**Course Outline: PLSC 310A – Politics of Middle East**

Instructor Name: Dr. Abeeda Qureshi

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Office Location: E-036

Student Meeting Hours:(Monday to Wednesday 2pm-3pm or by appointment)

**Course Details**

Room E040, Monday, Wednesday & Friday 15.00 50 15.50- Office hours: 1:00-2:00 pm (or by appointment)

**Course Description**

Middle East has long been dominated by uncertainty, external interventions, inter-state wars and intra-state conflicts. The new wave of extremism in the name of religion has further compounded already complex socio-political situation in the Middle East. This course introduces students to internal and external forces that have shaped today’s Middle East by placing the regional political conflicts in their historical, political and international context.

Relying on the theoretical analysis of international relations, the course discusses the impact of colonial interventions, post-colonial challenges, the pattern of relations among regional states; the causes of war or cooperation; the impact of domestic factors on the foreign policy of states; the role of transnational or ‘non-state’ forces in international relations; and the place of ideologies and belief in shaping relations between states and societies.

**Course Aims**

* Introduction of the changed nature of politico-strategic dynamics in the Middle East to the students.
* Provide Students with the ability to critically analyse and evaluate the developments and situate them in the broader historical context and their relationship with broader themes in International Relations.
* Ensure that the students acquire knowledge and understanding of competing explanations and interpretations of the substance, structure, and processes of foreign and security policy making in the Middle East after 9/11.
* Enable students to use the concepts, approaches and methods of International Relations to develop a critical understanding of the contested nature and problematic character of security situation in the Middle East.

**Learning outcome**

**On completion of this course students will have developed.**

* A detailed insight into key issues in the Middle East.
* A sound theoretical and practical understanding of the concepts at the forefront of academic discipline of International Relations.
* Ability to identify those dominant trends which will determine future debates in the Middle East.
* Understanding of the role played by the global powers and non-state actors in the Politics of the Middle East
* Competence in a range of transferable skills, including critical, analytical communication and independent study skills.
* Ability to gather, organize and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources so as to be able to engage confidently and efficiently in academic communication with others on issues and processes in the Middle East.
* An understanding of practical deterrents in the way of long-standing issues in the region.

**Required Textbooks**

The readings for this course will be distributed by the instructor through Moodle.

**Course Assessment:**

The course will be taught by using Inquiry based learning techniques. Students will be asked to read the reading material given in advance and take an active part in discussions during the class. An environment of close student-teacher interaction encourages students to develop independent analytical perspectives which help the instructor to identify students’ academic interests, strengths and weaknesses at a very early stage. With this in mind, teaching approaches are more inductive than expository. This means that students need to come to class fully prepared in order to contribute to the learning process through participation in discussions and presentations. The assessment will be based on a research-based assignment of 2500 words (20%) followed by a class presentation in the last week, a PowerPoint presentation (10%) on topics of their choice from the topics listed in the course outline, a reflection paper (5%) and a book review (5%), Mid-Term (30%) and Final Term Examination (30%).

**Research Based Assignment**

The most important assessment component of this course is 2500 words research-based assignment. Students are required to decide topics for their research before the Mid-Term after discussion with the instructor. Instructor will give them guidance on how to conduct research, and will also direct them towards useful research resources. To secure an A grade in the course, references used in the assignment should not be less than 10 books or articles or other authentic sources. The criteria used for assessing the assignment are as follows.

* The Quality of Content: The breadth and depth of analysis, the accuracy with which relevant theoretical arguments, concepts and data are described.
* The Structure: The logical development, coherence and fluency of argument, and the degree to which the theories and concepts discussed are integrated and contextualized.
* The range of sources material used and properly referenced and also include a bibliography.
* The presentation and lay out: the clarity (spelling, grammar, etc.) and technical accuracy with which ideas are expressed, and the competence with which sources are properly referenced so as to support the arguments made.

The term paper must be double-spaced and cite each referenced source properly in the **Chicago citation format**, and failure to do so will automatically result in a failing grade. When your marked assignment is returned to you, you are expected to read the detailed comments and if you have any confusion about the marks or comments you received; kindly discuss it with your instructor. Students are required to send their assignment one week before the final term exams. Late submission will be marked negatively and 10% marks will be deducted.

