

PSCI 4700-001 Contemporary Conflicts in the Middle East
Professor Ayal K. Feinberg
Summer 2017

Class: WH 319

MTWTH 2:00-3:50

Office Hours: Monday 4:00-6:00, Thursday 4:00-5:00

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to equip students with the knowledge, both theoretical and empirical, to understand conflicts that continue to play a major role in the contemporary Middle East and the broader international arena. Course readings and discussions will address foundational concepts such as colonialism, imperialism, orientalism, religious fundamentalism, sectarianism and terrorism that are fundamental to understanding the history of the Middle East as well as its contemporary states. The course will build on these concepts to analyze the antecedents and characteristics of recent and current conflicts including the Iran-Iraq War, the Yemeni Civil War, the Arab-Israeli/Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the Syrian Civil War.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate key concepts that contribute to contemporary Middle Eastern conflicts.
- Describe and explain main conflict events and players in several past and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.
- Pinpoint the location of Middle Eastern countries and their capital cities as well as identify their government structures and their geopolitical alliances.
- Formulate thoughtful, expert positions on political issues at the core of a specific ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

Course Materials

1. Cleveland, W.L. and Bunton, M., 2016. *A history of the modern Middle East*. Westview Press.
2. Melamed, A., 2016. *Inside the Middle East: Making Sense of the Most Dangerous and Complicated Region on Earth*. Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.

All additional readings will be made available to students in advance of their assigned date on BLACKBOARD.

Turnitin.com

You are required to turn in your final draft of your newspaper assignment and event reflection on the Turnitin.com link provided on the class Blackboard page. This must be completed by 11:59 pm on the day each assignment is due. Additionally, a paper copy of

your newspaper assignment and event reflection must be turned in at the beginning of the class day each assignment is due. If you fail to complete either of these tasks for both assignments, **you will not be graded resulting in a 0.**

Grading

Class Attendance: 20%

Map Quizzes: 20%

Reading Quizzes: 20%

Newspaper Assignment: 20%

Event Reflection: 20%

Grading Scale

A: (90-100); B: (80-89); C: (70-79); D: (60-69); F: (59 and Below)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Attendance - 20%

The attendance grade will be made up of two components. First, I will take roll at the beginning of each class. It is essential that you plan on attending all 24 classes scheduled for the course. ***The only excused absences are for University-sponsored events where your attendance is required.*** The roll portion of your attendance score will count for a half of your attendance grade (**10% of your total grade**). This part of your attendance grade will be scored as follows:

- **A (Full 10%) - 20-19 classes attended**
- **B (8%) - 18 classes attended**
- **C (7%) - 17 classes attended**
- **D (6%) - 16 classes attended**
- **F (0%) - 15-0 classes attended**

Second, thoughtful and active participation in class discussions is a vital part of this course. Simply attending class does not in any way guarantee that you are contributing to learning. Your informed participation in class requires having done all readings in advance of the class in which that reading will be discussed. To best prepare for thoughtful contributions to class discussions write down questions or comments you have for the assigned reading, consider connections and build on concepts from past readings, and reflect on how readings might explain contemporary events and conflicts in the Middle East. I reserve the right to call on students at times to help ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute to discussions. There is a **strong correlation** between grades in the roll portion of class attendance and class participation scores. My estimation of your contributions to in-class discussions will count for the other half of your attendance grade (**10% of your total grade**). This part of your attendance grade will be scored as follows:

- **A (Full 10%) - Questions/comments show superior knowledge of the readings**
- **B (8%) - Questions/comments show good knowledge of the readings**
- **C (7%) - Questions/comments show knowledge of the readings**
- **D (6%) - Questions/comments show insufficient knowledge of the readings**
- **F (5%-0%) - Questions/comments show no knowledge of the readings**

***** Important Note - The free exchange of ideas is critical to creating a successful learning environment.** Whatever your views on an issue, you are expected to be open-minded and civil in your exchanges with your classmates and me. I aim to provide a classroom where as many informed positions on a topic can be analyzed and deliberated. Minimally, failure to adhere to these principals will result in a diminished attendance participation grade. I reserve the right to take more serious disciplinary actions when necessary.

