HONORS POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. CPO 3403H. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA. 3:00 P.M. TO 4:15 P.M. TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS. BHC 128. SPRING 2012.

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle East is a broad region that eludes precise definition. For academic purposes, however, it is generally defined as the Arab countries in Africa and Asia, Israel, and the non-Arab countries of Iran and Turkey. Some academic definitions also include Afghanistan, the Central Asian republics and Pakistan. The Middle East has witnessed significant change – most recently, the "Arab Spring" phenomenon – conflict and centrality in global affairs since the end of World War II. This course provides an intensive examination of the political, economic, military/security and social currents in the Middle East during the post-war period, including the Islamic setting that characterizes most of the countries. Its purpose is to acquaint students with the dynamics of Middle Eastern politics and culture, with an emphasis on both regional and international dimensions.

TEXTBOOKS & RESOURCES

No texts are required for the course. Instead, multiple handouts are distributed in class, typically one in each session. Responsibility falls to students to receive and review this material.

Students are also directed to use multiple websites, such as http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/ (U.S. Department of State Background Notes) and http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-12482313 (BBC Middle East Protests: Country by Country). Finally, students are asked to read an internationally oriented news source on a regular basis, for example, http://global.nytimes.com/ (The New York Times Global Edition/International Herald Tribune) or http://news.google.com/ (Google News - World).

In addition, students should visit www.ucfglobalperspectives.org for information about co-curricular activities at UCF and in the community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is not a traditional course with formal lectures. Rather, it features a combination of informal lectures, simulations and group presentations, with an emphasis on interactive learning. Lecture material – including talks by guest speakers, both in class and elsewhere on campus at the scheduled class time – often is not found in reading assignments. A 10-page research paper is assigned to each student the first week of class. Each student should focus on a different country or issue related to a single country for the paper. The paper is worth 15% of the final grade and is

due no later than April 17, 2012. There is also a mid-term exam with twelve (12) questions, from which students answer ten (10), that is worth 30% of the final grade, and two pop quizzes, each worth 5% of the final grade. Finally, there is a class project that takes the form of a model Middle East peace conference (see last page of syllabus) that will serve as the final exam (35% of the final grade). Class attendance and participation are required (10% of the final grade). The grading system of A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), etc., is used in class, with pluses and minuses given.

SCHEDULE AND READINGS (subject to change)

Jan. 9 – Classes begin (university-wide).

Jan. 10 – Overview of the modern Middle East; discussion/assignment of research projects and organization of groups. First day this class meets. Handout.

Jan. 12 – An examination of the "Arab Spring." All individual research paper topics should be confirmed by this date. Handout.

Jan. 17 – Political development and institutions in the Middle East. Handout.

Jan. 19 – Guest speaker, Rachel Louise Snyder, expert on globalization and development, 3:00 p.m., Cape Florida Ballroom, UCF Student Union (required).

Jan. 24 – Religion in the Middle East. Handout.

Jan. 26 – Arab-Israeli conflicts: the establishment of Israel and the early wars. First progress reports due. Handout.

Jan. 31 – Arab-Israeli conflicts: the definitive wars, 1967 and 1973.

Feb. 2 – Guest speaker, Farah Pandith, Special Representative to Muslim Countries, U.S. Department of State, 10:00 a.m., Cape Florida Ballroom, UCF Student Union (strongly encouraged, with extra credit given). Guest speaker, Tina Rosenberg, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and author of *Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World*, 3:00 p.m., Garden Key Room, UCF Student Union (required).

Feb. 7 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, contemporary strife.

Feb 9 – The challenges of Iraq and Iran. Handout.

Feb. 14 – Guest speaker, Jed Horne, expert on global catastrophes and preparedness, 3:00 p.m., Pegasus Ballroom, UCF Student Union (required).

Feb. 16 – The challenges of Iraq and Iran, continued. Review for mid-term.

Feb. 21 – Mid-Term Exam.

Feb. 23 – Guest speaker, Amitabh Pal, author of *Islam Means Peace: Understanding the Muslim Principle of Nonviolence Today*, 3:00 p.m., Garden Key Room, UCF Student Union (required).

Feb. 28 – The challenges in Iraq and Iran, continued.

March 1 – The rise of the Kurds. Second progress reports due. Handout.

Mar. 6 – Spring break.

Mar. 8 – Spring break.

Mar. 13 – The rise of the Kurds, continued.

Mar. 15 – Terrorism/extremism in the Middle East. Handout.

Mar. 20 – Guest speaker, Jeremy Scahill, author of *Blackwater*, 3:00 p.m., Pegasus Ballroom, UCF Student Union (required).

Mar. 22 – United States involvement in the Middle East. Handout.

Mar. 27 – Guest speaker, Alexandra Cousteau, expert on the global environment, 3:00 p.m., Cape Florida Ballroom, UCF Student Union (required).

Mar. 29 – Russian involvement in the Middle East. Handout.

Apr. 3 – European involvement in the Middle East. Handout.

Apr. 5 – Afghanistan. Handout.

Apr. 10 – Pakistan. Handout.

Apr. 12 – Special conference on globalization, society and technology, with multiple speakers, 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Key West Ballroom, UCF Student Union, with advance registration necessary (strongly encouraged, with extra credit given). If most students attend the conference, class will not meet at 3:00 p.m.

Apr. 17 – Remaining issues. Individual research papers due.

Apr. 19 – Prospects for peace. Review for Model Middle East Peace Conference. Position papers due and one-page summaries distributed to other groups. Last day this class meets.

Apr. 23 – Classes end (university-wide).

Apr. 26 – Final Exam Period; Model Middle East Peace Conference, 1:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Class Project: Model Middle East Peace Conference. UCF. Spring 2012.

1) Jan. 10 – team formation. Students will select one of the following:

   Israel, Palestinian Authority, United States, Syria, Lebanon

   Teams meet informally during the first 5-10 minutes of each class; this is a standing assignment. The first meeting sets out a basic strategy. Research duties are also assigned. The goal is to represent as closely as possible the official policies and positions of the country/group being modeled. The final product, a 10-15 page group position paper, includes the assigned country/group's approaches to the overall peace process (recognition of Israel, Palestinian status, land for peace, refugees, Jerusalem, etc.); multilateral issues such as arms control, economic development and resources; and bilateral issues (Israel-Syria, etc.).

2) Jan. 26 – first progress reports due.
3) Mar. 1 – second progress reports due.
4) Apr. 19 – 10-15 page position papers due; 1-page summaries of these position papers should be given to each other group.
5) Apr. 26 – Model Middle East peace conference.