CIEE Amman, Jordan

Course name: America and the Arabs
Course number: MEST 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

In this undergraduate course, students will critically examine the complex relationship between the United States and the Arab World during the past 150 years, with particular focus on relations during the past decade.

This course is divided into two sections. In the first section, students will study the history of the relationship between America and the Arab World. Analysis begins from the end of the 19th century and chronologically examines the economic, political, and social relations, highlighting the role of colonialism, the two World Wars, the creation of Israel, the Cold War, the war in Iraq, 9/11, foreign policy during the George W. Bush and Obama presidencies. In the second half of the course, specific topics will be our focus, such as US foreign policy and its interests in the region, including oil, Israel, foreign aid, and democracy promotion. The course ends with in-depth analysis of the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” and recent events including the refugee emergencies, America’s response to ISIS, and political crisis and war in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. The interdisciplinary course relies on a combination of analysis and critical inquiry in the fields of history, politics, international relations, and sociology.

Learning Objectives

• To have a foundational understanding of the historical, political, economic, military and cultural context of relations between America and the Arab World
• To analyze current events in the Arab World with an understanding of the historical and political context

Course Prerequisites

Students without a background in Modern Middle East History and International Relations are welcome to take the course but will be required to do extra reading in the first few weeks so they can keep up with the class.

Methods of Instruction

This course will include lectures, presentations, and short films. Students must be prepared to engage in discussion on the assigned readings for each week. The readings come from a variety of sources including peer reviewed journals, textbooks, and newspaper articles. All reading materials will be accessible through google drive.
Assessment and Final Grade

1. Blended Learning 10 pts
2. Mid-Term/ Comparative Film Essay 20 pts
3. Paper proposal 10 pts
4. Presentation 15 pts
5. Final paper 30 pts
6. In class participation, and demonstrated engagement with readings 15 pts

Course Requirements

Blended Learning:
Short essay (3-5 double spaced pages) reacting to the readings and two 1960s Hollywood Epics on the Middle East: “Lawrence of Arabia” (1962) and “Exodus” (1960). How do these films frame the debate on nationality, independence, and statehood? What is the relationship, if any, to U.S. foreign policy towards Arab nationalism and the establishment of the state of Israel?

Comparative Film Essay:
Visit Hamoudeh or another store selling pirated DVDs. Ask for recommendations on contemporary U.S. films or TV series about the Middle East, and Arab made films that either address the same issue or offer an Arab filmmakers view on the United States (for example: Cherien Dabis Amreeka 2009 and Ridley Scott’s Body of Lies 2008, or The Kingdom 2007 and Wajida 2012). Compare how the films reflect the dominate, social/political discourse at the time they were made. What major events are they reacting to? What key themes about the “other” are represented in these films? Refer to earlier readings from Melanie MacAlister’s Epic Encounters in framing your argument for the paper. (5-7 pages).

Policy paper and presentation
(10 points for the proposal, 15 points for the presentation, 30 points for final, 12-15 page paper)
Students should select a contemporary issue in US-Arab relations, and conduct a thorough, multi-faceted investigation of the relevant policy angles for both the United States and the Arab state(s) or non-state actors involved. Students can focus on a particular conflict in the region with a record of U.S. involvement, or a broader policy issue such as combatting violent extremism, refugees, non-proliferation, or trade in fossil fuels. Students cannot select a topic already covered in class.

Paper Proposal
Paper should include a one paragraph description of the policy problem being addressed, how it reflects the main themes in US-Arab relations, and why it’s relevant to both societies. Proposal should also include a working bibliography, which includes reference to class readings. Students will present their findings during weeks 13 and 14. Final paper should be between 12 and 15 double spaced pages (12pt font) and is due the last day of final exams.

Weekly assignments and class participation
All students should be prepared for each class and ready to participate in the lectures with comments, questions, and feedback drawn from the course readings. Faculty will make weekly notes on
participation: quality, demonstration of engagement with the readings, grasp of course concepts, etc. Quality is preferred to quantity, but points cannot be awarded for silence. By definition, one cannot receive points for participation when absent from class. NOTE: This is not a free 15 points.

Format and referencing:
All papers and assignments you submit should have a title, your name, be double-spaced with 1” margins and 12 sized font, have page numbers, include in text citations and a bibliography. Make sure that you provide citations for any piece of information you give me or any opinion which is not your own. Maps, tables, diagrams, and quotations must be referenced properly. For references please use the APSA Style Guide available here: http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/APSA%20Files/publications/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
A Tale of Three Speeches
Listen or read the transcripts of the following:
• His Majesty King Abdullah II Before the US Congress 7 March 2007
• President Barak Obama Prepared Remarks, Cairo University 4 June 2009
• Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, A Force for Good: U.S. Reinvigorated in the Middle East, American University in Cairo, 10 January 2019

Key Question: What do “we” want from each other? What are the main issues framing the relationship between the US and the Arab world?

Week 2
Early Interactions
Readings:
- Little Douglas. Orientalism, American Style. (9-42)

Week 3
Epic Encounters
*Blended Learning Assignment
Readings:
- Media Education Foundation “Reel bad Arabs” (documentary) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdRc8c8jhU8&list=PL5885FD84F42C6BE4
Week 4  
Arab Nationalism and it’s response  
Readings:  

Week 5  
Cold War: Hot Wars, and Hard Bargains  
Readings:  

Week 6  
Cold War II: the Geopolitics of Oil  
Readings:  
History, 99(1), 208-218.


Week 7  Spring Break
*Film Essay Due

Week 8  Cold War to Cold Peace: Camp David
Readings:
*Paper proposal

Week 9  Gulf Wars
Readings:


**Week 10**

**Pax Americana**

**Readings:**
- Reich, B. The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship, in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012), pp p. 205

**Week 11**

**Non-Proliferation and Regime Change**

**Readings:**
Week 12

The Arab Spring
Readings:

Week 13

Hala L’Wein?
Readings:

Key Question: Where are we now?

Week 14

Student Presentations

Week 15

Student Presentations & Final Paper Due

Readings:
- Little Douglas. Orientalism, American Style. (9-42)
- Media Education Foundation “Reel bad Arabs” (documentary) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdRc8c8jhU8&list=PL5885FD84F42C6BE4
- Reich, B. The United States and Israel: The Nature of a Special Relationship, in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012), pp p. 205