

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY
INTL 410: UNITED STATES AND MIDDLE EAST RELATIONS
Summer 2009
Masoud Kheirabadi, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A proper understanding of contemporary American involvement in the Middle East requires knowledge of America's role in post-World War II political, social, and economic changes in the region. In this course we will examine the nature of American involvement in the Middle East with regard to region's national, regional, and international conflicts. We will trace the history of regional conflicts (i.e., land, resources, religion, and ethnicity) and discuss the complications that these ongoing conflicts can cause for American foreign policy elite. Possible strategies to reduce, manage, and possibly solve some of these problems with regard to American interests and involvement will be examined in class. This will be a totally online course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: After taking this course you are expected to:

1. have a better understanding of the roots of contemporary Middle Eastern problems;
2. understand the role that America has played to protect her "interests" in the region;
3. understand the roots of international terrorism.

REQUIRED READINGS:

David W. Lesch, The Middle East And the United States: A Historical And Political Reassessment (Paperback), Westview Press; 4th edition (January 31, 2007) (ISBN-10: 0813343496; ISBN-13: 978-0813343495)

Dan Smith, The State of the Middle East: An Atlas of Conflict and Resolution (Paperback), Earthscan Ltd; 2nd edition (October 15, 2008) ISBN- 1844076296

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Louise Fawcett, International Relations of the Middle East (Paperback), Oxford University Press, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0199215539)

Haggai Ram, Iranophobia: The Logic of an Israeli Obsession (Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and I) (Paperback), Stanford University Press, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0804760683)

Rashid Khalidi, Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East (Hardcover), Beacon Press, 2009 (ISBN-13: 978-0807003107)

Griffin, D.R., Cobb Jr., J.B., Falk, R.A., Keller, C. (2006). The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God: A political, economic, religious statement. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

1. ACCESS TO COMPUTER WITH INTERNET CONNECTIONS

To take this geography course you will need to have access to a computer with Internet connections, which can allow you to connect to our class site.

2. AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIALS AND DOCUMENTARIES

Textbooks for the course are available through PSU bookstore. You need your required textbooks in hand by the first day of the term in order to do your weekly assignments. It is your responsibility to purchase your textbook on time. Lack of access to the textbook cannot be used as an excuse for not doing the weekly assignments.

3. MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to read the assigned weekly material and have a reasonable understanding of issues discussed by your textbooks. Your comprehension of reading materials will be tested through weekly quizzes and critical thinking essays. To satisfy the course requirements, you need to complete 4 weekly quizzes and respond to 4 weekly critical thinking questions during the term. Due dates for assignments are given under Weekly Readings and Learning Activities below. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

A. WEEKLY CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS: To better understand the issues discussed by your text you will write four critical thinking essays throughout the term and for each critical thinking assignment will respond to at least two other students' essays. Your critical thinking essays and your responses will account for 100 points or 1/3 of your total points for the course. Each essay will worth 25 points (15 for your own posted essay and the remaining 10 points for responding to at least two other essays posted by your fellow students.) Essays should be at least 750 words and have to be submitted before the assigned deadlines. Your essays should display your comprehension of concepts covered by your textbook, which are related to your essay. In addition to your textbook you need to use at least two outside sources (articles from journals, Internet sites, book chapters, etc.) You need to clearly cite the information for your outside sources (i.e. author, article name, journal name, year of publication, Internet site, etc.) at bottom of your posted essay. Failing to cite the above information will result in point deductions from your assignment. You need to post your essays on our Discussion Board under their assigned spaces. Please preview your essays for clarity before posting them for others to see. There should be at least one space between your consequent paragraphs. Make sure your essay is not all bumped together in one bunch without spaces between your paragraphs or references.

For doing your weekly assignments you can click on Learning Modules and see the required assignments for various weeks. For your first critical thinking essay you can find it under Week 1 Assignments (under Learning Modules) or our Discussion Board. To post your first essay do the following:

1. Click on "Discussions" (under Course Tools);
2. Click on "Critical Thinking Essay 1" on Discussion page and read the question;
3. Click on "Create Message" and on the "Subject" box write the name that you want to pick for your essay or simply type CTE 1;

4. Type your essay or copy and paste it from another program that you might have used to write your essay;
5. Click on "Preview" to see if your essay is readable and there are enough spaces between your consequent paragraphs. Also check for possible spelling and grammatical errors. Finally make that sure you have cited your references correctly according to the rules indicated above;
6. Click on "Post" when you are happy with your essay;
7. After posting your essay go back to the Discussion page and make sure your essay has been posted properly;
8. If you have problems posting correctly contact our technicians at Distance Learning Center or HELP Desk.