Map Quizzes (4) - 20%

You will be responsible for completing four map quizzes; each counts for a quarter of your map quizzes grade (**each quiz is worth 5% of your total grade**). The goal of these map quizzes is for students to be able to identify the locations of contemporary Middle Eastern countries, cities, government types and conflict zones. **No make-ups will be offered to students who are absent when quizzes are assigned.** These map quizzes will occur on the following dates:

- **Countries Quiz - Monday, July 17th, 2017**
- **Capital Cities Quiz - Monday, July 24th, 2017**
- **Governance Quiz - Monday, July 31st, 2017**
- **Conflict Zone Quiz - Monday, August, 7th, 2017**

Reading Quizzes (5) - 20%

All assigned reading for the course must be completed by their due date stated on the syllabus. Built into the design of class materials and planned class discourse is the understanding students have completed assigned reading(s) prior to their due date. To reward students for completing assigned readings on time, I will give five unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class. Each reading quiz will contain 10 straightforward questions of varying types (true/false, multiple choice and fill in the blank). I will drop the lowest quiz score for each student. **No make-ups will be offered to students who are absent when quizzes are assigned.**

Newspaper Assignment - 20%

Our understanding of critical events and issues on the regional or international scale frequently comes from media reporting, specifically newspapers. Often, the media in different countries cover conflict events and issues with notable dissimilarity. Each student will identify a topic being covered in an American newspaper and an English language newspaper published in the Middle East. The purpose of this assignment is for students to identify how media sources in different countries produce narratives on important conflict topics specific to their country's audience.

To get you thinking about your newspaper assignment early, **you are required to turn in a topic selection on July 13th, 2017.** Your topic selection should consist of a 1 page (double spaced) broad summary of your topic, why you are interested in it, and what 2 newspapers you intend on using for the assignment. This portion of your assignment is not optional. I will return your topic selection portion of the newspaper assignment on July

17th, 2017 with my comments and approval to proceed with the essay portion of the assignment.

Grading for the newspaper assignment will be determined by a **4-6 page (double spaced)** analysis of your topic with an emphasis on the differences in how the topic is reported in the American newspaper and the Middle East English language newspaper of your choice. The first portion of your essay should consist of roughly half of your essay's total length. In this section, you should briefly synopsise the content of your newspaper articles, with a focus on how the articles contribute to your understanding of the broader topic. The second portion of your essay should also consist of roughly half your essay's total length. In this section, you should describe the similarities and differences in how your topic is reported, with a focus on variations in style, tone, content and topic narrative. Your essay must include **at least 3 corresponding articles from each newspaper** as the essence of your analysis on reporting differences. You must include these articles as an attachment to your final draft. **Your paper is due on August 3rd, 2017. Late papers will be given a grade of 0.**

Keys to topic selection:

- Don't be too broad (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) or too specific (e.g., U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley's visit to Israel). Instead choose a topic expansive and enduring enough to be covered across time but particular enough to be a component of a larger conflict (e.g., possible U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital).
- Select a topic that is being regularly covered by U.S. media. An easy way to check whether your topic is receiving consistent attention is to utilize LexisNexis Academic, which is available through the UNT Library website.
- Choose a topic you are genuinely interested in.

Keys to newspaper selection:

- If the topic is country-specific, choose an English language newspaper from that country.
- Utilize newspaper website search boxes to review coverage of your topic.
- Visit the website below which has links to English language newspapers by country: <http://www.thebigproject.co.uk/news/Middle%20East%20Newspapers%20in%20English.html#.WTcMecm1sci>

Keys to successful assignment completion:

- Search for your topic in your newspapers of choice every day and save all relevant articles in a file. Choose articles for comparison that cover the same newsworthy event or similar topic component.
- The best essays will be those that highlight nuances of the similarities and dissimilarities in their topics reporting across newspapers and which attempt to successfully explain the cause(s) of these disparities.

Event Reflection - 20%

Although it frequently seems conflicts and political turmoil occur because of the response to a single action (e.g., the self-immolation of Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia leading to the “Arab Spring” or “Arab Awakening”), in reality, these events are almost never explained by single actions alone. Similarly, important conflict management or conflict resolution attempts and successes are too rarely explained by these circumstances as well (e.g., Sadat’s speech at the Knesset leading to a peace accord between Egypt and Israel). Each student will be asked to choose a key event or action that has served to be an important catalyst for change in the Middle East. The purpose of the event reflection is for students to think critically about the antecedents to formative political events as well as how they have and continue to impact the Middle East.

