



Miniseries Information Packet

The following miniseries take place over three sessions, led by an IMPACT Israel educator. Each miniseries includes a guest speaker, multimedia presentations, program coordination and content development, and being available for open communication and meetings as needed with staff and participants. Each miniseries also includes the option for asynchronous learning to *continue the conversation* in between the live sessions, which would entail asynchronous learning in *Hevruta* and moderated discussions with your IMPACT Israel educator. You are invited to check out an example of a *Hevruta* learning site [here](#) which features as a prominent pedagogical element of our [IMPACT Israel Fellowship](#).

Am I a Zionist?

This miniseries will delve into the purpose of Israel and the role of Israel in the lives of Jews from outside Israel, with a particular focus on emergence of the modern Jewish world and how Israel fits into it. Participants will wrestle with a fundamental Zionist idea that Jews are a nation with a shared land, language, and culture, and in the process identify for themselves the meaning of Israel and the existence of a Jewish state beyond traditional conceptions of the Bible and antisemitism. Most importantly, participants will explore their personal connections to Israel and answer for themselves if and why they are a Zionist.

*This miniseries includes a session with an expert guest speaker on *Why I'm a Zionist*.

Conflicting Narratives of the Conflict

This miniseries will be a deep dive into the meaning two different peoples - Jews and Arabs or Israelis and Palestinians - prescribe for the same place. Why the land of Israel for Jews? Why Palestine for Arabs? How come Jews around the world call *Eretz Yisrael* their homeland yet most Jews throughout history were not born in the land or stepped foot there? How come Palestinians call Palestine their country when a nation-state called Palestine has never existed? We will examine how two self-identified nations can make equal claims to the same space rooted in history, archaeology, theology, and myth.

*This miniseries includes a session with an expert Palestinian speaker.

What does a Jewish democracy look like?

The state of Israel functions as a compromise between several Jewish & non-Jewish tribes – *secular Jews, national religious Jews, ultra-orthodox Jews, and Arabs*. We will explore the



compromises, and sometimes lack thereof, between these tribes, which have a tremendous impact on Israeli society today. This series will also focus on the status of minorities in Israeli society, learning about both Jewish and non-Jewish minorities, with a focus on Arab citizens. Using the text of the Declaration of Independence as our guidepost, we will analyze if and how Israel can be a Jewish state with equal rights for all individual citizens regardless of religion, race, or ethnicity.

*This miniseries will include a [tour of and seminar from the Israeli President's Residence](#).

To Annex or not to Annex?

The recent normalization of ties between Israel and Bahrain and the UAE was framed in the context of stopping Israeli annexation efforts of the West Bank by these Arab states. But if Israel conquered/liberated/acquired/occupied/took over this territory in 1967, why is the land still technically not sovereign Israeli territory? This mini-series will help students understand Israel's relationship to a territory it usually refers to not as the West Bank, but Judea and Samaria, diving into the many dilemmas it possesses for Israel's politics, security, and Zionist identity.

*This miniseries includes a session with one Israeli and one Palestinian to give their personal thoughts on the annexation issue.

Judaism in Israeli Society

In this miniseries, we will tackle the challenge of Israel being a Jewish state for all Jews of different streams, beliefs, and backgrounds. What role do issues of religion and state play in the daily life of Israelis? Should buses run on Shabbat in Tel Aviv? Does the future of Torah study require an army exemption for certain yeshiva students? Can the Western Wall be welcoming to all denominations? This miniseries will help participants conceptualize and explore what place religion should play in a Jewish country.

*This miniseries includes a session with two Israeli activists from different perspectives to give their personal thoughts on the issue of Religion & State in Israel.

About IMPACT:

[IMPACT](#) educates students to negotiate between Israel and their American and Jewish identities by exploring their meanings, conflicts, and points of integration. Through our educational programs, students explore *why Israel* and *why Jewish* are compelling values to embrace in the buffet of options in pursuing a meaningful life. Students will ultimately develop their own identities as they encounter Israel as an idea and value of the long running saga of the Jewish story.

About Benji Davis, IMPACT Director:





Benji Davis, the founder of [IMPACT Israel Education](https://www.impactisraeleducation.com), is a Jerusalem-based educator specializing in Israel education. He manages a team of educators that teach Israel education courses for gap year students, gives geopolitical lectures to 60+ Birthright-Israel groups a year, leads seminars, tours and Shabbatons for many visiting groups to Israel and specializes in online Israel education for learners before and after their

Israel experience. Benji grew up in Los Angeles, California, holds a BA in Middle East Studies & History from the George Washington University, an MA in Jewish Education from the Hebrew University and is a doctoral student at the University of Haifa in the Faculty of Education, focusing his research on teacher knowledge of Israel educators of American Jewish teens. He lives in Jerusalem with his wife Rachel and daughters Maia and Ella.

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