CIEE Online

Course name: America and the Arabs
Course number: MEST 3002 CIEE
Programs offering course: Online Summer
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Term: Summer 2020

Course description:

In this course, students will critically examine the complex relationship between the United States and the Arab World during the past 150 years, with particular focus on relations during the past decade.

This course is divided into two sections. In the first section, students will study the history of the relationship between America and the Arab World. Analysis begins from the end of the 19th century and chronologically examines the economic, political, and social relations, highlighting the role of colonialism, the two World Wars, the creation of Israel, the Cold War, the war in Iraq, 9/11, foreign policy during the George W. Bush and Obama presidencies. In the second half of the course, specific topics will be our focus, such as US foreign policy and its interests in the region, including oil, Israel, foreign aid, and democracy promotion. The course ends with in-depth analysis of the aftermath of the “Arab Spring” and recent events including the refugee emergencies, America’s response to ISIS, and political crisis and war in Syria, Libya, and Yemen. The interdisciplinary course relies on a combination of analysis and critical inquiry in the fields of history, politics, international relations, and sociology.

Learning Objectives:

By completing this course, students will:

- Assemble a foundational understanding of the historical, political, economic, military and cultural context of relations between America and the Arab World
- Evaluate the results of the U.S. polices in the Middle East
- Analyze current events in the Arab World with an understanding of the historical and political context
- Expand on the disapproving public opinion of the U.S. in the Arab and Muslim world

Course Prerequisites

No prerequisites required

Method of Instruction
This course will include online lectures, presentations, recordings, case studies, documentaries and short films. Students must be prepared to engage in discussion on the assigned readings for each week. The readings come from a variety of sources including scholarly and academic papers, newspaper articles and chapters from books. All reading materials will be accessible through Canvas.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Reaction to a documentary 15%
2. Mid-Term/ 15%
3. Film-study and Critique 15%
4. Final paper 20%
5. Final Exam 20%
6. Class Participation 15%

**Course Requirements**

**Reaction to a documentary**
The value of good documentaries is established in the course. They provide the requisite context, illustrate some of the more complex issues in relatively simple ways, and offer a plurality of views on any given issue. This allows the student to interact critically and creatively with the piece. Students should watch the proposed documentary and write a 250 word response.

Time on task = 10 Hours

**Mid-Term**
After two weeks of study, students take a mid-term exam which consists of two parts: the first, cast in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) tests the student’s knowledge of facts, key concepts, and central issues (covered in the first leg of the course). The second part consists of four questions covering different aspects of the materials and themes covered. Students are required to address 3 of those questions, each in the form of a short analytical essay of 250 words.

Time on task = 6 Hours

**Film-study and critique**
Students choose Hollywood films referencing the Middle East such as: “Lawrence of Arabia” (1962); “Exodus”(1960); “The Mummy,” or, more recent films featuring anti-terror movies featuring Muslims: such as “Kingdom of Heaven,” “Indian Jones,” “Rules of Engagement,” “Death before Dishonor,” ... How does the film frame the debate on nationality, independence, statehood, interfaith relations, Pan-Arabism, Pan-Islamism etc.? What is the relationship, if any, to U.S. foreign policy towards Arab nationalism and the establishment of the state of Israel? What is the perception and framework used by Hollywood in regards to Muslims, an Islamic State, or “clashes of civilizations?” This essay should range between 1200 to 1500 words.

Time on task = 18 Hours
Final paper
Students should select a contemporary issue in US-Arab relations, and conduct a thorough, multi-faceted investigation of the relevant policy angles for both the United States and the Arab state(s) or non-state actors involved. Students can focus on a particular conflict in the region with a record of U.S. involvement, or a broader policy issue such as: combating violent extremism; representation of Arabs/Muslims in media, literature, and film; refugees; US policy towards minorities (the Kurds, for example); nuclear non-proliferation; trade in fossil fuels; business hegemony; foreign aid; soft-power etc. They are required to submit an 2000-2500-word double-spaced page term paper, with a bibliography including some references to class readings.

Time on task = 35 Hours

Final exam
At the end of the course study, students take a final exam which consists of two parts: the first, cast in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) assesses the student’s knowledge of facts, key concepts, and central issues (covered in the second leg of the course). The second part consists of four questions covering different aspects of the materials and themes covered and the students is required to address 3 of them, each in the form of a short analytical essay of about 250 words.

Time on task = 7 Hours

Format and referencing:
All papers and assignments you submit should have a title, your name, be double-spaced with 1” margins and 12 sized font, have page numbers, include in text citations and a bibliography. Make sure that you provide citations for any piece of information you give me or any opinion which is not your own. Maps, tables, diagrams, and quotations must be referenced properly. For references please use the APSA Style Guide available here:

Participation
Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.
Technology Requirements
Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

Attendance Expectations: In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:
• in instructional activities, course content, course tools
• with the course instructor, other students, and
• by timely completion of all assessments.
“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.
Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:
• submitting an academic assignment;
• taking an exam or quiz;
• attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;
• participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or
• initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:
• logging into an online class without active participation
• contributing to or engaging in the CIEE Orientation or Community Course(s)

First Week of Class: Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

Duration of Course: Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director. CIEE instructors / staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis.
The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course.

