

UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST

Course Syllabus

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Class Meetings: MW, 6:00-7:30 P.M.; in CAS B20

Office Hours: MW: 3:30-5:00, After class, by Appointment

Course Description:

Drawing on sources from a number of academic disciplines, this course is designed to provide an introduction to the peoples, cultures, and contemporary issues in the region called the Middle East. For purposes of this course and the readings assigned for it, this region is defined to include the states located in the area bounded in the west by the Arab Republic of Egypt and in the east by the Islamic Republic of Iran; on the north by the Republic of Turkey and in the south by the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Yemen. Some attention to states and peoples living adjacent to this region, in North Africa and Central Asia, will be included as appropriate for comparative and analytical purposes and because the history, socio-economic, political, and religious life and experiences of these regions have often been closely linked and interactive with the states and societies of the Middle East.

The course is intended to provide an introduction that is comprehensive in scope and interdisciplinary in approach, providing historical, geographical, social, and cultural background and context for a deeper and more detailed appreciation of the region's societies, political systems, and international relations in the twentieth century. It is organized in part to explore general themes of long-term and contemporary significance for the region generally and in part to profile individual nation states in the region. Hence, the course will address themes that involve

the entire region such as the “Arab Spring”, the quest for economic development, the achievement of a just and lasting peace between Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab states, the struggle for gender equality, the factors which have produced and sustain religious revivalism throughout the region, the fragility of civil society, the persistence of authoritarian regimes and the quest for more democratic systems of government. It will also treat these themes as they have evolved and have had impact in individual states there. In exploring these general themes and the experiences of individual countries, students will be able to develop a critical and well-informed understanding of the region’s rich and complex patterns of complementariness and shared experience, as well as its enduring specificities and divergent trends and interests. How these local interests and concerns interact with the interests, goals, and policies of states outside the region will also be given extensive consideration.

The course will focus as well on how understanding the Middle East is not simply a matter of access to more reliable and consistent data. It also involves political and cross cultural dynamics which often contrive to constrain or distort understanding more than facilitate it. Readings and films used in the course will be evaluated and discussed for the way in which they present the people, culture, and politics of the region, as well as for the specific data they convey. Through the analysis of specific works and issues, students will be provided with an opportunity to discuss and assess some of the cultural assumptions which have for a long time underlain academic writing, travel reporting, and the production of visual media on the region—both by local authors and by authors from other parts of the world, especially Western Europe and the United States.

Individual country profiles will focus on contemporary issues and trends with particular emphasis on how these reflect and/or depart from the broader themes elaborated in the course, providing students with specific cases for demonstration, evaluation, and comparison.

Required Texts:

Abou El Fadl, Khaled, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam From the Extremists*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005.

Arjomand, Said Amir, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009/2012.

Bucar, Elizabeth, *The Islamic Veil*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2012.

Haas, Mark L. and Lesch, David W. eds., *The Arab Spring: Change and Resistance in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013.

Hahn, Peter L., *Missions Accomplished?: The United States and Iraq since World War I*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Schwedler, Jillian, ed., *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East. 4th. Ed.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013.

Shennav, Yehouda, *Beyond the Two State Solution: A Jewish Political Essay*.
Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012.

Recommended:

National Geographic Atlas of the Middle East. Washington, D.C.: National
Geographic Society, 2003.

NOTE: Any

additional assigned readings will be found on reserve at the Mugar Library
Reserve Service.

Assignments, Examinations, and Projects:

- a) Readings – As indicated in the syllabus
- b) Examinations – Two quizzes on the readings (short answer format); Final
examination
- c) Map Exercise
- d) Book review paper that presents an analytical critique and evaluation of one (1) of
the following titles: Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft*, OR Haas and Lesch,
The Arab Spring, OR Bucar, *The Islamic Veil*, OR Peter Hahn, *Missions
Accomplished ?*, OR Arjomand, *After Khomeini*

This paper should be 1,250 to 1,500 words in length (typed, double-spaced).

- e) Research Assignment – Research proposal and project on topic of your choice with
an annotated bibliography containing at least ten(10)sources.

Assignment guidelines will be distributed as a separate handout. For questions
regarding organization, format, and writing style issues please consult any of the
standard manuals of style, such as, Kate Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers*, Andrea
Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*, Diana Hacker's, *A Pocket Style Manual*, Joseph
Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, *The Chicago Manual of
Style*.

This paper should be 3,000-3,500 words in length (typed, double-spaced).

**WORK NOT RECEIVED ON THE DUE DATE WILL BE PENALIZED ONE FULL
GRADE FOR EACH DAY IT IS LATE (Allowances made, of course, for excusable
delay**

ALL QUOTATIONS, PARAPHRASES, OR OTHER USAGE OF PUBLISHED SOURCES must be identified with page and source citations. The style guides cited above provide guidelines for the form and content of footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographical entries. Choice of format style is at your discretion, but once chosen, use this style consistently.

