

Texas A&M University-Commerce, Department of Political Science
PSCI 333.001 Middle East Politics
Spring 2008

Location and Time: Rm. SS134 T & R 12:30-1:45

Instructor: Jeremy R. Backstrom

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Office Hours: T & R: 8am-9am; 11am-12pm; and by appointment.

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to enhance your understanding of non-European political systems specifically those systems within the Middle East and North Africa. This course will focus on a variety of Arab and non-Arab states (both Muslim and non-Muslim), their political systems, and the historical events that influenced the development of their respective nation-states. It should be noted that this course is reading intensive and also demands effective note taking on the part of the student.

Required Text:

David E. Long, Bernard Reich, and Mark Gasiorowski. 2007 *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Additional Required Readings:

You will be required to read a variety of journal articles in addition to the main text for the course in order to enhance your understanding of the state in focus. I will ensure that two copies of each article will be placed on my bulletin board that you may use briefly to copy. Please be considerate of your classmates and their need to copy the articles as well.

Newspaper Headlines:

Although the course focuses on the history and political systems of the states of the Middle East, students need to keep abreast of current developments within the region. Therefore, the instructor will assign each student a regional newspaper to monitor the headlines on a daily basis. Most of these newspapers will not be available to you in hard copy form; therefore, it is suggested that you follow the headlines by accessing the newspaper online. I will provide a listing of newspapers and the student assigned to it by the end of the first week of class. During the first 10 minutes of class, students will engage in a brief discussion of current developments within the region. Your participation will be noted and included in your class participation grade.

Assignments:

- I. **Geography Exercise:** For this assignment, you will be given a take-home exercise consisting of 20 questions concerning the geography of the Middle East and North Africa. Due date for this assignment is noted in the Reading section of this syllabus. This exercise is worth 10 points.

- II. Pew Case Studies:** For each case study (4 total), you will be required to answer a series of questions in written form. It is imperative that you respond to the questions in a manner in which you would approach a research paper. Specific instructions for the case study will be provided in a separate handout. Discussion and due dates are noted in the Reading section of this syllabus. Each case study is worth 10 points, totaling 40 points for the course.
- III. Class Participation:** I expect you to arrive to the class each day prepared to discuss the readings of the text as well as the additional readings assigned. Furthermore, during the Pew Case studies, we will devote a full class period to the discussion of the case study and your findings. Your participation will be noted and graded accordingly. The quality of your informed participation shall be noted rather than the quantity. Your class participation is worth 20 points for the entire course.
- IV. Final Examination:** During finals week, you will be required to take a final examination. This exam will be focus on all materials covered during the semester. The final examination will be an open book, open notes in-class essay exam. This examination will be worth 30 points of your final grade.

Grading:

Total points for the course: 100. **A:** 90-99; **B:** 80-89; **C:** 70-79; **D:** 65-69; **F:** 64 and below. No extra credit work will be allowed. Unless instructed otherwise, I will not accept emailed assignments. **Late assignments will be heavily penalized unless there are extenuating circumstances.**

Attendance Policy:

As adults, you are expected to attend every class. Attendance is required and roll will be taken at every class. In addition, you are expected to be in the classroom on time. If you continue to have a problem with being on time to the class, you will be listed as absent for the day. Excessive absences or tardiness will count against you in your final grade. If you miss more than three classes, one point from your overall grade will be deducted for each additional absence. Additionally, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes from your fellow students for the class that you missed.

Furthermore, as a student in this course, you are expected to come into each class having read the required materials and be prepared to participate in discussions.

Additional Policies:

Personal laptops may be used to take notes during the class; however, this is not an invitation to check your email, surf the internet, chat online, or any other activity that would disturb your attention from your classwork. If caught engaging in one of these infractions, I will warn you only once. After this warning, you will not be allowed to bring your laptop to class.

Cell phones, blackberries, I-pods, or any other electronic communication device must be shut off during class. Like the policy regarding laptops, I will warn you once; after, I will not tolerate any violation of this policy. You will be asked to leave the classroom for that specific day and be listed as absent for the class.

This is a course on Middle East politics and each of us has our own personal thoughts and opinions on the matter. As your instructor, I encourage scholarly debate and discussion in the classroom. However, you must be respectful of your fellow students and their opinions. I will not

tolerate any outbursts or demeaning comments to your fellow students regarding their opinions or observations. If this does occur, I will consider it as a disturbance to the learning experience of the classroom and ask you to leave for that day and you will be listed as absent.

Tentative Reading and Course Outline:

January 15: Introduction to the course; Current state of Middle East studies

January 17-22: Introduction to the Middle East (Long, Reich, & Gasiorowski: Introduction pgs. 1-10)

January 24: **Geography exercise due**

January 29-31: Islam

February 5-7: Turkey (Barkey & Taspinar: "Republic of Turkey" pgs. 12-44)

Journal Articles: *Turkey's AKP: A Model "Muslim-Democratic" Party?* (Sultan Tepe); *Turkish-Kurdish Relations and the European Union: An Unprecedented Shift in the Kemalist Paradigm?* (Fotios Moustakis & Rudra Chaudhuri)

February 12: **Case Study due:**

The Turkish Democratic Experiment: Integrating the Demands of Kemalism and Political Islam (Deborah J. Gerner & Omur Yilmaz)

February 14-19: Egypt (Deeb: "Arab Republic of Egypt" pgs. 403-431)

Journal Articles: *Egypt-Don't Give Up on Democracy Promotion* (Michele Dunne, Amr Hamzawy, & Nathan J. Brown); *Egypt's Unwavering Path to Democratic Reform* (Nabil Fahmy)

February 21-26: Saudi Arabia (Maisel: "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" pgs. 83-113)

February 28-March 4: Iran (Gasiorowski: "Islamic Republic of Iran" pgs. 45-82)

Journal Articles: *Iran's Resilient Civil Society: The Untold Story of the Fight for Human Rights* (Ladan Boroumand); *Ahmadinejad's Foreign Policy* (Masoud Kazemzadeh)

March 6: **Case Study due:**

The Fall of the Shah of Iran (Gregory F. Treverton & James Klocke)

March 11-13: Syria (Lesch: "Syrian Arab Republic" pgs. 259-291)

Journal Articles: *The Syrian Opposition* (Joshua Landis and Joe Pace)

March 18 & 20: No Class- Spring Break

March 25-27: Jordan (Ryan: "Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan" pgs. 292-314)

April 1-3: Israel (Reich: "State of Israel" pgs. 315-367)

Journal Articles: To Be Determined

April 8: **Case Study due:**

The Israel-P.L.O. Declaration of Principles (Denis J. Sullivan)

April 10-15: Palestine (Robinson: "The Palestinians" pgs. 368-402)

Journal Articles: To Be Determined

April 17-24: **To Be Determined**

April 29: **Case Study due:**

Democracy and Islam in Arab Politics (Mark Tessler and Laurie Brand)

May 1: Review of the course

May 8: **Final Exam-** SS134: 10:30 am-12:30 pm

Conduct:

"All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)

Requests from students with disabilities for reasonable accommodation must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the office of Advisement Services, BA 314, (903) 886-5133.

As your instructor, I reserve the right to add, amend, or modify this syllabus as the conditions may dictate.