

POSC 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Fall 2012

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Office Hrs: M/W/F: 10-11:30
OR by appointment

The students will learn to examine critically a number of issues and themes pertaining to the Middle East. We will begin by examining the prevalent Western perceptions of the Middle East. We will then deal with various topics including but not limited to Islam and the Western world, the US/Iran/Turkey/Saudi Arabia/Israel relations, politics in contemporary Iran, the Palestinian problem, the so-called War on Terror, and the political upheavals in the region since the start of the Arab Spring with a particular attention to the case of Libya. We will no doubt encounter other issues, countries and themes that make up the complex tapestry of politics in the region, such as politics in modern Iraq, religious fundamentalisms, resource politics. Throughout, my emphasis will be on separating myth from reality. We will end with a consideration of the prospects for peace, democracy, prosperity and social justice in the region. The course also relies heavily on a number of critical documentaries and films that deal with critical themes encountered in class readings and discussions. Some of these deal with the more controversial aspects of life and politics in the region that are often shunned by the mainstream U.S. media.

Required Books:

Feffer: **Crusade 2.0**; Kinzer: **Reset**; Peled: **The General's Son**; Kurzman: **The Missing Martyrs**; Prashad: **Arab Spring, Libyan Winter**

Requirements:

- (1) **Class Participation (CP):** (10%) It refers to regular attendance plus informed participation based on completing assigned readings (40-70 pages/week);
- (2) **Takeaways:** (20%) At the beginning of each class period please hand in a summary of key lessons (not to exceed 2 pages) from assigned class readings for that class. There will be a total of 10 takeaways, each worth maximum of 2 points. Please bring 2 copies to each class.
- (3) **Research Paper:** (20%): Due Date: Nov. 19 **Also** on Oct. 29 you must hand in a typed page indicating your 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).
- (4) **A Mid-Term** (20%) **& a Final Exam:** (20%): Dates: the Mid: Oct. 1; the Final: Dec. 10
- (5) **Book Review:** (10%): Write a 3-4 (typed) page reflective essay on *The General's Son* due the Monday after we finish reading it.

Evaluation *	Class Participation	10%
	Takeaways (10)	20%
	Book reflection paper	10%
	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 Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center."
- **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.

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