To get you thinking about your event reflection early, **you are required to turn in an event selection on July 20th, 2017**. Your event selection should consist of a 1 page (double spaced) broad summary of your topic, why you are interested in it, and 3 academic sources you have found that you intend on using for the event reflection essay. This portion of your assignment is not optional. I will return your event selection portion of the event reflection on July 24th, 2017 with my comments and approval to proceed with the essay portion of the assignment.

Grading for the event reflection will be determined by a **4-6 page (double spaced)** analysis of your chosen event. Your event reflection essay should be made up of three components. First, students should identify their event, those involved in the event (both directly and indirectly) and why it was critical in altering the modern Middle East. This portion of the essay should not exceed more than 1 page. The second part of your essay should identify the important precursors that led to the event. You should explain how these antecedents resulted in your event occurrence. This portion of the essay should not exceed 2 pages. The third and final part of your essay should identify how your event has affected and will continue to alter the modern Middle East. This portion of the essay should not exceed 3 pages. Your essay must include **at least 5 scholarly articles**, which must be **cited using Harvard citation** in a reference page attached to the article. **Your paper is due on August 9th, 2017. Late papers will be given a grade of 0.**

Keys to event selection:

- Don’t be too broad (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian conflict)
- Choose a specific event (e.g., the signing of the Oslo Accords).
- Events should be a specific behavior, action or operation and should be longer than a year in length. For example, the Second Intifada is too long for this assignment but the Battle of Jenin is not.
- Choose a topic you are genuinely interested in.

Keys to scholarly article selection:

- Utilize Google Scholar to see the number of academic citations. Use the cited by link to find other relevant articles.
- Search for an e-Journal through the UNT library home page.

- **A tutorial on selecting scholarly articles will be provided in class on July 12th, 2017.**

Keys to successful assignment completion:

- Focus your analysis on what contributed to your event occurrence by describing several specific factors going from broad to specific. Use this same approach regarding how you believe your event has and will contribute to conflicts in the modern Middle East.
- The best essays will highlight your critical thinking and go beyond the obvious.

Extra Credit

All students will be given the opportunity to earn a total of **at least 5 extra credit points added to their final grade**. For example, if a student received an 86% (B) for the course, by taking advantage of and earning all extra credit opportunities, this same student will earn a final grade of a 91% (A). **Student requests for additional extra credit will not ever be satisfied** (so don't bother asking).

Many professors provide a syllabus quiz to ensure their students have read their class syllabus. Instead, I assume my students are mature enough to understand that it is vital to read the syllabus of any class they take. Nonetheless, a fair amount of students continue to email professors and TAs with questions about grading, assignments and class dates that are clearly answered in their syllabus. To avoid this, I will award all students who do not send unnecessary emails containing questions clearly answered in the syllabus with **2 extra credit points added to their final grade**. Of course, I encourage students to ask me any questions not answered in the syllabus.

On our final class day, **August 10th, 2017**, students will have the opportunity to present their newspaper assignment and event reflection. A student presentation should be a brief synopsis of their topic and analysis with a particular focus on any unique or thought-provoking findings. Presentations should not exceed 5 minutes in length. Students may use PowerPoint or other visual aids for their presentations but are not required to do so. I will award **1.5 extra credit points added to a student's final grade** for each satisfactory presentation (**3 extra credit points added to a student's final grade** for the satisfactory presentation of both the newspaper assignment and event reflection).

IMPORTANT DATES

July 10th, 2017 (Monday) -- First day of class
 July 12th, 2017 (Wednesday) -- Research tutorial
 July 13th, 2017 (Thursday) -- Newspaper assignment topic selection due
 July 17th, 2017 (Monday) -- Countries map quiz
 July 20th, 2017 (Thursday) -- Event reflection event selection due
 July 24th, 2017 (Monday)-- Capital cities map quiz
 July 31st, 2017 (Monday) -- Governance map quiz
 August 3rd, 2017 (Thursday) -- Newspaper assignment due

August 7th, 2017 (Monday) -- Conflict zone map quiz
August 9th, 2017 (Wednesday) -- Event reflection due
August 10th, 2017 (Thursday) -- Last day of class & extra credit presentations

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Academic Integrity

You are expected to do your own work for all assignments in this course, and it must be original work for this course. If you plagiarize, resubmit work that you have used previously, or do not properly cite the sources in which you got your material and ideas (thereby creating the impression that the work is your original work), you will receive a 0 for the assignment, receive an "F" for the course, and you will be referred to the appropriate student disciplinary authorities for violation of the University's academic integrity policies. If you are concerned about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult UNT policies on academic dishonesty (<http://www.vpa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>) or ask me in class or via email.

