



## **GVT 485 M1 – POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **Instructor Information:**

**Instructor:** Ana Belén Soage

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### **Course Information:**

**Catalog Description:** Interlocking themes making the contemporary Middle East an area of chronic conflict: Big Power rivalries; social and political change within individual countries; unity and Arab rivalry involved in Arab nationalism; the Palestinian-Israeli-Arab dispute. Cultural Diversity B.

**Instructor's Additional Course Description:** In this class we explore the history of the Middle East and North Africa since World War I to the present. We focus on the different actors, the ideologies which motivate them and their role in events such as the abolition of the Caliphate, the establishment of the State of Israel, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the 1991 and 2003 invasions of Iraq or the so-called "Arab Spring."

**Credit Hours:** 4

This course follows the US Federal Government's Credit Hour definition: "An amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutional established equivalence that reasonably approximates no less than:

- (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or
- (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours."

For full up-to-date statement:

[https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/POLICIES/Pp111-Policy On Credits And Degrees.pdf](https://cihe.neasc.org/sites/cihe.neasc.org/files/downloads/POLICIES/Pp111-Policy%20On%20Credits%20And%20Degrees.pdf)

To complete this course, students will need to dedicate, at a minimum, the following amount of time to the listed activities:

<b>Assignments/Activities</b>	<b>Engagement Estimate</b>	<b>Engagement Hours</b>
Class attendance	3 hours x 15 weeks	45 hours
Course readings		45 hours
Research paper	15 hours research, 5 hours drafting	20 hours
Current affairs topic	15 hours research, 5 hours drafting	20 hours
Book review	15 hours research, 5 hours drafting	20 hours
Midterm exam	15 hours preparation	15 hours
Final exam	15 hours preparation	15 hours
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>180 HOURS</b>

## **Textbook/Course Materials:**

### ***Required textbook:***

- Fisk, Robert (2005), *The Great War for Civilisation. The Conquest of the Middle East*. London: Fourth Estate.

### ***Required for book reviews:***

The following books contain one or more chapters included on the reading list. You are also encouraged to use them for general reading and/or reference:

- Aboul-Enein, Youssef (2010), *Militant Islam Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institution Press.
- Clarkson, Patrick & Rubin, Michael (2005), *Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos*. New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harms, Gregory & Todd, Ferry M. (2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), *Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction*. London/Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.
- Kuru, Ahmet T. & Stepan, Alfred (eds.) (2012), *Religion, Culture and Public Life: Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Primakov, Yevgeny (2009), *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to Now*. New York: Basic Books.

In addition, please consult the press on current news, especially *The Economist*, *TIME* magazine, *The Independent*, *El País*, *Ahram Online*, *Al-Monitor* and *Haaretz*. Other materials will be made available on Blackboard throughout the term.

## **Course Goals & Learning Objectives:**

<b>Upon successful completion of this course, students will know/understand:</b>	<b>Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:</b>	<b>How the student will be assessed on these learning outcomes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main ethnic and religious actors in the MENA region.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe in general terms their characteristics and motivations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class discussions</li><li>• Midterm &amp; final exam</li><li>• Research paper</li><li>• Book review</li><li>• Conflict report</li><li>• Possible pop quizzes.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Historical background: colonial Cold War, 9/11...</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain the regional impact of global trends and events.</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current situation and future prospects.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow the news about the region as informed citizens.</li></ul>	

## **Course requirements:**

The course will follow a lecture/seminar format, based on lectures, extensive readings, class discussion, student presentations and book reviews. Student are expected to read all the assigned readings in order to identify and discuss the central arguments of each one of the topics as well as to make significant contributions to the class. The elements to be considered during the course are the following:

1. *Exams*. There will be two in-class examinations in this course: a midterm on March 1<sup>st</sup> and a final TBA. There will be no make-up exams unless the instructor has been notified ahead of time. If a student cannot attend an examination, s/he must inform the instructor as soon as possible, and prior to the day of the exam. If the student has a valid and documented excuse, s/he will be allowed to take the exam at another date, to be determined by the instructor.
2. *Book review*: Based on the assigned reading schedule, students will write a book review during the semester. The book review must be circulated to the class by email 48 hours before the oral presentation; there will be a penalization of one percent per each three hours of late distribution of it. The presentation to the class must summarize the written component in 15 to 20 minutes. The book review should be around 1,000 words long and follow the following structure: abstract; summary; analytical critique.

