4370-001: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
SPRING SEMESTER 2010
COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor: Brent E. Sasley         Class location: 109 Pickard Hall
Office: 412 University Hall          Class time: Mon/Wed/Fri, 10:00-10:50am
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E-mail: bsasley@uta.edu
Website: http://www3.uta.edu/faculty/bsasley/

Office hours: Wednesday, 11:00am-12:00pm, or by appointment
Please note: Although the office phone has voicemail, the best and fastest way to reach me is by email.

COURSE CONTENT AND DESCRIPTION:

Albert Einstein argued that the purpose of a university education is not to teach students just facts, but to teach them to think. To this end, this course will introduce students to the international relations of the contemporary Middle East. It is divided into four sections: Section A lays out the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for understanding Middle Eastern international relations. Section B looks at some of the main conflicts that have plagued regional relationships. Section C explores some of the contemporary challenges and issues facing Middle Eastern states today in terms of regional relations. Section D provides a survey examination of the foreign policies of select countries in the region.

It is advisable that students keep up with current developments in Middle East politics. Although this is not a course on current events per se, these will of necessity be part of the class discussions. Students can follow developments in all major media outlets—such as CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC, and so on—as well as regional outlets (see the professor’s website for links to these).

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course students will be familiar with the various processes and the norms of interaction between contemporary Middle Eastern actors. To meet these goals the course has the following objectives:

- Identify key concepts and theoretical frameworks used for investigating contemporary Middle Eastern international relations, and acknowledge some of the different ideas that shape the study of Middle East politics. This provides us with the appropriate tools for our exploration of the region.
Describe the basic shape of the contemporary Middle Eastern order and its component parts. This equips us with a range of necessary facts that are vital to informed discussion, such as who the relevant actors are, when the various Arab-Israeli wars took place, and so on.

Understand why current regional interactions play out the way they do. Building on the previous objective, this takes us into a deeper, more detailed examination of the formation of these facts.

Think critically about Middle East international relations. It is easy to take a stance on a given issue, but more difficult to defend that stance in a logical manner that rests on a judicious, nuanced, and open-minded foundation of understanding. Learning to think critically allows us to do the latter.

Connect this knowledge to a better understanding of politics in general, in any region of the world. By sharpening our critical thinking and analytical skills, we can more effectively take on the problems faced by societies everywhere.

**FORMAT:**

The course is conducted within a lecture framework. But class time will be used for general discussions and group work, in order to give students more time to discuss their own ideas and to understand the material through dialogue. Because this is a university course, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, and are encouraged to question and debate with the instructor and each other on the various issues. This must be done in a productive and civil manner. Personal attacks and polemics will not be tolerated. The purpose of a freer flow of dialogue is to better understand and absorb the materials covered in class, and offensive actions and ideological or political agendas impede this process. Students who engage in such activities will have to leave the class.

PowerPoint will be used, but only to provide a skeletal outline of the lectures; students must pay attention to and take notes on what is said in class. Otherwise, they will not learn what is necessary for the course and the assignments.

The lectures are based in part on the readings, but will not necessarily directly discuss them; it will be assumed that students have done the readings.

Both the professor and the students have obligations and responsibilities in this course.

My responsibilities include making clear the objectives and material of the course; training students to think critically; returning assignments within a reasonable period of time with adequate comments and suggestions for improvement; treating students with respect and a willingness to hear their opinions and ideas; and keeping my own personal politics out of the classroom.

Students’ responsibilities include taking seriously the purposes and assignments of the course; preparing themselves adequately for the lectures; handing their assignments in
on time; treating each other and the professor with respect and a willingness to hear other opinions and ideas; and a readiness to think about the material with an open mind while keeping their own personal politics out of the classroom.

Students are also responsible for their own attendance and participation in class. Students who do miss class are responsible for obtaining the material discussed in class from their colleagues. I will not provide notes from lectures or discussions, but I am happy to discuss the material with a student who has already obtained the information. Poor attendance and poor participation will reflect on your final grade.

All cell phones, gadgets for listening to music, playing games, or contacting other people, and all similar devices must be turned off prior to the beginning of class. Students who engage in such activities will have to leave the class.

Please note that topics may change or may not be covered, depending on unforeseen circumstances. Any such changes are at the instructor's discretion. If there are any changes, they will be announced in class; students then are responsible for knowing whether and when any changes have been made.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

There are three sources of mandatory readings for this course:

- A coursepack of readings, available for purchase at the UTA Bookstore. Coursepack readings will be referred to in the reading list below as (Coursepack)
- Specific URLs available on the course WebCT. To access these, log in with your UTA NetID and password at <http://www.uta.edu/webct/>. WebCT readings will be referred to as (WebCT).
- Journal articles (in PDF form) available on e-reserves at the library. To access these, log in with your UTA NetID and password to the library's website (“Catalog,” then “Course Reserves”). Library reserve readings will be referred to as (Library).

