

POL 375: Politics of the Middle East: CID 4770
Fall 2008
3 credit hours
Tu, Th 3:30-4:50 p.m. AB1, 310

Masoud Kazemzadeh, Ph.D.
Office: Academic Building 1, 319F
Phone: (936) 294-1462
E-mail: mxk002@shsu.edu
Office Hours:
Mon 4:20-5:30 p.m.
Tues 4:50-5:10 p.m.
Wed 4:20-6:00 p.m.
Thur 3:00-3:25 and 4:50-6:00 p.m.
and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

What is Islamic fundamentalism and how is it different from (the religion of) Islam? Why did al Qaeda carry out the 9/11 terrorist attacks? What are some of the causes of the 1979 Iranian revolution? Why are almost all the countries in the Middle East and North Africa ruled by dictatorships? What are the prospects for democracy in the Middle East? What are some of the concerns and issues that may lead to wars involving the U.S. in the near future? What are the options open to the U.S. in dealing with Iran in the next two years? By the end of this course, you should be able to answer these questions.

For most Americans, the Middle East appears as an enigmatic region with perplexing politics. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the region and its politics. I hope to achieve two main goals. First, to impart a solid understanding of basics of the region. Second, to present competing explanations and analyses of domestic politics and international relations of the Middle East.

Most students will find that the materials covered in this course is not especially difficult to understand. There is a substantial amount of materials to be read, however, and it is imperative for each student's success that he or she develops a regular study schedule that permits keeping up with the assignment at all times.

You are expected to watch national and international news such as CNN and Fox at least five times a week. I highly recommend PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer. If you do not have access to television, you should read *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com).

Course Objectives

This class is designed to help the student learn:

- (1) the basics of the Middle East society, history, and politics;
- (2) the political systems in several significant countries in the region;
- (3) about the significant Middle Eastern terrorist organizations, their ideologies, and goals; and
- (4) critically evaluate political events and trends.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. It is imperative that you attend all the lectures. If you are going to miss a class, ask a friend to tape the lecture for you. Rolls will be taken periodically. Anyone with 3 absences (that are not excused) will receive an "F." Permission to take a make-up exam will rarely be given and only a dire situation will warrant one. Make-up exams will be harder than the one given to the entire class.

Religious Holy Day or Days

A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day or days or to travel for the purpose of religious observance may take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time. The student should inform me before or immediately after the absence in writing (e-mail preferred). The student will have 15 days to complete the assignment or take the exam. If you are to miss the lecture, have a fellow student tape the lecture for you. Absence due to religious holy day does not count towards the 3 absences.

Academic Dishonesty

Anyone caught cheating will receive "F" for the course and will be referred to the Associate Vice President for Student Services for further disciplinary action.

Attention Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals that otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs, nor shall they be subject to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with me so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Visitors in the classroom

If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. As a rule, I have no objections to "tourists" if extra seats are available.

Instructor evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form towards the end of the semester.

Classroom rules of conduct

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:
<http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

Course Grade Will be Computed as Follows:

map quiz	20%
1 st mid-term	25%
2 nd mid-term	25%
final exam	30%

* Note: The point distributions might fluctuate a little bit (about 5 points). For example, the 1st mid-term might be 30 points (instead of 25) and the final 25 points (instead of 30) depending on how fast we are able to proceed. There is a total of 100 points for the course.

Extra Credit

One may earn up to two extra points by making an oral presentation based on either first-hand experience in the Middle East or reading an article or book chapter. Make certain that you make an agreement with me on the specifics. A list of articles and book chapters is included at the end of this syllabus.

Textbooks:

* Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
ISBN: 0-520-24150-9.

* David E. Long, Bernard Reich, and Mark Gasiorowski, eds., *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, 5th edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2007).
ISBN-10: 0-8133-4361-5. Hereafter referred to by: L, R, G,

From the e-syllabus in Bb click on the links to the various articles. You would be prompted to enter your SHSU username and password. The link will directly take you to the article.

OUTLINE

weeks 1-4 **Introduction: geography, religions and ethnic groups in MENA**

* L, R, G, Maps 1-5, pp. xv-xix.

* Kamrava, pp. 1-34.

* Basic data on oil and gas reserves: U.S. Government official date (7 pages)

http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Persian_Gulf/pdf.pdf

Map Quiz

1st Mid-Term Exam

week 5 **Brief History**

* Kamrava, ch. 2.

* L, R, G, ch. 1.

* Masoud Kazemzadeh, book review on women in Egypt and Iran.

<http://www.jstor.org.unx1.shsu.edu:2048/stable/pdfplus/2945897.pdf>

* Film: “The Middle East on the Verge of WWI.”

week 6 **The Age of Nationalism**

* Kamrava, ch. 3.

* Film: BBC, “End of Empire.”

week 7 **Turkey**

* L, R, G, ch. 2.

week 8 **Iran**

* L, R, G, ch. 3.

week 9 **U.S.-Iran Confrontation**

* Masoud Kazemzadeh, “Ahmadinejad’s Foreign Policy,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2007).

http://muse.jhu.edu.unx1.shsu.edu:2048/journals/comparative_studies_of_south_asia_africa_and_the_middle_east/v027/27.2kazemzadeh.pdf

* Mehdi Khalaji, *Apocalyptic Politics: On the Rationality of Iranian Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 2008) available at

<http://washingtoninstitute.org/download.php?file=PolicyFocus79.pdf>

(this is about 40 pages)

2nd Mid-Term Exam

week 10 **Saudi Arabia**

* L, R, G, ch. 4.

week 11 **Iraq**

* L, R, G, ch. 5.

week 12 **Lebanon & Syria**

* L, R, G, ch. 8.

* L, R, G, ch. 9.

week 13 **Egypt**

* L, R, G, ch. 13.

week 14 **Israeli-Palestinian-Arab Conflicts**

* Kamrava, ch. 4.

week 15 **Middle Eastern Wars 1980-Present (Iran-Iraq War, Iraq-Kuwait-U.S., 9/11, U.S.-Iraq War, Israel-Hezbollah War)**

* Kamrava, ch. 6

* Paul Salem, "The after-effects of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war," *Contemporary Arab Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 2008), pp. 15-24.

<http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/Pdf/AddCoversheet?xml=/mnt/pdfserve/pdfserve/469610--789764692.xml>

* Film: "Charlie Wilson's War."

Final Exam

Thursday December 11, 2008; 3:30-4:50 p.m.

List of book chapters and articles for extra credit presentations:

- * Kamrava, ch. 7: Palestinian-Israeli Conflict
- * Kamrava, ch. 8: Challenge of Economic Development
- * Kamrava, ch. 9: States and Their Opponents
- * Kamrava, ch. 10: The Question of Democracy
- * L, R, G, ch. 6: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman
- * L, R, G, ch. 10: Jordan
- * L, R, G, ch. 11: Israel
- * L, R, G, ch. 12: Palestinians
- * L, R, G, ch. 14: Libya
- * L, R, G, ch. 15: Morocco
- * L, R, G, ch. 16: Algeria
- * L, R, G, ch. 17: Tunisia
- * Timothy Garton Ash, "Soldiers of the Hidden Imam," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 52, No. 17 (November 3, 2005).
- * Masoud Kazemzadeh, "Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1998), pp. 52-59.
- * Elliot Hen-Tov, "Understanding Iran's New Authoritarianism," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2006-07), pp. 163-179.