N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

**Class 1:** Introduction & Historical Overview: Colonialism (Case study: Syria)

This class is the start of Section I of the course: Overview & Theoretical Grounding.

Guiding questions for this section will be: How does the U.S. foreign policy community define the Middle East? What are the theories that often lay the framework for both discourse and policy in Washington? How has the history of U.S. intervention in the Middle East shaped the region?

This first class will be an introduction and historical overview of Colonialism, using Syria as a case study. Topics of discussion will be:

- Syllabus overview: expectations, assignments, questions
- Overview of the Middle East & USFP
- **Assignment:** map quiz for next class; choose a debate day

Readings:
- Gory Gunderson, *Countries of the Middle East* (for factual information about Arab countries making up the Middle East)
- Excerpts from D.K Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East* (1914-1958)
- Documentary: Sykes-Picot: Lines in the Sand (*Al-Jazeera* World) 47.27 minute long documentary.
  - Students are required to watch this documentary and write a 1-page reaction paper on it.

  **Time on task = 3.5 Hours**

**Class 2:** The Past as a Prologue: Looking back at US and the “would-be” MENA region relations

- Western perceptions of the “Orient” and the Construction of the Orient
- A look into the early relations between the US and ancient Arab nations (Libya, Morocco, Egypt, ...)
- Piracy, trade and the earliest treaties drawn between Morocco and the US

**Documentary:**
- Edward Said on *Orientalism* (Palestine Diary) 40.52 minutes (Students are required to watch the documentary and write a 250-word reaction page in which they reflect on and share their thoughts on the contents and their implications)

  **Time on task = 3.5 Hours**

**Class 3:** An overview of US and would-be MENA region relations
• US and the Middle East: Decline of France and Britain and Surge of the US after World War I and WW II, in particular
• Discovery of Oil in Saudi Arabia and the concomitant interest shown by the US, as an industrial power, in the Middle East

Readings:
Marwan Bishara, “The Ancien Regime,” in the Invisible Arab. (46 pages) Students are required to read this document which surveys the Middle East (from Colonial times up to the 2011 Arab Spring) and write a two-page long summation of the most important ideas.

Time on task = 5.5 Hours

Class 4: The First Mechanism: Soft-power, especially in the Post-Cold War Era

This class is the start of Section II of the course: The First Mechanism: Soft-power, especially in the Post-Cold War Era

Guiding questions for this section will be: What are the costs and benefits of each mechanism? Which mechanisms have the best outcomes?

This class will explore the following:
• Soft power (Definition and Scope), with reference to Aldous Huxley; Joseph Nye ...
• Costs and benefits
• Soft power at play in the Gulf countries, especially after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and advent of “liberalism” (consumerism, infotainment, entertainment, American inspired fashion, American cinema ....)

Readings:
Documentary: Joseph Nye, “Global Power Shifts,” Ted Talks 18: 13 minutes. Students are required to watch the documentary and write a one-page reaction to it.

Time on task = 3 Hours

Week 2

Class 5: The Second Mechanism: Hard Power, before, during, and after the Cold War

• Hard power (Definition and Scope), with reference to George Orwell, Noam Chomsky...
• Costs and benefits
• Hard power at play during the Pan-Arab (or Arab Nationalism Era) in such Middle Eastern countries as Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt

Documentary:
“Pan-Arab Nationalism,” by Joshua Landis, a 12 minute documentary. Students are required to watch the documentary and write a one-page reaction to it.

Optional activity: Students wishing to find out more about autocrats in the Arab world, who have been propped by Western powers because “they do their bidding,” can watch this illuminating documentary: *Absolute Power/ the Arab Awakening* (Al-Jazeera English), 46.18 minutes.

Time on task = 4 Hours

**Class 6:** Other Mechanisms of Endearment and Control

- Parallel diplomacies (Trade, business, religious ...)
- Foreign Aid
- Humanitarian work
- Educational, cultural Exchanges, tourism as means to promote the image of America

**Readings:**
Oswaldo de Reviero, “The Myth of the Development,”
An interview with James Tobin and the Tobin Tax (Students research the mechanisms of foreign trade and how they are detrimental to most Middle Eastern countries and empowering to developed countries

**Due Date for Submission of reaction to a documentary**

Time on task = 3 Hours

**Class 7:** Other Coercive Mechanisms

- Economic sanctions and military intervention
- Case study: Libya and Sudan (and possibly even Iran)
- Midterm Exam

**Due Date for Submission of Midterm Exam**

**Reading:**

Time on task = 3 Hours

**Class 8:** How US Foreign Policy in the Middle East is shaped by Multiple Players and Stakeholders
This class is the start of Section III of the course: Influences on U.S. Foreign Policy

Guiding questions for this section will be: What factors, groups, interests, and ideas shape U.S. foreign policy the most? What bearing do these factors have, specifically on the Middle East? Are these influences likely to change over time?

