The International Politics of the Middle East, POLI 4059

Fall 2010
1:30-3:00 TTh, 116 Stubbs Hall

Mark Gasiorowski
Department of Political Science
Louisiana State University

Office: 153B Howe-Russell. Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 pm TTh. Office Phone: (225) 578-3001. Email: pogasi@lsu.edu.

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 either online or through the Moodle webpage for this class, which also contains the class handouts and powerpoints. For help with Moodle, see http://www.lsu.edu/its/elearning/students.htm. The background readings listed below are essential for understanding most of the subsequent readings. Read them before the semester starts. I will not cover them in class.

Grades: You will have a midterm exam (Thursday, October 14), a final exam (Tuesday, December 7, 12:30-2:30), and a term paper (due Thursday, November 18). 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 related to security in the greater Middle East, including one of the region’s many wars or other crises, a regional guerrilla or terrorist group, security conditions affecting a particular country, or issues affecting past or present US security. Do not choose a topic covered extensively in class lectures or readings. Your paper must go well beyond what is covered in class readings. If you have any doubt about the suitability of a topic, see me before you start.

You must submit a one-paragraph (i.e., at least five sentences) summary of your proposed paper by Thursday, September 16, along with its title, the names of at least six books, articles, or websites you plan to use, and your email address. I will not grade this, but you must get my approval on it before starting your paper.
Your paper must be 13-17 double-spaced pages in length, including notes and/or bibliography. I will grade it mainly on the depth and insightfulness of your analysis, though I will also consider its organization, quality of sources, and writing style (for native English speakers only). Your paper should be factual and analytical, not opinionated. At least four of your sources must have been published in 2005 or later. The paper is due on Thursday, November 18, with no exceptions. Late papers will receive at least one letter grade off. See my handout “Guidelines for Writing Term Papers” for tips on finding sources and organizing and writing your paper.

Schedule of Readings (read in the order listed):

Background Readings
- “Indo-Pakistani Relations” and “Civil War in Afghanistan,” *Wikipedia*. (Also look at interesting links within these articles.)

I. Conventional War and Military Balance

II. Weapons of Mass Destruction: Nuclear Weapons
- “Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,” *Wikipedia*.
- “Iran – Nuclear Overview” and “Libya – Nuclear Overview,” Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies. (Skim the Libya article.)


III. Weapons of Mass Destruction: Chemical and Biological Weapons, Missiles

• “Chemical Warfare,” “Chemical Weapons Convention,” “Biological Warfare,” and “Biological Weapons Convention,” *Wikipedia*. (Skim these.)


• *Iran’s Nuclear and Missile Potential* (New York: The EastWest Institute, 2009).

• “Missile Technology Control Regime,” *Wikipedia*.


• “Arrow Missile,” “Barak SAM,” “David’s Sling,” “Iron Dome,” “MIM-104 Patriot,” *Wikipedia*. (Skim these.)


IV. 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.

V. Asymmetric Threats: Terrorism


• “History of Terrorism,” “Hezbollah,” and “Hamas,” *Wikipedia*.


VI. Domestic Political Aspects of Security

- *Building Moderate Muslim Networks* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2007), pp. xi-xxiv.

VII. Economics and Security

Guidelines for Writing Term Papers

Mark Gasiorowski
International Studies Program and
Department of Political Science
Louisiana State University

General Points

Before writing your paper, plan out its overall structure: the general theme, the order in which you will present various issues, the relative emphasis you will give to each issue, whether you have enough information on the issues you will cover, the main conclusions you will draw, etc. The best way to do this is to develop a detailed outline of the paper before you start writing. Keep your paper focused on a single theme. Include only material that is essential for developing this theme. A little effort at the planning stage will save you a lot of time later and help you write a better paper.

For an excellent guide to writing a research paper, see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/, especially “The Writing Process” and “General Academic Writing.” Include a separate cover page giving the title, your name, the date, and the class name and number. Break your paper up into separate sections with section titles. Include a proper introduction and conclusion, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/728/01/. Organize your paper to flow smoothly from one section to another. Express your ideas clearly. Each paragraph should express a single idea and should not be too long, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/. Avoid run-on sentences. Use proper writing style, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/, “Grammar and Mechanics.” Quote only when necessary, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/. Cite your sources and any quotations correctly, using either MLA or Chicago style, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/ or http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/. If you use endnotes or a bibliography, put them on a separate page. Do not plagiarize, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/. Proofread your work, using a dictionary or dictionary.com when necessary. Be sure your paper is neat and clean. Keep an extra copy. For help with your writing, see a tutor or use the Grammar Garage at the LSU Writing Center, www.lsu.edu/writingcenter. Remember: good ideas are wasted if they are not clearly presented.

Sources

The best places to look for source material are the LSU library catalog and the databases at www.lib.lsu.edu/databases, especially International Political Science Abstracts and LexisNexis Academic. The reference librarians in Middleton Library can help you use these sources. Internet searches also can be useful, though quality and reliability vary greatly. Once you have found a few good sources, use them to find others, e.g., by continuing to search with the same keywords, looking in other issues of the same journal or magazine, looking at footnotes or the bibliographies of books and articles, looking near a book in the stacks, or using the library catalog to search for other books with the same subject classification (usually listed in the library
catalog entry and on the front or back page of a book). Do not cite class readings or lectures, local newspapers, Wikipedia, or other encyclopedias, though you can use them for general information.

The types of source material you need depend on what type of paper you are writing. If the paper is about a current or very recent topic, the most useful sources usually are good national newspapers and magazines, like The New York Times, The Washington Post, Time, Newsweek, and The Economist. Local newspapers (e.g., the Morning Advocate) generally are not useful for international topics. If your topic is more than a few years old, books and journal articles probably are more helpful. For the Middle East the main journals are Middle East Journal, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Journal of Near East and South Asian Affairs, Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Report, Middle East Policy, and Journal of Palestine Studies. For security topics see International Security, Survival, Orbis, and Security Studies. Journals focusing on current issues also may be useful, including Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Washington Quarterly, and Current History. Most of these are available at www.lib.lsu.edu/epubs/cjournals.html. See also the following websites: nytimes.com, washingtonpost.com, cnn.com, news.bbc.co.uk, crisisgroup.org, globalsecurity.org, gulf2000.columbia.edu, etown.edu/vl/mideast.html, mepc.org/resources/resources.asp, rand.org/pubs/online/national_security, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/, cns.miis.edu/stories/index.htm, cdi.org, and lib.utexas.edu/maps. And see me or the reference librarians in Middleton for help in finding material.