

Palestinian and Israeli Literature

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Overview: For many audiences, understanding of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict comes mainly from the media -- news of violence and of political friction dominate the airwaves, and we sometimes forget about the ordinary Palestinian and Israeli citizens involved. To get at the human element of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, students will read, discuss, and reflect on stories from and/or about Palestine and Israel. Units are designed by theme/topic, and each unit contains readings from both Palestinian and Israeli perspectives on each theme/topic. This curriculum was designed for a grade 12 course.

Timing: Suggested class periods: 21+. This curriculum may, of course, be shortened or lengthened depending on schedule, students, etc. This curriculum may also be developed into a semester long course.

How to Read this Document: This Palestinian & Israeli Literature Unit has been divided into 9 mini-units. Under each mini-unit, you will find suggested class times, background information or context, suggested readings, and suggested class lessons/activities. At the end of the document, you will find sample writing assignments and further information about the suggested readings. Most readings are available online, and links have been provided.

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Unit 1: History of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Suggested Time: 3 class periods

Day 1 - History:

Readings: “Background to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona. Review primary sources: “Hussein McMahon Letters,” “Sykes-Picot Agreement,” and “Balfour Declaration.”

- In class: History lesson of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.

Day 2 - Simulation:

Prepare for “Simulation on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by the United States Institute of Peace. Assign students specific roles and have them review the “Participant Tasks” & “Key Issues.” Based on their character and the history they have learned, role-players should write a proposal on how to help improve the situation in Israel/Palestine. Guiding questions: What are the key issues for your character? What proposals will you make? What will you not compromise on? What will you compromise on? Students should be sure to incorporate the story of their character in writing their proposals. American mediators should read all roles and prepare questions to facilitate discussion in class.

- In class: Simulation on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict facilitated by American mediators. Teacher provides name tags for students. Teacher types up a transcript of the conversation to share with mediators (this role may also be assigned to a student if the class is larger than the amount of roles assigned).

Day 3 - Reflection:

American mediators should produce a document summarizing the main points of the discussion, identifying any points of common ground, and highlighting remaining tensions. American mediators should prepare to share their summary with the class. Role-players should reflect on the discussion had during the simulation and, taking a step away from their role, reflect what they, as American students, believe would lead to lasting peace in the region.

- In class: American mediators present summary. Students discuss their own views based on the knowledge they have of the conflict so far.
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Unit 2: Perspectives on 1948

Suggested Time: 2+ class periods

Background from “Background to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict”:

In 1947, “U.N. Resolution 181 divided Palestine in two: giving 55% of the land to the Jews and 45% to the Palestinians, while putting the city of Jerusalem under a separate international authority. The Jews accepted the proposal and proclaimed the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948; the Palestinians rejected the loss of their territory. Fighting broke out in which neighboring Arab countries supported the Palestinians. Israeli forces were victorious.” Israelis call the war of 1948 “The War of Independence,” whereas Palestinians call it “Al-Nakba” or, in English, “The Catastrophe.”

Day 1 - Palestine’s Al-Nakba:

Readings: Joe Sacco’s *Palestine* “Black Coffee” pages 164-165 (Graphic Novel), Abu Salma’s “My Country on Partition Day” (Poem), and Ghassan Kanafani’s “Paper from Ramleh” (Short Story). For historical context about the events that occurred in Ramleh, you may also want to look at Sandy Tolan’s “The Fall of an Arab Town in 1948” in Al-Jazeera (Article: <http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/60yearsofdivision/2008/07/20087116188515832.html>)

- In class: Compare and contrast the sentiments about Al-Nakba and partition day in Kanafani, Sacco, and Abu Salma’s pieces.

Day 2 - Israel’s War of Independence:

Readings: S. Yizhar’s “The Prisoner” (Short Story), and Yehuda Amichai’s “A Meeting with my Father” (Poem).

- In class: Discussion. Discussion questions for “The Prisoner”: Based on your reading of this story, what are S. Yizhar’s views on the war of independence? What are the effects of warfare on the soldier and the shepherd? How does the soldier experience warfare (1948)? Should every man assume the full weight and responsibility of his choices? What or to whom is the soldier beholden to? Does power dehumanize those who exercise it? Is the problem war or power? Is man victim to war or power? What should prevail: the moral unitedness of an unyielding group or the individual’s morality? Why take the prisoner? At the end of the story, the soldier engages in internal dialogue: How and why is the soldier conflicted? What should the soldier do? What would you do? What should you do? Would you set the prisoner free? “What would happen if we all started to set prisoners free” (70)? (Some of these discussion questions are inspired by the section on S. Yizhar in *Modern Hebrew Literature* by Robert Alter).

