

## The Politics of the Middle East

Political Science 355j  
Dr. Jerry Pubantz  
Fall 2008

Office: 205 Foust Building  
Phone Number: 256-2579  
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 sixty years, including recent Arab-Palestinian-Israeli developments, the conflict in Iraq, the Iranian Revolution and its consequences, and the rise of Arab and Islamic radicalism.

### Required Texts

CQ Press, *The Middle East*, Eleventh Edition  
John Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
Deborah J. Gerner and Jillian Schwedler (eds.), *Understanding the Middle East*, Third Edition  
Hina Azam, *Sparks Charts: Islam*

### 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 politics
- understand critical factors in major regional developments such as the Arab-Israeli dispute, the Iranian Revolution, wars in the Gulf, oil politics, and the rise of radicalism

### Assignments

There will be two midterm tests (October 1 and November 10) as well as a final examination (December 12: 12 noon to 3p.m.). 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 (10 to 15 typed pages) on some aspect of **contemporary** Middle East politics, which must be submitted no later than November 24, and will be worth 20%. The submission of a clearly written thesis statement, an annotated bibliography of your preliminary research, and a one-page description of your research so far will be due in class no later than October 17, and will count for 10% of your grade.

The UNCG Human Rights Film Festival will be showing two important Middle East films this fall. Please make room in your calendars to attend the screening of these films. On September 24, you may attend the showing of *Offside* and the follow up discussion of the film for extra credit in the course. On October 8, you are **REQUIRED** to attend the showing and follow up discussion of *View from a Grain of Sand*. Both are being shown in the evening on campus. Three points will be added to the grade on your second exam for attendance at the first film, and 7 points will be deducted for non-attendance at the second film. Both films will be shown at 6:30pm in Room 28 of the McIver Building.

**N.B.** – There will be no class on **August 27** and **September 8**.

## Course Outline

- I. Geography and History of the Middle East Aug. 25 – Sept. 10  
A. Rise and Spread of Islam  
B. Colonial Experience  
C. 1914-1945  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 1 – 66; 137 – 143; 373 – 387  
*The Middle East*, Chapters 1; Country Profile of Saudi Arabia  
*Sparks Charts: Islam* as needed for understanding  
Esposito, Chapters 1-3
- II. Political Culture Sept. 12 – 19  
A. Zionism  
B. Islamic Pluralism  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, Chapters 10-11  
*The Middle East*, pp. 33-52  
*Sparks Charts: Islam* as needed for understanding  
Esposito, pp. 115-127
- III. Government and Politics in the Middle East Sept. 22 - 29  
A. Institutions and Law  
B. Secularism and Development in the Arab World  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, Chapters 4 and 9; pp. 221-241.  
(e-reserve) Bernard Lewis, "Freedom and Justice in the Modern Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 84, No. 3, May/June 2005, pp. 36-51.  
*The Middle East*, Country Profiles of Egypt, Kuwait, Libya  
*Sparks Charts: Islam* as needed for understanding  
Esposito, Chapter 6
- IV. The Arab-Israeli Conflict Oct. 3 – 17  
A. The Six Wars  
B. Borders, Refugees and Jerusalem  
C. Israel's Neighbors: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt  
D. The Palestinian Movement and the *Intifadahs*  
E. The Peace Process  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 66 – 84; Chapter 6  
*The Middle East*, pp. 52-96; Country Profiles of Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon,  
Palestinian Authority
- V. The Gulf States Oct. 22 – Nov. 7  
A. The Iranian Revolution  
B. The Wars of the Gulf  
C. Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Central Asia  
D. Oil Politics  
Readings: *The Middle East*, pp. 97-128; 135-139; Chapters 4; Country Profiles of Iraq, Iran,  
Yemen, Persian Gulf States  
Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 242-254; Chapter 8
- VI. Islamic Reawakening Nov. 12 - 19  
A. Shiite Resurgence  
B. The Muslim Brotherhood  
C. Fundamentalism and Terrorism  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 387-396.  
*The Middle East*, pp. 128-135  
(e-reserve) Zeyno Baran, "Fighting the War of Ideas," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 84, No.  
6, November/December 2005, pp. 68 – 78.  
Esposito, pp. 127 – 222; Chapter 7

- VII. Great Power Interests in the Middle East Nov. 21 - Dec. 8  
A. US Policy, Nixon to Bush  
B. European Community, Russian, and Chinese Interests  
C. The Iraq War  
D. New Regional Alliances  
Readings: Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 143-175.  
*The Middle East*, Chapter 5, Country Profile of Turkey

#### **Some General Notes and Guidelines**

**Attendance:** I will take class attendance for the first couple weeks of the course in order to get to know you and to meet financial aid and registration reporting requirements. However, in general, I will not require attendance—I will expect it, but not require it. This is your responsibility and up to your judgment. Students in the past have found attendance critical to their understanding and performance in the class, and I expect that will be the case this semester. 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. 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. 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://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/>. 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. The UNCG Honor System 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. Unfortunately, several students have not abided by this policy over the last two semesters and have been suspended or placed under academic penalty.

**Office hours:** This semester, I will be available to meet with you briefly immediately after class, and also in my office by appointment. Please call my office or e-mail me and we will set a time to meet. I look forward to talking with you about your work. Outside of class, you can reach me most quickly by e-mail. My e-mail address is [j\\_pubant@uncg.edu](mailto:j_pubant@uncg.edu). My phone number is 256-2579.