Strategic Survey of the Middle East
DSS 5313

Summer 2021
Online course

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Course overview
This graduate course provides a strategic overview of socio-economic issues, political contexts, and security challenges facing Middle Eastern states, including physical, cultural, historical, and environmental patterns and problems in the region. Additionally, political instability, insurgencies and counterinsurgency efforts in the region will be discussed. The nations in the area are examined in light of the themes of security and development.

Course objectives
Introduce students to important themes in a strategic survey of the region, to include but not limited to:
   a. Historical and cultural context in the region
   b. Sunni-Shi’i historical background
   c. Strategic importance of regional water supplies
   d. Israeli-Palestinian conflict
   e. Country by country, as well as regional analysis

Course requirements and grading
Reading the assigned texts each week provides a starting point toward an understanding of the course subject material. Students are expected to reflect upon these texts through active participation in weekly discussion boards as well as comments on the posts of others in the course. Active participation demonstrates your grasp of the material and is part of your grade. The success of this class is dependent upon the preparation of its members.

Students will also compose a final paper leveraging course readings and discussions to examine a significant related topic. While the span of acceptable topics is generally broad, students are encouraged to write on a more specific topic of their choosing in order to keep their paper focused. Your paper should present an argument demonstrating original thought with a consistent structure, leveraging additional resources while drawing upon course material.

Total course points: 1000 points

Quiz and Discussion Board Grading – 540 points
NOTE: All assignment due times are based on Mountain Time (UTEP time)
Students must complete all listed requirements to successfully pass this course, to include:

- Weekly Quiz (7 total: 30 points/quiz Weeks 1-6 for 180 pts, Final Quiz 60 points) – 240 points
• Students will complete all Weekly Quizzes (1 hour allotted) not later than Saturday at 2 PM.
• The Final Quiz (3 hours allotted) will be due Friday of the last week by 9 PM.
• Quiz answers will be graded on content, grammar, and presentation (i.e., logical introduction, synthesis, and conclusion). Answers should not simply repeat what you read, but should show insight (and an argument, where applicable) into the readings.

- Online discussion board (DB) posts and comments/replies on readings for each Section (generally two Sections per week, 12 total, 25 points each section) – 300 points
  • Posts for each Section (two Sections each week, except Weeks 1 and 7) are due not later than Saturday at 12 PM each week. Postings after 12 PM on Saturday will automatically receive a letter grade deduction.
  • These posts will respond to basic issues and questions raised in each week's readings.
  The posted questions in the DB are suggestions only – students are free to raise other issues in their posts.
  • Outside readings may be used, but should be minimal – base your posts on the assigned readings.
  • Replies to another student are due not later than Sunday afternoon at 3 PM each week. Comments/replies posted after 3 PM on Sunday will automatically receive a letter grade deduction.
  • DB posts/replies will be graded on content, grammar, and presentation (i.e. logical introduction, synthesis, and conclusion)

Participation – 110 points
• Students are expected to participate in weekly discussions throughout the course – not simply during the graded postings/replies noted above – participation scores are based on active online engagement.

Research Paper, to include Summary Question/Response – 350 points
The final class assignment is to research an issue/problem in the Middle East of particular interest to you. This may be any issue that you are interested in. The research paper will review the issue/problem you have selected and can include original research in the form of interviews with experts. There is one intermediate deadline (July 24); however, students should begin to plan the paper even earlier.

July 24: Research Paper proposal: Two-paragraph description of the problem or issue to be studied due, including 10 citations of books/articles specific to the topic.

August 14: Research Paper Due. The research paper should discuss the question of interest and why it is a significant problem (briefly), and describe/analyze the issue you have identified in the literature. Do not devote space in the paper to summarizing assigned course readings on your topic. The research paper is an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to synthesize the material presented in the relevant literature to a practical question of interest. The paper and summaries (see next) are due August 14.
You will make a short summary of the key findings of your research paper. Please post your summary by August 14 for the entire class to read. The class will be required to ask questions of different authors. Each student must ask at least one question to five different authors. Questions are due August 16. Answers to questions will be due by August 19.

- Final paper will be 8-12 pages in length (12-pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, using endnotes, which are not included in the page count – no footnotes permitted). The paper is due not later than Saturday, August 14 at 3 PM. Each 24-hour period delay will result in a 10% reduction in the grade (e.g. receipt of the paper on Sunday at 8 AM results in maximum score of 90%, receipt of the paper on Sunday at 3:30 PM results in maximum score of 80%).
- Final paper will be submitted to the instructor via email, in Microsoft Word format
- See Final Paper Guidelines on Blackboard for the rubric and further guidance

**Discussion and Analysis Expectations**
Throughout the class we will discuss issues and other literature on the Middle East. Each analysis/discussion must demonstrate a mastery of the details as well as the literature on the topic. Each student writes up his/her own analysis/discussion. The grading will include the quality of the discussion, outside research, and the ability to participate in the discussion of the topic. Students are encouraged to question assumptions and theories in the readings or related issues and make pertinent comments that might encourage further comments/debates. Especially insightful comments will be scored higher. All posts are required to be written professionally; students should carefully proofread all entries before posting.

