



# EXTENDED CAMPUS

COLLEGE of PROFESSIONAL  
and CONTINUING STUDIES

## **HIST 5970-220: Building Modern Nations: Bismarck and Ben Gurion**

### **Course Description:**

Otto von Bismarck forged modern Germany in his image, the same could be said of David Ben Gurion created modern Israel. Both men surmounted extraordinary odds, led their nations through their formative decades, wrestled with complicated challenges and achieved considerable, though incomplete, success. While Bismarck was a Prussian military aristocrat, and Ben Gurion was a secular-socialist Polish Jew, both were classic pragmatists, practitioners of *Realpolitik*. Assessing four critical policy areas (diplomatic, military, religion, economic) this class attempts to derive some lessons for modern statesmen, soldiers, and students.

### **Class Dates, Format, Location and Hours:**

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Dates:                        | November 2-7,2021   |
| Format:                       | On-site   |
| Location for on-site courses: | Wiesbaden Education Center, Bldg. 1023 East, Basement Room 04, Clay Kaserne, 65205, Germany |
| Hours:                        | Tuesday - Friday 6:00-9:30 pm; Saturday and Sunday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.                      |

Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: October 4, 2021

### **Site Director:**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Name:         | Mr. Wade Jackson   |
| Location:     | Wiesbaden Education Center, Bldg. 1023 East, Basement Room 011, Clay Kaserne, 65205, Germany |
| Office hours: | Monday- 0800 – 1500, Tuesday- Friday- 0800 – 1600  |
| Email:        | <a href="mailto:apwiesbaden@ou.edu">apwiesbaden@ou.edu</a>                                   |
| Phone:        | DSN: 548-1309 or CIV: 49-(0)611-143-548-1309   |

### **Professor Contact Information:**

Course Professor: Alan Levenson  
Mailing Address: Department of History  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, OK 73019

Telephone Number: 405-325-6508

Email Address: [alevenson@ou.edu](mailto:alevenson@ou.edu)

Professor availability: The professor will be available via email to students before and after the class sessions. On-site office hours are half an hour before and after each class session, by appointment.

## Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Student materials are available at the OU Bookstore Website at <https://ou.textbookx.com/institutional/index.php>. The website has book selling, renting, buying, returning, and order tracking capabilities. If you need help with an order, or if you have any questions contact the toll-free phone at 1-(855)-790-6637, agents are available from 9a – 5p (EST) Monday – Friday. For more information or questions about textbooks, feel free to contact [apsyllabi@ou.edu](mailto:apsyllabi@ou.edu). Text prices are available online.

1. Katherine Anne Lerman, *Bismarck. Profiles in Power* (Harlow, UK: Pearson 2004) ISBN 0-582-03740-9 pbk
2. Anita Shapira, *David Ben Gurion. A Life.* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2014) ISBN 978-0-300-18045-9

All the readings for this course will be placed on Bizzell's Electronic Reserve system. We will add instructions on how to access the material.

## Course Objectives:

The course objective is to study the leadership of two successful nation builders, both of whom are essential to understanding the nature of two important American allies, Germany and Israel. These case studies offer examples of how policies in different arenas (war, diplomacy, economics, religion) influence each other and how successful leaders can achieve changes in course without losing sight of their larger objectives. Our approach is fundamentally historical, so the skills of reading, writing and speaking are paramount.

Specific objectives include:

1. To introduce students to the formative history of modern Germany and modern Israel.
2. To examine the significance of individual leadership in the creation of modern nations.
3. To analyze the failures (both obvious and unanticipated) of these leaders and the national systems they created.
4. To enrich student understanding of the limits and possibilities of leadership through historical investigation.

## Course Outline:

Session 1: Introducing Two Nation Builders (Instructor Lecture)

Otto von Bismarck created modern Germany; David Ben Gurion created modern Israel. Both men surmounted extraordinary odds, led their nations before, during and after their formative decades, wrestled with complicated challenges, and achieved considerable, though not complete, successes. Personally and ideologically they appear on first glance as polar opposites. While Bismarck was a Prussian military aristocrat and right-leaning reactionary, and Ben Gurion was a secular-socialist Polish Jew, both were actually classic pragmatists, practitioners of *Realpolitik*. Assessing four critical policy areas (diplomatic, military, religious, economic) this class attempts to derive some lessons for modern statesmen, soldiers, and students.

