

**The Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
Georgia Institute of Technology
Spring 2013
INTA 2803 MB - Introduction to the Middle East**

Instructor: Dr. Murat Bayar
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Office: Ivan Allen College 141
Office hours: W 3:00-4:00 p.m. or by appointment

CRN: 29441
Class Time: MWF 13:05-13:55 p.m.
Location: Cherry Emerson 320

Objectives

From energy security to democratization, and terrorism to nuclear proliferation, the politics of the Middle East have held a central place in foreign policy debates across the world, especially since such dramatic events as the 9/11 and the Arab Spring. Thus, there is a growing need to understand the conflicts and challenges in the region, and how they relate to the international security in general and to the United States' foreign policy in particular. This is why the Middle East policy analysts and language specialists are among the most sought-after human capital by the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the intelligence community, as well as by the private sector and international non/governmental organizations.

This course aims to provide you with a general view of the historical, socioeconomic, and political background of the Middle East *and* specific knowledge about its key events and actors. For the purposes of this course, the borders of the region are stretched beyond their usual boundaries in order to include not only North Africa, but also Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is because these countries have Islam as their common denominator (except Israel), and it is hard to comprehend the causes and implications of democratization, counter/terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and the Arab Spring without including Afghanistan, Pakistan, or North African countries into our analysis. By the end of the semester, you will develop a strong understanding of the structural and cultural foundations of the Middle Eastern states, as well as the interests and relative power of domestic and external non/state actors in the region.

Requirements

This course is structured around four major pillars. First, the lectures will cover the assigned readings and news regarding the Middle East in a discussion format with the assistance of selected movies and short videos. Second, each student will present the historical, socioeconomic, and political background of a Middle Eastern country, beginning January 23. Third, you will work in groups and analyze a major conflict/challenge in the region. You will present your analysis in class and also submit a written report at the end of the semester. Finally, you will not have a midterm or final exam, but your knowledge of the material will be assessed by four noncumulative quizzes throughout the semester. The quiz dates will depend on our progress and be announced a week in advance, but you can expect to have one every 3 weeks.

First, class discussions on the assigned readings will focus on main arguments of the author(s) and key events. You are also expected to follow the news pertinent to the Middle East and inform the class about those developments. Furthermore, the quality of your questions and feedback to the presenters will constitute a substantial part of your participation. I will give you a tentative participation grade (pass/fail) early March so that you will know your standing in class and have time to improve your performance. The participation grade will make up 10% of your overall grade. I will not take attendance.

Beginning January 23, each student will present the historical, socioeconomic, and political background of a Middle Eastern country in class. The presentation format will include PowerPoint slides with other visual material (maps, pictures, short videos). The instructor will organize the country assignments and provide detailed guidelines about the presentations in the first week of the semester. This individual assignment will constitute 15% of your overall grade. The presenters will be considered as our “country specialists” and are particularly required to follow the news regarding their country and inform the class about those developments throughout the semester.

Third, you will work in groups and analyze a major conflict/challenge in the Middle East. You will present your analysis both in class (PowerPoint) and as a written report. The potential topics include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (including Hamas), nuclear proliferation (Iran), counter/terrorism (Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah), water scarcity and transboundary river conflicts (Euphrates-Tigris, Nile, Jordan River), democratization (Iraq and Afghanistan), and the Arab Spring (Egypt, Libya, Syria). The analysis will focus on post-2001 and include policy recommendations. The instructor will organize the group/topic assignments and provide further guidelines in the first week of the semester. The class presentations will begin on April 19. You will submit your draft paper on April 15 and the finalized paper on May 1 to the instructor. This group assignment will make up 35% of your overall grade (15% class presentation and 20% written paper, including the draft). Each group member will receive the same grade from this assignment, unless s/he fails to contribute to the group work. If you experience any such cases, please contact the instructor immediately by e-mail.

Finally, you will have four noncumulative quizzes throughout the semester. As stated above, the quiz dates will be announced a week in advance depending on our progress, but you can expect to have one every 3 weeks. The quizzes will mostly involve short essay-type questions. Each quiz will constitute 10% of your overall grade (40% in total). You can expect to receive questions about anything we discuss in class, including the country presentations and news. In this regard, the instructor’s PowerPoint slides, which will be updated on T-Square every week, will only constitute a general template for quiz topics and need to be supplemented by your own notes for your exam preparation.

The breakdown of your grade will be as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Country presentation: 15%
- Group presentation: 15%
- Group paper: 20%
- Quizzes: 10% each, 40% total

Graduate students who wish to take this class will be required to write (35%) and present (15%) an individual research paper instead of doing the country presentation and group assignment. The research paper will involve an original empirical analysis of a topic pertinent to the Middle East. Graduate students are required to have their research topics approved by the instructor by February 11 the latest.