**Books and resources (the following are required)**


*Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard, or are available through UTEP library resources*
Course calendar and Outline: The following is the sequence of topics and required text reading assignments for the course. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. The listed chapters are from the required text, Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics by Held and Cummings. The other readings are listed by author. Your professor reserves the right to alter this calendar as circumstances dictate. All changes will be sent to students.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Key points to take away from the geographic and environmental portions of the readings include strategic implications for the region. You are not expected to read these particular sections in great detail, but to discern important potential effects as you skim them.

Week 1
What is the Middle East?

Section 1: Intro to ‘The Middle East’
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 1 & 2
- Davison

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Keddie

Section 2: Historical and Cultural Patterns
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 3
- Davis
- Fain

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Whalen
- Mawby

*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above

Week 2
Historical and Cultural Patterns, Urbanization and Rural Development

Section 3: Demographic and Social Patterns
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 4
- Bonine
- Dangor
- Forstenlechner
For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Soffer
- Simon

**Section 4: Urbanization and Rural Development**
**Required readings:**
- Held and Cummings, Chap 5, 6, 7
- Ventner
- Baghat
- Hvidt

*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above*

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**Week 3**

*Geopolitics and Introduction to the Levant*

**Section 5: Geopolitics**
**Required readings:**
- Held and Cummings, Chap 8, 9
- Hammami

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Ackerman
- Khatib
- Lagerquist
- Pappe

**Section 6: Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Jordan**
**Required readings:**
- Held and Cummings, Chap 10, 11, 12
- Ghadbian
- Little
- Lucas

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Kaufman
- Moore and Schrank

*Research paper proposal due by July 24*
*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above*
Week 4
Israel, Palestine, and Iraq

Section 7: Israel and Palestine
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 13
- Frederiksen
- Abu Odeh
- Ben Meir

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Chamberlin
- Hanieh

Section 8: Iraq
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 14
- Sluglett
- Takeyh

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Wuthrich
- Lees

*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above

Week 5
Arabian Peninsula to Egypt

Section 9: Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, Oman, Yemen
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 15, 16, 17, 18
- Al-Atawneh
- Al-Suwaidi
- Dekmejian

Section 10: Egypt
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 19
- Rugh

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Elssasser
- Blanga
- Barsalov

*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above
Week 6
Turkey and Iran

Section 11: Turkey
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 20
- Kirisci

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Arat
- Hosgor
- Murinson
- Sayari

Section 12: Iran
Required readings:
- Held and Cummings, Chap 21
- Amuzegar
- Malley

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Mavani
- Rahigh
- Kaye and Lorber

*Research paper and posted summary due Saturday, August 14
*Complete DB posts and Weekly Quiz by deadlines noted above

Week 7
Afghanistan and Research Paper Discussions

Section 13: Afghanistan
Required readings:
- Afghanistan Key Data
- Afghanistan Political
- Busby

For further exploration (Optional, not required):
- Afghanistan – Recent US engagement

*Complete DB posts and Final Quiz by deadlines noted above
NOTE: Final Quiz is due Friday, one day earlier than previous weeks (see above)
Additional thoughts

Respect for others in sharing ideas; Netiquette:
As is the case with many academic courses, students may be exposed to provocative thoughts or ideas, including those professed by the instructor. These thoughts may or may not reflect my own line of thinking, and indeed may well be intended to encourage students to either defend a particular point of view or to consider and/or counter alternative perspectives. As such, my role in this course is not to provide you with prescriptive answers; rather, it is intended to guide and encourage students to think more broadly about the subject matter. In all cases, discussion participants are expected to demonstrate respect for others in their exchanges.

Please realize that attempts at humor, and satire in particular, may be misconstrued online. Emoticons such as a smiley face :) may help communicate humor to your reader. Further tips on ‘Netiquette’ may be found at www.albion.com/netiquette.

Academic Integrity:
Academic Dishonesty is NEVER tolerated by UTEP. All cases are reported to the Dean of Students for Academic Sanctions. These sanctions may include expulsion. All work submitted must be original; students may not submit graded work from another course. Forms of academic dishonesty include: Collusion—lending your work to another person to submit as his or her own; Fabrication—deliberately creating false information on a works cited page, and Plagiarism—the presentation of another person's work as your own, whether you mean to or not (e.g., copying parts of or whole papers off the Internet).

Disability Services:
If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 915-747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and CASS at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Disclaimer Statement
Course content may vary from the outline to meet specific objectives.