PS 399-Politics of Middle East

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Description

This course will locate Middle East politics in the main currents of the modern world. It has four parts: 1) The importance of Middle East, 2) the consequences of imperialism for the present day state of affairs, 3) the nature of regional conflicts, and 4) the direction of future change. Each part first explores the central theoretical issues and then attends to the details of Middle East politics.

Grading Criteria

Two Examinations (60%): A mid-term and a final. Each of the two non-cumulative essay exams will worth 30% of your course grade. Each will have six questions. You will answer four. Three questions will be based on class material and three based on the required readings. The six questions will be given to the class one day in advance. On the day of the exam, I will provide you with the four questions you must answer.

Essay (25%): This 5-7 page assignment requires writing an analytical piece challenging one of the myths regarding the Middle East listed below under “Essay Directions.” I am available to discuss your choices during office hours. (Not by email). Additional information are available at the end of this syllabus.

Geography Quizzes (15%): Two geography quizzes will have ten questions each. These questions will be based on maps and geographic information in lectures, chapters in Held and Thomas, and the information on Blackboard. Questions will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and identifications.

Grading Thresholds: 97-100 A+, 93-96 A, 90-92% A-, 87-89% B+, 83-86% B, 80-82% B-, 77-79% C+, 73-76% C, 70-72% C-, 60-69% D-, Below 60% F.

I will take into account improvements during the term if at the end you are on the borderline (within two points of the next higher grade).
Deadlines

Week 4: Geography Quiz # 1
Week 6: Mid-term
Week 7: Geography Quiz # 2
Week 9: Essay
Final Exam:

Required Readings

Louis Fawcett, *International Relations of the Middle East*, 2013
Peter Mansfield, *A History of the Middle East*, 2013

Readings marked by an asterisk are on Blackboard.

Books are available at the Duck Store.
I will post study aids and news stories related to our course on Blackboard.

Rules

- Punctuality is required.
- Use of laptops and other electronics is not allowed in class. Students are free to tape record lectures.
- Students are responsible for saving their graded assignments and a copy of their paper.
- There will be no makeup exams or any extension of deadlines without a documented personal medical emergency.
- Extra credit assignments, or "study guides" for exams or the quizzes are not provided.
- Late essays are penalized at the rate of one full letter grade per each late day.
- Students are expected to do the readings the day they are assigned.
- Films shown in class or assigned as home viewing are integral part of the course and should be treated as such.
- I will be happy to provide you with advice to improve your grade during the course of the quarter. However, grades are not subject to negotiation. In absence of a clerical error, your grades are final.

Week by Week

Week 1
Pictures in our heads
  - "Why do they hate us?"
  - Orientalism
  - Importance of evidence and analysis

Fawcett, Introduction
*Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”
*Said, “The Clash of Ignorance”

Class film and discussion: “Reel Bad Arabs”

Week 2
Political Geography
  o Gateway to continents
  o Causes of instability: External and Internal barriers

*People and the Place

Weeks 3-4
Development of Middle East state system
  o Emergence of Arab, Iranian, and Jewish nationalism
  o WWI and European Mandates
  o Case Study: Mandate of Palestine
  o Cold War competition
  o Case Study: Iran

Fawcett, Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 8
*Cottom, “Goodbye to America’s Shah”
*Khalidi, “The Palestinians and 1948” in Rogan and Shlaim
*Pappe, “The 1948 Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine”

Geography Quiz # 1 (Week 4)

Week 4
Politics of Oil
*Khalidi, “Geostrategy and Oil”

Week 5
Iran and the Middle East

*Kahl, “Iran and the Bomb”
*Waltz, “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb”

Weeks 6-7
Israel-Palestine: One Land, two peoples
  o Right of self determination
  o Right of return
  o Laws of occupation
  o Road to peace

Readings:
Fawcett, Chapters 11 &12

*Bar-Tal and Halperin, “Overcoming Psychological Barriers to Peace Making”
*Kanwisher, et.al. “Reigniting Violence”
*Loewenstein, “Setting the Record Straight on Hamas”
*Pape, “It’s the Occupation Stupid”

Tolan, How the War in Gaza Could Have been Avoided
http://www.thenation.com/article/180945/how-war-gaza-could-have-been-avoided

Class films and discussion: “Encounter Point”
Home viewing: “Journey to the Occupied Lands”
Mid-term (Week 6)

Geography Quiz # 2 (Week 7)

Weeks 8
America’s “War on Terror”

Readings:
Fawcett, Chapters 6, 14 & 16
*Jones, “Embracing Crisis in the Gulf”

Essay (March 3, Electronic copy to GTF)

Week 9
Popular uprisings and counter-revolution

Week 10
Future direction of change

Conflict resolution, disarmament, democracy, and peace

Readings:
Fawcett, Chapter 4
*Chomsky, “The one state/two state debate is irrelevant”
**“Climate Change: A New Threat to Middle East Security”

Final:

Essay Directions

Ground rules:

1. The essay must be based on your own research.
2. You can use the course readings alone if you believe they provide sufficient support for your analysis or consult outside sources.
3. Your analysis must be free of value judgments. **Views not supported in scholarly research should not enter into your writing.**
4. The paper should be no less than five and no longer than seven pages in length, double-spaced, 12 font, one-inch margins all around.
5. Sources you use in writing the essay should be listed in bibliography and all references and quotes cited in the text of the paper parenthetically (author, year, pages). No alternative formats (such as use of footnotes or end notes) are accepted as substitute.
6. Direct quotes longer than two sentences must be typed single-spaced and indented.
7. Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the clarity of your presentation, the consistency of your analysis and conclusion, and the range and the depth of sources consulted. (Consult “Essential Resources” below)

Your essay must challenge one of the persisting myths below:

1. Inherent reactionary or violent nature of Islamic movements.
2. Irrationality of Iran’s leaders regarding use of nuclear technology.
3. Uniqueness of the difficulties for a negotiated resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.
4. US and European support for democracy.
5. Moderate nature of regional regimes allied to US.

Essential Resources:

2. William Strunk and E.B. White, The Elements of Style
3. Kate L. Turabian, Student’s Guide to Writing College Papers