Day 3 - Reflection:

In writing, reflect on the varying perspectives--Palestinian and Israeli--of the events of 1948. How do the perspectives compare and contrast to one another? What does the reader learn from each piece of literature / from each perspective? What could Palestinians and Israelis learn from reading each other’s literature about 1948? This could be done for HW, as a blog post, or assigned as an in-class essay.

Unit 3: Return

Suggested Time: 2+ class periods

Background: Part of the debate in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict includes the idea of return.

Many Palestinians are refugees living in the West Bank, in Gaza, in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, or are spread elsewhere in the Middle East and the west as part of a large Palestinian diaspora. The Palestinian Right of Return "is a political position or principle asserting that Palestinian refugees, both first-generation refugees...and their descendants...have a right to return, and a right to the property they themselves or their forebears left behind or were forced to leave in what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories (both formerly part of the British Mandate of Palestine), as part of the 1948 Palestinian exodus, a result of the 1948 Palestine war and due to the 1967 Six-Day War" ([Wikipedia: Right of Return](#)).

Israel's Declaration of Independence asserts: "The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews and the ingathering of exiles from all countries of their dispersion" ([MyJewishLearning](#)). The Law of Return is "Israeli legislation, passed on 5 July 1950, that gives Jews the right of return and the right to live in Israel and to gain citizenship" ([Wikipedia: Law of Return](#)). Aliyah "is the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to the land of Israel...It is one of the most basic tenets of Zionist ideology...The concept of Aliyah (return) to the Holy Land was first developed in Jewish history during the Babylonian exile. During the Jewish diaspora, Aliyah was developed as a national aspiration for the Jewish people...Large-scale immigration to Palestine began in 1882. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, more than 3 million Jews from over 90 countries have 'made Aliyah' and arrived in Israel" ([Wikipedia: Aliyah](#)).

Day 1 - Palestine: (Given the length of Kanafani's novella, this may take 2 days)

Readings: Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (Novella), Abu Salma's "We Shall Return" (Poem), & Joe Sacco's *Palestine* "Return" pages 11-15 (Graphic Novel).

- In class: Discussion.

Day 2 - Israel:

Readings: Sarah Glidden's *How to understand Israel in 60 days or Less* "Chapter 1: Orientation" & "Chapter 2: Golan Heights" (Graphic Novel).

- In class: Discussion.

Day 3 - Reflection:

In writing, reflect on the varying perspectives--Palestinian and Israeli--on the idea of return. How do the perspectives compare and contrast to one another? What does the reader learn from each piece of literature / from each perspective? What could Palestinians and Israelis learn from reading each other's literature dealing with return? How do Palestinian and Israeli ideas about return affect / impact the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? This could be done for HW, as a blog post, or assigned as an in-class essay.

Unit 4: Displacement

Suggested Time: 2+ class periods

Background: As a people, Palestinians and Jews have both experienced displacement and have reflected on it in their respective literatures. The literature selected about Palestine reflects sentiments about the current refugee experience for Palestinians. In the Israeli literature selected, authors reflect on the Holocaust and its impact on the Jewish people.

Though it may be argued that displacement began for Jews during the time of the Roman Empire, the focus of this unit is on displacement after the tragic and cruel events of the Holocaust. During and after the Holocaust, many Jews were displaced. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “After liberation, many Jewish survivors feared to return to their former homes because of the anti-semitism (hatred of Jews) that persisted in parts of Europe and the trauma they had suffered. Some who returned home feared for their lives...With few possibilities for emigration, tens of thousands of homeless Holocaust survivors migrated westward to other European territories liberated by the western Allies. There they were housed in hundreds of refugee centers and displaced persons (DP) camps...A considerable number and variety of Jewish agencies worked to assist the Jewish displaced persons....and many labored for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine....The largest survivor organization, Sh'erit ha-Pletah (Hebrew for "surviving remnant"), pressed for greater emigration opportunities. Yet opportunities for legal immigration to the United States above the existing quota restrictions were still limited. The British restricted immigration to Palestine. Many borders in Europe were also closed to these homeless people....With the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, Jewish displaced persons and refugees began streaming into the new sovereign state. Possibly as many as 170,000 Jewish displaced persons and refugees had immigrated to Israel by 1953.”

After Israel’s victory in the war of 1948, “more than 700,000 Palestinian refugees fled or were driven from their homes. Many ended up in refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan, or other areas, camps that were to become permanent places of residence” (Background to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict). As Israeli poet Eliaz Cohen put it, although “the ‘catastrophe’ that befell the Palestinians with Israel's founding ‘is incomparable to the Holocaust as an event, [it] is no less formative a trauma’” (“Cultural exchange: Poet describes Israeli-Palestinian conflict in verse” in *LATimes*). According to The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), “Palestinian refugees are defined as ‘persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict’Nearly one-third of the registered Palestine refugees, more than 1.5 million individuals, live in 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.” At present, UNRWA posits that “some 5 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services” (UNRWA).