Grade Scale:

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|---|----------|--------------|
| A | 100-90 | Excellent |
| B | 89-80 | Good |
| C | 79-70 | Satisfactory |
| D | 69-60 | Passing |
| F | Below 60 | Failure |

Required Books

The following books are available for purchase at the Georgia Tech bookstores. The instructor may send you additional readings on T-Square. You are expected to check T-Square every day for announcements.

Richards, Alan, and John Waterbury. 2008. *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. Third edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. ISBN: 9780813343488.

Kamrava, Mehran. 2011. *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War*. Revised second edition. University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520267756.

Other Rules

If you miss an assignment and want to have a make-up exam, you need to contact the instructor as soon as possible and document your excuse.

If you feel that an assignment was graded incorrectly, e-mail the instructor within a week of the assignment. Students should keep graded assignments until they receive their final course grade.

Students with disabilities who require individualized testing or other accommodations should discuss this with the instructor in the first week of the semester.

Students who will need to miss a class meeting to observe a religious holiday should make arrangements with the instructor in the first week of the semester.

All coursework must meet the Georgia Tech standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. See: <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=46>

The use of cell phones is not permitted during class meetings.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Class Schedule

January 7 – Introduction

January 9 - From Islam to the Great War
Kamrava chp.1

January 11 - From Islam to the Great War
Kamrava chp.1

January 14 - From Territories to Independent States
Kamrava chp.2

January 16 - From Territories to Independent States
Kamrava chp.2

January 18 - The Age of Nationalism
Kamrava chp.3

January 21 – M.L.K., Jr. National Holiday

January 23 - The Age of Nationalism
Kamrava chp.3
Country presentation

January 25 – Economic Growth and Structural Change
Richards & Waterbury chp.3
Goldstone, Jack A. 2012. Is Islam bad for Business? *Perspective on Politics* 10(1): 97-102.

January 28 - Economic Growth and Structural Change
Richards & Waterbury chp.3
Country presentation

January 30 - The Arab-Israeli Wars
Kamrava chp.4

February 1 – The Arab-Israeli Wars
Kamrava chp.4

February 4 – The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict
Kamrava chp.7
Country presentation

February 6 - The Impact of Demographic Change
Richards & Waterbury chp. 4

February 8 – The Impact of Demographic Change
Richards & Waterbury chp. 4

February 11 - Human Capital: Health, Education, and Labor Markets
Richards & Waterbury chp.5
Country presentation

February 13 – Human Capital: Health, Education, and Labor Markets
Richards & Waterbury chp.5

February 15 – The Iranian Revolution
Kamrava chp.5

February 18 – The Iranian Revolution
Kamrava chp.5
Country presentation

February 20 - Water and Food security
Richards & Waterbury chp.6

February 22 - The Emergence of the Public Sector
Richards & Waterbury chp.7

February 25 - The Emergence of the Public Sector
Richards & Waterbury chp.7
Country presentation

February 27 - The Gulf Wars and Beyond
Kamrava chp.6

March 1 – The Gulf Wars and Beyond
Kamrava chp.6

March 4 - The Challenge of Economic Development
Kamrava chp.8
Country presentation

March 6 - Contradictions of State-led Growth
Richards & Waterbury chp. 8

March 8 – Contradictions of State-led Growth
Richards & Waterbury chp. 8

March 11 – Re-mixing Market and the State
Richards & Waterbury chp.9
Country presentation

March 13 - Re-mixing Market and the State
Richards & Waterbury chp.9

March 15 – Urban Political Economy
Richards & Waterbury chp. 10

March 18-22 – Spring Break

March 25 – Political Regimes
Richards & Waterbury chp.11
Country presentation

March 27 – Political Regimes
Richards & Waterbury chp.11

March 29 – States and Their Opponents
Kamrava chp. 9

April 1 – States and Their Opponents
Kamrava chp. 9
Country presentation

April 3 – Solidarism and Its Opponents
Richards & Waterbury chp. 12

April 5 – Solidarism and Its Opponents
Richards & Waterbury chp. 12

April 8 – The Military and the State
Richards & Waterbury chp.13
Country presentation

April 10 – The Military and the State
Richards & Waterbury chp.13

April 12 – No class (MPSA Conference)

April 15 – The Question of Democracy (draft paper due)
Kamrava chp. 10
Country presentation

April 17 – Is Islam the Solution?
Richards & Waterbury chp.14

April 19 – Student presentations

April 22 - Student presentations

April 24 - Student presentations

April 26 – Student presentations

May 1 - Group papers, graduate papers due.