Selected Topic in Political Science: International Relations and Conflict in the Middle East

Tuesday 14:35 - 17:25

Please confirm location on Carleton central

Instructor: Prof. Hamid Ahmadi   Office: Loeb B641
Phone: 520 2600 X 3052    OHs:  Tuesday 11:30-2:15
Email: hahmadi1@connect.carleton.ca

Description: The course focuses on the unfolding of multi dimensional nature of conflicts in the contemporary Middle East. A swift glance at the present situation of the Middle Eastern conflict studies reveals that they mostly emphasize on the Arab-Israeli conflict, thus neglecting other important types of conflicts in the region. While acknowledging the importance of the ongoing conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis and its effects on the Middle Eastern politics in general, the course concentrates on other sources of the conflict, either among Middle Eastern states themselves or at the extra regional level between the Great powers and countries of the region. Among these, ethnic conflict in national and regional levels, territorial conflicts and boundary disputes, conflict over scarce natural resources, water in particular, and finally the cultural conflicts, both in religious and civilizational terms are considered the most important manifestations of conflict in the Middle East.

Synopsis: The Middle East has been considered the most conflict laden and “penetrated” regional subsystems in the last two centuries. This rule has maintained its credibility in the first decade of the Twenty First Century. The culture shift in international relations studies can be explained partly by looking into the nature of the political conflicts in the post cold war Middle East. The September 11, the consequent wars in Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), and the ongoing “war against terror” have been the best manifestations of the effects of the cultural norms and values on international politics. For a long time, the Middle Eastern experts and elites have been raising the argument that one basic factor behind all different aspects of conflicts in the region stems from the lack of democracy and the persistent forms of authoritarian rule. According to this explanation, authoritarian states have used territorial, cultural, religious and ideological issues as useful pretexts in order to create conflicts, thus to deviate the public opinion from the their real socio-political and economic problems. The Arab Spring and the consequent fall of the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East would be good criteria for assessing the credibility of that argument.

Organization: This is a graduate seminar, thus, I would like the readings for the week to be discussed in class. The first part of every session will be devoted to the discussion of the readings for the day, by presentation of one student and the subsequent participation of all in
discussing the issue. Then, I will lecture on the topic at hand, but would welcome discussions during the lecture.

**Required Text(s)**


**Course Requirements**

To obtain credit for this course, students must meet all the requirements: attendance, a presentation, a book review, and a final paper. Students who do not meet these criteria will be assigned a grade of “F.” Late reviews will be penalized one fraction of a grade (i.e., B to B-) for each weekday they are late. All works must be handed to the instructor. Marks will be calculated as follows:

- The book review* 16% *(Feb 7th)*
- The short paper** 16% *(March 6th)*
- Final paper ** 38% *(April 5th)*
- Participation*** 30%

*Each review should be about 3-4 pages (double-spaced and typed). Books to be reviewed are the required texts. If anyone desires to review a book other than the assigned texts it is fine, provided it is related to the course and cleared by the instructor (Any of the books in the recommended reading would do). The content of your review should address the following questions: What is the main objective of the author? What is the methodology utilized? Did the author achieve the stated objective(s)? Answer to each question obtains is worth 4% and presentation (clean and clear writing) obtains 4%.

** The short paper can be the extension of the presentation each student gives in the class. However, she or he should go beyond the mere description of the texts and by focusing on specific issue, make an argument as a contribution to the Middle Eastern studies. The final paper should be a well-argued research paper, focusing on an individual scholar of the Middle Eastern studies. By criticizing or appreciating each scholar’s works, her or his contribution to the discipline of Political Science or International Relations in general, and Middle Eastern studies in particular must be explained. Papers are to be 14-18 pages, double-spaced and the deadline is April 5th.

*** Participation is evaluated based on regular attendance and active engagement in class discussion.
Course Calendar

Session 1 (Jan 10): Introduction and Orientation: Middle East in international politics
Introducing the Course
Film: Promises and Betrayal

Readings:


Bahgat kourani, “the Middle East since the cold war: torn between geopolitics and geo-economics” in Louis Fawcett, International Relations of the Middle East, pp. 59-75.

Recommended:

Session 2 (Jan 17): The Middle Eastern studies: the State of the Art

Readings:


Recommended


Session 3 (Jan 24): **Studying Middle East in the Light of IR Theories**

Readings:
Fred Halliday, “International Relations theory and the Middle East”, in *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*, pp.21-41.

Raymound Hinnebusch, “Core and periphery: the international system and the Middle East”, in *the international Relations of the Middle East*, pp.14-54.

--------------------------------, “Identity and sovereignty in the regional system”, in *The International Politics of the Middle East*, pp. 54-73.


Recommended:

Session 4 (Jan 31): **Conflict in the Middle East: Concepts, Theories and Classifications**
Readings:


Louise Fawcett, “Alliances, cooperation and regionalism in the Middle East”, in *International Relations of the Middle East*, pp. 173-191.

Raymound Hinnebusch, “war and order in the regional system”, in *International Politics of the Middle East*, pp. 154.204.

*Typology of conflicts in the Middle East*: Comments by professor

Recommended:

Session 5 (Feb 7): The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Readings:


Charles Smith, “the Arab-Israeli conflict,” in Louis Fawcett, pp. 217-241


Recommended:

Session 6 (Feb 14): Territorial Conflicts and Boundary Disputes

Readings:

Peter Hinchcliffe, Beverley Milton-Edwards,” War in the Gulf: Iran and Iraq 1981-1989,” in *Conflicts in the Middle East since 1945*, pp. 4-95

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------,” The Kuwaiti crisis: brother versus brother,” in *Conflicts in the Middle East since 1945*, pp. 95-106


Recommended:

Week of Feb 20-24th Winter Break

Session 7 (Feb 28): Ethnicity and Conflict (Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives)

Readings:


Recommended:

Session 8 (March 6th): Ethnic Conflicts in Regional and International levels

Readings:


-------------, “the decision for genocide in the light of Ottoman-Turkish documents”, in Taner Akcam, pp. 158-180.

Recommended:

**Session 9 (March 13): Conflict over Natural Resources (Water War)**

Readings:


Recommended:

Session 10 (March 20th): Culture and Conflict: (the Myth and Reality of the Islamic Threat)

Readings:


Jonathan Fox, “Are Middle East Conflicts More Religious”? Middle East Quarterly Fall 2001, pp. 31-40.


Raymound Hinnebusch, “the politics of identity in the Middle East international relations”, in Louis Fawcett, pp. 151-173.

Recommended:


Session 11 (March 27th) Nuclear Proliferation and Conflict over Nuclear Weapons

Readings:


R. Scott Kemp and Alexander Glaser, Statement on Iran’s ability to make a nuclear weapon and the significance of the 19 February 2009 IAEA report on Iran’s uranium enrichment Program (March 2, 2009).

Ray Takeyh, Iran Builds the Bomb (2004).


Recommended:
Session 12 (April 3): Looking to the Future (conflict and cooperation in the aftermath of the Arab Spring)

Readings:


Recommended:

Academic Accommodations
For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by (November 11, 2011 for fall term examinations and March 7, 2012 for winter term examinations).

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.
**Oral Examination:** At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Grading:** The following is the Carleton University grading system.

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**Grades:** Final grades are derived from the completion of course assignments. Failure to write the final exam will result in the grade ABS. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Connect Email Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.
**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.