Day 1 - Palestinian Refugees:

Readings: Joe Sacco's *Palestine* "Remind me" pages 41-50 and "Refugeeland" pages 145-149 (Graphic Novel), and Sharif Elmusa's "In the Refugee Camp" (Poem).

- In class: Unpack the imagery in Sacco's "Refugeeland." Have students 1) write what they see, 2) write what they interpret, & 3) write how they feel. Then discuss the readings. How does refugee life affect the characters in each reading? How (if so) do these readings encourage readers to empathize with the Palestinian need for a homeland?

Day 2 - Holocaust Survivors & The Second Generation:

Readings: Lea Aini's "Until the Entire Guard Has Passed" (Short Story), Etgar Keret's "Shoes" (Short Story or [Audio on *This American Life*](#)), and pages 95-104 & 155-159 of Sarah Glidden's *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less* (Graphic Novel).

- In class: Discuss the stories. How does the memory of the Holocaust affect the characters in each story? How (if so) do these stories encourage readers to empathize with the Jewish need for a homeland?

Potential Extension (2-3 days) - Palestinian Exodus & Exile:

Readings: Taha Muhammad Ali's "Exodus," Mahmoud Darwish's "Who Am I, Without Exile?" and Ghassan Kanafani's novella, *Men in the Sun*.

- Context for Darwish's poem: Darwish (1941-2008), Palestine's poet of exile, "described exile thus: 'Absent, I come to the home of the absent,' and when he was asked who he is, he responded, 'I still do not know.' His answer can best be understood in his words 'Perhaps like me you have no address'" ("[The poetry of absence: remembering Mahmoud Darwish five years on](#)" by Sonja Karkar). From [Poets.org](#): "About Darwish's work, the poet Naomi Shihab Nye has said, 'Mahmoud Darwish is the Essential Breath of the Palestinian people, the eloquent witness of exile and belonging, exquisitely tuned singer of images that invoke, link, and shine a brilliant light into the world's whole heart. What he speaks has been embraced by readers around the world—his in an utterly necessary voice, unforgettable once discovered.'"
 - In class: Discuss the literature. Explore: What is exile? How does exile impact the individual?
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Unit 5: Poems About Land

Suggested Time: 2 class periods

Background:

In *How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less*, Sarah Glidden writes, “people oversimplify the current conflict in Israel and say ‘it’s been a holy war for thousands of years.’ Actually, it seems that it’s never really been about religion but about land” (87). In the Palestine-Israel Journal, Yvette Neisser adds, “[s]ince the dispute over the land is the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it’s not surprising that many poets have dedicated poems to the country, to the land itself, or to a particular place.”

Day 1 - Palestine & Israel:

Assign a selection (or all) of the following Palestinian and Israeli poems about land. Palestinian poems: Mahmoud Darwish’s “A Soldier Dreams of White Tulips,” Laila Allush’s “The Path of Affection,” Taha Muhammad Ali’s “Ambergris,” & Rashid Hussein’s “With the Land.” Israeli poems: Yehuda Amichai’s “Temporary Poem of My Time” & “Love of the Land,” Nathan Alterman’s “The Killers of the Fields,” & Rachel Bluwstein’s “To My Land.”

- In class: Put the students in groups of 4-5. Give students poster board and markers. Have them produce a visual representation expressing what each poet/poem expresses about the land of Palestine/Israel. This activity encourages students to unpack the literary devices (metaphor, personification, simile) expressed in most of the poetry. Students must incorporate direct quotes from the poems in their posters.
 - Alternatively, have some student groups reflect on the Israeli poems and some student groups reflect on the Palestinian poems separately.
 - Another option, inspired by Kaye Peters at the American Embassy School, is to make copies of the poems for students and remove the poets’ names. Students then study and discuss the poems in class, examining common and differing themes and subjects. After students present, reveal who wrote each poem. That, according to Kaye Peters, “brings students into an awareness of the perspectives of each side.”

Day 2 - Presentations & Discussion:

Post posters around the classroom. Students present posters and discuss how each poet’s perspective on the land of Palestine/Israel.

Unit 6: Identities

Suggested Time: 3+ class periods

Background: This unit encourages students to begin to explore Jewish/Israeli, Arab/Palestinian, and Arab-Israeli identities.

Day 1 - Palestinian Identity: What does it mean to be Palestinian? To be Arab?

Readings: Mahmoud Darwish's "Identity Card" (Poem), Joe Sacco's *Palestine* "Sons of Curfew" pages 166-167 (Graphic Novel), Rashid Husain's "Without a Passport" (Poem).

