The Modern State of Israel: From Inception to the Present Day

Facilitated by David Groen, Tuesdays 11:00am

Course Description: In this course, the instructor will trace the story of modern Israel from Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* and the dream of a Jewish state to the realities of today. Each class will explore the people, events, and decisions that shaped Israel's founding and development. Through wars, achievements, and ongoing challenges, we will examine how Israel became a modern nation and what its story means to the Jewish people and the world.

Week 1: Ancient Roots and the Dream of a Modern State — Through 1917
The biblical and historical foundations of Jewish attachment to the land, tracing that connection through exile, continued Jewish presence, and the rise of modern Zionism. I will introduce Theodor Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*, the First Zionist Congress, early immigration, and the impact of World War I and the Balfour Declaration.

Week 2: From British Rule to Independence — 1917–1949
Explores the British Mandate, Jewish immigration, Arab-Jewish conflict, the Holocaust, and the struggle to establish a Jewish state. The lesson will conclude with the UN partition proposal, Israel's declaration of independence, and the 1947–1949 war, including its consequences for Israelis and Palestinians.

Week 3: Building a Nation Under Threat — 1949–1967
Examines Israel's early years, the absorption of Holocaust survivors and Jews from Arab countries, and the development of its government and society. I will cover border conflicts, the 1956 Sinai/Suez War, and the causes, events, and lasting consequences of the 1967 Six-Day War.

Week 4: Attrition, Surprise, and Peace with Egypt — 1967–1979
Discusses the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition, and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, including their military, political, and human consequences. I will then trace the political changes that brought Menachem Begin to power and led to the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty with Egypt.

Week 5: Lebanon, Palestinian Uprisings, and the Peace Process — 1980–2005
Covering the 1982 Lebanon War, Israel's prolonged involvement in southern Lebanon, the rise of Hezbollah and Hamas, and the First and Second Intifadas. I will also examine the Oslo Accords, peace with Jordan, Rabin's assassination, and the decisions leading to Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005.

Week 6: Renewed Wars and Israel Today — 2006–Present
Examining the 2006 Second Lebanon War, the successive Gaza conflicts—including 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, and 2021—and the October 7, 2023 attack and ensuing war and regional escalation involving Hezbollah, Iran, and the Houthis. I will conclude with current developments, the Abraham Accords, and the security, political, and social questions shaping Israel's future.