CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course name: Conflict and Diplomacy in the Contemporary Middle East
Course number: INRE 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

This course explores conflict and diplomacy in the contemporary Middle East through an in-depth examination and discussion of case studies from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Each week will be devoted to a specific conflict.

This course additionally serves as an introductory survey to the history, politics and societies of the contemporary Middle East, as well as to the main dynamics driving conflict and conflict resolution in this region.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to:

1- Familiarize students with the key conflicts and diplomatic processes in the contemporary Middle East;
2- Familiarize students with the history, politics and societies of the contemporary Middle East;
3- Provide students with basic analytical tools for understanding and interpreting the dynamics driving conflict and its resolution in the region;
4- Assist students to engage in informed discussion and debate about the Middle East, its conflicts, and conflict resolution.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

The course will be based on seminar-style discussions, and students' preparation and active participation is considered essential.
Several readings will be assigned for every session. A presentation by the instructor will be followed by group discussion in which the main themes, dynamics, and interests pertaining to the conflict/diplomatic process under discussion will be discussed and debated.
Laptops and other electronic devices are not permitted in class.
Assessment and Final Grade

1. Policy Brief: 20%
2. Midterm Exam 20%
3. Class participation: 15%
4. Presentation: 15%
5. Final Exam: 30%

Course Requirements

Policy Brief:
Students will prepare a policy brief of 3,000 – 3,500 words on one of the main crisis, conflicts or affairs in the region including those will be discussed during the semester. This policy brief will be prepared for the United Nations Secretary-General or The State Department and should:
1. Identify the main actors in the conflict and their core interests;
2. Recommend realistic and effective initiatives, to be undertaken by the UN and/or member states, to restore peace and address the threats this conflict poses to international peace and security;
3. Identify and respond to key objections to the proposed policy recommendations.

The policy brief should be prefaced by a 500-word Executive Summary, which is part of the total word count.
Students are strongly encouraged to conduct this exercise in groups of two-three each.

Presentation
The author(s) of each policy brief will present their work to the class during the final session of this course. Presentations will last a maximum of ten minutes, with an additional ten-fifteen minutes for discussion and debate of each paper’s conclusions.

Policy briefs are due by email. These must conform to the MLA format using 12-point font, with a cover page indicating name of class, instructor, authors and date.
(more explanation will be offered during classes)

Midterm Exam:
A set exam in the class will take place during the midterm week, covering the topics & readings covered.

Attendance and class participation:
Students are required to attend all classes and to be active and engaged in the discussions by asking questions and to speak up their own minds, thoughts, analysis & concerns about the topics covered.
In the course, one unexcused absence (an absence not caused by illness) is permitted.
If the student has more than one unexcused absence, the grade for the course will be lowered by one “mark” for each unexcused absence. In other words, after two unexcused absences an A becomes an A-; after three an A becomes a B+; after four an A becomes a B, etc. Term papers will not be accepted after 17:30 Amman time on the last day of class.
Final Exam:
A final take-home exam will be distributed in class consisting of four questions that may reflect any of the material covered during the semester; students are required to answer two of their choice with 750-1,000 word essays for each question. Papers are due no later than 5pm Amman time after a week by email, and must conform to the MLA format using 12-point font, with a cover page indicating name of class, instructor, author and date. The essay question should be fully identified.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Introduction: The Formation of the Contemporary Middle East
(lecture and discussion)
- Lynch, Preface, Chapter 1 (pp. ix-xviii, 1-73)

Optional supplementary readings:
- Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples (Warner, 1992)
- Eugene Rogan, The Arabs: A History (Basic Books, 2009), Chapters 6-14 (pp. 147-482)
- Jean Said Makdisi, Teta, Mother And Me: An Arab Woman's Memoir (Saqi, 2005)

Week 2
The Syria Conflict I

Optional supplementary readings:
- Lynch, Chapters 4,7 (pp. 105-138,189-224)
- Patrick Seale, Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East (University of California Press, 1990)
Week 3
The Syria Conflict II

- Stephen M. Walt, "Could We Have Stopped This Tragedy?", Foreign Policy 21 September 2015 (http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/21/could-we-have-stopped-this-tragedy-syria-intervention-realist/)
- Nour Samaha, "Survival is Syria’s Strategy", The Century Foundation, 8 February 2017 (https://tcf.org/content/report/survival-syrrias-strategy/)

Optional supplementary readings:
- Emile Hokayem, Syria’s Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant (Routledge, 2013)
- Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila al-Shami, Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War (Pluto, 2016)
- Khalid Khalifa, In Praise of Hatred (Black Swan, 2013)
- These websites also have regular coverage of the Syria conflict: Carnegie Middle East Center’s Syria in Crisis (http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/issue/1558?lang=en); International Crisis Group’s Syria page (https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria); Syria Comment: Syria Politics, History and Religion (http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/); and many others.