- In class: Discuss the assigned readings with the essential questions in mind. Additional question: is Palestinian and Arab one and the same?

Day 2 - Israeli Identity: What does it mean to be Jewish? To be Israeli? To be Zionist?

"The fact that someone is Jewish, Israeli, or Zionist is not and should not be obvious or automatic -- not even in the state of Israel" - Yair Auron in "Introduction: Expression of Jewish Identity in the Modern Era, in the Diaspora, and in Israel" in *Israeli Identities: Jews and Arabs Facing the Self and the Other*.

Readings: Amos Oz's "Just a Peace" (may be assigned for Unit 9), excerpts from "Israeli writer Etgar Keret on the long and (very) short of it" in *Jewish Journal* & "Etgar Keret: 'I feel more Jewish than Israeli'" in *The Guardian*.

- In class: Watch the video "Thoughts from an Israeli" and have students explore Gilab's point of view. Read and discuss excerpts from "Israeli writer Etgar Keret on the long and (very) short of it" in *Jewish Journal* & "Etgar Keret: 'I feel more Jewish than Israeli'" in *The Guardian* to explore author Etgar Keret's view on what it means to be Israeli and Jewish.
- Resource for teachers: "Introduction: Expression of Jewish Identity in the Modern Era, in the Diaspora, and in Israel" in *Israeli Identities: Jews and Arabs Facing the Self and the Other* by Yair Auron, located for complete preview on Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=ZGmF--NN5ZYC&pg=PA25#v=onepage&q&f=false>
Specific passages to explore: Martin Buber's excerpt (p.24-25), Ahad Ha'am's excerpt (p.25), & Amos Oz's excerpt (p.25).

Additional recommendation from Yair Leviel (a friend):

Excerpts from *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* by Ari Shavit. Leviel writes, "in *My Promised Land*, [Shavit] notes a number of personal, identity stories from a number of groups throughout Israeli society. This is because Israeli "identity" is something that resembles the mash of American identity. The Israelis you see in Israel today are composed of Russians, Ethiopians, Moroccans, Iraqi, Iranian, Polish, French, etc. along with the ones who were born in Israel (the Palestinian

Jews...[who] were born in Jerusalem and were British Palestinian citizens before the state was created.”

Day 3 - Arab-Israeli Identity: What does it mean to be Arab-Israeli?

“A million Palestinian Israelis are sons and daughters of the homeland but are not equal citizens of the state.” - Lutfi Mash’our in “The Palestinian in Israel” in *Palestine-Israel Journal*.

Readings: Selections from Sayed Kashua’s *Dancing Arabs* OR selections of Sayed Kashua’s column in *Haaretz.com*: "Sayed Kashua Blows his Fuse on Nakba Day," "Sayed Kashua's Daughter's School Project Isn't Homework, It's War," "Sayed Kashua's Right of Return," & “Up to Our Necks in it.” Also: "Why I Have to Leave Israel" published in *Theguardian.com*.

- Context: Sayed Kashua is an author and journalist and, up until 2014, was a Palestinian citizen of Israel. *Dancing Arabs* is based loosely off his own experiences. Kashua’s columns reflect his own life.
 - In class: Discuss the assigned reading(s). Additional questions: based on the reading(s), what, according to Kashua, concerns Arab-Israelis? How does Kashua’s perspective differ from other readings?
 - Extension: For another perspective to Kashua on what it means to be Arab-Israeli, read the article “Both Israeli and Arab, a poet straddles a conflict” in *Haaretz.com* where “Marwan Makhoul, a Palestinian poet living in Israel, writes of his precarious position, perched on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide.” Some of Makhoul’s poems: “Daily Poems” in Banipal & “An Arab at Ben Gurion Airport” located at the bottom of the blog, The Tanjara.
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Unit 7: Tensions Between

Suggested Time: 2 class periods

Background: Checkpoints, suicide bombs, settlements, stones, molotov cocktails, and prison -- they all contribute to the growing tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. The literature selected for this unit aims to explore varying perspectives on some of the causes of such tension.

Day 1 - Israel:

Agi Mishol's "Woman Warrior (Poem), Aryeh Sivan's "To Live in the Land of Israel" (Poem), Aharon Shabtai's "As We Were Marching" (Poem), and Shani Boianjiu's "Means of Suppressing Demonstrations" (Short Story)

- In class: Discussion. What are the Israeli perspectives on the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians? Between Jews and Arabs?

Day 2 - Palestine:

Joe Sacco's *Palestine* "The Bucket" pages 59-71 and "Ansar III" pages 81-92 (Graphic Novel).

