

## PO 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2008

Prof. Farbod  
(O) 861-1570

Room Z102, Zinzendorf  
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Office Hrs: T & R: 11-12 AM  
OR by appointment

The students will learn to examine critically a number of issues and themes pertaining to the Middle East. Selected topics include but are not limited to: a critique of prevalent Western ethnocentric views of the Middle East; examination of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, politics in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, in pre- and post-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan, an examination of religious fundamentalisms in the region, resource politics, in particular that of oil, the U.S. foreign policy, including the “war on terror,” and finally 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, and Saudi Arabia. The course combines a focus on significant regional themes with a more detailed look at critical countries such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel/Palestine, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The class will also benefit from viewing a number of critical documentaries dealing with some of the more controversial aspects of life and politics in the region that are often shunned by the mainstream media.

### Required Books:

*Jasmine and Stars* (Keshavarz); *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal* (Arnove); *Overcoming Zionism* (Kovel); *Bleeding Afghanistan* (Kolhatkar & Ingalls); *Perilous Power* (Chomsky & Achcar)

### Course Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
  - 1) Informed and consistent CP makes a difference in your grade. So keep up with the readings and the news from the region.
  - 2) Attendance Policy: After the introductory session, the first two unexcused absences will reduce the CP grade by 2 points each; the third will result in the loss of the participation grade altogether. Beyond that the student needs to schedule a meeting with me to discuss the status of the course.
- b. **Quizzes:** (20%)

There will be a total of **four** quizzes administered at the **beginning** of the designated class sessions; there shall be **no make-ups** regarding quizzes.
- c. **Research Paper:** (20%)

Please have a research topic in mind by the end of March. Hand in a typed introductory paragraph by the first class session in April to indicate 1) your topic, 2) a significant question, 3) why you think it important, and 4) the sources you will use in your research. Your research must consult sources **outside** of those assigned in class. You may choose contemporary or historical topics so long as they can be shown to enhance our understanding of the region’s politics. The paper should comprise 6-8 typed pages. Due date: A week before our last class meeting.
- d. **A Mid Term AND A Final Exam:** (20% each): Dates to be announced.
- e. **Think Essay:** (10%)

Write a 3–page critical essay. Choice of topics: (1) Present a current example of misrepresenting the Muslims in the Middle East along the lines of our class discussions of Orientalism; (2) Counter Arnove’s arguments in favor of an immediate withdrawal of US forces from Iraq.

<b>Evaluation* :</b>	Class Participation	10%
	Quizzes (4)	20%
	Think Essay	10%
	Mid-Term Exam	20%
	Term Paper	20%
	Final Exam	20%

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

**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.

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