Prof. Gregory P. Nowell
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POS 367 Politics of the Middle East (call no. 9218)

Tu-Th 2:45 to 4:05 Room LC 25
Uptown office hrs Tuesday 12:30 to 2; downtown Fri 3-5 p.m
Book orders have been placed exclusively at Mary Jane Books, Quail & Western
Midterm Exam: Thursday 25 October
Optional “parachute paper” due 29 November
Final Exam date: Tuesday 18 December 10:30 to 12:30.

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 www.abebooks.com and other sources. Some packet materials will also be
available there. 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:

isbn 0231103514


978-0470748619.

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.
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 (Nov. 29) 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.

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Week-by-week schedule


Davis, pp. 9-56.

Week 2 Tuesday 4 September, Thursday 6 September General Overview.
Tues pp. 57-108  
Thurs pp. 109-160

Week 3 Tuesday 11 September, Thursday 13 September: Iran.

Tues pp. 161-258  
Thurs pp. 258-end

Week 4 Saudi Arabia

Tuesday 18 September: No Class.  
Thursday 20 September

Thurs Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

Week 5 Saudi Arabia Tuesday 25 September:  
No class Thursday 27 September

Tues Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

**Week 6** Saudi Arabia, Tuesday 2 October, Thursday 4 October:  

Chaudhry, 43-136, 139-192

Week 7 Saudi Arabia, Tuesday 9 October, Thursday 11 October:  

Chaudhry, 193-307

Week 8 Iraq (British and U.S. invasions of).

Vinogradov (1972)


Ferguson: *No End in Sight* (movie, shown in class)

(You can also watch it on NETFLIX but may need to join)

Week 9 Iraq. Tuesday 16 October, Thursday 18 October:

Anderson, New Yorker, “Inside the surge.”  
[http://tinyurl.com/anderson-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 10 Tuesday 23 October, Thursday 25 October,

Tuesday: In class question period for exam

=>THURSDAY: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 11 Iran Tuesday 30 October, Thursday 1 November:

Afary 17-59; 63-115

Week 12 Iran Tuesday 6 November, Thursday 8 November

Afary, 258-342  
Shuster, Strangling of Persia  
chapters X, XI, 247-318 (available on google books; also hard copies)

Week 13 Iran Tuesday 13 November, Thursday 15 November


Week 14 Tuesday 20 November, Thursday 22 November Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday: catch up session, discussion

Week 15 Property Rights in the Middle East
Tuesday, 27 November, Thursday 29 November

29 November: Due date for optional “parachute paper” HARD COPY REQUIRED


Week 16 Tuesday 4 December Thursday 6 December

Kettell – first 2/3 of book

Week 17 Tuesday 11 December Last day of class
Kettell – (conclusion) and discussion of exam, which is scheduled for Tuesday 18 December 10:30 to 12:30 but the date is subject to change—not by me, but by the administration.
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.


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