- In class: Discuss the two chapters. Before discussing "The Bucket," give a historical / geographical overview of settlements in the West Bank. Maps from the BBC: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/03/v3_israel_palestinians/maps/html/settlements_checkpoints.stm & <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11968304>. Central questions for "The Bucket": How do the settlements contribute to tensions between Israelis and Palestinians? Between Jews and Arabs? For "Ansar III": What is the impact of the prison experience on Palestinians?
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Unit 8: Jerusalem in Literature

Suggested Time: 2 class periods

Background:

One of the key issues to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the question of Jerusalem. “In the original UN partition plan, Jerusalem was to remain under international authority because of its prime status for the religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. In 1948 the state of Israel controlled the western part of Jerusalem while Jordan controlled the eastern part, including the old city, home to the most important holy sites of the three religions. Israel wants to maintain sovereignty and control over all of Jerusalem while the Palestinians want sovereignty over East Jerusalem and to establish it as the capital of a Palestinian state. East Jerusalem is majority Arab but new Jewish settlements have been built to help solidify the Israeli claim to the whole city” (“Simulation on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by the US Institute of Peace). For a brief history of Jerusalem then and now, see “Jerusalem: Then and Now” by Mick Dumper, published in the *Middle East Report*. Essential question modified from “Jerusalem in Palestinian and Israeli Poetry”: What are the perceptions of Jerusalem, this holy city, and what are the meanings assigned to it by Palestinian and Israeli literature?

Day 1 - Israel:

Readings: Sarah Glidden’s *How to understand Israel in 60 Days of Less* “Chapter 6: Jerusalem” (Graphic Novel), Yehuda Amichai’s “If I Forget Thee Jerusalem,” “Jerusalem,” & “Ecology of Jerusalem” (Poem), Avraham Shlonsky’s “Jerusalem is a Hill City” (Poem), and Eliaz Cohen’s “Snow” (Poem).

- In class: Discussion.

Day 2 - Palestine:

Readings: Mahmoud Darwish’s “In Jerusalem” (Poem), Ali Qleibo’s “A City of Stone” (Poem), Tamim al-Barghouti’s “In Jerusalem” (Poem) & Suad Amiry’s “A Dog’s Life” (Short Story)

- Context for al-Barghouti’s “In Jerusalem” from <http://tamimbarghouti.net/>: “In 2007, Al-Barghouti’s work “In Jerusalem” became something of a street poem. Palestinian newspapers dubbed Al-Barghouti “The Poet of Jerusalem”. His posters hang on the streets of Jerusalem and other Palestinian cities, where keychains are sold with his picture on them. Sections of the poem have even become ring-tones blaring out from mobile phones across the Arab world, and children compete in memorizing and reciting it.”
- In class: Discussion.

Additional recommendations from Dr. Vered Karti Shemtov, Eva Chernov Lokey Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Comparative Literature at Stanford University:

Jerusalem Anthology (Dec 1, 1995 by Rabbi Reuven Hammer) & *My Jerusalem: Essays, Reminiscences and Poems* (Jun 30, 2005 by Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Zafar Isbaq Ansari).

Unit 9: Looking to the Future

Suggested Time: 3 class periods

Day 1:

Readings on Palestine: Joe Sacco's *Palestine* "Through other eyes," "Tel Aviv," & "A Boy in the Rain" excerpt 281-283 (Graphic Novel), Naomi Shihab Nye's "Jerusalem" (Poem), & Aharon Shabtai's "Lotem Abdel Shafi" (Poem).

- In class: Discussion. Based on these texts, what does the future hold for Palestine & Israel? What do the authors / characters present as possible solutions or scenarios for the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

Day 2:

Readings: Amos Oz's "Just a Peace" (may be assigned for Unit 6), Sarah Glidden's *How to understand Israel in 60 Days of Less* "Chapter 7: Post Birthright" (Graphic Novel), Eliaz Cohen's stories on [The Parents Circle Families Forum](#) website (the PCFF was developed "from a growing recognition that the reconciliation process is essential for future peace agreements.")

- In class: Continue the discussion from the previous day. Based on these texts, what does the future hold for Palestine & Israel? What do the authors / characters present as possible solutions or scenarios for the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

Day 3 - Reflection:

At the beginning of the unit, you were asked to reflect what you, as American students, believe would lead to lasting peace in the region. Reflect on the simulation held at the start of the Palestinian & Israeli literature unit, and reflect on the texts read. What ideas or texts resonated with you? How and why? What are some things you've learned in this unit that you did not know before? Based on what you have gathered from the readings, what do you see as the future of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? How do you envision a peaceful future for both Palestinians and Israelis? What suggestions do you have for peace? How have your views changed from the start of the unit to now? This reflection could be done for HW, as a blog post, assigned as an in-class essay, or assigned as an informal journal for the first half of the period and then discussed for the second half.

