CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course title: Political Structure and Dynamics in the Middle East Regional System
Course code: INRE 3003 AMJO
Programs offering course: Middle East Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

Events in the Middle East have been capturing worldwide attention since a long time ago, starting with the revelation of Islam through many historical stages. The Middle East geographic position alone, at the junction of Africa Asia, and Europe, is a sample reason for it to command the world’s attention. Three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam arose from the same culture and society. So, social and political structure in the Middle East encounter many internal and external challenges which have led many researchers and students to look for deep understanding of what happened and what is happening in the Middle East.

Therefore, this course will offer good opportunity to our students to understand tradition cultures of the Middle East- civilization and politics. The turning point in the Middle East when many political entities tried to self-determination will be taken in consideration in this course. Then this course will offer good opportunity for the students to know the politics of religion, culture, social life and political elites in the Middle East. We will discuss in this course the political leadership in the contemporary Middle East and the economic setting. What is happening in the Middle East in the last 30 years? The power dynamics in the region including the three non-Arab powers and their impact over the Middle East. Also we will discuss the role of military in the Arab world as well as the role of media.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:
• Improve the understanding of the Middle East in the last 10 years especially after 9/11 and what has been changed from that time
• Investigate what happened in the Middle East after 2011 or what may it be called Arab spring or Arab awakening
• Develop a broad view of the Arab Israeli conflict and what the future of peace between both sides
• Analyze some contemporary events and challenges of the Middle East and Jordan such as the water crisis
• Evaluate the refugee crisis and its impact over the Jordanian society

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

This course mainly relies on discussion and lecture. Based on our readings from the reading materials that I will assigned to you, we will try as a group to extract major themes of our classes. Sometimes this might require more lecture than discussion. Also I will ask students to prepare lectures to present before the class after contacting me in this matter. Students will be asked to discuss and response to some article that I will assign to the them about current issues in the Middle East, and I will inform the students when these papers due. In the beginning of each class we will discuss current issues that related to the Middle East.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Midterm Exam 30%
2. Research Paper 20%
3. Critique Papers 20%
4. Final Exam 20%
5. Class Participation 10%

TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Midterm Exam
The exam materials will be assigned prior to the exam, and it will be held during the midterm week during the scheduled class meeting time.

Research Paper

This paper needs to be at least 10-12 pages, 12 font size, double space. You are also required to do an in-class power point presentation (10-15 minutes). Then, send me your final paper after any feedback from me or your colleagues. More guidance will be provided.

Critique Papers

You will be assigned 4 articles to read and write your critique thoughts; then submit them via e-mail. You will be provided with the due dates of the critique papers; any late response will reflect in your grade.

Final Exam

The final exam will be held during the finals week.

Class Participation

Your active participation is essential to your learning process and to the success of the course – both for you and for the class as a whole. Therefore, you are expected to read the assigned reading and participate in class discussions.

Attendance

Attendance is required, and this class follows the CIEE attendance policy.

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: Introduction

An introduction to the class which will include distribution of the syllabus and overview of the politics, social and economic issues in the Middle East with focus on situation in the Arab World.

Week 2
Class: Traditional Culture of the Middle East


In this class Students will study the five popular misconceptions about Islam as well as some aspect of traditional culture of the Middle East. Social change and social structure in the Arab world and Middle Eastern society will be in our focus in this lecture.

Week 3
Class: Israeli - Palestinian Conflict: Solving the Problem

Israeli ideas for solution, The Jordanian option, the Two States Solution, The right of return, The one state solution, How acceptable was the one state solution, Binational or secular democratic.


Critique Paper 1 Due

Week 4
Class: Rentierism and State Survival

The birth of Jordan was one of controversial issues in the Middle East. As a deal between the super powers (France and Britain), Jordan has
been established in the East of the River of Jordan). Jordan and the Royal Family bonded their relationship with Western World as part from its strategy to survive among the key players in the Arab World. Students will be able to understand the functioning role of Jordan and how Jordan has been able to survive in such situation.


Week 5
Class: Iraq: From Rentier State to Failed State

Iraq is one of the key players in the region through the history of the Middle East. Many events have been shaped the Iraq as state in the Arab world. The war of 1980 with Iran and 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and the war of 2003 put Iraq in critical situation as state. Students will be able to know about the politics in Iraq and the future of the political position of Iraq in the Middle East


Critique paper 2 Due

Week 6
Class: Midterm Exam (After the exam there is no class that day)

Week 7
Class: Spring Break

Week 8
Class: The Rise of Religious Radicalism in the Arab World:

Significance, Implications, and Counter-Strategies

1. The "Islamic state" organization: its Roots, Path and Transformation
2. Al Nusra Front: its Founding, Rise and Crisis


Week 9
Class: Iran Role in the Middle East: Attitudes of Arab Toward Iran


Green, Jerrold (2009). Understanding Iran Rand cooperation. This source is available online. www.rand.org

Iran: Domestic Discontent and Regional Ambition

Iran has become one of the most important political actors in the Middle East. An Iran role in many political events becomes suspicious. How Arab people look to the Iranian role in their countries? How Arab people see the relationship between Iran and USA after Geneva deal 2013? Will this new relationship change the political relationship between US and the most important ally in the Arab world, Saudi Arabia?


Critique Paper 2 Due

Week 10
Class: Migration and Refugees: The Problem of the Refugees in the Middle East.


Week 11
Class: The United States in the Middle East

In this class we will discuss the traditional American interest as well as Washington's response to new regional tensions and upheavals since the late of 1970s. Also we will discuss and describes the structure of Middle Eastern policy-making and its domestics political context.


Trends in Arab Attitudes Towards the United States

In this reading students will get close to know how the Arab World evaluate the role of United State of America in the Middle East and The Arab World. Also students will be able to understand the most important issues that affect the Arab opinion towards United States of America.

Shibley Telhami, Basic Book, New York

Critique Paper 3 Due

Week 12
Class: Arab Spring in the Arab World and State Building

General discussion about the political Social, and economic situation in the Middle East, Arab spring, Muslim Brotherhood, election in the Arab world.

The Arab uprising: what everyone needs to Know. James L. Gelvin

Week 13
Class: .

Week 13 & 14

Final Research Paper Due
Research Paper Presentations

Be sure to finish your paper before that time, I will choose who will present on Week 13 and who will present on Week 14.

Research Guideline

- Use Microsoft Word and save the paper as a word file (not PDF).
- Length: from 10-12 pages
- Double-space. Times New Roman (font style) and size 12 (font size).
- Regular margins (2.54 cm for "top" and "Bottom" and 3.17 cm for "left" and "right").
- You must cite at least 5 different sources (books & articles) (you cannot cite any Wikipedia sources)

Week 15
Class: Final Exam

Course Materials
Readings

Each class has some assigned readings, but here are few resources:

- The Arab Spring: Implication for British, Ali Ansari. Chapter 10 (40-44)
• Telhami, Shibley (2012), the World Through Arab Eyes. Basic Books, New York Chapter 8 (129-145)
• Green, Jerrold (2009). Understanding Iran Rand cooperation. This source is available online. www.rand.org