POS 367 Politics of the Middle East

Tu-Th 10:15 to 11:35 Room LC 3B
Uptown office hrs Tuesday 2:40-4:00; downtown 3-5 p.m

Midterm Exam March 15th Tuesday
Optional “parachute paper” due 28 April no late papers

Final Exam date: Thursday May 12th 1-3 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 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 course will present some materials on the Arab-Israeli conflict and then move on to Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

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 quiz results. The exams are required. 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. There is no guarantee that the paper will lead to a higher grade. 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.

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. The Arab-Israeli conflict 2. Saudi Arabia 3. Iran and 4. Iraq. Additional 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.

The principal evaluation metric will be a required in class exam, 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.

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Week-by-week schedule


Shuster, Strangling of Persia  
Chapter II, 35-49; VI, VII, VIII, 157-230; X, XI, 247-318

This book is available through Google books and printed copies. The google version seems better able to reproduce the photos which did not upload well in the professor’s google docs version.

…so try to get the google books version because the photos are priceless!

http://tinyurl.com/strangling-of-persia

There are many empty pages at the beginning of this link so scroll down a bit, please. And give google docs a few minutes to do its thing to open the file.

Week 2  Tuesday 25 January, Thursday 27 January  Iran.

Shuster, Strangling of Persia  
Chapter II, 35-49; VI, VII, VIII, 157-230; X, XI, 247-318

http://tinyurl.com/strangling-of-persia

This book is available through Google books and hard copies may be ordered on line.
Week 3 Tuesday 1 February, Thursday 3 February


=>These three articles are on JSTOR. Go to http://library.albany.edu and find the small tab in DATABASES that says JSTOR. Log on and search for the articles.

Week 4 Tuesday 8 February, Thursday 10 February

Arabian Peninsula: Quick Survey of the Arab-Israeli conflict

Bard, Middle East Conflict pp. 4-227

(hard copy or ebook from Amazon: no linky here)

Week 5 WINTER BREAK 2011 (22 & 24 February: 21 thru 26 Feb off)

Week 6 Tuesday 22 February, Thursday 24 February: Quick Survey of the Arab-Israeli conflict

Bard, Middle East Conflict, pp. 229-413

(hard copy or ebook, no linky)

Week 7 Tuesday 1 March, Thursday 3 March: Saudi Arabia

Vassiliev, 235-320, 321-353

(hard copy only, Mary Jane books, no linky)

Week 8 Tuesday 8 March, Thursday 10 March: Saudi Arabia

Vassiliev, 354-392, 401-451, 474-482

(hard copy only, Mary Jane books, no linky)
Week 9 Tuesday 15 March, Thursday 17 March, Saudi Arabia – da bad guys

Dore Gold, pp. 41-184

(hard copy only, no linky)

Week 10 Tuesday 22 March, Thursday 24 March: Exam

Tuesday: In class question period for exam

=>THURSDAY: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 11 Tuesday 29 March, Thursday 31 March: The U.S. Decision to Invade

Vinogradov (1972)
http://tinyurl.com/vinogradov-1920-revolt-in-Iraq

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

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

Week 12 Tuesday 5 April, Thursday 7 April: Kurdistan


pp. 3-43, 116-143, 173-185, 186-194, 195-218, 268-281

Hard copy only: ordered at Mary Jane books

Week 13 Tuesday 12 April, Thursday 14 April: Invasion et sequelae

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 14 Tuesday, 19 April, Thursday 21 April: Spring Break (18th-25th)

Week 15 Tuesday 26 April, Thursday 28 April
Waqf property rights and Khoury selections on tribalism

Baer (1997)
http://tinyurl.com/baer-Waqf-as-a-prop-for-social

Khoury: Gellner (pp. 109-126); Tibi (pp. 127-152); Beck (pp. 185-225); Kostiner (pp. 226-251) No linky for this stuff.

The Khoury edited volume is hard copy only at Mary Jane Books.

28 April: Due date for optional “parachute paper”

Week 16 Tuesday 3 May Last day of class

Review of final exam
COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR POS 367

Make sure you have/can get/ have access to these titles, Anderson through Vinogradov


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, and it is by no means meant to be exhaustive or authoritative.


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