Writing Assignments

Blogging on Blogger.com

Adapted from: "Reflection Paper General Instructions and Rubric"(<http://www.sgmhs.org/>)

Throughout our time together, you will be expected to provide written evidence through our class blog that you understand, have reflected on, and are thinking critically about the material covered in the course. In your blog post, you must react to a reading, discussion, topic, theme etc. covered in class the current week or the week prior.

While completing your reading during each unit, consider what themes you find most interesting and appealing. Also, be an observant listener and contributor in class discussions. You can easily find a blog topic from among the issues discussed in class. Remember, however, in the blog, you will have to present your *own* views and interpretations of the readings. Take chances. Try out an idea. Take a leap.

If you need a starting point for your response, consider the following questions: Did something bother you? Intrigue you? Surprise you? Does something need to be talked about in class?

A ✓ + blog post meets submission and length requirements. It is inventive, thought-provoking, original, exploratory, and demonstrates an in-depth reflection on the themes, ideas, and/or content presented in the course. It uses details from the text and/or discussion, and shows use of personal voice. It shows control of standard writing conventions (grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage), and uses proper MLA documentation and citation. Writing is clear, concise, coherent, well-organized, and well-synthesized.

Creative Writing Essay

Pick a character who isn't the central focus or narrator of a story and re-tell/re-write the story from his/her perspective. You may select a character from any text read during the Palestinian/Israeli Literature Unit.

For example: What would the story in "The Prisoner" look like from the prisoner's point of view? What would the story in "Paper From Ramleh" look like from the point of view of the barber or the female soldier? What's the suicide bomber from "Woman Martyr"'s story? There are so many options!

Notes for the essay:

- All texts (including graphic novels and poems) from the P/I unit are eligible.
- You may do research to further understand your character, setting, etc. Research must be logged and cited in your work cited page.
- Be aware of stereotypes.
- You may borrow dialogue from the original story (if you do, footnote it).
- Make sure your descriptions are rich, accurate, and authentic.
- Strive to create full characters.
- Recommended process:
 - Pick your story → Re-read your story → Pick your character → Re-read your story with your character in mind → Jot notes as you re-read the story from your character's perspective. What is he/she thinking? How does he/she feel? What does he/she see? → Brainstorm, free-write, or outline → Write → Revise.

Assessment:

Creativity: Does the writer take on a fresh approach that holds the reader's attention?

Word Choice: Is the word choice original, vivid, specific, and purposeful throughout? Does the writer use powerful verbs, precise nouns, and appropriate adjectives and phrases to enhance meaning? Is the writing authentic? Does the author avoid clichés and stereotypical language?

Flow / Organization: Does the work function well as a whole? Does it have a clear flow and a sense of purpose? Is the structure (ex: paragraphing & formatting) intentional and does it meaningfully connect to the content?

Style / Voice: Is a consistently compelling and engaging voice evident? Does the writer use original phrasing and memorable language to prompt reflective thoughts and insights? Does dialogue, if used, sound natural? Do sensory details and figurative language create vivid images that contribute significantly to the meaning of the piece? If applicable, are sound devices used effectively and do they contribute to the meaning of the piece?

Spelling / Grammar: Does the writer show a clear understanding of the rules of capitalization, punctuation and spelling OR does the writer show consistency and intentionality in breaking the rules?

Process: Does the writer demonstrate diligent revision that achieves effective organization, content, diction, and level of detail? Is the piece polished (aka not sloppy)?

Readings

Teaching Resources

“Background to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Arizona:

- Link: http://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/High%20School%20English%2020%20-%20Background%20to%20the%20conflict_0.pdf
- Description: A concise yet thorough 2 page overview of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

“Simulation on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by the United States Institute of Peace:

- Link: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/israeli_conflict.pdf
- Description: “This simulation focuses on a U.S.-led effort to bring together many elements of both Israeli and Palestinian society to hold discussions about the needs and interests of both sides before entering into formal negotiations.” This great role-playing activity “provides an opportunity to view this longstanding conflict from the perspectives of those immediately impacted by it: in particular, the communities of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians who have yet to see much benefit in their own lives from the peace process.” Though a bit dated, this simulation can be modified to reflect the issues of the current conflict. Some roles still apply today.

“Israel’s Poetry Reflects Story of a Nation” by PBS NewsHour (video, 11:12 mins):

- Link: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/

“For Palestinians, Identity Is Regained Through Poetry” by PBS NewsHour (video, 12:33 mins)

- Link: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-22/

Israel Readings

Dancing Arabs by Sayed Kashua (Fiction)

From *Publishers Weekly*: “Kashua resists stereotype in this slyly subversive, semi-autobiographical account of Arab Israeli life, telling the story of a Palestinian boy who wins a prestigious scholarship to a Jewish high school, but slips into listless malaise as an adult, despising himself, scorning his fellow Arabs and resenting the Israelis.”

