

## POSC 245 PM: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST/Spring 2012

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Office Hrs: M/W: 10-Noon  
OR by appointment

In this course, we will examine a number of issues/themes pertaining to politics of the Middle East. To begin, we will enquire about (and question) the ways in which *we* think about the Middle East. We do this to avoid the common misrepresentations that have prevented many from gaining a humane understanding of this region, its people, and its politics. 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 “War on Terror,” and the political upheavals in the region since the start of the Arab uprisings. 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 Iraq and Afghanistan, religious fundamentalisms and resource politics. Throughout, my emphasis will be on separating myth from reality and considering the prospects for peace, democracy, prosperity and social justice in the region. I also will rely on a number of critical documentaries and films to introduce marginalized (i.e., in the mainstream U.S. political culture) but important perspectives about crucial issues.

**Required Books:** Feffer: *Crusade 2.0*; Kinzer: *Reset*; Peled: *The General’s Son*; Gelvin: *The Arab Uprisings*

### 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:** (30%) I will collect these at *the beginning* of each period. Three criteria apply to writing (and grading) Takeaways: 1) Length: write 300 to 400 words; 2) Separate Commentaries for each Chapter: that is, don’t write one comment for all the readings combined; and 3) Takeaways: avoid mere summaries. Instead discuss what you have taken away from each reading section in your own words. This may include discussing key lessons learned, and/or making critical comments about the author’s argument(s), reasoning, tone, emphasis, examples, blind spots, strengths and weaknesses, ambiguities, biases, etc., and/or a number of questions generated by the readings in your mind that you may or may not choose to pursue further but should explain why they are important to ask. There are a total of 10 takeaways, each worth a maximum of 3 points. Please bring two copies to the class..
- (3) **Research Paper:** (20%): Due Date: April. 8 Also on March. 25 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 7-9 typed pages (not including the Bibliography, the Endnotes and the Title pages).
- (4) **A Mid-Term (20%) & a Final Exam:** (20%): Dates: the Mid: Feb. 18; the Final: April. 29

<b>Evaluation *</b>	Class Participation	10%
	Takeaways (10)	30%
	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.

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