Week 4
From Iraq to ISIS I


Optional supplementary readings:

- Anthony Shadid, Night Draws Near: Iraq’s People in The Shadow of America’s War (Picador, 2006)
- Salam Pax, Salam Pax: The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi (Grove Press, 2003)
- Sinan Antoon, The Corpse Washer (Yale University Press, 2014)
- Elliott Colla, Baghdad Central (Bitter Lemon Press, 2014)

Week 5
From Iraq to ISIS II

- Abu Hanieh and Abu Rumman, Chapter 1 (pp.25-93)
- Gerges, Chapters 2-5 (pp. 50-169)
- Ussama Makdisi, "The Mythology of the Sectarian Middle East", Rice University Baker Institute for Public Policy, February 2017 (http://www.bakerinstitute.org/files/11372/)

Optional supplementary readings:

- Abu Hanieh and Abu Rumman, Chapters 3-6
- Gerges, Chapters 7-8 and Conclusion

Week 6 Midterm

Week 7 Spring Break
Week 8
Jordanian Politics

- https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/jordans-arab-spring/

Week 9
The Palestine Question and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Smith, Chapters 4-6 (pp. 162-299)
- Smith, Chapters 7-10 (pp. 300-480)

Optional supplementary readings:
- Smith, Prologue, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-161)
- David Hirst, The Gun and The Olive Branch (Faber and Faber, 1977)
- Walid Khalidi (ed.), From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem Until 1948 (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987)
- Shira Robinson, Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State (Stanford University Press, 2013)
- Ghassan Kanafani, Palestine’s Children: Returning to Haifa & Other Stories (Lynne Riener, 2000)
- S. Yizhar, Khirbet Khizeh: A Novel (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014)
- Smith, Chapter 11 and Epilogue (pp. 482-555)
- Geoffrey Aronson, Creating Facts: Israel, Palestinians and the West Bank (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1987)
- Shlomo Ben-Ami, Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy (Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Avi Shlaim, The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World (W.W. Norton, 2014)
• Graham Usher, *Dispatches From Palestine: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process* (Pluto, 1999)
• A.B. Yehoshua, *A Woman in Jerusalem* (Mariner, 2007)

**Week 10**

**Libya**

• Lynch, Chapter 3 and 6 (pp. 75-104, 175-188)

• Optional supplementary readings:

**Week 11**

**Policy Brief Paper Due by 5:00pm**

**Iran and the Nuclear Agreement**


• Optional supplementary readings:
  • David Crist, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America’s Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran* (Penguin, 2013)
• Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (Free Press, 2008)
• Stephen M. Walt, “Barack Obama Was a Foreign Policy Failure”, Foreign Policy, 18 January 2017 (http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/18/barack-obama-was-a-foreign-policy-failure/?utm_content=buffer6f6b7&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

**Week 12**

**The Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, the War in Yemen, and the Qatar Crisis I**

• The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation. 2015 https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1429.html
• How Might Mohammed bin Salman’s Arrest of Saudi Princes Affect His Rise to the Throne? http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/74725
• In Yemen, Iran outsmarts Saudi Arabia again Bruce Riedel, December 6, 2017 https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/12/06/in-yemen-iran-outsmarts-saudi-arabia-again/
• The Qatar Crisis and the Future of the GCC. Ashley Inman 14th Aug 2017 https://chargedaffairs.org/the-qatar-crisis/
Week 13
Policy Brief Presentations I

Week 14
Policy Brief Presentations I

Week 15
Take-Home Final Exam Due by 5:00pm

Readings

- Stephen M. Walt, “Could We Have Stopped This Tragedy?”, Foreign Policy, 21 September 2015 (http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/09/21/could-we-have-stopped-this-tragedy-syria-intervention-realist/)
- Nour Samaha, “Survival is Syria’s Strategy”, The Century Foundation, 8 February 2017 (https://tcf.org/content/report/survival-syrias-strategy/)
- Marc Lynch, The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East (Public Affairs Press, 2016)
- Nikolaos Van Dam, Destroying A Nation: The Civil War in Syria (I.B. Tauris, 2017)
− Ussama Makdisi, "The Mythology of the Sectarian Middle East", Rice University Baker Institute for Public Policy, February 2017 (http://www.bakerinstitute.org/files/11372/)
− The Outlook for Arab Gulf Cooperation. 2015 https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1429.html
- In Yemen, Iran outsmarts Saudi Arabia again Bruce Riedel, December 6, 2017 [https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/12/06/in-yemen-iran-outsmarts-saudi-arabia-again/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/12/06/in-yemen-iran-outsmarts-saudi-arabia-again/)

Additional online and optional supplementary readings are included for each week.