CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course title: America and the Arabs
Course code: MEST 3002 AMJO
Programs offering course: Middle East Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

In this course, students will critically examine the complex relationship between the United States and the Arab World during the past 150 years, with particular focus on relations during the past decade.

This course is divided into two sections. In the first section, students will study the history of the relationship between America and the Arab World. Analysis begins from the end of the 19th century and chronologically examines the economic, political, and social relations, highlighting the role of colonialism, the two World Wars, the creation of Israel, the Cold War, the war in Iraq, 9/11, foreign policy during the George W. Bush and Obama presidencies. In the second half of the course, specific topics will be our focus, such as US foreign policy and its interests in the region, including oil, Israel, foreign aid, and democracy promotion. The course ends with in-depth analysis of the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” and recent events including the refugee emergencies, America’s response to ISIS, and political crisis and war in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. The interdisciplinary course relies on a combination of analysis and critical inquiry in the fields of history, politics, international relations, and sociology.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Assemble a foundational understanding of the historical, political, economic, military and cultural context of relations between America and the Arab World
- Evaluate the results of the U.S. polices in the Middle East
• Analyze current events in the Arab World with an understanding of the historical and political context
• Expand on the disapproving public opinion of the U.S. in the Arab and Muslim world

Course Prerequisites

Prior knowledge and understanding of the politics of the Middle East. However, students without a background in Modern Middle East History and International Relations are welcome to take the course but will be required to do extra reading in the first few weeks so they can keep up with the class.

Methods of Instruction

This course will include lectures, presentations, and short films. Students must be prepared to engage in discussion on the assigned readings for each week. The readings come from a variety of sources including peer reviewed journals, textbooks, and newspaper articles. All reading materials will be accessible through google drive.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Blended Learning  10%
2. Mid-Term / Comparative Film Essay  20%
3. Paper Proposal  10%
4. Presentation  15%
5. Final Paper  30%
6. In class participation, and demonstrated engagement with readings  15%

TOTAL  100%

Course Requirements

Blended Learning

Short essay (3-5 double spaced pages) reacting to the readings and two 1960s Hollywood Epics on the Middle East: “Lawrence of Arabia” (1962) and “Exodus” (1960). How do these films frame the debate on nationality, independence, and statehood? What is the relationship, if any, to U.S. foreign policy towards Arab nationalism and the establishment of the state of Israel?
Mid-Term / Comparative Film Essay

Visit Hamoudeh or another store selling pirated DVDs. Ask for recommendations on contemporary U.S. films or TV series about the Middle East, and Arab made films that either address the same issue or offer an Arab filmmakers view on the United States (for example: Cherien Dabis Amreeka 2009 and Ridley Scott’s Body of Lies 2008, or The Kingdom 2007 and Wajida 2012). Compare how the films reflect the dominate, social/political discourse at the time they were made. What major events are they reacting to? What key themes about the “other” are represented in these films? Refer to earlier readings from Melanie MacAlister’s Epic Encounters in framing your argument for the paper. (5-7 pages).

Paper Proposal

Paper should include a one paragraph description of the policy problem being addressed, how it reflects the main themes in US-Arab relations, and why it’s relevant to both societies. Proposal should also include a working bibliography, which includes references to class readings. Students will present their findings during weeks 13 and 14. Final paper should be between 12 and 15 double spaced pages (12pt font) and is due the last day of final exams.

Presentation

Final Paper

(10 points for the proposal, 15 points for the presentation, 30 points for final, 12-15 page paper)

Students should select a contemporary issue in US-Arab relations, and conduct a thorough, multi-faceted investigation of the relevant policy angles for both the United States and the Arab state(s) or non-state actors involved. Students can focus on a particular conflict in the region with a record of U.S. involvement, or a broader policy issue such as combating violent extremism, refugees, non-proliferation, or trade in fossil fuels. Students cannot select a topic already covered in class.

In class participation, and demonstrated engagement with readings
All students should be prepared for each class and ready to participate in the lectures with comments, questions, and feedback drawn from the course readings. Faculty will make weekly notes on participation: quality, demonstration of engagement with the readings, grasp of course concepts, etc. Quality is preferred to quantity, but points cannot be awarded for silence. NOTE: This is not a free 15 points.

Format and referencing:

All papers and assignments you submit should have a title, your name, be double-spaced with 1” margins and 12 sized font, have page numbers, include in text citations and a bibliography. Make sure that you provide citations for any piece of information you give me or any opinion which is not your own. Maps, tables, diagrams, and quotations must referenced properly. For references please use the APSA Style Guide available here: http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/APSA%20Files/publications/APSASTyleManual2006.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for short-term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.
Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences will lead to the following penalties:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed</th>
<th>Minimum Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 20%</td>
<td>Participation graded as per class requirements; grade penalty &amp; <strong>written warning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Automatic <strong>course failure</strong>, and possible expulsion</td>
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N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: A Tale of Three Speeches

Listen or read the transcripts of the following:

- His Majesty King Abdullah II Before the US Congress 7 March 2007
- President Barack Obama Prepared Remarks, Cairo University 4 June 2009
- Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, A Force for Good: U.S. Reinvigorated in the Middle East, American University in Cairo, 10 January 2019
Key Question: What do “we” want from each other? What are the main issues framing the relationship between the US and the Arab world?

Week 2

Class: Early Interactions

Readings:

- Little Douglas. Orientalism, American Style. (9-42)

Week 3

Class: Epic Encounters

*Blended Learning Assignment

Readings:

- Media Education Foundation “Reel bad Arabs” (documentary) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdRc8c8jhU8&list=PL5885FD84F42C6B

Week 4

Class: Arab Nationalism and Its Response

Readings:


Week 5
Class: Cold War: Hot Wars, and Hard Bargains

Readings:


Week 6
Class: Cold War II: The Geopolitics of Oil

Readings:


Week 7
Class: Spring Break
*Film Essay Due

Week 8
Class: Cold War to Cold Peace: Camp David

Readings:


*Paper proposal

Week 9
Class: Gulf Wars

Readings:


Week 11
Class: Pax Americana

Readings:

• Reich, B. The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship, in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012), pp p. 205

Week 12
Class: The Arab Spring

Readings:


Week 13
Class: Hala L'Wein?

Readings:


Karlin, M. & Wittes TC “America’s Middle East Purgatory: The Case for Doi


Key Question: Where are we now?

Week 14
Class: Student Presentations

Week 15
Class: Student Presentations & Final Paper Due

Course Materials

Readings


Little Douglas. Orientalism, American Style. (9-42)


Media Education Foundation “Reel bad Arabs” (documentary) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdRtc8c8jhU8&list=PL5885FD84F42C6BE4
• Reich, B. The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship, in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012), pp. p. 205
• Waltz, K. N. (2012). Why Iran should get the bomb: Nuclear balancing would mean stability. Foreign Affairs, 2-5.
• Bellin, E. (2012). Reconsidering the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. Comparative Politics, 44(2), 127-149.
• Salloukh, B. F. (2013). The Arab uprisings and the geopolitics of the Middle East. The international spectator, 48(2), 32-46.
• Allison, R.J. Postscript: Americans and the Muslim World-First Encounters in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012) p. 534