Classroom Etiquette

All students must treat the instructor, the other students, and the classroom setting with respect. This includes arriving on time and staying for the entire class (or notifying the instructor in advance if this will not be possible), turning off cell phones and similar devices during class, and refraining from reading, passing notes, talking with friends, and any other potentially disruptive activities. This also means showing respect for alternative opinions and points of view, listening when either the instructor or a fellow student is speaking to the class, and refraining from insulting language and gestures. Repeated or egregious instances of classroom disruption will result in referral to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. If you are concerned about what constitutes appropriate classroom etiquette, please refer to UNT's Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.unt.edu/csrr>).

Department Statement of ADA Compliance

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

July 10th, 2017 -- Class Introduction, '71

Required Reading: Please read the course syllabus in full.

July 11th, 2017 -- '71, Conflict Discussion, and Middle East Origins Overview

Required Reading: Please read chapter 11 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 184-205.

July 12th, 2017 -- Middle East Origins Overview Continued

Required Reading: Please read chapter 12 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 206-225.

July 13th, 2017 -- Middle East Origins Overview Continued, Lawrence of Arabia

Required Reading: Please read chapter 13 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 226-255.

Assignment/Quiz: Newspaper assignment - topic selection

July 17th, 2017 -- Orientalism Discussion, Lawrence of Arabia Continued

Required Reading: Please read excerpts from the following:

- Said, E.W., 1985. *Orientalism Reconsidered. Race & Class*, 27(2), pp.91-97
- Chapter 1 in Melamed (2016), pp. 1-21

Assignment/Quiz: Map quiz - countries

July 18th, 2017 -- Imperialism vs. Colonialism Discussion, Lawrence of Arabia Continued

Required Reading: Please read chapter 9 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 139-159 and Adas, M., 1998. *Imperialism and colonialism in comparative perspective. The International History Review*, 20(2), pp.371-388.

July 19th, 2017 -- Religious Fundamentalism Discussion,

Required Reading: Please read chapter 4 in Melamed (2016), pp. 44-85 and Leon, N., 2014. *Ethno-religious Fundamentalism and Theo-ethnocratic Politics in Israel. Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 14(1), pp.20-35.

July 20th, 2017 -- Sectarianism and Tribalism

Required Reading: None

Assignment/Quiz: Event reflection - event selection

July 24th, 2017 -- Arab Nationalism

Required Reading: Please read chapter 15 & 16 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 293-306, 307-325.

Assignment/Quiz: Map quiz - capital cities

July 25th, 2017 -- Iran-Iraq War

Required Reading: Please read chapter 18 & 21 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 371-377, 433-446.

July 26th, 2017 -- The U.S. and Iraq

Required Reading: Please read chapter 22 & 25 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 456-473, 524-532.

July 27th, 2017 -- Shia v. Sunni & Iran v. Saudi Arabia

Required Reading: Please read chapter 5 in Melamed (2016), pp. 86-115

July 31st, 2017 -- Arab Spring

Required Reading: Please read excerpts from the following:

- Chapter 26 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 537-556
- Chapter 2 in Melamed (2016), pp. 21-29

Assignment/Quiz: Map quiz - governance

August 1st, 2017 -- Yemeni Civil War

Required Reading: Please read <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29319423>

August 2nd, 2017 -- Syria Civil War

Required Reading: Please read <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

August 3rd, 2017 -- Syria Civil War Continued

Required Reading: Please read chapter 6 in Melamed (2016), pp. 115-160

Assignment/Quiz: Newspaper assignment - essay due

August 7th, 2017 -- Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Required Reading: Please read <https://www.cfr.org/israel/crisis-guide-israeli-palestinian-conflict/p13850>

Assignment/Quiz: Map quiz - conflict zone

August 8th, 2017 -- Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Continued

Required Reading: Please read chapter 23 in Cleveland and Bunton (2016), pp. 474-498

August 9th, 2017 -- The Middle East, Looking Forward

Required Reading: Please read chapter 12 in Melamed (2016), pp. 261-276

Assignment/Quiz: Event reflection - essay due

August 10th, 2017 -- Last Class, Student Presentations

Required Reading: None

Assignment/Quiz: Extra credit presentations