How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less by Sarah Glidden (Graphic Novel/ Non-Fiction)

From *School Library Journal*: “Glidden travels to Israel on a program that offers Jewish young adults first-time trips to the country. She details her two-month excursion through cities and deserts, seeking to view Israel with an objective eye.”

“Until the Entire Guard Has Passed” by Lea Aini (Short Story)

Published in *Nothing Makes You Free: Writings by Descendants of Jewish Holocaust Survivors* edited by Melvin Jules. Also located at:

http://www.pascack.k12.nj.us/cms/lib5/NJ01000238/Centricity/Domain/111/Holocaust_Until_the_Guard_has_passed_.pdf

“Means of Suppressing Demonstrations” by Shani Boianjiu (Short Story)

Link:<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/25/means-of-suppressing-demonstrations>

“Shoes” by Etgar Keret (Short Story)

A Jewish Israeli boy on remembering the Holocaust. Published in *The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God & Other Stories*. Audio of the story by actor Matt Malloy on *This American Life*:

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/381/turncoat?act=4>

“Just a Peace” by Amos Oz (Non-Fiction)

Published in *In the Land of Israel*. About the book from Amazon: “Notebook in hand, Amos Oz traveled throughout Israel and the West Bank in the early 1980s to talk with workers, soldiers, religious zealots, aging pioneers, new immigrants, desperate Arabs, and visionaries, asking them questions about Israel’s past, present, and future. What he heard is set down here in those distinctive voices, alongside Oz’s observations and reflections. A classic insider’s view of a land whose complex past and troubled present make for an uncertain future.” “Just a Peace” is available in its entirety for preview on Google Books:

http://books.google.com/books?id=y1yyiug-z74C&pg=PT90&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

Additional resource: *New Yorker* profile on Amos Oz:

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/11/08/the-spirit-level>.

“The Prisoner” by S. Yizhar (Short Story)

Published in *Sleepwalkers and Other Stories: The Arab in Hebrew Fiction* edited by Ehud Ben-‘Ezer. Also located at:

<http://www2.trincoll.edu/~kiener/YizharThePrisoner.pdf>

Nathan Alterman: “The Killers of the Fields” (Poetry)

- “The Killers of the Fields”:

<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/3439/auto/The-Killers-of-the-Fields>

Yehuda Amichai: “Temporary Poem of My Time,” “Love of the Land,” “If I Forget Thee Jerusalem,” “Jerusalem,” “Ecology of Jerusalem” & “A Meeting with My Father” (Poetry)

- About Yehuda Amichai: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/yehuda-amichai>

- “Temporary Poem of My Time”:

<http://www.poemhunter.com/best-poems/yehuda-amichai/temporary-poem-of-my-time/>

- “Love of the Land” and other poems:

<http://cms.education.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/4A95A475-6ACF-490B-8DD7-C9DFB8FE2B01/75461/aYehudaAmichaipoetry.doc>

- “If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem”:
<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/if-i-forget-thee-jerusalem/>
- “Jerusalem”:
<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1009>
- “Ecology of Jerusalem”:
<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1009>
- “A Meeting with My Father”:
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/138/3#!/20594247>

Rachel Bluwstein: “To My Land” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=536>

Eliaz Cohen: “Snow” (Poetry)

- Link (see middle of page):
<http://kavvanah.wordpress.com/2010/12/23/eliaz-cohen-in-translation-%E2%80%93hear-o-lord-poems-from-the-disturbances-of-2000-2009/>
- Video interview on PBS NewsHour with Eliaz Cohen (from 3:48-7:34):
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
- Eliaz Cohen shares his stories on The Parents Circle Families Forum website. The PCFF was developed “from a growing recognition that the reconciliation process is essential for future peace agreements.” See: <http://center.theparentscircle.org/Content.aspx?ID=133>

Agi Mishol: “Woman Martyr” (Poetry)

- Version 1:
<http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net/pi/site/poem/item/3291/auto/WOMAN-MARTYR>
- Version 2: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
- Video interview on PBS NewsHour with Agi Mishol & Agi Mishol reading “Woman Martyr” (from 0:00-3:48):
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/

Aharon Shabtai: “As We Were Marching” & “Lotem Abdel Shafi” (Poetry)

- About Aharon Shabtai: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/aharon-shabtai>
- “As We Were Marching”:
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
- Video interview on PBS NewsHour with Aharon Shabtai & Aharon Shabtain reading “As We Were Marching” (from 7:35-11:13):
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-21/
- “Lotem Abdel Shafi”:
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/240100>

Aryeh Sivan: “To Live in the Land of Israel” (Poetry)