Course Grade Value of Projects and Examinations:

Map Exercise and Participation	= 10%	= 05% of Total Grade Attendance
Two Reading Quizzes (@ 10% of grade each)		“ ”
Final Examination	= 25%	= 20% “ ”
Research Paper	= 25%	“ ”
Book Review Paper	= 15%	“ ”

Lecture Topics and Assignment Schedule:

September 4	Orientation to Course, Readings, Assignments Schwedler, <i>Understanding the Contemporary Middle East</i> , pp. 1-39
September 9	Historical Crossroads, Contemporary Directions Schwedler, <i>Understanding....</i> , 41-88; Haas & Lesch, <i>Arab Revolt...</i> , pp. 13-34
September 11	The Middle East: Environment, Population and Land Use Schwedler, <i>Understanding....</i> , pp. 223-258
September 16	Rural Economies and Societies in the Middle East in the Twentieth Century Pappe, <i>Modern Middle East</i> , pp. 61-113 (on reserve)
September 18	Urbanization and the Urban Setting Schwedler, <i>Understanding....</i> , pp. 315-344; Pappe, <i>Modern Middle East</i> , pp. 115-163 (on reserve)
September 23	The Political Economy of Petroleum Development Schwedler, <i>Understanding....</i> , pp. 259-286

- September 25 Manufacture, Trade, and the Challenges of Industrial Development in the Modern Middle East
- Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 287-313
- MAP EXERCISE DUE
- September 30 Popular and Elite Cultures and Politics
- Pappe, *Modern Middle East*, pp. 165-209; Schwedler, *Understanding....*, 403-437
- October 2 The Media Revolution and Politics in the Modern Middle East
- Pappe, *Modern Middle East*, pp. 211-223, 293-302
- READING QUIZ # I
- October 7 Islam in Middle Eastern Societies: Doctrines and Practices
- Abou El-Fadl, *The Great Theft....*, pp. 113-125
- For an Introduction to Islam, Malise Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997/2000), OR Jacques Jomier, *How to Understand Islam*(New York: Crossroad, 1991), OR John E. Esposito, *The Straight Path*(New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), OR Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*(Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, any of three editions) recommended.
- October 9 Religious Revival in the Middle East
- Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 377-401; Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft*, pp. 1-44, 95-110, 125-219, 275-288
- October 14 HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
- October 15 SUBSTITUTE SCHEDULE -- Extremism and Its Counter-discourses
- Abou El-Fadl, *The Great Theft*, pp. 220-249; Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 89-137

- October 16 The Role and Status of Women in Middle Eastern Societies and Economies

Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 345-376; Abou El-Fadl, *The Great Theft*, pp. 250-274; Bucar, *The Islamic Veil*, book
- October 21 The Arab and Jewish Quests for Nationhood in Palestine Since World War I

Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 175-221
- October 23 The Arabs, Israel, and the Palestinians: On the Road to Oslo

Schwedler, *Understanding....*, pp. 139-173; Shenhav, *Beyond the Two State Solution....*, pp. 1-52
- October 28 The Road from Oslo to Where?

Shenhav, *Beyond the Two State Solution....*, pp. 55-168
- BOOK REVIEW PAPER DUE
- October 30 From Secular Nationalism to a Sectarian Future? : Syria and Its Neighbors

William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview, 3rd ed. 2004, or later), pp. 217-230, 382-392, 397-407; Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring....*, pp. 79-96, 116-130
- November 4 Modern Turkey

Cleveland, *A History....*, pp. 175-185, 275-288; Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring....*, pp. 152-173
- READING QUIZ # 2
- November 6 The Iraq War, 2003: Regime Change and Consequences

Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished ?*, book
- November 11 The Iraq War, 2003: War Now Ending?

Peter Hahn, *Missions Accomplished ?*, book

- November 13 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Cleveland, *A History*...., pp. 225-228, 436-447; Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft*, pp. 45-95; Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring*...., pp. 97-115
- RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FIRST DRAFT OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
- November 18 The Other Gulf States (Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman)
- Cleveland, *A History*...., pp. 451-472
- November 20 Arab Republic of Egypt Since Nasser's Revolution
- Cleveland, *A History*...., pp. 323-344, 369-382, 392-395
- November 25 Egypt: The Fall of President Mubarak and After
- Yasmine El Rashidi, "Egypt: The Hidden Truth", in *The New York Review of Books*, August, 16, 2012, pp.24-26 (on-line); Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring*...., pp.35-63
- November 27 THANKSGIVING RECESS – NO CLASS
- December 2 Introduction to Modern Iran and Its Revolution
- Cleveland, *A History*...., pp. 185-192, 288-300, 423-450; Arjomand, *After Khomeini*...., pp. 3-89
- December 4 Iran Since the Revolution
- Arjomand, *After Khomeini*...., pp. 90-211
- December 9 The Arab Spring: New Challenges and Opportunities
- Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring*...., 174-237
- December 11 Wrap-Up, Evaluation, and Review
- Schwedler, *Understanding*...., pp, 439-443; Haas & Lesch, *The Arab Spring*...., pp. 238-255
- December 12-16 STUDY PERIOD
- December 16 ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH REVISED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE (Instructor's Mailbox, International Relations Department): Paper copies preferred).

December 16-20 FINAL EXAMINATION PERIOD

Date and Hour for IR/GE 382 Examination to be Announced