

Politics of War and Peace in the Middle East

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Class Hours: T TH 3-4.15 pm

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to equip the students with the historical, theoretical and empirical knowledge to better understand the Middle East, its culture and politics. It will address a set of enduring issues in Middle East international relations such as the Arab Spring, the evolving US role in the region, the Arab-Israeli Conflict, the challenge of Iran, the war in Iraq, and political Islam. First 4 weeks introduces theoretical discussion relevant to the region. Starting with the 5th week, we examine several civil wars and inter-state wars.

Expectations

Students are expected to read all the assigned material prior to lecture. Lecture material and reading assignments are complementary and should not be considered substitutes for each other. Students are highly encouraged to ask any questions and participate in class discussions. Our classes will be open to expression of all views and questions.

Class Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for taking this class. The content of the class is directed at second-year (and above) Political Science and International Relations majors, but first-years and non-majors are welcomed to join.

Required Books

- Cleveland, William L. 2004. A History of the Modern Middle East. Westview Press, Third Edition.
- Hinnebusch, Raymond. 2015. The international politics of the Middle East. Manchester University Press, Second edition.
- Cole, Juan. 2009. Engaging the Muslim World, Palgrave Macmillan.

Course Structure

Discussion Participation

This is a seminar-form class. For this type of class to run best, the active contribution of all students is necessary. Students are thus expected to attend and participate in all class meetings. Participation here does not require that you are talking in class all the time; I understand that we do not always have something to say. Instead, what I expect of you is to positively contribute to the class atmosphere. This means paying attention to when others are contributing, not being disruptive and, of course, offering your opinions and ideas when appropriate.

Take-Home Response Papers

You are asked to write two response papers to your choice of two class readings. Each response paper should be up to 1000 words. Each response paper is due at the class that corresponds to the paper you chose to write about.

In-Class Presentation

Each group of 3-4 students will present a case study at the end of each class starting the 4th week of classes. Each presentation should take no more than 15 minutes. Please think of this presentation as a group project where every participant can contribute their strengths. Slides or some other form of visual aid is highly encouraged but is not necessary. Feel free to be creative!

Final Paper

Final paper should be a research paper no more than 3000 words. You are free to choose any topic that is relevant to our course material. Your research paper should include a thesis statement supported by empirical evidence such as historical, statistical or anecdotal evidence. Required books and readings should have enough resources to support your papers. However, additional research on your topic of interest is welcome.

Grading Policy

The typical school grading scale will be used. I reserve the right to curve the scale dependent on overall class scores at the end of the semester. Any curve will only ever make it easier to obtain a certain letter grade. Any adjustments will be conducted to the benefit of students and will be communicated clearly. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

- 10% Discussion Participation
- 30% 2 Take-home Response Papers (15% each).
- 20% In-class Presentation
- 40% Final Paper

Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1: What/Where is the Middle East?

- *Quiz*: Map the Countries in the Middle East (Not Graded)
- The Question of Modernity, James L. Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*

Week 2: International Politics of the Middle East

- Introduction to the international politics of the Middle East. Raymond, Ch. 1
- Core and periphery: the international system and the Middle East. Raymond, Ch. 2
- Identity and sovereignty in the regional system. Raymond, Ch. 3

Week 3: Orientalism and “the Clash of Civilizations”

- Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction
- Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993

Week 4: Colonialism/Decolonization in the Middle East

- The End of Empires; Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*
- Egypt and the British to World War II; Cleveland
- *Movie Suggestion: The Battle of Algiers (1966)*

Week 5: Arab-Israeli Conflict

- War and order in the regional system, Raymond Ch. 7
- Barak, O. 2005. The failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, 1993-2000. *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Oten, N. 2010. Israeli identity formation and the Arab-Israeli conflict in election platforms, 1969-2006. *Journal of Peace Research*.
- *Documentary Suggestion: The Gatekeepers (2012)*

Week 6: Lebanese Civil War

- Changing Patterns of War and Peace: Egypt and Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s. Cleveland, Ch. 18
- Ghosn, F; Braithwaite, A and Chu, TS. 2019. Violence, displacement, contact, and attitudes toward hosting refugees. *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Nagel, C. 2002 *Reconstructing space, re-creating memory: sectarian politics and urban development in post-war Beirut*. *Political Geography*.

- *Movie Suggestion: West Beirut (1998)*

Week 7: The Iranian Revolution

- The Iranian Revolution and the Resurgence of Islam. Cleveland, Ch. 20
- From Tehran to Beirut: The Iranian Challenge. Juan Cole, Ch. 6
- Kurzman, C. 1996. Structural opportunity and perceived opportunity in social-movement theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review*.
- *Movie Suggestion: Persepolis (2007)*

Week 8: The War in Afghanistan

- Pakistan and Afghanistan: Beyond the Taliban. Juan Cole, Ch. 5
- Blair C. Forthcoming. The Fortification Dilemma: Border Control and Rebel Violence. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Pape, R. 2003. The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism. *American Political Science Review*.
- *Movie Suggestion: Charlie Wilson's War (2007)*

Week 9: The War in Iraq

- Challenges to the Existing Order: The Palestinian Uprising and the 1991 Gulf War. Cleveland, Ch. 22
- Iraq and Islam Anxiety: How Fearmongering Got Up a War and Kept It Going. Juan Cole, Ch. 4
- Condra LN and Shapiro JN. 2012. Who Takes the Blame? The Strategic Effects of Collateral Damage. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Shaver A and Shapiro JN. 2021 The Effect of Civilian Casualties on Wartime Informing: Evidence from the Iraq War. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- *Series Suggestion: Generation Kill (2008)*

Week 10: Fall Break

Week 11: Political Islam

- Muslim Activism, Muslim Radicalism: Telling the Two Apart. Juan Cole, Ch. 2

Week 12: Arab Spring

- Bellin, E. 2012. Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*.
- Ketchley, N. 2021. Unpopular Protest: Mass Mobilization and Attitudes to Democracy in Post-Mubarak Egypt. *Journal of Politics*.

- *Movie Suggestion: The Square (2013)*

Week 13: Syrian Civil War

- Revkin, MR. 2020. What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria. *Journal of Politics*
- De Juan, A and Bank, A. 2015. The Ba'athist blackout? Selective goods provision and political violence in the Syrian civil war. *Journal of Peace Research*.
- Sener, IE. Peace Negotiations and Civilian Targeting
- *Movie Suggestion: The Swimmers (2022)*

Week 14: Kurdish Insurgency

- Tezcur, GM. 2016. Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Participation in an Ethnic Rebellion. *American Political Science Review*.
- Sener, IE. State Oppression, Activist Propaganda and Support for Militancy.
- *Movie Suggestion: Bahoz (The Storm) (2008)*