Syllabus/Course Outline
Middle East/North Africa Regional Studies
Fall 2015
(INST 3363)
(Subject to change/revisions)

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(Or By Appointment)

Course Description

For many years, the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region has been prominent in the U.S. and international media. Coverage has spotlighted the region periodically over the decades, and peaked once again after the destruction of the Twin Towers; then came the war in Afghanistan, the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and a small number of coalition partners, ostensibly to rid the country of weapons of mass destruction. Since 9/11, Americans have been deeply concerned about new attacks by al-Qaeda. And in 2010-2011 came the potential sweeping reform of the “Arab Spring,” followed by the Syria Civil War, the advent of ISIS, and many other events.

This course aims to introduce you to the history, religion, and culture of the MENA region by giving you a broad regional overview and then zooming in on several key countries. It will provide a detailed historical analysis underscoring the social, religious, economic and political influences which shape the formation and consolidation of governance in modern Middle Eastern states. We will explore the political economy of the region, Islamic politics, state-society relations, and other topics as explanatory variables. With a history of authoritarianism, will current efforts lead the way to democratization?

Students With Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to speak with me as early as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will also need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-3162 or 6953. Additionally, you will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center; a professor is unable to unilaterally grant ADA consideration to students.
READING

There will be three required books:


Other required and suggested course readings are posted on Blackboard.

Current Events Reading: In addition to course readings, students will be expected to keep up with Middle East & North Africa issues during the term. Students can select any daily/weekly source of news and analysis on international issues and events, e.g., NYT, Washington Post, Time or Newsweek, U.S. News, Foreign Policy, etc. The key will be to keep up with it on a daily/weekly basis. See list of source media, attached.

Other readings: Periodically, additional required reading will be xeroxed and handed out along the way, and/or posted on Blackboard.

EXAMS and PAPERS and GRADES

Exams: 3 – Quiz re Reading; Mid-Term; and Final

Papers: One Term Paper, details to follow.

Grades: 10% - Class participation  
10% - Quiz  
20% - Mid-Term  
30% - Term Paper  
30% - Final Exam

NOTE: There may be one or more unannounced “pop quizzes” based on both the course readings and current Middle East policy events in the media. These will count for a total of 10% of the grade, and Term Paper and Final Exam percentages will be adjusted accordingly.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

NOTE: GRADUATE STUDENTS NEED TO CONSULT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS. The quality of work from graduate students should be, by definition, superior in most instances to undergraduate work. Graduate students:

• are always welcome to meet with me to discuss the course material at greater length.
• should exhibit a greater ability to summarize and synthesize information.
• are expected to read all articles posted on Blackboard.
• are expected to contribute to class discussion on a regular basis.

On examinations, graduate students will also be held to a higher standard with regard to the precision of answers. In other words, partial credit will be limited.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a representation of another person's work as your own (for example, directly quoting from another source without using quotation marks). See the University of St. Thomas' Regulation on “Scholastic Dishonesty” for discussion and range of available penalties. Plagiarism will be punished to the maximum extent possible. If a student is found to have committed an act of scholastic dishonesty, I will recommend the most severe penalty.

**The Course**

The course will have several segments (I-IV below). *DATES ARE NOTIONAL:*

I. **Introduction to the Middle East/North Africa**

A. **(8/25)** Introductions/Framework/Housekeeping/Responsibilities

B. **(8/27)** Islamic Art as Background – We will view the video “Islamic Art: Mirror of the Invisible World,” PBS Documentary, Unity Productions Foundation (2011)

B. **(9/1 & 9/3)** Introduction to MENA History & Civilization/Rise & Expansion of Islam

   **Required Reading:**


C. **(9/8 & 9/10)** The Fundamentals & Development of Islamic Civilization/ the Umayyad & Abbasid Empires

   **Required Reading:**

II. Background & History: The Evolution of Politics, Society & Religion in the Age of Empires

A. (9/15 & 9/17) The Ottoman & Safavid Empires

Required Reading:


B. (9/22 & 9/24) An Era of Transformation in the Changing Middle East World / Rise of Egypt

Required Reading:

C. (9/29 & 10/1) Western Encroachment & the Arab Response

Required Reading:


Quiz (Tentative) (10/1 ?)

D. (10/6 & 10/8) European Imperialism & Early Arab Nationalism

Required Reading:


We Will View & Discuss the Movie “Lawrence of Arabia” (10/13, 10/15 & 10/20)
E. (10/22) Colonialism & the Push to Arab Nation-States

Required Reading:


F. (10/27) Post-World War II, Self-Determination & the Era of the Nationalists

Required Reading:

Mid-Term Exam (Tentative) (10/29)

III. Aspects of the Modern Middle East & North Africa

A. (11/3) Religion, Cultural & Social Values

Required Readings:


B. (11/5) Politics & Political Elites

Required Reading:

C. (11/10) Contemporary Economics & Petroleum

Required Reading:

IV. The Current State of the Middle East - Powerful Players and Powerful Currents

A. (11/12) Pattern of Continuity & Change/ The Arab Spring

**Required Reading:**


B. (11/17) Turkey, a Potentially Pivotal State & Model?

**Required Reading:**
“The Historical Lens” thru “New Openings to the Muslim World,” Chapters 1 – 5 in *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Graham Fuller, U.S. Institute for Peace (2008), pgs 13-47. (Blackboard)

“The Reemergence of Turkish Islam” and “JDP Policies toward the Muslim World,” Chapters 6 & 7 in *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Graham Fuller, U.S. Institute for Peace (2008), pgs 49-80. (Blackboard)

C. (11/19) Iran & Its Influence

**Required Reading:**

D. (11/24) Egypt & the New Pharaohs (tentative)

**Required Reading:**
(to be determined)

E. (12/1) The Arab-Israeli Dispute (tentative)

**Required Reading:**

Indyk, Martin, “Trusteeship for Palestine?” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2003 (Blackboard)

V. Review / Valedictory (12/3)

A. Final Exam
Middle East News Sources

*Al-Bab.com* (background info on MENA region): www.al-bab.com/
*Al-Jazeera News* www.aljazeera.com
*An-Nahar Net (Lebanon)* http://www.naharnet.com
*Al-Ahram (Egypt)* english.ahram.org.eg
*BBC Online* Middle East coverage: www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/middle_east/
*The Economist* www.economist.com
*Haaretz* www.haaretz.com
*Jerusalem Post* www.jpost.com/
*The Independent* Middle East coverage: http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/
*Middle East International*, online edition: http://meionline.com/front.html
*Middle East Report:* www.merip.org/mer/middle_east_report.html
*Washington Post* www.washingtonpost.com