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 2016.

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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, 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/Country Fact Sheets) and http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12813859 (BBC analysis). Finally, students are asked to read a general, internationally oriented news source on a regular basis, for example, http://global.nytimes.com/ (International New York Times) or http://news.google.com/ (Google News - World).

In addition, students should visit www.ucfglobalperspectives.org for information about related 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 research project consisting of a 10-page paper and a 10-minute class presentation 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 project, which is worth 25% of the final grade. Class presentations start in mid-February. The paper is due no later than April 26, 2016. 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. Finally, there is a class project that takes the form of a model Middle East peace conference (see section at end 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. 11 – Classes begin (university-wide).

Jan. 12 – First day this class meets. Overview, discussion/assignment of research projects and organization of groups.

Jan. 14 – Introduction to the modern Middle East. Handout.

Jan. 19 – Special presentation by Amy Hawthorne, Deputy Director of Research, Project on Middle East Democracy. In class.

Jan. 21 – Political development and institutions, including the "Arab Spring." All individual research paper topics should be confirmed by this date. Handouts.

Jan. 26 – Political development and institutions in the Middle East, continued.

Jan. 28 – Religion in the Middle East. Handouts.

Feb. 2 – Special presentation by Imam Muhammad Musri, with a focus on Islam. In class. Handout.

Feb. 4 – Arab-Israeli conflicts: the establishment of Israel and the early wars. First progress reports due. Handouts.

Feb. 9 – Special presentation by Kim Barker, author of *The Taliban Shuffle*. In class.

Feb. 11 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, continued: the definitive wars, 1967 and 1973. Handouts.

Feb. 16 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, continued: contemporary strife. Three research presentations.

Feb. 18 – Human Trafficking Awareness Forum. Garden Key, Student Union. Required.

Feb. 23 – Mid-term exam.

Feb. 25 – Florida International Summit 2015, with a focus on global citizenship, literary and education. UCF Student Union, Pegasus Ballroom, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Partial attendance required instead of class, as specified.

Mar. 1 – The challenge of Iraq and Iran. Second progress reports due. Three research paper presentations. Handouts.

Mar. 3 – The challenge of Iraq and Iran, continued. Three research paper presentations.

Mar. 7 – Spring break.

Mar. 10 – Spring break.

Mar. 15 – The rise of the Kurds. Three research paper presentations. Handouts.

Mar. 17 – The rise of the Kurds, continued. Three research paper presentations.

Mar. 22 – Terrorism/extremism in the Middle East. Any remaining research paper presentations. Handout.

Mar. 24 – The United States and the Middle East. Handout.

Mar. 29 – The U.S. and the Middle East, continued.

Mar. 31 – Russia and the Middle East. Handout.

Apr. 5 – Russia and the Middle East, continued.

Apr. 7 – Europe and the Middle East. Handout.

Apr. 12 – China and the Middle East. Handout.

Apr. 14 – Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states. Handout.

Apr. 19 – Afghanistan. Handout.

Apr. 21 – Pakistan. Handout. Position papers due and one-page summaries distributed to other groups.

Apr. 26 – Remaining issues. Last day of this class. Classes end (university-wide). Research papers due. Review for Model Middle East Peace Conference.

Apr. 28 – Final Exam Day. Model Middle East Peace Conference, 1:00 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Class Project: Model Middle East Peace Conference. UCF. Spring 2016.

1) Jan. 14 – 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) Feb. 4 – first progress reports due.
3) Mar. 3 – second progress reports due.
4) Apr. 21 – 10-15 page position papers due; 1-page summaries of these position papers should be given to each other group.
5) Apr. 28 – Model Middle East peace conference.