Syllabus/Course Outline
Middle East/North Africa Seminar
Spring 2018
(INST 4374/MLINS 6374)

(Subject to change/revisions)

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(Or By Appointment)

Course Description

Never before has the Middle East and North Africa been as important and central to a wide range of U.S economic, political, social, and security interests. This course aims to engage the class in a seminar-style discussion each week on the current “hot” issues confronting the U.S. For the core of the course, we will address about four main topics:

- The Iran nuclear issue
- The Arab-Israeli dispute and current turmoil/challenges/opportunities
- The Arab Spring & its current manifestations/permutations
- Evolving Saudi Arabia & Regional Pretensions

In addition, it seems as if events break forth with lightning speed these days. So the issues may change suddenly and drastically, and the course will evolve/adjust through the semester as events unfold and become the center of media attention. I am also open to detours to discuss and mull over issues/topics/interests which you all as students might wish to raise.

Class Participation

As a seminar, we will all enjoy the course to the fullest if everyone participates in class discussions. I would like to have an informal setting, with each person chiming in each class as a full participant in a roundtable format. This will work best if everyone does the reading before the class for which it is assigned and is able to fully engage in the discussion in class. Attendance will also be calculated as part of the course grade. Please come to class regularly and be on time.

Students With Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations for this class is requested to speak with me as early as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Additionally, students will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.
READING

Reading materials will be adjusted over the semester as current events warrant. Thus far there will be three required books:


Other required course readings will be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class. Independent, supplemental Reading by students amongst the many resources for Middle East information is encouraged.

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: 2 - Mid-Term & Final

Papers: One Video Project, details to follow.

Grades: 20% - Class participation
20% - Mid-Term
30% - Video Project
30% - Final Exam

NOTE: There may be one or more unannounced “pop quizzes” based on both the course readings and current foreign 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.

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 four core segments. *These may switch around depending on whether new events needing our close attention unfold in one or another of the topics.* Almost certainly, the readings listed below will change with events and updating by me; new readings will usually be handed out in class, and posted on Blackboard as well:

I. The Iran, Nuclear & Regional Pretensions

Required Reading:

“Guide: How Iran is Ruled,” BBC, June 9, 2009 [BLACKBOARD]


II. The Arab-Israeli Dispute

Required Reading & Viewing:


Learning Each Others’ Historical Narrative: Palestinians & Israelis, Bar-On, Dan & Adwan, Sami, Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (March 2003) [BLACKBOARD]


We will also view the movie “Exodus,” and a PBS documentary on the 1967 Six-Day War.

III. The Arab Spring – Seven Years After

Required Reading:


Jones, Seth & Berman, Sheri. Martin, Arab Spring: Two Views (two articles), Foreign Affairs, Jan./Feb. 2013 [BLACKBOARD]


“The Arab Winter,” The Economist, January 9, 2016 [BLACKBOARD]


IV. Saudi Arabia, Modernization, Regional Pretensions
Required Reading/Viewing:

“A Chronology: The House of Saud, PBS.org, 2016 [BLACKBOARD]

“House of Saud: The Story of a Troubled Alliance” PBS Frontline, Feb 8, 2005 [BLACKBOARD]


Stoffel, Derek, “Saudi Arabia’s Young Crown Prince Moves Boldly to Secure His Grip on Power, Analysis, CBC, November 6, 2017 [BLACKBOARD]


V. Review / Valedictory

A. Final Exam

Middle East News Sources

Arabic News.com (Arab world news portal): www.arabicnews.com
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 Report: www.merip.org/mer/middle_east_report.html
Washington Post www.washingtonpost.com