Session 2: Assessing Statesmanship: Students Discussion of the two pre-course readings/papers  
Pre-course papers will be discussed: please keep a hard copy for yourself for discussion purposes in addition to submitting it to the instructor via Canvas Dropbox!

**Readings for this session: Anita Shapira, *Ben Gurion. Father of Modern Israel* & Katherine Anne Lerman, *Bismarck: Profiles in Power***

Session 3: Religious Politics (Culture Wars)

The unification of Germany meant the dominance of Prussian Lutheran North Germans. But the Catholic population differed in many ways and Bismarck chose conflict – the Kulturkampf, to crush the political power of German Catholics, organized in the Center Party. After several years, Bismarck declared a truce, and formed a center-right coalition from 1878-1880 onwards, serious tensions remained between Protestants and Catholics. The Catholic Center's political leader, Ludwig Windhorst, often defeated the

Iron Chancellor in the German Congress (Reichstag), but Bismarck had the loyalty of the Protestant monarch, Wilhelm I.

Ben Gurion needed Jewish Ultra-Orthodox leadership (organized esp. in the Agudah party) to sign off on Israel's secular-democratic government. But the price the Orthodox factions exacted was high: a. kosher food in all government offices b. no official governmental activity on Saturdays (the Jewish Sabbath) c. personal control over personal status laws (birth/marriage/conversion/burials). These issues have continued to be sources of conflict between Israel's secular and religious populations, exacerbated by Israel's coalition style governments which gives the smaller parties disproportionate power.

**Readings: Margaret Anderson, "Kulturkampf" + Tom Segev, "Battle for the Sabbath"**

#### Session 4: Economic Politics

The innately conservative Bismarck championed universal male suffrage to limit the power of the German Princes; social security and disability pay to stymie the progress of the Social Democrats. The first tactic worked and the princes lost power to Prussian dominated Germany. But Bismarck's second tactic failed. The Social Democrats became one of the largest parties in the Reichstag, allying with the liberals and causing Bismarck no end of trouble. When Bismarck favored the capitalist free market policies that enabled fabulous economic growth, he alienated his feudal Junker constituency and opened up the ridiculous charge that Bismarck was the tool of Jewish financiers. When Bismarck favored protectionism, he alienated the Manchester Liberals who wanted to forward Germany's industrial and capital growth.

A committed Socialist in the 1920s-1940s, Ben Gurion realized that he needed to turn a class movement into a nation (*mamlachtiut*). The huge number of Jews from Arab lands and Holocaust survivors had no commitment to Labor/Socialist Zionism. But those on the left objected strenuously to Ben Gurion's betrayal of principle, while those on the right believed that Ben Gurion's embrace of open economics was both insincere and incomplete: that he continued to lavish benefits on collective farms (kibbutzim), state run industries (the largest infrastructure builder), the national labor union, and glorify the soldier-farmer ideal at the expense of shopkeepers and city dwellers (there was also an ethnic Ashkenazi versus Sephardi ethnic element to this charge).

**Readings: Primary Documents on German Industrialization (Williamson) + Shlomo Avineri, "Ben Gurion" in *The Making of Modern Zionism***

#### Session 5: Military Politics

Prussia's military aristocracy (the Junker class) served as the nucleus for the German Nation and won that unification on the basis of three successful wars waged within a decade (1864 versus Denmark; 1866 versus Austria; 1870 versus France). Although he shared the background of these Junkers, and coined the famous phrase "blood and iron," Bismarck realized after 1870 that his military goals had been achieved, and he spent the rest of his Chancellorship (until 1890) maintaining the status quo through diplomacy, not war. When German nationalists demanded expansion, Bismarck turned to colonialism, but half-heartedly. Bismarck wished above all to maintain the European balance of power, avoid a French-Russian alliance and a two-front war.