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION:**

**Participation.** Students are expected to actively contribute to the conversations that take place within the framework of learning the material. This means asking questions, answering questions, and being part of whatever class discussions and group work, or other work, are included in the course. Participation is **worth 10% of the final grade**, and will be judged over the entirety of the course.

**Practice final exam.** There will be a practice final exam in class, on **Monday, February 15**. The practice exam is **worth 5% of the final grade**. It will reflect the structure and substance of the final exam; the purpose is to give students practice writing a critical analysis of the course material, obtain feedback, and get a better feel for the nature of expectations for the final exam. Thus, the practice exam will be cumulative (taking into
account everything studied from the beginning of the course until and including the class on Wednesday, February 10) and will consist of a single essay question. Students may not use books, notes, electronic devices, or anything else to help write their exams. Students who are late to the exam will not be given extra time to finish.

There will be no make-up practice exam, barring a very serious development or illness. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; visiting friends or relatives; having other work. If there is an illness, students will have to provide a medical note—not one in which a doctor writes that the student confirms he/she was sick, but a detailed note explaining that the doctor knows for a fact that the student was sick on the day of the test and could not be expected to write. Documentation must be provided for a missed practice exam within five days after the missed exam, regardless of the reason, and is subject to verification. Any requests for a deferral must be made before the date of the exam in order to be considered, and are at the professor’s discretion. A missed practice exam must be made up within five school days after the date of the original scheduled exam. No make-up will be allowed after five school days, and a zero will be assigned for that grade.

**Simulation prep paper.** In order to prepare for the simulation that will be conducted in class, each student will submit, independently, a prep paper 5-10 pages in length. The prep paper is worth 15% of the final grade and is due at the beginning of class on Monday, March 29. Given the nature of this assignment, papers will not be accepted after class begins, and there will be no extensions on this assignment. The purpose of this paper is to prepare and familiarize students with their particular role. The prep papers will be discussed in greater detail in class.

Prep papers must be typed or word-processed, with normal font, spacing, and margins. They must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. Regardless of the style used, page numbers must be included in the citations and bibliography. Papers cannot be emailed in—a hard copy must be provided. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves. All papers must be double-sided, including title page and bibliography. Failure to do so will result in a penalty to the paper.

**Simulation.** In order to give students a more direct understanding of and experience with the international relations of the region, five classes will be devoted to a simulation of decision-making within and between actors in the Middle East. These will take place between Monday, March 29 and Friday, April 9. Students will be divided into three to five groups, each representing a specific actor in the Middle East. An issue or crisis will be given and students will engage in a process of discussion, debate, argument, and negotiation in order to come up an agreed-on response. Simulation details, including the particular issue/crisis under discussion, will be provided in class. A de-briefing/discussion of the simulation and its results will take place on Friday, April 9.

Students will be graded on their participation in the simulation; this activity is worth 20% of the final grade. Simulation activity consists of four elements: vigorous participation
in one’s group discussions (including the formulation and evaluation of policy options); peer evaluations; contributions to the de-briefing session; and simulation evaluations.

Writing assignments. Students will have a choice whether to write two short papers, or one major paper. Short papers are each worth 15% of the final grade, and are due on Monday, March 1, and on Monday, April 19. Each paper is to be 4-8 pages in length, excluding title page and bibliography; going under or over this range will result in a penalty, as the purpose is to learn how to make an argument in a specified amount of space. The papers will be based on the themes and topics of the course. The specific nature of the assignments will be posted on WebCT well in advance of the due date. Examples of assignments could include: analysis of a reading or comparison of two readings; a particular question about a specific topic studied in class; a policy memo; and so on.

The major writing assignment is worth 30% of the final grade, and is due on Monday, May 3. The paper is to be 12-15 pages in length, excluding title page and bibliography; going under or over this range will result in a penalty, as the purpose is to learn how to make an argument in a specified amount of space. Students may choose any topic of interest, provided it deals with the international relations of the Middle East. (Papers cannot deal with purely domestic politics, though they can focus on the connection between domestic politics and foreign policy/international relations.) Students must have explicit permission from the professor for their topic. Without this consent, the paper will not be graded and a zero will be assigned. Once a student has discussed his/her paper with the professor, a confirmation-permission email will be sent to the student’s UTA email address.

