

**PSCI 4210/8216/INST 4140-002**  
**International Relations of the Middle East**  
**Fall 2017**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course focuses on the international politics of the Middle East region, specifically looking at conditions for peace and causes of war. The course is structured in four parts. In Part I, it analyzes the historical evolution of the Middle Eastern regional system from colonialism to the contemporary era and the political context of international affairs in the region. In Part II, it looks at the regional security environment, and the role of the regional powers in Middle East international affairs. In Part III, it covers major regional issues such as Syrian civil war, instability in Iraq, Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Iranian nuclear issue. In Part IV, it examines the US foreign policy toward the Middle East.

This course has the following objectives: (1) To provide the students with an understanding of the historical evolution of international system in the Middle East. (2) To familiarize the students with major international and regional actors influential in the Middle Eastern politics. (3) To familiarize the students with major international issues in the Middle East by providing them a historical and theoretical discussion of these issues. (4) To help students understand the interactions between domestic politics, international relations, and foreign policies by a detailed analysis of the cases from the Middle East.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Required Readings:**

Louise Fawcett (ed.), *International Relations of the Middle East*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Fawaz Gerges, *Obama and the Middle East: The End of America's Moment*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Marc Lynch, *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East* (Public Affairs, 2016).

There will be additional reading assignments throughout the semester. Exams will cover the material in the textbooks, additional reading assignments, and in-class materials including the lectures.

#### **Make-Up Exams and Incompletes**

I will not allow make-ups without an ***official documented excuse*** regarding medical or family emergencies. Please keep in mind that late assignments will be downgraded. An incomplete will only be given in exceptional circumstances (a documented circumstance beyond the student's control). Students will only be given an incomplete if they have been doing passing work during the semester.

#### **Code of Conduct**

All students need to acquaint themselves with what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences thereof. See the general university policies for further information:

<http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/leftcolumn/inside/students/policiesandprocedures/aiundergrad.php>. ***Laptops and other devices with internet connections are not allowed during the classes.***

Although I acknowledge that laptops provide several benefits for learning, I am convinced, based on my experience, that they distract students from the lecture and discussions.

#### **Fairness and Disability Statement**

The instructor of this course is committed to support the learning of all students, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, handicapping condition, or sexual preference. Students should be able to expect that their learning environments are free from any form of prejudice. Students requiring special consideration

must contact and work through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in EAB 117 (554-2872). This office then notifies the instructor in writing of the accommodations the student needs in compliance with 504/ADA.

## **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria.

### **1. Attendance (5 %) and Participation (5 %)**

You are expected to attend all the course sessions. More than three unexcused absences will negatively influence your grade. After three absences, each absence will decrease your attendance grade by 0.5 %. You are also expected to productively contribute to classroom discussions. This contribution can be in the form of participating in informal and formal debates, posing and responding to questions, sharing other resources that can facilitate classroom learning. Class attendance and participation will be worth 10 percent of your final grade.

### **2. Exams (25 % each, 50 % total)**

There will be a midterm and a final exam based on the assigned readings and material covered in the class. Suggestions for exam preparation will be given prior to the tests. The exam dates are **October 24** and **December 12**. You must be in class on the exam dates. Each exam is worth 25 percent of your final grade.

### **3. Critical Review Paper (15 %)**

In this paper, you are required to write a critical review on a book of your choice that is published in 2015 or after, preferably in 2016 or 2017. The book should be about the Middle East, preferably its international affairs. Please confirm your selections with me in advance. This review will be different from typical book reviews. You will come up with a question, and answer it in reviewing the book. Further details about the assignment will be provided later. Your paper will be 3-page-long (double spaced), and you should use citations and quotations properly. The critical review paper is due on **November 21**. This paper will be worth 15 percent of your final grade.

### **4. News Reports (5 %)**

You are encouraged to select your country among Middle Eastern states that receive extensive press coverage such as Turkey, Iran, Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. You are required to make your country selection in the first two weeks of the semester. After making your country selection, familiarize yourself with the local news sources from your country and begin tracking local, European, and American press coverage. Therefore, starting from the third week of the semester, you will be required to read a local, European and American newspaper article on your country every week. The following local news sources in English are available online: *Daily Star* (Lebanon), *Iran Daily* (Iran), *al-Ahram Weekly* (Egypt), *Middle East Times* (Egypt), *Hurriyet Daily* (Turkey), *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), *Haaretz* (Israel), *Al-Jazeera* (entire region), *Gulf News* (UAE), and *Azzaman* (Iraq). For European press, you may consult websites of *BBC*, *Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Economist*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*. For American Press, the best sources are *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

To make sure that you read the news throughout the semester regularly, two news reports will be required. Each news report should include the source, date, title, and 2-3 sentence summary of the news that you will read. The students will also add a one-page analysis in which they will summarize the skills and knowledge that they gained from the news report assignments. They are expected to bridge course readings with the news stories in this report. A template for the news reports will be posted on the course website in advance. The news reports are due on **October 31** and **December 7**. Unless you have a legitimate excuse, you will lose 10 percent of your grade for this assignment for each day your assignment is late. In

the event of a problem, please contact me as soon as you know. Each news report weighs 2.5 percent of your final grade.

