The Middle East in Conflict: A Century of War and Peace
University of Pennsylvania, Spring, 2018

Instructor: Dr. Samuel Helfont
Office Hours: Monday 2:30 to 4:30 or by appointment most days

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Overview:
The modern Middle East has witnessed tremendous conflict and turmoil since it emerged following World War One. It would be impossible for one course to cover all conflict in the Middle East over the past century. Therefore, this course investigates three prominent conflicts (the Arab Israeli Conflict, Islamist Terrorism, and the Iraq Wars), which represent case studies on ethno-national conflict, religious conflict, and great power intervention. Thus, the courses uses these conflicts to expose students to the primary types of conflicts that have manifested in the region over the past one hundred years.

After a brief introduction to the Middle East and the emergence of the modern political system that developed in the wake of World War One, the first case that the course will discuss is the Arab-Israeli conflict. This case will be used to investigate ethno-national conflict in the region. At the end of the first case, the class will use the spring break holiday to travel to Israel and Jordan. This will give students a hands-on perspective to some of the issues discussed in the classroom. The second case that this course covers is Islamist terrorism. It will be used investigate whether and to what extent that religious ideas intersect with violence. This section will cover the rise of various international terrorist networks as well as intra-Islamic strife. Finally, the course will use American wars in Iraq as a case study of great power intervention in the region.

Grades:
Class Participation – 25%
Responses to Readings – 15%
Midterm – 20%
Final Paper – 40%

[Please note that failure to complete any of these assignments will result in failure of the class. For example, if a student does not complete the midterm, he or she will fail the course regardless of his or her grades on the other assignments. Also, more than two unexplained absences will result in a lower grade.]
Responses to Readings:
Each student will be required to submit 8 brief responses to the readings throughout the semester. Students are free to choose which 8 of the 11 sets of readings to submit responses. The responses should be ~150-200 words. Often, a specific question will be provided. Students are encouraged to address this question, but are free to respond to a different issue raised by the weekly readings if they feel particularly inspired to do so. Responses will be submitted by midnight before class.

Take-Home Midterm:
Due on Monday, February 20. Students will write a 1,500 word essay on one of four questions. The questions will be broad and theoretical.

Final Paper:
Students will write a narrative or analytical paper on some aspect of Iraq and the Iraq Wars. Students should consult with the instructor to find additional outside sources. The paper should be 10-12 pages in length.

Readings:
Book for Purchase:

-Other readings will be provided on Canvas.
-Readings marked with an * are primary sources.

Class Schedule

**Week 1**
**Wednesday, January 10** – Introduction. Cover Syllabus. Basics of The Middle East and the course

**Week 2**
**Monday, January 15** – The Middle East and the Islamic World
Readings:

- TBD

**Week 3**
**Monday, January 22** – How was the Middle East created? Does it matter?
Readings:
- Cleveland, William, pp. 149-237.


*The McMahon Letter
*The Sykes-Picot Agreement
*The Balfour Declaration

CASE ONE: ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT

Week 4
Monday, January 29 – The Birth of Israel and the Refugee Crisis
Readings:
-Cleveland, pp. 239-271.


- Susser XXX

*Jabotinsky, “The Iron Wall,” Razsviet, 1923
*Declaration of Independence for the State of Israel.

Week 5
Monday, February 5 – Arab Israeli Conflict Cont…

Readings:
-Susser XXX

Week 6
Monday, February 12 – Arab Israeli Conflict Cont…

Readings:
-Susser XXX
**Week 7**
**Monday, February 19** – Attempts at Peace

**Readings:**

-Clinton, Bill. My Life. pp. 541-6; 814-20; 911-6; 935-47.

*UN Security Council Resolution 242 (Nov. 22, 1967);
*The Clinton Plan (Dec. 23, 2000)

**CASE TWO: ISLAMIST TERRORISM**

****Mid Term Exam Handed Out in Class****

**Week 8**
**Monday, February 26** – The Rise of Islamic Politics

**Readings:**
-Cleveland, William, pp. 440-4.


* Hasan al-Banna, Toward the Light, in Princeton Readings, 49-78.
* Sayyid Qutb, Signposts along the Road, and In the Shade of the Qur'an, in Princeton Readings, 129-154

****Midterm Exam Due****

**Week 9**
**March 3 – 11: CLASS TRIP TO ISRAEL AND JORDAN!**

**Week 10**
**Monday, March 12** – Iranian Revolution and Shi’ism

**Readings:**
- Cleveland, William, pp. 423-40.


**Week 11**  
**Monday, March 19** – Saudi Arabia and Salafism

**Readings:**
- Stéphane Lacroix, The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia, 37-81


**Week 12**  
**Monday, March 26** – Al-Qaida and ISIS

  http://csweb.brookings.edu/content/research/essays/2015/thebeliever.html

* Usama bin Laden, Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places XXX

**CASE THREE: AMERICAN AND THE IRAQ WARS**

**Week 13**  
**Monday, April 2** – Gulf Crisis 1990-91

**Readings:**
- Cleveland, William, pp. 408-421,


Week 14
Monday, April 9 – Aftermath of Gulf War and Sanctions

Readings:
- TBD

Week 15
Monday, April 16 – 2003 War

Readings:
- Cleveland, William, pp. 478-97.
- *2002 National Intelligence Estimate, pp 11-48.*

Week 16
Monday, April 23 – US Occupation of Iraq

Readings:
- Tripp pp. 277-316

* CPA Orders 1 and 2