3. *Report on current affairs topic*: Students will write and present to the class the analysis of a current affairs topic. The report must be circulated to the class by email 48 hours before the oral presentation. It should contain the following sections: Relevant context (historical, geographical, economic, social...); actors involved, both internal and external, and their motivations and aims; evolution of the issue; and current situation.

4. *Research paper*: Students will be required to submit a 2,000-words long research paper on the topic agreed on with the instructor. The instructor will monitor the progress of the research during the course as indicated in the guidelines for final papers. The research paper is due by April 12<sup>th</sup>, both digitally and as a hard copy.

5. *Participation in class*: Students are expected to make significant contributions to the course by participating in class and delivering short assignments on time. Class participation provides the opportunity to practice persuasive skills as well as the ability to listen. Comments that are vague, repetitive, unrelated to the current topic, disrespectful of others, or without sufficient foundation will be evaluated negatively. What matters is the quality of one's contributions to the class discussion, not the number of times one speaks.

6. *Attendance*: Students are expected to attend class regularly. Each session of the course counts towards the final grade. Students arriving later than 9:10 pm or leaving before the end of the class are welcomed; however, their physical presence will not be credited as attendance.

#### **Grading/Evaluation:**

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Research paper: 15%

Book review: 15%

Report on current affairs topic: 15%

Participation in class: 15%

Late assignments will be graded 5% down for each delayed day or portion thereof.

#### *Grading scale:*

Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade
93-100	A	73-77	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
88-89	B+	68-69	D+
83-87	B	63-67	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
78-79	C+	59 or less	F

#### **Course and Classroom Policies:**

We shall seek to make this class open, respectful and engaged. Please come prepared to participate in each class session, and help create an environment of respect for all religions, ideologies, ethnic groups and gender identities. Courtesy towards each other is expected. Therefore, no food or drink (except water) should be brought into class. Please refrain from using cell phones. It is expected that students will remain in the classroom throughout the class meeting (except for emergencies).

Please be on time to class; those arriving once teaching has begun will have it counted as half an absence. **The Madrid Campus requires regular attendance. Absences will affect your grade**, and 20% of your final grade will depend on your participation in class. All required assignments are to be submitted on time. In deference to your punctual peers, final papers that are handed in late will be marked down. If a problem arises regarding attending a class session or delivering work on time, please speak to the instructor beforehand. Minor allowances for justified absences can be made if enough advance notice has been given.

**Participation/Attendance Policy:**

The SUMC Student Handbook states the following:

*Once a student is registered for a course, attendance at every meeting of every class is expected, including those held in the first week of the semester. A maximum of two unjustified absences is permitted. Each additional absence will cause the final course grade to be lowered by one-third of a letter grade, i.e., from A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.*

*Excessive absences in a course will have a negative effect on the final grade. When a student is absent, the quality of his or her work in a course will deteriorate since material missed in class sessions can rarely be made up satisfactorily, even though the student remains responsible for that work.*

*Please note that even when a student has a justified reason for missing class, such as illness, the negative academic impact on learning will be the same as if the absence were for spurious reasons.*

In this course, any absence due to illness should be justified by a note from the student's physician or other health professional confirming the day(s) on which the student was unable to attend class. A written excuse from a student's host parent or residence supervisor is also acceptable.

In the event that a class meeting is unexpectedly cancelled, students will be expected to continue with readings or other assignments as originally scheduled. Any assignments due or class activities (e.g., a quiz, exam or presentation) planned for such a cancelled class are due at the next class meeting unless other instructions are communicated.

**Disability Statement:**

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in my classroom.

If formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at the main Campus in Boston so that I am notified of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. Check the ODS web site at [www.suffolk.edu/disability](http://www.suffolk.edu/disability) for information on accommodations.

**Student Resources:**

SUMC provides a range of student services, both academic and personal. To learn more about course-related tutorials and academic workshops, refer to the SUMC Student Handbook, Section 2 "Academic Policies and Services". Section 5, "Living in Madrid", contains information on the medical and mental health resources, including an English-speaking therapist, available to you.

**Midterm Review:**

At midterm, on week 6, you will be given a midterm grade based on your progress to date and performance on assignments, quizzes and midterm exam. Midterm grades of C- or below will be reported to the Madrid Campus Academic Standing Committee, with an explanation of what I believe has contributed to that grade: excessive absences, poor time management or study skills, lack of effort, difficulty with the course material or with writing or language skills, etc. The Academic Standing Committee or I may contact you to suggest strategies for addressing these difficulties. I strongly encourage you to visit me during my office hours so we may discuss how you can be successful in this class.

