

POSC 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2011

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Office Hrs: M: 11-12; T/R: 1-2
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 religious fundamentalisms in the region; politics of oil; U.S. foreign policy in the region. 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 attention to 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:

Keshavarz: **Jasmine and Stars**; Lando: **Web of Deceit**; Zogby: **Arab Voices**; Christison: **Palestine in Pieces**; Turse: **Case For Withdrawal From Afghanistan**

Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
 - 1) Be informed and participate actively in class. Your effort WILL make a difference in the final course evaluation (even beyond the 10% weight assigned to it).
 - 2) Bring relevant course materials (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.
 - 3) For each reading come to class with at least 2 questions written down in your notebook to share with the class: (1) What you found to be the most interesting and thought provoking (and why?), and (2) what you found to be the most puzzling and in further need of explanation.
 - 4) **Attendance Policy:** Regular attendance is required. Excluding the Introductory Session, each unexcused absence reduces the CP grade by 25%. Beyond 4 unexcused absences, you need to meet with me to justify your continued presence in the course. You are required where appropriate to provide a note from a health provider.
- b. **Five One-Minute Quizzes:** (10% total)

These will be unannounced and given at the beginning of a class period. Make-ups are given only for missed quizzes due to excused absences.
- c. **Research Paper:** (30%)

Hand in a typed intro page on **the last session we meet in March**, indicating 1) your topic, 2) a significant question/claim/thesis, 3) why the latter matters, and 4) some of the sources you have already consulted to help in your research. The final product should be between 8-10 typed pages (not including the Bibliog., Endnotes or Title pages) and is due two weeks before our last session.
- d. **A Mid-Term (25%) & a Final Exam:** (25%)

Evaluation*:	Class Participation	10%
	Quizzes (5)	15%
	Term Paper	25%
	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.

- “Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.”

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