

PO 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2010

Prof. Farbod
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Room Z102, Zinzendorf
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Office Hrs: W: 10-12 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 of pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, pre- and post-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan; examination of Middle Eastern fundamentalisms; resource politics, in particular politics of energy resources; U.S. foreign policy in the region, to include the so-called ex-“war on terror.” Throughout, we will attempt rationally to separate myth from reality, and will end with a consideration of the near- and long-term prospects for peace, democracy, prosperity and justice 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 is organized around significant regional themes coupled with a detailed look at several key countries that best demonstrate these themes. The course relies on a number of critical documentaries and films 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*; Zangana: *City of Widows*; Cole: *Engaging the Muslim World*; Halper: *An Israeli in Palestine*

Course Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
 - 1) Informed and consistent CP WILL make a difference in evaluation. Bring books and notebooks to each class. Keep up with the **readings** and the **news** from the region.
 - 2) **Attendance Policy:** Regular class attendance is required. Excluding the Introductory class session, each unexcused absence reduces the CP grade by 30%. Beyond this, each additional unexcused absence will reduce the overall grade by 5%. In case of emergency, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor prior to the class and if appropriate the student must provide a note from a health provider.
- b. **Critical Reflection Paper:** (10%)

Write a critical 3-page typed essay on any topic of interest encountered in class readings, viewings, and discussions. The essay can be a prelude to your research paper as well. It is due prior to the Mid-Term (Feb. 26).
- c. **Four Quizzes:** (20%)

One for each book. Make-ups are given only for missed quizzes due to excused absences.
- d. **Research Paper:** (20%)

Have a research topic in mind by **early March**. Hand in a typed intro page on **March 15** 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. Research requires consulting sources **outside** of class materials. You may choose a contemporary or historical topic so long as it can be shown to enhance our understanding of the present issues in the region. Write between 6-8 typed pages not including the Bibliog., Endnotes or Title pages. Due date: **Monday, April 19**.
- e. **A Mid-Term & a Final Exam:** (20% each): The Final Exam is not cumulative. Mid-Term Exam Date: **Monday, either February 22 or 29**.

Evaluation* :	Class Participation	10%
	Critical Ref Paper	10%
	Quizzes	20%
	Term Paper	20%
	Mid-term Exam	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.

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