- Link:
<http://matthewsalomon.wordpress.com/2008/05/09/aryeh-sivan-to-live-in-the-land-of-israel/>

Avraham Shlonsky: “Jerusalem is a Hill City” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/92/4#!/20587058>

Palestine Readings

“A Dog’s Life” by Suad Amiry (Non-Fiction)

Published in *Sharon and my Mother-in-Law: Ramallah Diaries*. Also located at:
<http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1147>

Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories by Ghassan Kanafani (Short Stories)

About *Men in the Sun* from a customer review on Amazon: “Kanafani weaves memory with an intense meta-narrative in ‘Men In the Sun’, through three primary characters that reflect the vulnerability, hardship, and loss of Palestinian refugees. Set in 1958, these characters, a young boy of sixteen, a resistance fighter in his twenties, and an old peasant, all dream of leaving behind their painful past and finding new hope in Kuwait. Their destinies collide when they meet a smuggler who promises a safe journey across the border to a new, happier life. Although his greedy attitude and method of transportation frightens the lot, desperation places the three men in his care.”

Palestine's Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories by Ghassan Kanafani (Short Stories)

Recommended stories: “Paper from Ramleh” and “Returning to Haifa.” About “Returning to Haifa” from *Book Dragon*: “Almost 20 years since Said and Safiyya were driven out of Haifa, they now return and find Miriam, a widowed Jew, living in their home. When the Palestinian couple fled amidst violent confusion, they somehow left their infant son Khaldun behind. Returning to their Haifa home for the first time, Said and Safiyya hope for news of their lost son. Miriam has been waiting for almost two decades, dreading the future of her adopted son Dov ... The Solomon-like confrontation between the two sets of parents and the one son that they share by blood and by nurture is a paralyzing situation that will chill every parent, any child.”

Palestine by Joe Sacco (Graphic Novel/Non-Fiction)

From Wikipedia: “*Palestine* is a graphic novel written and drawn by Joe Sacco about his experiences in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in December 1991 and January 1992. Sacco gives a portrayal which emphasizes the history and plight of the Palestinian people, as a group and as individuals.” Recommended chapters: “Black Coffee,” “Return,” “Remind Me,” “Refugeeland,” “Sons of Curfew,” “The Bucket,” “Through Other Eyes,” “Tel Aviv,” “A Boy in the Rain.”

Tamim Al-Barghouti: “In Jerusalem” (Poetry)

- About Tamim Al-Barghouti and the poem “In Jerusalem”: <http://tamimbarghouti.net/>
- Link (includes video in Arabic):
<http://www.a-w-i-p.com/index.php/poetry/2010/01/29/in-al-quds-in-jerusalem-a-1578-a-1605-a-1587>
- “In Jerusalem” first appeared on a TV show called *The Prince of Poets*. For more about the show and responses to the poem, see:
<http://thesaifhouse.wordpress.com/2007/09/18/the-prince-of-poets-arab-poetrys-answer-to-american-idol/>

Taha Muhammad Ali: “Ambergris” & “Exodus” (Poetry)

- About Taha Muhammad Ali: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/taha-muhammad-ali>
- Interview with Taha Muhammad Ali on PBS NewsHour (video, 7:53-12:33): http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/entertainment-jan-june07-poetry_03-22/
- “Exodus”: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/241016>
- Other poems found in *So What: New and Selected Poems, 1971-2005* by Taha Muhammad Ali.

Laila Allush: “The Path of Affection” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.al-awda.org/until-return/affection.html>

Mahmoud Darwish: “A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies,” “In Jerusalem,” “Who Am I, Without Exile?” & “Identity Card” (Poetry)

- About Mahmoud Darwish: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/mahmoud-darwish>
- “A Soldier Dreams of White Lilies”:
http://www.identityofthesoul.com/Media/WhiteLilies_English.pdf
- “In Jerusalem”: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/236752>
- “Who Am I, Without Exile?”: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/236748>
- “Identity Card”: <http://www.barghouti.com/poets/darwish/bitqa.asp>

Sharif Elmusa: “The Eraser” & “In the Refugee Camp” (Poetry)

- Published in *Flawed Landscape: Poems, 1987-2008* by Sharif Elmusa

Rashid Hussein: “Without a Passport” & “With the Land” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1068/two-poems-by-rashid-hussein>

Naomi Shihab Nye: “Jerusalem” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/240142>

Ali Qleibo: “A City of Stone” (Poetry)

- Link: <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1098>
- About Ali Qleibo: http://www.resistanceart.com/ali_qleibo.htm

Abu Salma: “My Country on Partition Day” & “We Shall Return” (Poetry)

- Published in *Tablet & Pen: Literary Landscapes from the Modern Middle East* edited by Reza Aslan.