

## The Politics of the Middle East

Political Science 355j  
Dr. Jerry Pubantz  
Spring 2016

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-3pm; Thursdays, 11am-12noon

Office: 317 Curry Building  
e-mail: j\_pubant@uncg.edu

This course is an analysis of contemporary politics in the Middle East. It explores the roles of Islam, regional issues, and the Great Powers in the area. It will assess the significance of the events during the last 70 years, including recent Palestinian-Israeli developments, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, the Iranian Revolution and its consequences, the Arab Spring, and the rise of Islamic radicalism.

### Required Texts

Roy R. Andersen, Robert F. Siebert, and Jon G. Wagner, *Politics and Change in the Middle East*, 10<sup>th</sup> Ed.

John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, Fourth Edition

Jillian Schwedler (ed.), *Understanding the Middle East*, Fourth Edition

### Student Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- interpret political, social, and economic phenomena in the Middle East
- appreciate the role of religion, culture, and tradition in the politics of the region
- identify key issues that continue to mold Middle East affairs
- research effectively and write clearly about a significant topic in Middle East politics
- understand critical factors in major regional developments such as the Arab-Israeli dispute, Iranian politics, wars in the Gulf, oil politics, and the rise of radicalism

**N.B.: Class and office hours are cancelled for Thursday, March 17.**

### Assignments

There will be two midterm tests (February 16 and March 29) as well as a final examination. **Please note: The final exam will NOT be given individually or collectively at any earlier date and time than the scheduled period set by the Registrar. This semester it is scheduled for May 3, noon to 3:00pm.** Please plan all end-of-semester travel or other personal commitments with this knowledge in mind. The midterm tests will each be worth 20% of the final grade and the final exam will count for 30%. There will be a research paper (8 to 12 typed pages) on some aspect of **contemporary** Middle East politics, which must be submitted no later than April 14, and will be worth 20%. The submission of a clearly written thesis statement, an annotated bibliography of your preliminary research, and a one-page tentative outline of your paper will be due in class no later than March 15, and will count for 10% of your grade.

## Course Outline

- I. Geography and History of the Middle East January 12 - 19  
A. Rise and Spread of Islam  
B. Colonial Experience  
C. 1914-1945  
Readings: Schwedler, pp. 1 – 68; 377 – 391  
Esposito, Introduction and Chapters 1-3  
Andersen et al, Introduction, Chapters 1-5
- II. Political Culture January 21 - 28  
A. Zionism  
B. Islamic Pluralism  
Readings: Schwedler, Chapters 10-11  
Esposito, pp. 141-154; 187-207  
Andersen et al, pp. 143-153
- III. The Nation-state and Politics in the Middle East February 2 - 9  
A. Secularism and Development in the Arab World  
B. The Arab Spring  
Readings: Schwedler, Chapters 4, 7, and 9.  
Esposito, pp. 215-235  
(canvas) Bernard Lewis, "Freedom and Justice in the Modern Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 84, No. 3, May/June 2005, pp. 36-51.  
Andersen et al, pp. 77-96; Chapters 9 and 11
- IV. The Arab-Israeli Conflict February 11 - 25  
A. The Six Wars  
B. Borders, Refugees and Jerusalem  
C. Israel's Neighbors: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt  
D. The Palestinian Movement: *Intifadahs*, PLO, Hamas  
E. The Peace Process  
Readings: Schwedler, pp. 68 – 88; Chapter 6  
Andersen et al, pp. 96-113; 133-142; 297-300; 317-322
- V. The Shia-Sunni contest March 1 - 22  
A. The Iranian Revolution and Aftermath  
B. The Wars of the Gulf  
C. Iraq, Iran, Syria, and ISIS  
Readings: Andersen et al, pp. 120-133  
Esposito, pp. 207-215.
- VI. Islamic Reawakening March 24 – April 5  
A. Shiite Resurgence  
B. The Muslim Brotherhood  
C. Fundamentalism and Terrorism  
Readings: Schwedler, pp. 391-401.  
(canvas) Zeyno Baran, "Fighting the War of Ideas," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 84, No. 6, November/December 2005, pp. 68 – 78.  
Esposito, pp. 154-186; 235-249; Chapter 6  
Andersen et al, pp. 153-171

VII. Great Power Interests in the Middle East

April 7 - 21

- A. US Policy, Nixon to Obama
- B. European Community, Russian, and Chinese Interests
- C. New Regional Alliances

Readings: Schwedler, pp. 146-173; Chapter 8.

Andersen et al, Chapter 12; pp. 300-322; Chapters 14 and 15.

### Some General Notes and Guidelines

**Canvas:** Please establish access to the Canvas site for this course. Regular announcements, reserve readings, new readings assigned during the term, the syllabus, assignments, and other critical information for the class will be maintained there. Check the site daily if possible. You are responsible for knowing all course information on the site.

**Attendance:** I will take class attendance regularly in order to get to know you and to meet financial aid and registration reporting requirements. If you miss a class, you remain completely responsible for the material covered that day, new assignments made, the outcome of classroom discussions, and any change in course schedule or other matter related to the course.

**Tests:** Except in the case of a bona fide medical emergency with confirming documentation or the sudden death of an **immediate** relative, I do not approve make-up tests or accept papers or assignments late. If you have a commitment scheduled for the day of a test, assignment, or paper submission you should contact me well before the date so that we can consider the possibility of taking the test or submitting the material early.

**Class rules:** This class is wide open for discussion. So please come prepared, be on time, and actively participate. Middle East politics obviously is an interesting and important topic worthy of much conversation. In our exchanges all of us have the right to expect professionalism and courtesy. If you have a cell phone or pager with you, **BE SURE to turn it off before you enter the room.** If it rings while in class, you will not be allowed to bring it to class again. Please bring old-fashioned paper, pens, and pencils. **I do not want you to use your laptop or tablet during class.** It is far better to be focused on the discussion and materials in the class than on trying to transcribe every aspect of the session. You can transfer your handwritten notes to your computer at a later time, which will prove a very valuable learning exercise.

All students are expected to abide by the University's academic integrity regulations. If you are not familiar with the University's policy, please see <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>. Plagiarism (presenting the ideas or words of another as if they were one's own) is cheating. **At a minimum, plagiarism on the paper assignments or cheating on the tests will result in a grade of "F" for the course – not for the assignment, but for the course.** The UNCG Honor System and judicial process will be triggered by your misuse of materials, or by your submission of work that was done by others but passed off as your research and writing.

**Office hours:** This semester I will hold office hours immediately after this class on Thursdays from 11am to 12 noon, and also on Tuesdays from 2 to 3pm. Should you need to make an appointment for another time, you may do so by e-mail and we will set a time to meet. I look forward to talking with you about your work.