Nowell Syllabus, Middle East POS 367, Fall 2016 This version 9/13/16, p. 1

Prof. Gregory P. Nowell
284 Richardson Hall
135 Western Ave - SUNY
Albany NY 12222
518 442 5267
greg.nowell@hotmail.com

POS 367 Politics of the Middle East (call no. 8567)
RPOS 367 Politics-Middle East
TTH 11:45 AM-01:05 PM HU0133 Uptown office hrs 1:15 to 2:15 Tuesdays and
Thursdays
Book orders have been placed exclusively at Mary Jane Books, Quail & Western
Midterm Exam: October 27
Optional “parachute paper” due December 6th
Final Exam date: Monday Dec 19th 1 to 3 p.m.

Course Books: Have been ordered exclusively at Mary Jane Books, at the corner of
Quail and Western. Generally this will be your least expensive alternative. You may
also order books via Internet, and prices vary considerably by vendor. Used books can
be had at http://www.abebooks.com and other sources. A certain number of articles will
be on the class web site and/or JSTOR.

The academic objective of this course is to explore the political and social organization of
the Middle East with an aim to understanding the material underpinnings of seemingly
“irrational” tendencies. The main focus is on Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Authors to buy:

Press, ISBN 0231103514

9780521528917.


Hahn, Peter (2012). Missions Accomplished? The United States and Iraq since World War I. NY: Oxford


Course grading. The course grade will be based on a midterm (nominally 40% of the
grade each) and one final (nominally 60% of the grade plus adjustments due to
attendance and subjective appreciation of such factors as class participation and pop quiz results. The exams are required, that is, you can’t not take an exam and get a passing grade.

The course includes a map quiz. You MUST PASS the map quiz. You can take it several times, but you MUST PASS. Not taking the quiz or putting it off past October is a FAIL in the course.

Parachute Paper. Students who are unhappy with the results of the midterm may write a short “parachute paper” of about 3 to 5 pages near the end of the semester. If the grade of the parachute paper is higher than the midterm, that grade will be substituted for the midterm grade. (1) There is no guarantee that the paper will lead to a higher grade. (2) Students who punt the midterm are not eligible to write a parachute paper. Papers must follow prof’s required format regarding use of citations and bibliography. (3) The parachute paper is optional. If the paper is not turned in class on the due date (December 6th, and uploaded to Safe Assign on or before that date) it means that the student has exercised the option NOT to write the paper. Therefore, there is no such thing as a late parachute paper.

The main on-line source of information will be the BLACKBOARD for this course AND ALSO such materials as are distributed from the prof’s account on docs.google.com.

The purpose of this class is to make students conversant in four aspects of the contemporary Middle East: 1. A general overview 2. Saudi Arabia 3. Iran and 4. Iraq. Additional educational goals include 5. Islamic finance and 6. Other economic aspects of the region including oil.

The principal tools will be: a variety of assigned texts. Certain non-Middle East materials are assigned to show how comparative politics methodologies inform strategic thinking and political analysis.

The principal evaluation metric will be the required in class midterm and final exams, an optional make-up paper, pop quizzes; participation and attendance.

A student who successfully completes this course will understand basic aspects underpinning key past and present conflicts in the Middle East including: imperial rivalries, conflicting systems of property rights, economic dislocations, cultural and religious antagonisms.

Students who require special accommodations for disabilities must signal their needs at the beginning of the semester, per university policy.

****************************************************************
Week-by-week schedule

**Week 1** – Tuesday 30 August, Thursday 1 September. Class Introduction and Organization. General Overview of issues in the Middle East.


**Week 2**  Tuesday 6 September, Thursday 8 September, General Overview: the U.S. as a Middle Eastern country

**FILM:** PBS Front line “Saudi Arabia Uncovered,”

**Week 3**

Tuesday 13 September.
Thursday 15 September,

General Overview: Oil and the Middle East

Aug. 24, 2015 7:42 p.m. “Oil’s Drop Puts Spotlight on Saudi Arabia,”


**Week 4 Saudi Arabia**

Tuesday 20 September
Thursday 22 September

Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

**Week 5 Saudi Arabia**

Tuesday 27 September
Thursday 29 September  NO CLASS

Tues Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

**Week 6 Saudi Arabia**

Tuesday 4 October NO CLASS
Thursday 6 October,

Chaudhry, 43-136, 139-192

**Week 7 Saudi Arabia,**

Tuesday 11 October
Thursday 13 October NO CLASS

Chaudhry, 193-307

**Week 8**
Tuesday 18 October
Thursday 20 October:
Tuesday: In class question period for exam

=> **Thursday 27 October: MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 9 Iraq.** Iraq (British and U.S. invasions of).

Tuesday 25 October
Thursday 27 October
Hahn, pp. 7-66.
Vinogradov (1972)
http://tinyurl.com/vinogradov-1920-revolt-in-Iraq

**Week 10**
Tuesday 1 November,
Thursday 3 November

Ferguson “No end in Sight.” On Iraq.

Hahn, pp. 113-197.

Anderson, New Yorker, “Inside the surge.”
http://tinyurl.com/anderson-inside-the-surge

U.S. military analogies:

Willis, After the Blitzkrieg
http://tinyurl.com/willis-after-the-blitzkrieg

Siegrist, Apache Insurgency
http://tinyurl.com/siegrist-apache-insurgency

**Week 11 Iran**

Tuesday 8 November
Thursday 10 November

Afary 17-59; 63-115
Abrahamian, pp. 34-62

**Week 12 Iran**
Tuesday 15 November
Thursday 17 November,

Afary, 258-342
Abrahamian, pp. 63-96

Shuster, *Strangling of Persia*
chapters X, XI, 247-318 (available on google books and archive.org; also hard copies)

**Week 13 Iran**
Tuesday 22 November  Tuesday: catch up session, discussion
Thursday 24 November NO CLASS

Week 14 Iran

Tuesday 29 November,
Thursday 1 December

Abrahamian, pp. 97 to end

Week 15 Property Rights

Tuesday 6 December
Thursday 8 December  Last day of class, final exam, etc.

6 December: Due date for optional “parachute paper” HARD COPY REQUIRED. SAFE-ASSIGN REQUIRED.

http://tinyurl.com/baer-Waqf-as-a-prop-for-social


COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR POS 367

THIS IS NOT A BUY LIST


LIST OF ADDITIONAL BOOKS. This is not a “to buy” list. Just here for those that are interested in more books on the Middle East, a bunch of stuff I’ve liked.


*******