The Modern Middle East: History, Challenges and Opportunities

S. Azmat Hassan Ambassador
Seton Hall University

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Recommended Citation
The Modern Middle East – History, Challenges and Opportunities
DIPL 4180
Spring 2009
Monday 5.45 – 8.15 pm

Instructor: Ambassador S. Azmat Hassan (Ret.)
Adjunct Professor
Office Hours: by appointment
Email:

I. Course description and objectives.
The course will commence with an overview of the history of the Middle East. Students are requested to pay special attention to this portion as a grasp of the historical background of the Middle East is crucial to understanding current events. The historical portion which will be based on Albert Hourani’s book will be followed by the emergence of the modern period from 1832 to the present day. The texts used for this portion will be Rashid Khalidi and Mehran Kamrava, respectively. The final portion of the course will consist of a discussion of three Arab Human Development Reports prepared under the auspices of the United Development Programme. (UNDP) I will give my own insights on Middle East topics based on my diplomatic assignments in Syria, United Arab Emirates, Morocco and heading the Middle East Division at Headquarters in Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry.
I will circulate articles from newspapers and magazines relevant to the course. I also expect all students to share material they have found relevant with me, for onward transmission to the class. Credit will be given to those students who can cite relevant books and articles during class discussions.

II. Course Strategy
The best strategy for students to do well on the course is to complete all reading assignments beforehand, come punctually to class, listen attentively to my lectures and take notes. I want an interactive class asking questions and making comments. Class participation will count towards the grade. If any points discussed in the class are not clear to any student, he/she should not hesitate to approach me either before or after class. Students can also meet me by prior appointment. I can also be reached by email. I hope that by the end of the course all students will have a good grasp of the Middle East, its history, political evolution and trends for future developments.

III. Course materials
Compulsory reading: selected chapters from the books at serial numbers 1, 2 and 3 below will be utilized. These are detailed in the course schedule and readings section of the syllabus.

1. A History of the Arab Peoples by Albert Hourani with a new Afterword by Malise Ruthven (hardback)
2. Resurrecting Empire by Rashid Khalidi (paperback)
3. The Modern Middle East by Mehran Kamrava

Background reading
1. A Border Passage, by Leila Ahmed
2. The Modern Middle East by James L. Gelvin
The students will benefit enormously by devoting at least thirty minutes every day to reading a newspaper providing coverage of Middle East issues. I recommend the New York Times and the International Herald Tribune. Magazine and journal articles on the Middle East can be accessed on the internet and in the Library and should be perused from time to time. Listening to Middle East topics on NPR and on the BBC will be extremely beneficial. The careful reading and absorption of the above mentioned materials will advance the understanding and comprehension of students.

IV. Course activities:

- Lectures
- Examination
- Research Paper
- Paper presentation
- Class discussions

V. Course requirements:

a. There will be a final examination based on essay type questions carrying a maximum total of 100 points (40% of the grade).

b. A well developed research paper carrying a maximum of 100 points (40% of the grade). The research paper will make an in depth analysis of the topic selected. The paper should not be less than 12 pages (excluding the cover page and bibliography) and not more than 16 typed double spaced pages. Papers of a length less than the prescribed minimum will be penalized. Footnotes at the bottom of each page in sequential order, plus the bibliography are mandatory. Citations or references should not be inserted in the text. Only footnotes should be used. Credit will be given for proper citations and footnotes. The topic will be proposed by the student and approved by the Instructor. The topic should be selected and submitted to me in writing by Monday, February 16. I require a one para outline of the paper from each student in hard copy. An approved topic cannot be changed. If a paper is submitted on any topic other than the one approved, it will receive 0 points and result in the student failing the course. The paper is due on Monday, March 30. If the papers are not submitted by the deadline, 2 points per every late day will be deducted from the grade. If the paper has not been submitted within 7 days of the expiry of the dead line i.e. by Monday, April 6 the student will get 0 points and forfeit 40% of the grade Regrettably this means not getting a passing grade. I require hard copies of the paper properly stapled and page numbered. Email submissions will not be accepted.

c. Class attendance throughout the course, participation and class presentations will constitute 20% of the grade. Each student will make a short presentation based on his/her research paper. There will be a class discussion on the presentations.

Grading:

To get a good grade all students are expected to concentrate equally on the research paper and final exam. Meeting the date deadline for the paper is important. For the paper, I give credit for sustained efforts to locate appropriate material on the chosen topic from scholarly books and journals, and to analyze and present it in an effective
manner. The writing of the paper should not be left to the last minute as this will inhibit your performance. Similarly for the final exam, well formulated answers demonstrating knowledge and insights about the subject will earn a good grade. Students who work conscientiously throughout the semester in comprehending the material will find their efforts rewarded. Similarly I give credit to those students who participate in class discussions and ask occasional questions.

Plagiarism

Students may please note that plagiarism will not be tolerated. The Whitehead School of Diplomacy takes serious note of students who indulge in plagiarism. If it is established by me that a student has copied material from any source and tried to pass it as his or her own work, the paper will get 0 points resulting in the student failing the course. Moreover students will be subject to administrative action by the School.

General Comments:

I expect all students to perform to the maximum of their ability. Cultivation of good study habits will contribute to the achievement of this goal. These are punctuality and regularity in attendance, concentration in class, taking of lecture notes by hand and not on the laptop, regular and methodical study, turning in the research paper on time and not trying to do a rushed last minute job. Regular attendance will be counted towards class participation.

Absence from the final examination will result in 0 points for that examination and thereby result in failing the course. The date for the final examination cannot be changed.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1: January 12: General introduction about parameters of the course – explanation of syllabus, grading, readings. The importance and significance of the Middle East today. How the course will improve the students’ comprehension of world affairs.
Week 2: January 19: The emergence of the Arabs in the Middle East.
   The emergence of Islam.
   Hourani, Prologue, Part 1 - chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 & 9.
Week 3: January 26: The Ottomans and the Ottoman age.
   Hourani, chapters 13, 14 & 15
Week 4: February 2: The European interaction with the Middle East 1774 –1939
   Hourani, chapters 16, 17, 18 & 19
Week 5: February 9: Arab Unity and Disunity (since 1967), A Disturbance of Spirits
   Hourani, chapters 25, 26 & Afterword by Malise Ruthven
Week 6: February 16: Khalidi, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 & 3
Week 7: February 23: Khalidi, Chapters 4 & 5
Week 8: March 2: Mehran Kamrava, The Palestinian Israeli Conflict. Chapter 7
Week 9: March 9: No Class – Spring Break
Week 10: March 16: Mehran Kamrava, The challenge of Economic Development, States
   and their Opponents. Chapters 8 & 9
Week 11: March 23: Mehran Kamrava, The Arab Israeli Wars, the Iranian Revolution,
   the Gulf Wars and beyond. Chapters 4, 5 & 6.
Week 12: March 30: Mehran Kamrava, The Question of Democracy, Challenges facing
   the Middle East, chapters 10 & 11
Week 14: April 13: Discussion of the Arab Human Development Reports 2004 & 2005
Week 15: April 20: Class presentations and discussion.
Week 16: April 27: Class presentations and discussion.
May 1 - 7 Final Examinations. The final examination will be held on Monday, May 4 from 5.45 pm to 7.15 pm in the normal class-room.

Good luck on the course!