

Master Syllabus

1. Course Information

College: College of Liberal Arts
Department: Political Science
Course Title: Regional Studies: The Middle East
Course Designation and Number RST 291
GE Area(s)

II: Cultural-Social Foundations: The Non-western World
VI: College Component

Writing Intensive: Yes No

For WI Courses: All Sections Selected Sections are WI.

Method(s) of Instruction: Lecture
 Discussion
 Web-enhanced
 Web-only
 Other
 Small Group Activities

Includes Lab: Yes No

Prerequisites: None

1. Objectives

GE Program Objectives:

- sharpen critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills;
- learn about the aesthetic, ethical, moral, social, and cultural dimensions of human experience needed for participation in the human community;
- increase knowledge and understanding of the past, of the world in which we live, and of how both past and present have an impact on the future.

GE Area Two Objectives:

- describe and analyze historical-social elements of non-western culture;
- describe and analyze the global interdependence of groups and of individuals.

GE Area Six Objective (in addition to the above):

- understand important relationships and interdependencies between the student's major and other academic disciplines, world events or life endeavors.

Course Objectives and GE Learning Outcomes:

For area two, the course heavily emphasizes the historical and social elements of Middle Eastern cultures, their interdependence with one another, and their interdependence among the cultures and societies outside the region.

- describe and analyze historical-social elements of non-western culture;
- describe and analyze the global interdependence of groups and of individuals.

For area six, the college component, this course has linkages to virtually all majors in the Liberal Arts College, be they in the humanities, the fine arts, or the social sciences. For instance, in addition to history, politics, and the cultures of the region, we also discuss poetry and literature in the Islamic world and the nature of art, architecture, and music in the area. Linkages are also made to the classical Greco-Roman world and the regions of Central Asia. This is intentionally a multidisciplinary course.

- Understand important relationships and interdependencies between the student's major and other academic disciplines, world events or life endeavors.

Re Diversity:

In almost every way, the Middle East is among the most diverse regions of the world. This applies racially and ethnically, but also in terms of religious, cultural, and economic diversity. We examine the religions of the region, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as the major divisions within them, e.g., in the case of Islam, Sunnism and Shiism. We examine the major linguistic/ethnic groups in the region – Arabs, Jews, Turks, Persians, Kurds. We discuss the differences between the economically have and have not countries in the region with emphasis on petroleum and other resources as well as the education of the workforces.

The region is also a laboratory for exploring the diversity of modernization and development experience – the clash between the Lexus (modernity) and the olive tree (tradition) to use Thomas Friedman's analogy. The modernization process is covered in some detail along with the question of to what extent is westernization a part of economic modernization.

WAC Objectives

- To improve students' writing proficiency-their ability to develop ideas and transmit information for an appropriate audience in an organized, coherent fashion while writing with appropriate style and correct grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling.
- To encourage students to use writing as a learning tool to explore and structure ideas, to articulate thoughts and questions, and to discover what they know and do not know, thereby empowering students to use writing as a tool of discovery, self-discipline, and thought.
- To demonstrate for students the ways in which writing is integral to all disciplines and essential to the learning and conveying of knowledge in all fields.

The goal of 1500 words (6 double-spaced pages) will be achieved in two ways (1) a 250 word essay on each of the three exams, for a total of 750 words, plus a 750 word typed interpretive essay, which will weigh as much as an exam.

3. Suggested Course Materials

Reading: Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr., *A Concise History of the Middle East*, Seventh Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002. Paperback.

Videos: As indicated below.

4. Suggested Methods of Evaluation

There are three midterm exams. Each takes 75 minutes and consists of 50 objective questions plus a 250 words essay question. There will also be an interpretive essay of 750 words to be selected from a list of topics to be provided. It is due **one week after Exam 2**. The essay will be graded for logical coherence, clarity of content, and proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Students will

then rewrite the essay making any indicated corrections. The three exams and the essay are equally weighted and will be averaged to determine the course grade.

Also, a good record of attendance will be considered for students whose grades are border-line.

5. Grading Policy

All GE course are graded A – F. WI component is graded Pass/Unsatisfactory.

6. Suggested Weekly Course Outline Including Typical Assignments

Week 1 Introduction: The Land and People of the Middle East
Goldschmidt: Introduction & Chapters 1 & 2
Video 50114: “The Middlemen” Encyclopedia Britannica Series

Week 2 The Legacy of Islam
Goldschmidt: Chapters 3, 4 & 5
Video 50074: “Holy Land” Encyclopedia Britannica Series
Video 50073: “Sects and Violence” Encyclopedia Britannica Series

Week 3 The Umayyads and the Abbasids
Goldschmidt: Chapters 6, 7, & 8

EXAM NO. 1

Week 4 The Ottoman Empire
Goldschmidt: Read Chapter 9 and Skim Chapter 10
The 19th Century: Imperialism and Nationalism
Goldschmidt: Chapters 11, 12, & 13
Video 50116: “New Frontiers” Encyclopedia Britannica Series

Week 5 Independence and Modernization: The Emergence of the States of the Contemporary Middle East
Video 50116: “New Frontiers” Encyclopedia Britannica Series

EXAM NO. 2 (covers all material since Exam 1)

Week 6 The States of the Modern Middle
& Week 7 Video 54158: “The Century of Warfare: War in the Middle East 1945-89

Week 8 Zionism, Palestine, and the Birth of Israel
Goldschmidt: Chapters 16 & 17, also pp. 330-336

Week 9 The Arab-Israeli Wars and the Quest for Peace
Goldschmidt: Chapter 18

Week 10 The Reassertion of Islamic Influence: The Middle East Today and Tomorrow
Goldschmidt: Chapters 19 & 20
Video 54287: CNN Perspective: Revolutionary Journey with Christine Amanpour

EXAM NO. 3 (covers all material since Exam 2)

Make-up Exams are given during the regularly scheduled final exam period.

7. Other

Syllabus distributed to students should employ the format approved by UCAP and must include:

- ✓ Instructor name, office hours, and contact information.
- ✓ Office of Disability Services information.
- ✓ Information on how grades will be determined.
- ✓ Attendance policy.