### 5. Soliya Connect Program (20 %)

During the semester, you are expected to engage in virtual discussions with students from the Middle East thanks to “the Connect Program” developed by educational organization, Soliya (<https://www.soliya.net/programs/connect-program>). Connect is an online cross-cultural education program that provides students with a unique opportunity to establish a deeper understanding for the perspectives of others around the world on important socio-political issues and to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and media literacy. The Connect Program gives students the opportunity to engage in facilitated and substantive dialogue, and build meaningful relationships across national, cultural, religious, and ideological boundaries. Through a web-conferencing application, students speak face-to-face in groups of 8-10 global peers, with no more than two students from a physical classroom assigned to the same online group so as to ensure a deeply multilateral learning experience. Each group is led by one or two facilitators trained, by us, to sustain dialogue and support an environment where students can comfortably explore perspectives, uncover biases, and arrive at a better understanding of cultures, with the goal of developing the global competence essential to thriving in an interconnected world. This component of the course includes seven online meetings, one project and a reflections paper. Attendance in online meetings weighs 7 % of your final grade, the final project weighs 8 % of your final grade and reflections paper weighs 5 % of your final grade. Final Project Paper and Reflections Paper are due on December 3 for the Soliya program. You can revise and upload to Canvas by **December 5**. More details about this program will be provided throughout the semester.

**Graduate Student Research Paper:** Graduate students will be required to write a 10- page (double-spaced) research paper for the class. The exams for the graduate students will weigh 30 % of their grade while the research paper will weigh 20 % of their grade. The paper is due on December 7.

The entire course is worth 100 points:

A	94-100 points	C	72-76 points
A-	90-93 points	C-	69-71 points
B+	87-89 points	D+	66-68 points
B	83-86 points	D	63-65 points
B-	80-82 points	D-	60-62 points
C+	77-79 points	F	0-59 points

#### *A Summary of Grading Requirements*

<u>Course Requirement</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Attendance	5 %	
Participation	5 %	
Midterm Exam	25 %	October 24
News Report I	2.5 %	October 31
Critical Review	15 %	November 21
Soliya Virtual Discussions	7 %	
Soliya Final Paper	8 %	December 5
Soliya Reflections Paper	5 %	December 5
News Report II	2.5 %	December 7
Final Exam	25 %	December 12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### INTRODUCTION

*August 22: Overview of the Course*

*August 24: The Middle East in Crisis: Statement of the Problem*

Lynch, Chapter 1, "The New Arab Wars," pp. 1-46.

*August 29: Understanding the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 1, "International Relations Theory and the Middle East," pp. 21-38

*August 31: NO CLASS, Watch the Following Film*

NPR Frontline Documentary "Benghazi under Crisis/Yemen Under Siege," broadcasted on May 2, 2016, available at: <http://www.pbs.org/video/frontline-benghazi-crisis-full/>

### HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

*September 5: Formation of the State System*

Fawcett, Chapter 2, "The Emergence of the Middle East into the Modern State System," pp. 39-61

*September 7: The Cold War in the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 3, "The Cold War in the Middle East," pp. 62-78

*September 12: The Post- Cold War Years in the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 4, "The Middle East since the Cold War" pp. 79-103

*September 14: The Security Environment in the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 9, "Alliances and Regionalism in the Middle East," pp. 196-217

Fawcett, Chapter 10, "Middle East Security: Conflict and Securitization of Identities," pp. 218-238

*September 19: Oil and International Relations of the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 5, "Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East," pp. 105-130

Michael Ross, "Will Oil Drown the Arab Spring: Democracy and Resource Curse," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 90 No 5 (September/October 2011), pp. 2-7

*September 21: Islam and International Relations of the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 8, "Islam and International Relations in the Middle East: From Umma to Nation-State," pp. 76-195

Nader Hashemi, "Toward a Political Theory of Sectarianism in the Middle East: The Salience of Authoritarianism over Theology," *Middle East Institute*, October 27, 2015.