Note: Do not post your essay as an attachment. You can type your essay using a Word 2007 or another compatible program and then copy and paste it to our Discussion Board. This way you can make sure your essay is spell-checked and ready to go. Make sure to post your essay before the deadline. LATE ESSAYS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Comments/Responses: As I indicated above you also need to read the postings by other students and respond (i.e., make comments) to at least two other postings for each essay. Your responses/comments should be substantial and express your understanding of issues in hand (it should go beyond simply complementing the person for the essay.) Each comment should be at least 100 words. For posting your comments simply click on "Reply" and type your comments.

Grading Criteria for your 750-word Critical Thinking Essay, and Responses

1. Preview them for clarity and readability before posting, (contact our Blackboard technicians at PCC Help Desk if you do not know how to post properly.)
2. Make sure that there is enough space between consequent paragraphs (preferably one space),
3. Spell-check your essay and correct your grammar,
4. Focus on the assigned topic and avoid going in tangents,
5. Use your required text plus **at least two outside sources to support your arguments (refer to your sources within the body of your essay,)**
6. **Cite your references clearly**, indicating the names of the **authors** and **articles**, and **dates** and **sources** for material that you have used for writing your essay (if your article does not include author's name, either avoid that article or use it as an additional one. **You need to have at least two outside sources with complete citations including authors' names.**)
7. Assignments without proper citations will lose points
8. **Do not use "Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia"** as one of your two required outside sources. Also any other source without author or article title will not be accepted. **Do not trust the content of any article without a given author.** Make sure to find articles with known authors and dates of publication.
9. Any sign of plagiarism will result in zero grades.
10. Responding to at least two other students' postings with substantial arguments of about 100 words.

B. WEEKLY QUIZZES: There will be a total of four quizzes testing your comprehension of the reading material. There will be one quiz per week for four weeks. Quizzes are mainly multiple choice questions. Each week's quiz will cover material from the readings assigned for that particular week. Quizzes will worth 200 points (50 points for each quiz) or 2/3 of your total 300 points for the course.

To take your quiz 1:

1. Click on "Assessment" (under the Course Tools);
2. Click on "Begin Assessment" box to start taking the quiz;
3. Select the correct answer for each question and click the "Save Answer" box (Note: there is only one correct answer for each question);
4. When you finish answering all the questions click the "Finish" box at the bottom of the test;
5. A box will appear that asks you if you want to "Submit Quiz for Grading?", click "Ok;"
6. Click on "View Results" in the Assessments area if you want to see your score.

Note: Please make sure to submit your quizzes before the assigned deadlines. LATE QUIZZES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

4. GRADING CRITERIA

There are a total of 300 possible points with 200 points belonging to weekly quizzes and 100 points belonging to biweekly critical thinking essays. If you have taken this course as pass/no pass, in order to pass the course you need to make the minimum points required for a C- grade. Grading is based on the following percentages:

Points	Grade
300-279	A
278-270	A-
269-258	B+
257-249	B
248-240	B-
239-228	C+
227-219	C
218-210	C-
209-198	D+
197-189	D
188-180	D-
179-0	F

5. ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

Quizzes will become available on Thursday of each week and will remain available until their due date which is the following Sunday before midnight (Of course the first week quiz appears on the first day of the term and is due to Sunday of the same week.) So each assignment (with the exception of week 1) will remain available for a total of 10 days and will give you plenty of time to complete the assignment. This will be the case until the end of the term. Critical thinking essays are due Fridays and responses to other students' essays are due Sundays before midnight. There is NO time limit for these assignments. However, pay close attention to deadlines. Quizzes disappear exactly on their assigned deadline. You should not wait until the last moment to take your quizzes because then if you encounter computer or technical problems you might not be able to find any help. I will not accept computer or other technical problems as excuses for not taking your quizzes on time.

