboard)
   Ghassan Kanafani: *Men in the Sun* (AUC, 1991)

**October 5** – paper 1 due – impact of 1948

**October 12** – Living inside Israel
   Emile Habibi: *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Ill-Fated Pessoptimist*.
   Selection from Sabri Jiryis: *The Arabs in Israel*.

**October 19** – 1967 and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza
   Sahar Khalifeh *Wild Thorns*,
   (remaining articles on Blackboard)
October 26 – Living in Lebanon and Jordan
   Peteet: Landscape of Hope and Despair, chs 5-6. (Lebanon 68-present).
   Selections of articles on Jordan.
   Swedenberg and Rebecca Stein, Popular Palestines: Cultures,
   Communities, and Transnational Circuits (Durham: Duke University
   Press, 2005).

   final paper topic due via email

November 2 – The intifadas, Oslo, and Hamas: identity, civil society, and social
   change
   (All on Blackboard)
   Rema Hammami, "Women, the Hijab, and the Intifada," in MERIP, May-Aug,
   Glenn Bowman: "Christian, Muslim Palestinians Confront Sectarianism:
   Religion and Political Identity in Beit Sahour" in MERIP, May-Aug,
   1990.
   Selections from Lockman and Beinin, eds. Intifada: Palestinian Uprising
   against Israeli Occupation. (South End Press, 1989).
   Ziad Abu-Amr. "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background" in Journal of
   Palestine Studies, 1993.
   Other selected articles on Oslo and Hamas.

November 9 – Modernity, family, and maternity.
   Rhoda Kanaaneh: Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in
   Israel (California, 2002).

November 16 -- paper 2 due -- resistance

November 23 – no class

November 30 – Ethnography of a refugee camp
   Maya Rosenfeld: Confronting the Occupation: Work, Education, and Political
   Activism of Palestinian Families in a Refugee Camp (Stanford, 2004).

Final paper bibliography and outline due – via email

December 7 – Exile and Return

December 15 final paper due, email and hard copy