*September 26: The Arab Spring and the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 15, "The Arab Spring: The 'People' in International Relations," pp. 324-355

Lynch, Chapter 2, "The Arab Uprising," pp. 47-74.

Lynch, Chapter 3, "Intervention and Militarization," pp. 75-104

**September 28: Middle East Forum (CEC, Room 230): Current Issues in the Middle East**

### REGIONAL POWERS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

*October 3: Foreign Policy Making: An Analytical Perspective*

Fawcett, Chapter 11, "Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East: Complex Realism," pp. 239-258

Gerges, Chapter 5, "The Pivotal States: Egypt, Iran and Turkey," pp. 151-202

*October 5: Saudi Arabia*

Fawcett, Chapter 14, "The International Politics of the Gulf," pp. 304-323

Lynch, Chapter 8, "The Saudi Gambit," pp. 225-240.

*October 10: Egypt*

Yoel Guzansky and Ofir Winter, "Last Alliance Standing: Egypt and Saudi Arabia Strengthen Relations Despite Differences," *Foreign Affairs*, November 24, 2015

*October 12: Turkey*

Ziya Öniş, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest," *Insight Turkey*, Volume 14 No 3 (Summer 2012), pp. 45-63

Auzolas Bagdonas, "Turkey as a Great Power? Back to Reality," *Turkish Studies*, Volume 16 No 3 (2015), pp. 310-331

**October 17: Fall Break**

**October 19: Middle East Forum (CEC, Room 230): Current Issues in the Middle East**

**Soliya Reading Package 1 is due**

**October 24: Midterm Exam**

## **REGIONAL ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

*October 26: Authoritarianism, Democracy, and International Relations in the Middle East*

Lynch, Chapter 5, "Democracy's Chance," pp. 139-164.

Lynch, Chapter 6, "Autocrats on Offense," pp. 165-188.

*October 31: The Syrian Civil War*

Lynch, Chapter 4, "Syria's Uprising," pp. 105-138.

Lynch, Chapter 7, "Syria in Hell," pp. 189-224.

**News Report I Due**

*November 2: The ISIS Question*

Scott Atran, "ISIS is a Revolution," *AEON*, December 15, 2015.

**Soliya Reading Package 2 is due**

*November 7: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1*

Fawcett, Chapter 12, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict," pp. 259-284

*November 9: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 2*

Fawcett, Chapter 13, "The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process," pp. 285-303

Gerges, Chapter 4, "Israeli-Palestinian Peace," pp. 115-150

*November 14: Iranian Nuclear Program*

Mohammad Javad Zarif, "What Iran Really Wants: Iranian Foreign Policy in the Rouhani Era," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 93 No 3 (May/June 2014), pp. 1-11

Mohsen M. Milani, "Iranian Politics after the Deal," *Foreign Affairs*, June 15, 2015  
Mohammed Ayoub, "The Iranian Nuclear Deal: Long-Term Implications for the Middle East,"  
*Insight Turkey*, Volume 17 No 3 (Summer 2015), pp. 45-52

**November 16: Middle East Forum (CEC, Room 230): Current Issues in the Middle East**

**US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST**

*November 21: A Brief History of the US Involvement in the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 16, "The United States in the Middle East," pp. 356-379

Gerges, Introduction: The End of America's Moment," pp. 1-26

Gerges, Chapter 1, "America's Encounter the Middle East: A Bitter Legacy," pp. 27-68

**Critical Review Due**

**November 23: Thanksgiving Holiday**

*November 28: The Bush Era*

Gerges, Chapter 2, "The Bush Doctrine: Social Engineering," pp. 69-88

F. Gregory Gause, III, and Ian S. Lustick, "America and the Regional Powers in a Transforming Middle East," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (Summer 2012), pp. 1-9.

*November 30: The Obama Era*

Gerges, Chapter 3, "The Obama Anti-Doctrinal Doctrine," pp. 89-114

Gerges, Chapter 6, "The War on Terror," pp. 203-231

Elliott Abrams, "Trump the Traditionalist: A Surprisingly Standard Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 96 No 4 (July/August 2017), pp. 10-16

*December 5: The US, Europe and Russia in the Middle East*

Fawcett, Chapter 17, "Europe in the Middle East," pp. 380-398

Angela Stent, "Putin's Power Play in Syria: How to Respond to Russia's Intervention," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 95 No 1, (January/February 2016), pp. 106-113

**Soliya Final Project Paper Due**

**Soliya Final Reflections Paper Due**

**CONCLUSIONS**

*December 7: Conclusions*

Lynch, Chapter 9, "Where Do We Go From Here," pp. 241-254.

**News Report II Due**

**December 12: Final exam (12:00 pm-2:00 pm.)**