

POSC 245: POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Fall 2013

Instructor: Faramarz Farbod Room: Zinzendorf 102 Office Hrs.: M:10–11:30 am
(O) 610-861-1570 email: mefnf01@moravian.edu W: 9–10:30 am

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 with a special focus on Egypt. 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, Afghanistan, Libya and Tunisia, 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. The course will rely on a number of critical documentaries/films to introduce critical perspectives about important issues that are often sidelined or marginalized in the mainstream discourse in the U.S.

Required Readings: (1) *Kumar: Islamophobia* (2) *Kinzer: Reset* (3) *Peled: The General's Son* (4) *Gelvin: The Arab Uprisings*

Grades*:	Participation/Preparation	15%
	Exams (2)	40%
	Research Paper/Presentation	25%
	Quizzes (4)	20%

Notes & Explanations:

- **In-Class Participation:** Refers to regular attendance plus informed participation in both the *Weekly Takeaway Circles* and the more general class discussions. On the *Weekly Takeaway Circles*: At the beginning of the semester you will be organized into groups of 4 to 5 students. Each group meets once a week in class for about 15 minutes to discuss the assigned readings. We do this before class discussions/lectures begin. Plan to come to the Circle with the assigned reading materials AND your takeaways from the readings. *Takeaways* are made up of two items: (1) *significant understandings* gained from the readings and (2) *questions* raised by reading the texts or about the texts to include difficulties encountered in understanding the materials.
- **Research Paper:** (20%) Due On: Nov. 18 (POSC 245Z)/Nov. 21 (POSC 245A). Late papers will be penalized by a grade. You must hand in a typed single-page Synopsis on Nov. 4 (POSC 245Z)/Nov. 7 (POSC 245A) indicating your paper's 1) topic, 2) significant question, 3) why the latter matters, and 4) the list of research sources you've *already* consulted. The Paper should be between 7-9 typed pages (not including the Bibliography, the Endnotes and the Title pages). **Presentations:** (5%) You are required to present your research in class on the above due dates. If you hand your Research Paper late you lose the opportunity to present it in class. No make-ups are allowed. Keep your presentation to less than 5 minutes. Use the Synopsis Page format

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

with the addition of a segment on “findings/discussions” concerning your paper’s significant question. And, of course, present your updated research sources during the presentation.

- **EXAMS: *Mid-term Exam*** (20%) On Oct. 7 (POSC 245Z)/Oct. 8 (POSC 245A); ***Final Exam*** (20%) On Dec. 9 (POSC 245Z)/to be announced for POSC 245A. The Final Exam is cumulative.
 - **Quizzes:** There are 4 quizzes, each covering a single book and given at the beginning of a class period.
 - **Class Readings** will be assigned on a class-by-class basis. If you miss a class, consult a classmate to find out about assigned readings.
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- “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:** Please arrive on time to every class. Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly. Absence due to illness requires written confirmation from a healthcare provider. Any other absence requires a 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.
 - **E-Devices:** All electronic devices should be turned *off* before class.
 - **Writing Center Wonders:** I strongly advise the use of the Writing Center’s services. You WILL improve your writing ability AND improve your grade by at least a full grade.