Students must notify the professor by email which option they choose (two short papers or one major paper) by 7:00pm Friday, February 26. Once selected, students cannot change their decision. Students who do not make a choice by the deadline will receive a zero on the assignment, without exception.

All papers are due at the beginning of class; a paper that is handed in after class begins will be considered late. Late papers will not be accepted without penalty, unless there is a valid medical excuse and doctor’s note or evidence of another serious and unavoidable reason. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; being sick the day the assignment is due; visiting friends or relatives; having other work. Documentation is always required and is subject to verification. Papers handed in after class begins, but on the same day the assignment is due, will be penalized one percentage point per day off the mark received out of the total worth of the assignment, with an additional percentage point taken off for each additional day the report is late (i.e., 1% per day off whatever grade is given out of 15% or 30%). Any requests for an extension must be made before the due date of the assignment. Papers will not be accepted later than one week after the due date; students will then receive a zero on the assignment.

Papers must be typed or word-processed, with normal font, spacing, and margins. Papers must have the standard format required of a university paper, including title page, proper and consistent citation style, bibliography, and page numbers. Regardless
of the style used, page numbers must be included in the citations and bibliography. Papers cannot be emailed in—a hard copy must be provided. Students should also be sure to keep a copy of their assignments for themselves. All papers must be double-sided, including title page and bibliography. Failure to do so will result in a penalty to the paper.

Students’ research must be based on scholarly sources, which means journal articles, books, and academic reports from well-known research institutes. Students must use at least one book and one journal article in their research for each paper (neither of which can be on the course reading list). Dictionaries, lecture notes, encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), and many websites are not acceptable; students are strongly advised to consult with the professor first to find out if a source is suitable or not. Sources containing basic background information (e.g., the CIA World Factbook) and media reports are not scholarly sources; but they are useful for providing empirical evidence for an argument.

Students are expected to use proper format, structure, grammar, and citations in all of their assignments; how students make their arguments is as important as what they argue. If a student hands in an assignment that does not meet these standard university requirements, she will be asked to re-submit the assignment with the requisite changes and a penalty. For technical material, see Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), sixth edition or later; the course WebCT also has links on citations and bibliographies. Students may also consult the professor for further help.

**Final exam.** A final 2.5-hour exam, worth 20% of the final grade, will be written at the end of the course, during the university’s final exam period, on Monday, May 10, 8:00 – 10:30am. The exam will be cumulative, taking into account everything studied from the beginning of the course (lectures, class discussions, readings, and any other materials covered in the course). The format of the final exam is a single essay section. Students may not use books, notes, electronic devices, or anything else to help write their exams, and they may not use the same exam booklet used for the practice exam. Students who are late to the exam will not be given extra time to finish.

There will be no make-up exam, barring a very serious development or illness. Common but invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): computer, printer, or car troubles; visiting friends or relatives; having other work. If there is an illness, students will have to provide a medical note—not one in which a doctor writes that the student confirms he/she was sick, but a detailed note explaining that the doctor knows for a fact that the student was sick on the day of the test and could not be expected to write. Documentation must be provided for a missed exam within five days after the missed exam, regardless of the reason, and is subject to verification. Any requests for a deferral must be made before the date of the exam in order to be considered, and are at the professor’s discretion. A missed exam must be made up within five school days after the date of the original scheduled exam. No make-up will be allowed after five school days, and a zero will be assigned for that grade.
Please note that no extra credit work is provided or allowed, regardless of circumstances. Please also note that not completing an assignment (writing assignment, practice exam, exam, simulation activity, participation) and instead re-weighting the worth of other course assignments is not an option.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

Neither the professor nor the university has any tolerance for any form of academic dishonesty. Students who engage in such activities will face serious penalties, ranging from (among others) failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion from the university. According to the Regents’ Rules and Regulations, academic (scholastic) dishonesty “includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.”

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation. As the professor I am required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. It is the students’ responsibility to inform me of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. You may contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for more information: (817) 272-3364, or www.uta.edu/disability.

**DROPPING THE COURSE:**

Students are responsible for deciding whether or not they should drop the course, and for being aware of the consequences of doing so. The last day to drop classes is April 2, 2010. Students should see their respective departmental advisors for more information.

**STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMS:**

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of programs to help students connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at (817) 272-6107, or http://www.uta.edu/uac/studentsuccess-home/. 
Participation: 10% (Throughout the course)

Practice exam: 5% (Monday, February 15, in class)

Simulation prep paper: 15% (Due Monday, March 29)

Simulation activity: 20% (Monday, March 29 – Monday, April 12)

One major writing assignment: 30% (Due Monday, May 3)

OR

Two small writing assignments: 15% each (Due Monday, March 1; Monday, April 19)

Final exam: 20% (Monday, May 10, 8:00-10:30am)

**Grading Scale:**

A 80-100%
B 70-79%
C 60-69%
D 50-59%
F 0-49%

**Course Schedule:**

**Wednesday, January 20:** Introduction to course

*No readings.*

**Section A: Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

**Friday, January 22:** IR theory and Middle Eastern uniqueness


**Monday, January 25:** Paradigms: Systemic and material


**Wednesday, January 27:** Paradigms: Systemic and material imperatives, cont.

Friday, January 29: Paradigms: Colonialism


Monday, February 1: Paradigms: Colonialism, cont.


Wednesday, February 3: Paradigms: Domestic politics


Friday, February 5: Paradigms: Domestic politics, cont.


Monday, February 8: Paradigms: Discourses of identity


Wednesday, February 10: Paradigms: Discourses of identity, cont.


Friday, February 12: How to write a paper for this class

Margaret Price, “The St. Martin’s Tutorial on Avoiding Plagiarism: Student Resources.” (WebCT)

Monday, February 15: Practice final exam (in class)

Wednesday, February 17: Film: TBA

Friday, February 19: Film: TBA
Section B: Three Circles of Conflict

Monday, February 22: The Arab-Israeli conflict


Wednesday, February 24: The Arab-Israeli conflict, cont.


Friday, February 26: The Arab-Israeli conflict, cont.


Yitzhak Shamir (Israeli Prime Minister), Address at Madrid Conference (October 31, 1991). (WebCT)

Farouk al-Shara (Syrian Foreign Minister), Statement at Madrid Conference (October 31, 1991). (WebCT)

Haider Abdul Shafi (Head of Palestinian Delegation), Address at Madrid Conference (October 31, 1991). (WebCT)

Monday, March 1: The Arab-Israeli conflict, cont.


Wednesday, March 3: The Arab-Israeli conflict, cont.

Benjamin Netanyahu (Israeli Prime Minister), Address at Bar-Ilan University (June 14, 2009). (WebCT)

Mahmoud Abbas (PNA President), Statement at United Nations General Assembly (September 26, 2009). (WebCT)


**Friday, March 5:**

Inter-Arab conflicts

Pact of the League of Arab States (March 22, 1945). (WebCT)

**Monday, March 8:**

Inter-Arab conflicts, cont.


**Wednesday, March 10:**

Inter-Muslim disputes


**Section C: Other Challenges**

**Friday, March 12:**

Weak states and regional wars


**Monday, March 15:**

*Spring break—No class*

**Wednesday, March 17:**

*Spring break—No class*

**Friday, March 19:**

*Spring break—No class*

**Monday, March 22:**

Potential security communities


**Wednesday, March 24:**

Regional Economic Integration

**Friday, March 26:** Extra-regional actors


**Monday, March 29:** Simulation prep paper due

Simulation

**Wednesday, March 31:** Simulation

**Friday, April 2:** Simulation

**Monday, April 5:** Simulation

**Wednesday, April 7:** Simulation

**Friday, April 9:** Simulation de-briefing and discussion

**Section D: Foreign Policies of Select States**

**Monday, April 12:** Foreign policy analysis in the Middle East


**Wednesday, April 14:** Turkey


**Friday, April 16:** Turkey, cont.

Alexander Murinson, “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.6 (November 2006): 945-964. (Library)

**Monday, April 19:** Egypt

Issandr El Amrani, “The Emergence of a ‘Coptic Question’ in Egypt.” *Middle East Report*, Middle East Research and Information Project (April 28, 2006). (WebCT)

**Wednesday, April 21:** Egypt, cont.

Friday, April 23: Jordan

Curtis Ryan, “Reform Retreats Amid Jordan’s Political Storms.” Middle East Report, Middle East Research and Information Project (June 10, 2005). (WebCT)

Monday, April 26: Jordan, cont.

Brent E. Sasley, “Changes and Continuities in Jordanian Foreign Policy.” Middle East Review of International Affairs 6, no.1 (March 2002): 36-48. (WebCT)

Wednesday, April 28: Syria


Friday, April 30: Syria, cont.


Monday, May 3: Iran


Wednesday, May 5: Iran, cont.

Mark Gasiorowski, “The New Aggressiveness in Iran’s Foreign Policy.” Middle East Policy 14, no.2 (June 2007): 125-132. (Library)

Friday, May 7: Review for final exam

No readings.

Monday, May 10: Final exam (8:00 – 10:30am)