This class will cover the following points of discussion:
- Oil and Arms industries lobbies
- Political lobbies
- Think tanks
- When the Middle East plays the Game of Washington

Reading:
“Middle East Lobbying: the Influence Game,” Al-Monitor
Kenneth Vogel and Josh Gerstein, “Moroccan Cash flows to Clinton Foundation,” in Politico, April 8, 2015
Time on task = 4 Hours

Week 3

Class 9: The Media and Film Industry and US Foreign Policy

- Hollywood and Arabs
- Watching a documentary dubbed, Reel Bad Arabs by Jack Shaheen

Readings:
Excerpts from Sally Totman’s How Hollywood Projects Foreign (New York: Palgrave, 2009) (about 40 pages in all)

Documentary: Reel Bad Arabs by Jack Shaheen (50 minutes long documentary). Students are required to watch the documentary and write a 500-word reflective essay on it.

Time on task = 4 Hours

Class 10: Pan-Islamism, a New Enemy?

- 9/11 Attack; War on Terror, and Competing Narratives: Public opinion and the Arab world

Reading:
Excerpts from, Covering Islam by Edward Said (20 pages long approximately)
Excerpts from, The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims, by Nathan Lean (15 pages long, approximately)

Time on task = 3.5 Hours
Class 11: The Israel/Palestine conflict and US Foreign Policy.

This class is the start of Section IV of the course: Overarching and Structuring questions: Case Studies of Pivotal Countries.

Guiding questions for this section will be: In considering the history the U.S. has with each of these countries, what lessons can be learned from where it went wrong? What policies were good or bad? How could U.S. policy have been more effective?

This class will cover the following topics:

- A survey of the peace process from the Cold War era up to the recent “Deal of the Century”
- Can the US still be considered a fair peace broker?

Readings:


Time on task = 3.5 Hours

Week 4

Class 12: Iraq

- Overview of Iraqi history, with a particular focus on Iraqi invasion
- Film-screening: “No End in Sight,“

Reading:

Hal Brands and David Palkki, “Conspiring Bastards: Saddam Hussein’s View of the United States.”
Film-screening: “No End in Sight.” Students watch the film and write a 500 w reaction paper.

Time on task = 5.5 Hours

Class 13: The US and the Arab Spring

- Case study: Egypt (Representing ally Arab republics); Bahrain (as an ally Arab monarchy); and Libya (as a non-allied (rogue) Arab republic)
Readings:
Gamal Selim, “The United States and the Arab Spring: the Dynamics of Political Engineering”

Documentary: “Seeds of Revolution: the Arab Awakening,” Al-Jazeera English, a 46.18 minute long documentary. Students are required to watch the documentary and write a 500 word reflective paper.

Due Date for Submission of film-study and critique
Time on task = 4 Hours

Class 14: US and Post-Arab Spring Middle East

This class is the start of Section V of the course: Overarching and Structuring questions: The Future.

Guiding questions for this section will be: How could the U.S. better move forward, especially in the light of the ‘Arab Spring’? Is the US response indicative of its waning influence, or is the idea of ‘American decline’ overblown?

The topic of this class will be:
• The US role in the Middle East: is it on the wane or is it being renewed?

Documentary:
Stephen Kinzer, “US Foreign Policy in the Middle East,” an interview with Joshua Landis from the Oklahoma Middle Eastern Studies Center. (About 40 minutes long). Students are required to watch the documentary and write a 500-word reaction paper.

Time on task = 4 Hours

Class 15: Wrap up session.

This session will wrap up students’ perspectives on the main recurring patterns of America’s relationship with Arab people shared with peers. Each participant is expected to address their peers for about 10 minutes.

FINAL EXAM

Due Date for Submission of Final paper
Time on task = 3 Hours

Course Materials Readings:
• Gory Gunderson, Countries of the Middle East (for factual information about Arab countries making up the Middle East)
• Excerpts from D.K Fieldhouse, Western Imperialism in the Middle East (1914-1958)
• Excerpts from Soft Power, the Means to Success in World Politics (New York, 2005)
• Oswaldo de Reviero, “The Myth of the Development,”
• An interview with James Tobin and the Tobin Tax (Students research the mechanisms of foreign trade and how they are detrimental to most Middle Eastern countries and empowering to developed countries)
• Ngaire Woods, “The United States and the International Financial Institutions: Power and Influence within the WB and IMF,”
• Mickey Edwards and Stephen J. Solarz, “Foreign Policy Tools: Budget, Aid, Defense, Force,” Brookings Institute
• “Middle East Lobbying: the Influence Game,” Al-Monitor

Excerpts from Sally Totman’s \textit{How Hollywood Projects Foreign} (New York: Palgrave, 2009)

- Excerpts from, \textit{Covering Islam} by Edward Said (20 pages long approximately)
- Excerpts from, \textit{The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims}, by Nathan Lean (15 pages long, approximately)
- Gamal Selim, “The United States and the Arab Spring: the Dynamics of Political Engineering”
• Allison, R.J. Postscript: Americans and the Muslim World-First Encounters in Lesch and Haas (eds.) The Middle East and the United States, 5th ed. (Westview, 2012) p. 534