POS 367 Politics of the Middle East (call no. 9303)

MWF 12:35 to 1:30 HU 132
Office hours Monday, Wednesday, Humanities B016 (Contact Office) 1:35-2:20
Book orders have been placed exclusively at Mary Jane Books, Quail & Western
Midterm Exam: Wednesday 28 October
Optional “parachute paper” due Wednesday 4 December
Final Exam date: Friday Dec. 11th 10:30am – 12:30pm.

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:


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.

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 (xxx) 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

Week 1 – Wednesday 26 August, Friday 28 August. Class Introduction and Organization. General Overview of issues in the Middle East.


Week 2  Monday 31 August, Wednesday 2 September, Friday 4 September
General Overview: the U.S. as a Middle Eastern country

FILM: Ferguson “No end in Sight.” On Iraq.

Week 3  NO CLASSES on Monday 7 September.
Wednesday 9 September,
Friday 11 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

Monday 14 September  NO CLASS
Wednesday 16 September
Friday 18 September


Dore Gold, pp. 41-184
**Week 5** Saudi Arabia

Monday 21 September:
Wednesday 23 September  NO CLASS
Friday 25 September
Tues Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

**Week 6** Saudi Arabia

Monday 28 September,
Wednesday 30 September,
Friday 2 October

Chaudhry, 43-136, 139-192

**Week 7** Saudi Arabia,
Monday 5 October
Wednesday 7 October,
Friday 9 October

Chaudhry, 193-307

**Week 8** Iraq (British and U.S. invasions of).
Monday 12 October
Wednesday 14 October
Friday 16 October:

Hahn, pp. 7-66.
Vinogradov (1972)


**Week 9** Iraq.

Monday 19 October
Wednesday 21 October
Friday 23 October:

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 10
Monday 26 October,
Wednesday 28 October,
Friday 30 October,

Tuesday: In class question period for exam

=> Wednesday 28 October: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 11 Iran

Monday 2 November
Wednesday 4 November
Friday 6 November:

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

Week 12 Iran
Monday 9 November
Wednesday 11 November,
Friday 13 November

Afary, 258-342
Abrahimian, 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
Monday 16 November
Wenesday 18 November,
Friday 20 November


Abrahamian, pp. 97 to end

**Week 14**
Monday 23 November,
Wednesday 25 November Thanksgiving Break

Monday: catch up session, discussion

**Week 15**
Monday 2 December
Wednesday 4 December
Friday 6 December

Property rights in the Middle East
4 December: Due date for optional “parachute paper” HARD COPY REQUIRED


Week 16 Tuesday  9 December  Last day of class conclusion and discussion of exam. Final Exam week runs Thursday 11 December through Thursday 18 December. **Our exam is Friday Dec. 11th 10:30am – 12:30pm.**
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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Corrected map 9/09/15