

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

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Office Hrs: TH: 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.

Books & Readings:

Keshavarz: **Jasmine and Stars**; Lando: **Web of Deceit**; Cole: **Engaging the Muslim World**; Christison: **Palestine in Pieces**; Ram: **Iranophobia**

Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
 - 1) Informed and consistent CP WILL make a difference in the course evaluation. Please bring readings and notebooks to each class. Keep up with the assigned readings and make an effort to stay informed about 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 3 unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence lowers the earned semester grade half a grade level. In case of emergency, the student is responsible to inform the instructor prior to the class and where appropriate provide a note from a health provider in the following session.
- b. **Four Quizzes:** (20% total)

Four announced quizzes, one for each book, will be given at the beginning of class periods.. Make-ups are given only for missed quizzes due to excused absences.
- c. **Research Paper:** (20%)

Have a research topic in mind by the **end of Oct.** Hand in a typed intro page **the 1st session in Nov.** indicating 1) your topic, 2) a significant question/claim/thesis, 3) why the latter matters, and 4) the sources you have and 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 Biblio., Endnotes or Title pages. It is due two sessions before the end of the term.
- d. **A Mid-Term & a Final Exam:** (25% each)

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