INTER 290-03
Issues of Peace and Conflict in the Middle East

Term: Spring 2018
Class time: Monday-Wednesday-Friday: 10 a.m- 10.50 a.m
Location: Maybank Hall, Room 110
Instructor: Ali Demirdas
Office: Education Building Room 206-A
Office Hours: MWF 2pm-3pm or by appointment.
Contact: demirdasa@cofc.edu (E-Mail is the best way to contact with me. Specify the subject line appropriately in your e-mail.)

"The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge."
Thomas Berger
Course Description, Learning Objectives and Outcomes.

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the “cradle of civilization,” is today home to around 330 million people, the world’s fastest growing religion, and great resource wealth. The Middle East is also home to some of the world’s most pressing challenges.

At the state level, Iraq, which until the U.S. occupation was held together by authoritarian rule, appears increasingly unstable and divided along ethnic and religious lines. 250 miles to the west, the Israel-Palestine conflict has left over 4,500 people dead in just the past four years. And Iran, a growing power and a country which the United States sees as the next threat in the region, has done little to hide its intention of developing nuclear weapons.

The course objectives:

- First, it aims to give students a more nuanced and complete understanding of the politics, societies and economies of the MENA.
- Second, it fosters students’ analytical skills, helping them to apply theoretical frameworks to problems in the Middle East.
- Third, it seeks to supply students with the theoretical and empirical evidence necessary to evaluate and make critical, analytical arguments about the Middle East in comparative perspective. It is important to remind you that Martha Nussbaum in Cultivating Humanity (1997)\(^1\) defines critical thinking as “the capacity to reason logically, to test what one reads or says for consistency of reasoning, correctness of fact, and accuracy of judgment.” Critical comparison and judgment depends on more than factual knowledge, however.
- Fourth, it aims to encourage your imagination, "to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story." (Martha Nussbaum)

Grading (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY)

- Participation (10%)
Regular attendance and participation in class is very important and required. You will be graded according to your participation in class discussions. Therefore, it is strongly advised that you come to class well prepared and contribute to the discussion. A sign-in sheet will be given to you at the beginning of every class to keep record of your attendance. Undocumented absences will result in deduction from your final grade. (1 day = 2 points) If need be, please bring a copy of doctor’s report to me for the record.

---

→ Pop Quizzes (10%)

→ Research Paper (20%)
You, as a group of two, will be assigned a country in the Middle East. In a 10-12 page double space paper, write an analytical research paper about important aspects of foreign relations of your country vis-à-vis its neighboring countries as well as the United States and other related major powers.

- In the first part of the paper introduce your country by writing about its location, neighbors, population, demographics, economy, government and so forth.
- In the second part, you will talk about important aspects of your country’s history in 20th century. In this context, pay close attention to the state of your country during and after WWI, the western colonization (your country’s relations with the European powers) as well as, if relevant, with the United States and the Soviet Union (Russia). For example, if your country is Egypt, you will talk about the developments before and after WWI leading to its establishment in 1922. In this context, among other things, you will talk about Egypt’s post-Colonial relations with Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Don’t forget to talk about the Egypt-USA relations.
- In the third section, you will analyze your country’s relations with its neighbors. For example, in the case of Egypt, talk about its relations with Israel, Jordan, Libya and Palestine. This section should include the current state of relations with neighbors.
- The conclusion section will reflect your evaluation of the country with your own words. Tell what you have learned about your country in the research paper and based on that make future projections in regards to its political, social and economic state.
- You will consult with me about your findings before the presentations.

→ Presentations (10%)
In a 15 minute period, you will present the preliminary findings of your research paper.

→ Midterm Exam (20%)
There will be a cumulative mid-term exam.

→ Final Exam (30%)
It will cover all the course materials (lectures, discussions and readings).
Note on the Syllabus Readings

The weekly readings listed below are subject to change based on what the instructor deems relevant new or alternative material. Since the course deals with current affairs issues in regard to which daily, if not hourly, developments are constantly unfolding, occasional topical readings from newspapers or online resources will be included in class sessions.

Academic Integrity—Very IMPORTANT. Please read.

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Final grades will be calculated using the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignment grades (insofar as they use a percentage scale) will also follow this grading scheme. Please, be a responsible student and take charge of your grade. If you want to know your current standing in class, check on the OAKS course site or inquire with me about this.

**Disability Services**

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsibility for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.
Content of the Course

- Introduction and Course Content.
- Introduction to the Middle East: Its Geography.
  - Text book pages 3-11
  - The video on Middle East geography: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatnKvByjRw&list=PLWCiJ3Zfnm1QI7MDTCUGqzyoULPBDrXE5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatnKvByjRw&list=PLWCiJ3Zfnm1QI7MDTCUGqzyoULPBDrXE5)
- Introduction to the Middle East
  - Its Early History: Text book pages 12-22, The Middle East, Old and New by Martin Kramer. The reading is on OAKS.
  - The Birth of Islam, (The First Muslim Revolution, the Early Arab Conquests, the Caliphate, the Islamic Civilization): Text book pages: 23-59, PBS Documentary on Islam; Islam-Empire of Faith [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHhbSvOcz4g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHhbSvOcz4g), An Introduction to Islam by Susan Douglass. The reading is on OAKS.
- People of the Middle East: Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Kurds and Jews.
  - Text book pages 12-22 and 75-91
- European Colonization and its Legacy in the MENA.
  - Text book pages 137-161
  - History Channel Documentary; Betrayals and Promises [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW2sm0iR0E8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW2sm0iR0E8)
  - ABC Documentary; Revealing Gallipoli [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrB6oRf63rU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrB6oRf63rU)
- Sunni-Shia conflict.
  - Text book 75-80
  - Foreign Policy Association on the Sunni Shia Divide [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MZeHeOwEXI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MZeHeOwEXI)
- State & Society in MENA: Identity
  - Kinship, Class and Ethnicity by Laurie King-Irani. Reading is on OAKS.
  - Text book pages 148-169
- Islam and the West
  - Edward Said, “Covering Islam”, Orientalism. Reading is on OAKS.
- Arab-Israeli Conflict
  - Text Book pages 249-333.
  - Documentary https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wABigdqXKmk

- US foreign policy vis-a-vis Middle East
  - Turkish American Relations by Nuzhet Kandemir http://arsiv.setav.org/ups/dosya/28397.pdf
  - Oil, the Middle East the US National Interest by Nasser Momayezi http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_10_August_2011/1.pdf

  - Text book pages 364-385
  - The Persian Gulf War, reading is on OAKS
  - CNN Documentary Societ Invasion of Afghanistan https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xx4RDzwyOFY
  - The American Invasion of Iraq: Causes and Consequences by Raymond Hinnebusch, reading is on OAKS.

- PRESENTATIONS- In April

- MID-TERM EXAM (Last Week of February)

- FINAL EXAM- April 30, Monday