This course considers the complex problem of nationalism and national identity in the modern world. Although it is common to believe that nations have always existed, in fact, they are quite new. For most of human history, people identified themselves not as members of a nation but as belonging to groups far more immediate and concrete—family, clan, or tribe—or as residents of a certain village, riverbank, or other geographic area. Unlike a family or a village, a nation is an abstraction, and people didn’t begin to see themselves as belonging to a nation until certain economic, political, and cultural forms were in place—forms that rarely appeared before the eighteenth century.

Our objective in this course will be to consider what a nation is, how nations came to be, what historical experiences particular nations have undergone, and what forms of nationalism and national belonging their peoples have displayed. In pursuing these objectives, we will discuss different theories of nationalism and then look in detail at four case studies, each representing a different form of nationalism: 1) The rise of Arab nations and nationalism amid the collapse empire—Ottoman, British, and French (1914-58); the extreme racist nationalism epitomized by Nazi Germany (1918-45); the nationalism of the independence movement in Algeria (1954-62); and the rival religion-tinged nationalisms of Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, since 1917. The course will conclude with some reflections on the persistence of nationalism in our globalized world.

Course Format and Assignments

Each week, there will be two lectures and one discussion session. The three weekly classes are equally important, and you are required to attend all three. You are also required to complete the readings for each week prior to meeting with your Preceptor. We expect all students to participate actively in class discussions, and part of your grade will depend on this participation.

During the semester you will be asked to write several short essays on aspects of the course readings. At the end of the term, there will be a final examination consisting mainly of essay questions. There will be no formal mid-term exam, though Preceptors may require one or two short tests during the discussion periods.
The essays taken together will count for 40-50 percent of your grade; the final counts another 30-40% and attendance and participation about 20%.

**Texts**

Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria, A History from 1830 to the Present*
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud El-Alami, *Palestine Israeli Conflict*
Omar Dahbour, *The Nationalism Reader*
Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the 20th Century*
Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*
Ian Kershaw, *Hitler (Profiles in Power)*
Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds, *Israel-Arab Reader*
Readings on electronic reserve, indicated by an *

**Topics and Readings**

**PART ONE. What is a Nation?**

**Week I (Jan. 16):** What Is a Nation?

Readings: Ernst Renan, *What is a Nation?* in Nationalism Reader (NR)
*Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, pp. 1-7*

**Week II (Jan. 23):** The Nation as Imagined Community

Readings: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, chs. 1-3

**First paper:** Answer the following question: What is a nation? (500 words or less)

**Week III (Jan. 30):** What is Nationalism?

Readings: Elie Kedourie, “Nationalism” in NR
Anderson, chs. 5-7

**Second paper:** Answer the following question: What is nationalism? (500 words or less)
PART TWO. From Empire to Nations: The Arab World

Week IV (Feb. 6): Origins of Arab Nationalism

Readings: Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, chs. 1-3

Week V (Feb. 13): Britain, the Jews, and the Quest for an Arab Nation

Readings: Dawisha, chs. 4-6
I-AR, pp. 30-77

Third Paper. What were the major obstacles blocking the path of Arab nationalism? (500 words)

PART THREE. Extreme Nationalism: National Socialism in Germany

Week VI (Feb. 20): Nationalism and Racism

Ian Kershaw, *Hitler*, Introduction and Ch. 1

Week VII (Feb. 27): National Socialism in Practice

Readings: Kershaw, chs 2-6

Fourth Paper: In what ways was National Socialism different from and similar to other forms of nationalism (500 words)

PART FOUR. Decolonization and National Liberation Movements: The Case of Algeria

Week VIII (March 6) : France and Algeria


Week IX (March 13): Spring Break

Week X (March 20): Algeria and the Rise of Anti-Colonial Nationalism

Readings: Ageron, chs. 7-8
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* in NR
Albert Camus, Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, pp. 109-54

Week XI (March 27): Decolonization and the National Liberation movement

Readings: Ageron, ch. 9

Fifth paper. Describe the goals and objectives of the Algerian national liberation movement (500 words)

PART FIVE. The Israel-Palestine Conflict

Week XII (April 6): Nationalism and the Politics of History

Readings: Cohn-Sherbok and El-Alami, The Palestine-Israeli Conflict, chs 1-2, 6-7

Week XIII (April 13): The Quest for Nationhood: Two Literary Views

Readings: *Ghassan Kanafani, “Men in the Sun”
*Amos Oz, The Hill of Evil Counsel

Week XIV (April 20): Israel and Palestine after 1948

Readings: Cohn-Sherbok and Dawoud El-Alami, chs 3-5 and 8-10
I-AR, pp. 81-83, 89-110

Final paper. How did nationalists on both sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict use history to further their respective causes? (1,250-1,500 words)

PART SIX. Beyond Nations and Nationalism?

Week XV (April 27): Nationalism’s Future