Israel needed an army to exist: opposed by several Arab states, only the development of state-like infrastructures in the 1930s-1940s enabled Ben Gurion and his generals to wage a successful war for independence (1947-1948). But Ben Gurion perceived that the army could also be a tool for unifying a very diverse nation, educating, indoctrinating and "Israelizing" those Jews expelled from Arab lands and Jewish displaced persons (DPs) who survived the Holocaust. The Israeli army (IDF) still plays this role to a surprising degree, with most men and women serving in the ranks, and with all men serving in the reserves until approximately age 40.

**Readings: Dennis Showalter, "Iron Dice" & "Epilogue" from: *The Wars of German Unification*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition + Jonathan Kolatch, "The Bible and the IDF" *Ben Gurion on the Bible***

#### Session 6: Lessons From the Past, Insights into Contemporary Allies, Summing Up/Writing Up

## Assignments, Grading and Due Dates:

Pre-Class Assignment 30%  
Attendance & Participation 30%  
Post-Class Research Paper 40%

Students will be expected to complete a 5-8 page paper assessing our two pre-class readings, Katherine Lerman's *Bismarck. Profiles in Power* and Anita Shapira's *David Ben Gurion. A Life*. My assumption is that even if these names Bismarck and Ben Gurion are familiar to you, neither man's achievements will be very well known. (I suspect there may be a few fans of German history in the class, but I will not assume that all are.)

This paper should sketch some of the challenges and accomplishments for each figure. The papers will be submitted by the week before the first class via OU Canvas Dropbox (Monday, 25 October, 2021), to give me time to read & comment, but please keep a hard copy for yourself as we will be discussing these papers in our second class.

If you need help accessing the OU Canvas system, contact your site manager promptly, since Canvas will be the portal through which both the pre-course and post-course paper will be submitted. The simplest way of submitted papers is to name your file using your last name-PRE or last name-POST. [For example: LEVENSON-PRE and LEVENSON-POST would be the file names for my two papers.]

The final paper will be due November 28, 2021.

### Post-Class Assignment: Research Paper (approximately 10 pages)

This course requires a research paper of roughly ten pages, double-spaced, with notes and a bibliography. While students writing this paper may (and probably will) use the assigned readings as their basis for the paper, students should consult at least four-five other sources, whether listed below, or found through the OU library system. Choosing books or articles that are peer-reviewed and thus contain vetted and reliable material is not as easy as it once was, and we will discuss this research issue in class.

It is important not to choose too difficult or too large a topic (you only have ten pages to work with)! We will discuss the selection of topics early in the class and you are welcome to ask about appropriateness (do-ability) of a topic at any point and/or send me an outline at any point until the due date. The most natural topics would be: 1) Explore either character (Bismarck, Ben-Gurion) in one discrete area covered in the class (war, diplomacy, economics, social, religious policy) or 2) Assess either character against a model of leadership you have explored in another AP class or in your previous education/training. (Please be sure to spell out in bullet form or in prose the criteria of leadership and where you get it from – remember, I am likely to be unfamiliar with the source.) The next steps were originally written for upper level undergraduate OU classes, but I have found that Graduate Students like them too:

- Step 1 – Choose a topic: Your topic should be connected to the themes and material covered in the syllabus. This will give you a starting point in terms of both primary and secondary source materials. Please limit the breadth of the topic about which you intend to write. Remember the writing itself is not going to be lengthy, so select a topic accordingly. If you have your heart set on a topic not listed in the syllabus, please see me.
- Step 2 – Receive approval for your paper topic. The sooner you propose a topic, the better off you will be. This way, I will be able to give some additional guidance in terms of reference materials, if you are having difficulty getting started. I will also be able to comment if I feel your topic may be too large. You can always reach me by e-mail: [alevenson@ou.edu](mailto:alevenson@ou.edu).
- Step 3 – Locate your materials. Although the paper should be based on a topic from the syllabus, I expect everyone to undertake some additional research. Your OU 4X4 allows you to use JSTOR; web-based materials are acceptable, but must be used with care.
- Step 4 – Writing. The challenge for a research paper is to utilize secondary literature, while making an argument. The scholarship on your topic should give you support, but **let your own voice be heard!** Keep in mind that your paper should show the significance of your subject matter for some of the larger themes addressed in this course.

