

POL 3375 (sec 1): Politics of the Middle East
CRN 21631
Spring 2018
3 credit hours
2:00 p.m.-2:50 p.m. CHSS 232

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Office Hours:
MW 4:00-7:00
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Course Description and Goals

What is Islamic fundamentalism and how is it different from (the religion of) Islam? Why did al Qaeda carry out the 9/11 terrorist attacks? What are some of the causes of the 1979 Iranian revolution? Why are almost all the countries in the Middle East and North Africa ruled by dictatorships? What are the prospects for democracy in the Middle East? What are some of the concerns and issues that may lead to wars involving the U.S. in the near future? What are the options open to the U.S. in dealing with Iran in the next two years? What were the main elements of President Bush's foreign policy towards the Middle East? What are the main elements of President Obama's policy towards the Middle East? By the end of this course, you should be able to answer these questions.

For most Americans, the Middle East appears as an enigmatic region with perplexing politics. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the region and its politics. I hope to achieve two main goals. First, to impart a solid understanding of basics of the region. Second, to present competing explanations and analyses of domestic politics and international relations of the Middle East.

Most students will find that the materials covered in this course is not especially difficult to understand. There is a substantial amount of materials to be read, however, and it is imperative for each student's success that he or she develops a regular study schedule that permits keeping up with the assignment at all times.

You are expected to watch national and international news such as CNN or PBS's News Hour at least five times a week. If you do not have access to television, you should read *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com).

Course Objectives

This class is designed to help the student learn:

- (1) the basics of the Middle East society, history, and politics;
- (2) the political systems in several significant countries in the region;
- (3) about the significant Middle Eastern terrorist organizations, their ideologies, and goals; and
- (4) critically evaluate political events and trends.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. It is imperative that you attend all the lectures. If you are going to miss a class, ask a friend to tape the lecture for you. Rolls will be taken periodically. Anyone with 3 absences (that are not excused) will receive an "F." Permission to take a make-up exam will rarely be given and only a dire situation will warrant one. Make-up exams will be harder than the one given to the entire class.

Religious Holy Day or Days

A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day or days or to travel for the purpose of religious observance may take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time. The student should inform me before or immediately after the absence in writing (e-mail preferred). The student will have 15 days to complete the assignment or take the exam. If you are to miss the lecture, have a fellow student tape the lecture for you. Absence due to religious holy day does not count towards the 3 absences.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Academic Dishonesty

Anyone caught cheating will receive "F" for the course and will be referred to the Associate Vice President for Student Services for further disciplinary action.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Attention Students with Disabilities

Requests for accommodation must be initiated by the student. Please go to the Counseling Center for certification of disability. Then, let me know. I will do all I can to assist.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Visitors in the classroom

If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. As a rule, I have no objections to "tourists" if extra seats are available.

The following is the official SHSU policy:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Instructor evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form towards the end of the semester.

Classroom rules of conduct

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

http://www.shsu.edu/students/StudentGuidelines2007_2008.pdf

Course Grade Will be Computed as Follows:

map exam	20%
mid-term exam	30%
Paper	20%
final exam	30%

* Note: There is a total of 100 points for the course. All grades will be posted on Bb.

For the map exam, you have to identify various entities (e.g., countries, bodies of water, major cities or regions, ethno-sectarian regions) on the maps. Exams include short and/or long essays. Exam questions are based on readings, lectures, films, videos, and class discussions.

Textbook:

Mark Gasiorowski, editor, *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, 8th edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2017).
ISBN: 978-0-8133-4994-7.

OUTLINE

weeks 1-4 **Introduction: geography, religions, and ethnic groups in MENA**

ch. 1.

Masoud Kazemzadeh, "Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 31, no. 1 (1998), pp. 52-59.

Map exam

First Mid-Term Exam

weeks 5-6 **Brief History**

Michael Gasper, "The Making of the Modern Middle East," in Ellen Lust, editor, *The Middle East*, 14th edition. Available on Reserve at the library. Pages 1-73.

weeks 7-8 **America's Challenges and Interests in the Middle East**

Reading on Donald Trump will be announced during the course.

Optional:

Jeffrey Goldberg, The Obama Doctrine, The Atlantic, April 2016,

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

Hillary Clinton foreign policy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIqYRI1Fw2I>

Paper due.

week 9 **Turkey**

ch. 7.

week 10 **Iran**

ch. 9.

Masoud Kazemzadeh, "U.S.-Iran Confrontation in the Post-NIE World: An Analysis of Alternative Policy Options." *Comparative Strategy*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2009), pp. 37-59.

week 11
ch 8. **Iraq**

week 12
ch 10. **Saudi Arabia**

week 13
ch 11. **Persian Gulf States (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman)**

week 14
ch. 3. **Lebanon**

week 15
ch. 2. **Syria**

or

Israeli-Palestinian-Arab Conflicts

ch. 5: Israel

ch. 6: Palestinians

Final Exam