

## POSC 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Fall 2011

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Office Hrs: T/R: 9:30-11:30am  
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 the prevalent Western ethnocentric views of the Middle East, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, pre- and post-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan, religious fundamentalisms, politics of oil, U.S. foreign policy, and the ongoing Arab uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and so on. Throughout, we will attempt rationally to separate myth from reality, and will end with a consideration of the prospects for peace, democracy, prosperity and social justice in the region. The course is organized around significant regional themes coupled with a detailed look at several key countries that best demonstrate these themes. The course also 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**; Lando: **Web of Deceit**; Zogby: **Arab Voices**; Christison: **Palestine in Pieces**; Turse: **Case For Withdrawal From Afghanistan**

### Requirements:

- a. **Class Participation (CP):** (10%)
  - 1) I strongly value informed & active student participation in class. It WILL make a difference in a student's final course evaluation even beyond the 10% weight assigned to it here.
  - 2) Students should keep up with the assigned course readings and bring them to relevant classes. I also encourage students to pay regular attention to the news of the region as it frequently informs our class discussions.
- b. **Two Quizzes:** (5% each)

Quizzes are announced and are given at the beginning of a class period. Make-ups are given only for missed quizzes due to excused absences.
- c. **Research Paper:** (20%)

*Due Date: Nov. 21. Also on 7 Nov.* Students are required to hand in a typed page indicating their Paper's 1) topic, 2) significant question/claim/thesis, 3) why the latter matters, and 4) the list of research sources **already** consulted. The Paper should be between 8-10 typed pages (not including the Bibliography, the Endnotes and the Title pages).
- d. **A Mid-Term (20%) & a Final Exam:** (20%)
- e. **Mini-Think Papers:** (10% each)

Write two 3-page critical commentaries on films, entire or parts of assigned readings, class discussions of interest, etc. The first is due by 3 Oct. and the 2<sup>nd</sup> by 31 Oct.

### Evaluation\*:

Class Participation	10%
Quizzes (2)	10%
Mini-Think Papers	20%
Term Paper	20%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

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

- "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."
- **Attendance Policy:** Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly. Absence due to illness requires written confirmation from a healthcare provider. Any other absence requires satisfactory explanation otherwise it will be marked and incorporated into the course grade determination.
- **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.