

Israel Exploration: Kol Yisrael (All of Israel) Syllabus

Wednesdays, June 11–July 23; 1:00–2:30 pm



Course Description

Kol Yisrael is a 6-week cohort learning experience offered by Hillel International to explore big ideas and big questions animating the contemporary Israeli discourse. Participants will explore big questions facing Israeli society, a diversity of narratives/experiences in the Israeli landscape, and their own personal relationships with Israel in a structured safe space. Rabbi Ron Symons will be a member of the class as a Hillel professional leads us.

The name, Kol Yisrael, embodies the aim and methodology of this curriculum. In Hebrew, the word Kol (כָּל) means “all”. While we can’t provide “all” perspectives and narratives on the questions raised here, it is our aspiration to make our tent wider, to invite more voices to the table, and to cultivate resilient empathy for diverse perspectives.

While we hope that you can join us for all of the sessions, we welcome you to attend most of them if that is what your schedule allows.

Syllabus

Session 1: What Stories Do I Bring?: Talking About Israel

- How have our previous experiences formed our opinions, feelings, and behaviors around discussing Israel?
- What core values inform the opinions and positions we hold, especially when it comes to charged topics like Israel?

Session 2: When Do I Wander? When Am I Home?

- What is my relationship to and experience of home?
- What does it mean to truly belong, and who decides?

Session 3: What Is A Homeland?: Exploring Zionisms

- How has Israel represented a physical or metaphorical homeland for the Jewish people?
- Why has Israel mattered to various thinkers, academics, politicians, activists, and teachers in Jewish history?

Session 4: Identity and Autonomy: Who Are My People?

- What is “the Jewish people,” and who are the Jews? How, if at all, is my Jewish identity bound up with Israel?
- What does it mean to claim Jewish identity in the diaspora vs. in Israel?

Session 5: Case Study (Educator’s Choice!*). Options Include:

- Do I Belong?: Being a Minority Within a Broader Society
- Jews, Israel, and Whiteness
- On Patriotism and Protest

Session 6: What’s Next? The Diaspora Israel Relationship Today

- How might I engage with Israel as an American/person living in America today?
- What questions do I still want to explore around my relationship with Israel?

Register: shamesjcc.org/jewishlife

Contact: Rabbi Ron Symons at rsymons@shamesjcc.org

