

## World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

**Teacher Name:** Tanya A. Martin  
2015

**Humanities Discipline:** Philosophy/Ethics

**Date:** 22 November

**World Religion:** Judaism

**Teaching Module Title:** Philosophy and Ethics of Zionism

### Teaching Module Goal:

Students will learn about different Jewish understandings of and debates about Zionism and its ethical implications

### Assigned Readings and/or Websites:

1. Levinas, Immanuel, translated by Alphonso Lingis, *Totality and Infinity: An essay on Exteriority* (c. 1961 Duquesne university Press) pp. 21-22
2. Kelman, Herbert C., *Israel in Transition From Zionism to Post Zionism* (Annals, AAPSS, 555, 1998)
3. Cohen, Naomi, *The Americanization of Zionism, 1897-1948* (Hanover: Brandeis UP, 2003), 43.
4. Altmann, Alexander, "Homo Imago Dei" in Jewish and Christian Theology *The Journal of Religion* Vol. 48, No. 3 (Jul., 1968), pp. 235-259
5. Oren, Michael B. In Defense of Zionism: The often reviled ideology that gave rise to Israel has been an astonishing success, *The Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2014,  
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/in-defense-of-zionism-1406918952>
6. Dayan, Arie. 1993. "The Debate over Zionism and Racism: An Israeli View," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22 (3). University of California Press: 96–105. doi:10.2307/2537573.
7. Hazony, David et al. *New Essays on Zionism* (published by Shalem Press) Jerusalem, New York c. 2006
8. <http://www.ijis.org.au/Variants-within-Judaism/default.aspx>

### Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students:

1. Aside from Israel, the U.S. is home to most Jews in the world. What differing views of Zionism have Jewish Americans proposed and supported? Do any Jewish American see conflicts or tensions between their commitments to U.S. nationalism/citizenship and to Zionism? Why or why not?

2. What roles do a sense of exile and Galut (diaspora) play in Jewish American ethics and philosophy?
3. Does the concept of the mashiach (anointed one) refute or support political Zionism or religious Zionism? Why or why not? Be sure to discuss the diversity of Jewish answers to this question.
4. Some Jewish critics of political Zionism have called it a form of colonialism, comparing it to Manifest Destiny in the United States—the ideology that justified the taking of Native American and Mexican land by white Americans. How do Jewish supporters of political Zionism respond to these criticisms? Do you find their answers convincing? Why or why not?

**Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:**

In 1897 the Central Conference of American Rabbis passed a resolution that stated, "We affirm that the object of Judaism is not political nor national, but spiritual, and addresses itself to the continuous growth of peace, justice and love in the human race, to a messianic time when all men will recognize that they form 'one great brotherhood' for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth."

Write a 5-7 page paper that analyzes how Jewish ideas of religious and political Zionism have stayed the same or changed since this statement was made. Explain how events such as the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel in 1948 have made an impact on these debates. Be sure to include contemporary Jewish debates over the ethics of Zionism. Does the existence of a Jewish state conflict with or complement the universal ethical vision of Judaism? Make sure that you describe a variety of Jewish responses to this question.