Coined to describe the Jewish dispersion in the ancient Near East, the Greek term "diaspora" has traditionally referred to the historical exile and displacement of the Jewish people. The term was subsequently applied to the Greek and Armenian dispersions, which – together with the Jewish dispersion – are often called the "classical diasporas." In recent decades, however, the meaning of "diaspora" has been expanded to refer to migrant, refugee and émigré populations that have left their places of origin – either forcibly or voluntarily – and come to constitute a group defined primarily in relation to its historic "homeland." We now hear of African, Indian, Sikh, Chinese, Korean, South Asian, Irish, Turkish, Alevi, Kurdish, Ukrainian, Russian, Tibetan, Palestinian, Croatian, Serbian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Haitian, and even Israeli diasporas. This course will begin with an exploration of the Jewish diaspora, asking to what extent this archetypical diaspora serves as a useful analytical category and framework for understanding the migrations and displacements of modern times. The course will examine certain diasporic models – e.g., trading diasporas, victim diasporas, cultural diasporas – with the aim of understanding the role they play in nation-building and group-formation, as well as the impact they have on identity politics and foreign policy "at home" and "abroad." In addition to the individual diasporas and themes treated in the readings, students will give class presentations exploring additional diasporic communities and/or theoretical issues related to the field of Diaspora Studies. These presentation may serve as the basis for the required term paper.

Requirements: All students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, all students are required to give a 20-minute class presentation, examining a diasporic community or theoretical issues related to the field of Diaspora Studies. This presentation may serve as the basis for the mandatory 10-12 page research paper.

Class Participation: 15%  
Article Presentation (10 minutes) 15%  
Class Presentation (20 minutes): 20%  
Research Paper (10-12 pages): 50%  

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students should have a fuller understanding of the extensive and highly multidisciplinary scholarly literature on "diaspora studies," in particular the writings of Safran, Clifford, Armstrong, Anderson, Brubaker, and Töölyan. They should be able to apply this theoretical literature to various dispersed populations (refugees, migrants, etc.), using it as a critical, analytic lens to shed light on identity, boundary maintenance, political mobilization, etc. They should be familiar with the basic diaspora typologies ("classical diaspora," "trade diaspora," "victim diaspora") that have been proposed to examine various dispersed populations. The class presentations should enable students to summarize and critique scholarly articles and gain confidence in presenting research to a group of one's peers.
The term paper should help students develop a case study that will incorporate the readings of this course and shed new light on a particular diaspora.

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**Week 1:** Introduction  
January 8

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**Week 2:** What is Diaspora?  
January 15


*Recommended:*


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**Week 3:** Diaspora and Exile  
January 22


Psalms 137: 1-6

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, 28A

Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 7, Chap. 2; Book 18, Chap. 46

Moshe Ibn Ezra, "Songs of Wandering"

*Recommended:*


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**Week 4:** Trading Diasporas, Mobilized Diasporas  
January 29


Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 4-39 (Chapter 4: Mercury's Sandals: The Jews and Other Nomads)

*Recommended:*


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**Week 5: The Armenian Diaspora**

February 5


Film: *Ararat* (2002)

*Recommended:*


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**Week 6: The African Diaspora**

February 12


"The Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World" (1920)

Recommended:


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**Week 7: Diaspora Politics – Diaspora Lobbying – Long-Distance Nationalism**

February 19


"Greek-American Lobby":
[http://ahiworld.org/about-ahi/ahi-history.html](http://ahiworld.org/about-ahi/ahi-history.html)
[http://ahcpc.org/dotnetnuke/](http://ahcpc.org/dotnetnuke/)

"Armenian-American Lobby":

"Jewish-American Lobby":

Recommended:

Week 8: Diaspora Tourism
February 26


Birthright Israel
http://www.birthrightisrael.com/site/PageServer

Birthright Armenia

Film: Everything is Illuminated (USA, 2005)

Recommended:

Week 9: Diaspora – Homeland Relations
March 5


The A. B. Yehoshua Controversy (2006)
http://www.ajc.org/atf/cf/%7B42D75369-D582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAF%7D/Yehoushua_Controversy_2006.pdf

Recommended:
Week 10: Student Presentations I  
March 12

Week 11: Student Presentations II  
March 19

Week 12: No class (Brubaker Seminar)  
March 26