Notes:

- 1 – Language – Many Jewish Studies papers include words and terms from foreign languages. Unless the language is commonly used and known, the first appearance should appear underlined or italicized, with a translation in parentheses. Subsequent usage should remain underlined or italicized.
- 2 – Style – Avoid: wordy locutions, extensive prepositional phrases, mixed up verb tenses, and contractions. Avoid excessive use of the passive voice (was...was...was.).
- 3 – Sources – You may use footnotes, endnotes, or, internal notation (Levenson, p. 35) with bibliography. The importance of citing sources is to tell the reader where you found your information – this is important when raising unique or contrasting scholarly views. It is also important when utilizing your primary documents, so the reader can consult the original material on which your argument is based. I advise against lengthy quotations from secondary literature –paraphrase and cite. You **must** have a **bibliography** for all works cited or alluded to directly. Be consistent!
- 4 – Proofread. Although you will be graded mainly on content, an argument stated clearly is more persuasive than one constructed poorly. Reading a draft aloud is fool-proof; the word/spell check function is good too.
- 5 – Length – Approximately ten pages (**Double Spaced!**). If you think you need to write more, limit your topic.
- 6 – Title Page -- Make sure you include all relevant information (**including a strong title for the paper!**) – your name, course title and number as well as the semester in which the course was taken – which may differ from the date you hand in a final version. **Please paginate!**
- 7 – **Back it up! Take it from an obsessive-compulsive: make at least one hard & electronic copy of everything!**
- 8 – **Submit via Canvas dropbox**

The final paper will be due NOVEMBER 28, 2021. It is strongly encouraged that students finish the research paper on time as there will surely be difficulty with further enrollment in your program or even in your program funding if the instructor is forced to report and INC (“I”) for the course grade. Students must check with site director as well as Instructor should a make-up prove necessary.

Some Highly Recommended Readings:

(Asterisks indicate we already read some of this in class)

(ON GERMANY)

Lynn Abrams, *Bismarck and the German Empire, 1871-1918* (Routledge, 2000)

Volker Berghahn, *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914* (Providence, 1994) (Good on economic & social issues)

\*Jonathan Steinberg, *Bismarck* (A recent, highly critical biography)

Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron*. A breakthrough work on Bismarck and his Jewish banker, Gershon Bleichroder.)

James Sheehan, *Imperial Germany* (A great collection of essays, including ones on B’s Realpolitik.)

Helmut Walser-Smith, eds., *Protestants, Catholics, Jews in Germany, 1800-1914* (Oxford, 2001)

\*Margaret Anderson, *Windhorst. A Political Biography*

Dennis Showalter, *The Wars of German Unification, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (Bloomsbury, 2015) (or, anything by Showalter on military history)

Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army* (NY, 1964) (A classic)

Edward Bucholz, *Moltke and the German Wars*

Gordon Martel, ed. *Modern Germany Reconsidered* (Routledge, 1991).

\*David Williamson, ed., *Bismarck and Germany, 1862-1890* (The best primary source collection – used in this class extensively)

Anything by Geoff Eley, David Blackbourn, Richard Evans, James Sheehan comes highly recommended

(ON ISRAEL)

Michael Bar Zohar, *Ben Gurion* (A balanced Ben Gurion biography)

Shabbtai Tevet, *Ben Gurion. The Burning Ground* (Somewhat adulatory biography – a gold mine of information)

\*Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism*

\*Jonathan Kolatch, ed., *Ben Gurion Looks at the Bible*

\*Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (History of Israel’s founding by a left-leaning historian.)

Chaim Herzog, *Israel's Wars* (military history by a Former Israeli President – like Gordon Craig for Israel's military history – classic, if dated.)

