

PO 245: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2006

Prof. Farbod
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Room Z102, Zinzendorf
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Office Hrs: T 1-3 PM
OR by appointment

The students will learn to critically examine a number of issues and themes in the politics of the Middle East. Selected topics include but are not limited to: a critique of prevalent ethnocentric views of the Middle East; the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; politics in Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia; a consideration of religious fundamentalisms in the region; politics of oil; the U.S. foreign policy; the “war on terror;” and the prospects for peace, democracy, and prosperity in the region. The students will benefit from a less detailed look at other nations of the region such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan and so on. However, the focus will be on significant themes and not on a country-by-country presentation. The students will also benefit from viewing a number of critical documentaries dealing with some of the more controversial aspects of politics in the region that are often shunned by the mainstream media.

Required Books: *A People’s History of Iraq*, Salucci *All the Shah’s Men*, Kinzer
 The Battle for Saudi Arabia, Abukhalil *Resurrecting Empire*, Khalidi
 Toward an Open Tomb, Warschawski

Requirements:

- a. *Class Participation: (10%)*
 - 1) I expect and welcome consistent participation in class discussions in the form of questions, commentaries, challenges, and so on. Students should keep up with the news about and from the Middle East.
 - 2) Unexcused class absences will affect this portion of the grade. Each unexcused absence will reduce the student’s participation grade by 2 percentage points; thus, five absences translate into the participation grade of zero.
- b. *Quizzes: (20%)*

There will be a total of FIVE quizzes administered at the beginning of class sessions. Each quiz will take up no more than five minutes and is comprised of a couple of very basic questions covering the readings for that class period. There shall be **no make-ups** regarding quizzes.
- c. *Research Paper: (20%)*

Write 6 pages (not including the endnotes or the bibliography), double-spaced, and typewritten on a topic of interest to you. Remember: Research requires going to sources **outside** of those assigned in class. Topics must deal with political issues and themes in the Middle East that are significant and contemporary. Students may choose to research themes, issues, or historical events that are several decades old. The key here is whether they are relevant to an understanding of contemporary Middle East issues. I would suggest clearing the topic with me before you start the research project. Due date: Two weeks before our last class session.
- d. *A Mid Term AND A Final Exam: (25% each)*

Times will be announced in class.

Evaluation* :	Class Participation	10%
	Quizzes (5)	25%
	Mid-Term Exam	20%
	Term Paper	20%
	Final Exam	25%

Class Readings will be assigned on a class-by-class basis.

Attendance Policy: Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly. Absence due to illness requires written confirmation from a healthcare provider. Any other absence requires satisfactory explanation otherwise it will be marked and incorporated into the course grade determination.

Academic Honesty Policy: In cases of cheating or plagiarizing in any way, I will follow the appropriate procedures as they appear in the College Student Handbook.

* It is within my purview to apply qualitative judgment in the determination of any and all grades.