What do I think about the Israel/Palestine issue?

Here are 10 questions/statements to probe the current state of your thinking on the Israel/Palestine question. At the end of the course, it will be interesting to see if you think you would answer any questions differently.

1. The only secure long-term solution to the conflict is to have 2 equal states living side by side in security.

2. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. Its Arabs and Jewish citizens have equal rights, (though they might not always respected as well as they should be).

3. Israel is an “apartheid state”

4. Most people in Israel/Palestine want peace. The main problem is that the religious extremists on both sides make it impossible.

5. The main problem in Israel is the proportional representation system which gives too much power to the right wing parties.

6. If the Palestinians had had better leadership, starting with Arafat, this could have been solved long ago.

7. The Palestinian refugees have to get over it. There is no way Israel will ever accept a return of 5 million refugees making Jews a minority in Israel. Palestinian refugees, like Russian, Polish or Eritrean refugees have to move on, not cling to the past.

8. Israel used excessive force against Hamas. But it has a right and an obligation to defend itself against rocket attacks from Gaza. As long as Hamas refuses to recognize Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state, Israel has the right to defend itself.

9. I believe that the move to boycott Israel, known as the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) is unfair and basically anti-Semitic as it put all the blame on Israel.

10. It’s basically a hopeless situation. Arabs and Jews have hated each other for millennia, and there doesn’t seem to be any reason to believe it will get better anytime soon.