The idea and reality of Israel elicit passions and persuasions like few other countries. The reasons are familiar: the emergence of Zionism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, strategic location, paramount religious sites, the history of the Jewish and the Palestinian peoples, the danger of nuclear escalation, technological innovation. For many, such perils and promises render this small spot, Jerusalem at its heart, “the center of the world.” British premier Benjamin Disraeli once went so far as to profess that “the view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more, it is the history of earth and of heaven.” In our Fall 2014 seminar, we will not subscribe to this claim, but will try to examine key tensions in our contemporary world through the fascinating lens of modern Israel. We will discuss these twelve diametric ideas and practices through various sources—academic, literary and cinematic—probing how they have shaped modern life, in and beyond Israel.

The workshop is open to faculty, post-doc researchers, and graduate and undergraduate students, across all disciplines, as well as to members of the wider Princeton community. If you would like to participate in the workshops, please contact Angella Matheney [matheney@princeton.edu], including a short statement of interest, no later than September 12, 2014. Space is limited.

**September 16: Samson’s Option & Solomon’s Judgment**
Gaza Crisis and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

**September 23: Sacred & Secular**
Documentary Film: *In Between* (Director: David Ofek)


**September 30: Hope & Fear**
Reading of Shavit’s *My Promised Land*


**October 7: Civil & Military**
Reading of Yizhar’s *Khirbet Khizeh*

**October 21: Blood & Land**

Documentary Film: *Ameer Got His Gun* (Directors: Naomi Levari and Saar Yogev)


**November 4: Conventions & Conscience**

The assassination of Rabin


**November 11: Individualism & Solidarism**

Before and after the 2011 “social justice” protests

Reading of Keret’s *Missing Kissing*


**November 18: Homeland & Diaspora**

Documentary Film: *Not in My Name* (Director: Igal Hecht)


**November 25: Modernity & Tradition**

Start-up nation and amulets

Documentary Film: *The Israeli Code* (Director: Ayelet Dekel)


**December 2: Evolution & Revolution**

The boundaries of social imagination

Reading of Shammas’s *Arabesques*


**December 9: Utopia & Dystopia**

Documentary Film: *Life as a Rumor* (Director: Assi Dayan)