HONORS POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. CPO 3403H. UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA. 3:00 P.M. TO 4:15 P.M. TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS. HPA1 0363. SPRING 2018.

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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 – including material from the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) and Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), among others – are distributed in class, typically one per 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 15-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. Papers are due no later than April 19, 2018. 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. 8 – Classes begin (university-wide).

Jan. 9 – First day this class meets. Overview, discussion/assignment of research projects and organization of groups.

Jan. 11 – Introduction to the modern Middle East. Handout, including FPA brief on Middle East alliances.

Jan. 16 – Political development and institutions, including the "Arab Spring." All individual research paper topics should be confirmed by this date. Handouts, including FPA brief on Middle East sectarianism.

Jan. 18 – Special presentation, TBA.

Jan. 23 – Political development and institutions, continued.

Jan. 25 – Special presentation, TBA.

Jan. 30 – Religion in the Middle East. Handouts.

Feb. 1 – Arab-Israeli conflicts: the establishment of Israel and the early wars. **First progress reports due.** Handouts, including CFR material on the conflicts.

Feb. 6 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, continued: the definitive wars, 1967 and 1973. Handouts.

Feb. 8 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, continued: ongoing conflict.

Feb. 13 – Arab-Israeli conflicts, continued: contemporary strife. Two presentations.

Feb. 15 – The peace process. Two presentations. Handouts, including CFR material on peace process.

Feb. 20 – The peace process, continued. Two presentations. Review for mid-term. **Distribute mid-term exam.**

Feb. 22 – The challenge of Iraq and Iran. Two presentations.

Feb. 27 – The Syrian crisis. **Second progress reports due.** Two presentations. Handouts, including FPA brief on Syria. **Mid-term exam due.**

Mar. 1 – The rise of the Kurds. Handouts. Two presentations, including FPA brief on the Kurds.

Mar. 6 – The rise of the Kurds, continued. Two presentations.

Mar. 8 – Terrorism/extremism in the Middle East. Two presentations. Handout, including FPA brief on ISIS.

Mar. 13 – Spring break.

Mar. 15 – Spring break.

Mar. 20 – Terrorism/extremism in the Middle East, continued. Two presentations.

Mar. 22 – Special presentation, TBA.

Mar. 27 – The U.S. and the Middle East. Remaining presentations.

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

Apr. 3 – Russia and the Middle East. Handout.

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

Apr. 10 – Europe and the Middle East. Handouts, including FPA brief on Turkey.

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

Apr. 17 – Afghanistan, Pakistan. Handouts. **Position papers due and one-page summaries distributed to other groups.** Handouts, including FPA brief on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Apr. 19 – Remaining issues. Last day of this class. Review for Model Middle East Peace Conference. **Research papers due.**

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

Apr. 24 – Study day.

Apr. 26 – 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 2018.

1) Jan. 9 – team formation. Students will select one of the following:

   Israel, Palestinians, United States, Russia, Syria, Lebanon (at least 3 per team)

   Teams will 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 regarding the peace process. Given the rapidly changing environment of the region and major developments of the past year, the opportunity presents itself for stepping back and comprehensively evaluating peace prospects. The final product, a 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. 1 – first progress reports due.
3) Feb. 27 – second progress reports due.
4) Apr. 17 – 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.