Assignments	Dates Due by midnight
Critical Thinking Essay 1	June 26
Week 1 Quiz/Critical Thinking Essay 1 Responses	June 28
Critical Thinking Essay 2	July 3
Week 2 Quiz/Critical Thinking Essay 2 Responses	July 5
Critical Thinking Essay 3	July 10
Week 3 Quiz/Critical Thinking Essay 3 Responses	July 12
Critical Thinking Essay 4	July 17
Week 4 Quiz/Critical Thinking Essay 4 Responses	July 19

6. WEEKLY READINGS AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

WEEK 1 (June 22-28)

1. Read Part 1(chapters 1 through 9) of Lesch's book and Part 1 of Smith's book;
2. Complete Week 1 Quiz questions;
3. Post your Critical Thinking Essay 1 and responses

WEEK 2 (June 29-July 5)

1. Read Part 2 (chapters 10 through 15) of Lesch's book and Part 2 of Smith's book;
2. Complete Week 2 Quiz questions;
3. Post your Critical Thinking Essay 2 and responses

WEEK 3 (July 6-12)

1. Read Part 3 (chapters 16 through 21) of Lesch's book and Parts 2 and 3 of Smith's book;
2. Complete Week 3 Quiz questions'
3. Post your Critical Thinking Essay 3 and responses

WEEK 4 (July 13-19)

1. Read Part 4 (chapters 22 through 27) of Lesch's book and Part 3 of Smith's book;
2. Complete Week 4 Quiz questions;
3. Post your Critical Thinking Essay 4 and responses

7. EXTRA CREDIT OPTION:

1. Article Reviews: You can earn up to 30 extra credits by selecting up to 10 articles from your selected academic journals. Each review should be between 700 to 1000 words. Your reviews should overview and analyze the content of the reviewed articles and express your own views on issues discussed. Each review when done properly would worth 3 points. You can do as many as 10 article reviews for a total of 30 points. You need to post your reviews under Article/Book Reviews for Possible Extra Credits in our Discussion Board. I will encourage you to read the reviews posted by your fellow students and comment on their contents. This way we can generate a healthy class discussion with regard to various geographic topics.

Note: You need to reveal the exact name of the article, name of the author (s), date of publication, and the source (printed or web). You can have the citations either at the top or bottom of the page wherever you prefer. Article reviews without revealing sources will not be graded.

2. Book Reviews: Instead of article reviews you can choose two of your recommended books (listed above in your syllabus) and write reviews about them. For each book you choose write a 3000 word review discussing the main arguments presented by the author (s) and compare and contrast them with your required books. Each review when done properly would worth 15 points. You can review two books for a total of 30 points. You have also a choice of reviewing one book and five articles for a total of 30 points. Please post your reviews under the assigned place using our class site. The last day to post your reviews is July 19..

8. YOUR INSTRUCTOR

I would like to welcome you all to my class. I am an Iranian American by ethnicity, and have lived in the US since 1976, three years in Texas and the rest of it in Eugene and Portland. My background is in both science and social science, and I teach both. I have an M.S. in Agricultural Mechanization from Texas A & I (now merged with Texas A & M) University, and M.A. and Ph.D.. in geography from the University of Oregon and have taught for PCC for over ten years. I believe that critical thinking is an essential part of education and I will provide my students with plenty of chances to do just that. My classes are usually interactive and students have plenty of opportunities to discuss their ideas and reading assignments in a comfortable setting. For a more effective teaching, in addition to written material, I often utilize the audio-visual equipment to enhance my students' understanding of issues covered by the course. Among material that I use are some of the PBS educational documentaries. My regional especially and research area is the Middle East (Southwest Asia and North Africa). I am mainly interested in issues of development in Third World Countries. Sustainable development, ecology, and spirituality and religion are among my favorite topics.

9. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Our communication is mainly through our class site. I am usually available every day after 4 pm and check my mails once a day. If you have any questions just send me a mail. Usually you'll get a response from me within 48 hours.

10. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Any type of cheating and plagiarism will lead to zero point, and if repeated you may fail the course. Your essays and other writings have to be your own words and ideas. Whenever you use other people's ideas you need to give them the due credit and reveal your sources at the bottom of your essay. Any sentence which is borrowed from another writer should be in quotation marks. Please see the following source for ways to avoid accidental/intentional plagiarism: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_plagiar.html