

PO 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2009

Prof. Farbod
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Room Z102, Zinzendorf
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Office Hrs: W & F: 11-12 Noon
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:

Keshavarz: **Jasmine and Stars**; Bennis: **Ending the Iraq War: A Primer**; Wright: **Dreams and Shadows**; Karmi: **Married to another Man**; Kolhatkar: **Bleeding Afghanistan**

Course Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
 - 1) Informed and consistent CP will make a difference in your grade. So keep up with the **readings** and the **news** from the region.
 - 2) **Attendance Policy:** I encourage regular class attendance. Students are permitted one unexcused absence per semester. For each additional unexcused absence, the student’s final evaluation will be reduced by a quarter -- e.g., from an A to an A- --, unless there is an emergency, for which the student must inform the instructor prior to the class. If appropriate the student must provide a note from a health provider.
- b. **Critical Review Paper:** (10%)

The students may choose to write a critical 2-3 page typed essay on either of the Iran, Afghanistan, or Israel/Palestine books. The students are required to hand in their essay no later than the first class period after the class is done with any one of these three books.
- c. **Research Paper:** (30%)

You should have a research topic in mind by **early March**. Hand in a typed introductory paragraph no later than **Monday, March 23** indicating 1) your topic, 2) a significant question, 3) why you think the latter is important, and 4) the sources you will consult 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: **Monday, April 13**.
- d. **A Mid-Term & a Final Exam:** (25% each): The Final Exam is not cumulative. Mid-Term Exam Date: **Monday, February 23**.

Evaluation*	Class Participation	10%
	Critical review Paper	10%
	Term Paper	30%
	Mid-term Exam	25%
	Final Exam	25%

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.

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