Gregory Mahler, *Politics and Government in Israel* 3<sup>rd</sup>, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016)

Anita Shapira, *Israel* (state-of-the art survey by the author of our Ben Gurion textbook)

Howard M Sacher, *A History of Modern Israel* (Dated, but highly readable.)

Barry Rubin, *Israel: An Introduction* (Yale, 2012) (The standard undergraduate textbook – reliable, but light on history.)

Barry Rubin and Walter Laqueur, *The Israel-Arab Reader*. ( Best collection of primary documents.)

Paul Rivlin on Israel's economy in Levenson, ed., *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Jews & Judaism*.

(Rivlin's is the clearest analysis (in English) on Israel's economy – tends toward the critical.)

\* Used in this class

### **Grading:**

This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.

## **POLICIES AND NOTICES**

### **Attendance/Grade Policy**

Attendance and participation in interaction, individual assignments, group exercises, simulations, role playing, etc. are valuable aspects of any course because much of the learning comes from discussions in class with other students. It is expected that you attend all classes and be on time except for excused emergencies.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution's policy regarding "I" (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any "I" (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on "financial aid probation." If the "I" grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student's Financial Aid may be suspended making the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

OU faculty will submit grades online through ONE not later than 30 days after the course end date. Course end dates are approximately one calendar month after the final seminar date on this syllabus and are provided on the official scheduling website for reference.

### **Academic Integrity and Student Conduct**

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. Therefore all work and all grades should result from the student's own understanding and effort.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, submitting the same assignment for different classes (self-plagiarism); fabrication, forgery, alteration of documents, lying, etc...in order to obtain an academic advantage; assisting others in academic misconduct; attempting to commit academic misconduct; destruction of property, hacking, etc...; intimidation and interference with integrity process; and plagiarism. All students should review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at [http://integrity.ou.edu/students\\_guide.html](http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html)

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. All students should review policies regarding student conduct at <http://studentconduct.ou.edu/>

### **Accommodation Statement**

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

### **Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth-Related Issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to

accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html>.

### **Title IX Resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24/7, counseling services, mutual no-contact orders, scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at [smo@ou.edu](mailto:smo@ou.edu) or (405) 325-2215 (8-5), or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 615 -0013 (24/7) to report an incident. To learn more about Title IX, please visit the Institutional Equity Office's website at <http://www.ou.edu/content/eoo.html>

### **Course Policies**

Extended Campus (also and formerly known as Advanced Programs) policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are emailed to the professor for the course. Neither duplicating services nor office supplies are provided.

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about OU Extended Campus, visit our website at: <http://www.goou.ou.edu/>

## INSTRUCTOR VITA

**Alan Levenson**

### Education

1982 B.A, M.A., History, Brown University  
1990 Ph.D., History, Ohio State University

### Current Positions

Schusterman Chair Professor of Jewish History  
Director, Schusterman Center of Judaic and Israel Studies, (2008-Present)

### Frequently Taught Extended Campus (Advanced Programs) Courses

N/A

### Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

The role of the Bible in modern culture  
The history of Bible interpretation in Judaism and Christianity  
The nature of German-Jewish history

### Representative Publications and Presentations

*Joseph: Portraits Through the Ages* (2016)  
General Editor, *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Jews and Judaism* (2012)  
*The Making of the Modern Jewish Bible* (2011, pbk. 2016)  
*Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism: Defenses of Jews and Judaism in Germany, 1871-1932* (2006, pbk 2013)  
*An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers* (2006)

### Representative Honors and Awards Received

Research:

American Council of Learned Societies  
National Endowment of the Humanities  
Memorial Foundation of Jewish Studies  
German Academic Exchange Service

Teaching:

100 Ohio's Best College & University Teachers (2005)  
Nominee: Robert Foster Cherry Excellent Teachers Award, Baylor University (2016)

### Major Professional Affiliations

Jewish Studies Association  
German Studies Association  
World Union of Jewish Studies  
Academic Engagement Network