The International Politics of the Middle East, POLI 4059

Fall 2009
1:30-3:00 TTh, Howe-Russell E131

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Course Objectives: This course examines contemporary security conditions in the greater Middle East region, including conventional arms balances, weapons of mass destruction, guerrilla war, terrorism, and economic and political conditions affecting security. It focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on threats to US security interests in the region.

Readings: All readings listed below are available in electronic form through the Moodle webpage for this course, along with the Powerpoint presentations and other class material. For help with Moodle, see http://www.lsu.edu/its/elearning/students.htm. You can also find most of the readings on the internet or in the LSU library. You may prefer to read the assigned Wikipedia articles online so you can look at the various links they contain.

Grades: You will have a midterm exam (Thursday, October 15), a final exam (Wednesday, December 9, 10:00-noon), and a term paper (due Thursday, December 3). The best two of your three grades will each count for 40% of your final grade; the worst will count for 20%. Exams will consist of definitions and essay questions. They will not be cumulative. I give makeups only under exceptional circumstances and only with prior permission from me.

Term Paper:

Your term paper can be on almost any topic concerning security in the greater Middle East, including one of the many wars or other crises that have occurred there, a regional guerrilla or terrorist group, security conditions affecting a particular country, or issues affecting US security interests now or in the past. Do not choose a topic covered extensively in class lectures or readings. You must go well beyond any material in class readings pertaining to your topic. If you have any doubt about the suitability of a topic, see me before you start.

Your paper must be 12-17 double-spaced pages in length, including notes and/or bibliography. You must submit a one-paragraph (i.e., at least four sentences) summary of your paper to me by Thursday, September 17, including its title and the names of at least four books, articles, or websites you plan to use. The paper is due on Thursday, December 3, with no exceptions. I will lower your grade substantially if it is late.
I will grade your paper mainly on the depth and insightfulness of your analysis, though also on its organization, quality of sources, and writing style (for native English speakers only). Papers should be factual and analytical, not opinionated. You must use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical name/date citations (with bibliography) for any quotes and for important information or points taken from a particular source. At least three of your sources must have been published since 2004. I will expect you to follow the guidelines in my “Guidelines for Writing Term Papers” handout. Your paper must be typed (double-spaced) and proofread. If you have trouble finding a topic or organizing your paper, see me for help.

Schedule of Readings (read in the order listed):

I. Introduction: Conflict, Geopolitics, and US Interests in the Greater Middle East
   • “Indo-Pakistani Relations” and “Civil War in Afghanistan,” Wikipedia.

II. Conventional War and Military Balance

III. Weapons of Mass Destruction: Nuclear Weapons
   • Gawdat Bahgat, “Israel and Nuclear Proliferation in the Middle East,” Middle East Policy 13(2), Summer 2006, pp. 113-133.
   • “Iran – Nuclear Overview” and “Libya – Nuclear Overview,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies.
• “Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,” Wikipedia.

IV. Weapons of Mass Destruction: Chemical and Biological Weapons, Missiles
• “Chemical Warfare,” “Chemical Weapons Convention,” “Biological Warfare,” and “Biological Weapons Convention,” Wikipedia. (skim less-relevant parts)
• Iran’s Nuclear and Missile Potential (New York: The EastWest Institute, 2009).
• “Arrow Missile,” “Barak SAM,” “David’s Sling,” “Iron Dome,” “MIM-104 Patriot,” Wikipedia. (skim less-relevant parts)
• “Missile Technology Control Regime,” Wikipedia.

V. Asymmetric Threats: Guerrilla War
• Dangerous But Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2009), pp. 81-128. ("Chapter Four: Iran and its Non-State Partners: Assessing Linkages and Control")

VI. Asymmetric Threats: Terrorism
• “History of Terrorism,” “Hezbollah,” and “Hamas,” Wikipedia.

VII. Domestic Political Aspects of Security
• *More Freedom, Less Terror? Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), pp. xiii-xxvi. (“Summary”)
• *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007), pp. xi-xxiv. (“Summary”)

VIII. Economics and Security