**Academic Misconduct:**

[www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/academic-misconduct-policy](http://www.suffolk.edu/about/mission-history/policies-procedures/academic-misconduct-policy)

Suffolk University expects all students to be responsible individuals with high standards of conduct. Students are expected to practice ethical behavior in all learning environments and scenarios, including classrooms and laboratories, internships and practica, and study groups and academic teams. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of unauthorized electronic devices, self-plagiarism,

fabrication or falsification of data, and other types of academic misconduct are treated as serious offenses that initiate a formal process of inquiry, one that may lead to disciplinary sanctions.

Student work will be thoroughly examined for academic integrity and may be scanned using plagiarism detection software. A faculty member suspecting academic misconduct will contact the student using the Suffolk email address to schedule a meeting and will make all effort to do so within five business days of detecting the incident. During the meeting, the faculty member will present the documentation that led to suspected academic misconduct. Resolution of the incident will be according to the procedures outlined in the SUMC Student Handbook.

**Academic Grievances Policy:**

[www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-student-cas-sbs/grievances-academics](http://www.suffolk.edu/student-life/student-services/student-handbook/university-policies-for-student-cas-sbs/grievances-academics)

**Course Schedule:**

The schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better student learning.

Week	General Topic of Lesson	Readings and assignments due
1.	Intro. Rules of the game.	What do you hope to learn from this course?
2.	Lesson 1: MENA geography, ethnicity, religion, economy.	- CS Davis, " <a href="#"><u>Language, Ethnicity and Tradition in the Middle East.</u></a> " - Max Fisher, " <a href="#"><u>40 maps that explain the Middle East.</u></a> "
3.	Lesson 2. From Ottoman Empire to independence.	- " <a href="#"><u>Turkey in the First World War.</u></a> " - Fisk, <i>The Great War for Civilisation</i> (chapter 10).
4.	Lesson 3. Nationalism / Secularism: Kemalism, Nasserism, Baathism.	- Sukru Hanioglu, "The Historical Roots of Kemalism," in Kuru & Stepan, <i>Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey.</i> - Tarek Osman, " <a href="#"><u>Nasser's complex legacy.</u></a> ". <i>Open Democracy.</i>
5.	Lesson 4. Wahhabism / Salafism.	- Aboul-Enein, <i>Militant Islam Ideology: Understanding the Global Threat</i> (chapter 12).
6.	Lesson 5. Islamism: Muslim Brotherhood & Islamic Revolution in Iran.	- A.B. Soage (2009), "Introduction to Political Islam". <i>Religion Compass</i> 3/5: 887-896. - Clarkson & Rubin, <i>Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos</i> (ch. 6).
7.	Midterm review <b>MIDTERM EXAM - IN CLASS</b>	Email your questions
8.	Lesson 6. The Arab Cold War: Republics v. monarchies.	- P. Sluglett, "The Cold War in the Middle East", in <i>International Relations of the Middle East</i> , L. Fawcett (ed.), Oxford: OUP, 2005. - Y. Primavok, <i>Russia and the Arabs</i> (esp. chapter 7).
9.	Lesson 7. The Palestinian question.	- Harms & Tod, <i>Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction</i> (esp. from chapter 6).
10.	Lesson 8. The birth of Al-Qaeda: From Afghanistan to 9/11.	- Fisk, <i>The Great War for Civilisation</i> (chapters 2 & 3). - Darryl Li, " <a href="#"><u>'Afghan Arabs,' Real and Imagined.</u></a> ". <i>Middle East Research and Information Project.</i>

<b>Week</b>	<b>General Topic of Lesson</b>	<b>Readings and assignments due</b>
11.	Lesson 9. The Iraq wars: From Saddamism to Daesh.	- Fisk, <i>The Great War for Civilisation</i> (chapter 23). - Karen Armstrong (2014), " <u>Wahhabism to ISIS: how Saudi Arabia exported the main source of global terrorism</u> ". <i>New Statesman</i>
12.	Lesson 10. The "Arab Spring" and its aftermath.	- NA Khoury (2013), "The Arab Cold War Revisited: The Regional Impact of the Arab Uprising". <i>Middle East Policy</i> 20(2): 73-87. - Research paper due.
13.	Lesson 11. Social change in MENA: "Moderate" Muslims, ex-Muslims, feminists...	- Interview with Karima Bennoune (2015): " <u>Your fatwa does not apply here.</u> " - Mona Eltahawy (2012), " <u>Why do they hate us?</u> " <i>Foreign Policy</i>
14.	Review for the final exam	Email your questions
	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	