**Power Point Presentation**

Students are required to give a Power Point Presentation (PPT) from the topic listed in the course outline. The purpose of the Power-Point Presentations is to keep students engaged in learning from the very beginning and to ensure two-way traffic of knowledge. The presentation can be individual or in a group of 3 students depending on the class size. The Power Point Presentation by the student or a group of students will be followed by question answer session. Students will be assessed on the basis of the clarity and coherence of the content, meticulousness in the presentations of the ideas and analysis as well as the effective use of slides and images. 3 marks will be reserved to judge how the students handle and respond to the questions. Students are required to limit their presentation within the time period of 10 minutes. Negative marking will be applied, in case the student exceed their time limit. The criteria used for assessing the presentation is as follows.

The degree of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.

The ability to present a coherent and systematic argument.

The ability to communicate effectively in a clear and cogent manner.

The extent to which the time limits are observed.

The effectiveness with which oral questions are dealt with.

The clarity of delivery (pace, audibility, etc.)

Depending on the size of the class intake, students will be required either to make one individual presentation or contribute to one group presentation. If group presentations are required, student will also need to submit a log of their contribution to the group. Each contributing group member is awarded the same mark, which is 10% of the total marks.

**Book Review- Reflection Paper**

Students are required to write a book review (1000 words) on a book and a reflection paper (500-600 words) on any article of their own choice from the topic listed in the course outline.

**Mid Term and Final Term Exams**

The Mid Term and Final Term Examinations will be held on university’s prescribed dates. During online instructions, students will be assigned **Take-Home Mid-Terms.** The instructor will assign a question for a take-home midterm exam. The Take-Home Mid-Term exam will make students answer a question by applying the concept that they would have covered in their readings. This paper must be submitted online through Moodle; as no other modes of submission are allowed. The grading rubric for the research paper is available on Moodle.

**Grading Legend**

Below is the grading legend of FCCU (published in all catalogs and available on the FCCU website) as approved by the Academic Council and applies for Fall as well.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | Point value | Numerical value | Meaning |
| A | 4 | 93 - 100 | Superior |
| A-  B+  B  B- | 3.7  3.3  3  2.7 | 90-92  87-89  83-86  80-82 | Good |
| C+  C  C- | 2.3  2  1.7 | 77-79  73-76  70-72 | Satisfactory |
| D+  D | 1.3  1 | 67-69  60-66 | Passing |
| F | 0 | 59 or below | Failing |

**Important Course Policies**

**Mode of Instruction:** This course will be taught in-person, but will profoundly make use of Moodle and Microsoft Teams (for individual online meetings). Kindly ensure that you are familiar with the use of both.

**Submission of Assignments and Plagiarism**: All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle, and will be checked for plagiarism via Turnitin. This software ensures that the work submitted is the student’s own, and plagiarism and cheating in any class discussion or assignment will be dealt with a failing grade, and further disciplinary action will be taken according to FCCU policies. Please read the relevant sections in your Student Handbook for further details.

**Contacting the Instructor:** The best way to reach the instructor is through email. During the scheduled office hours, the instructor will respond within 45 minutes of the query being sent; response time outside of office hours is 12 hours max. If a student is participating in the course online, individual meetings can be arranged online via email. The instructor will be readily available for such meetings during office hours (listed above) and all that is required from a student is to send a request for an individual meeting through email.

**Response Time for Emails:** The instructor will respond to all emails during 9am to 5pm during Mondays to Fridays, with a maximum reply time of 12 hours.

**Late Submissions:** Late submission of the research paper, Mid-Term exam, and research paper will result in automatic penalties. Each day that passes after the deadline for submission will result in a 5% overall grade reduction.

**Re-take Policies:** Absolutely no re-takes for any assignment are allowed, and no extensions will be given for any assignment as well. Under extreme circumstances beyond the student’s control - such as electric or internet outages during online quizzes – he/she should inform the instructor.

**Participation Etiquette:** Students are expected to come to class on time. Personal attacks on other participants - including the instructor - through class discussions or other means will garner strict punishments. A written warning will be issued after one transgression, and further transgressions will result in an automatic failing grade in the course.

**Electronics Policy:** Usage of cell phones and other electronic or recording devices is strictly prohibited in the class. If you need to use your laptop or tablet to take notes, please see the instructor to obtain permission beforehand.

**Language of Instruction:** The language of instruction for the course is English, as required by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). As such, the instructor is not responsible for delivering the lecture or disseminating class-related reading materials in a language other than English; however, reasonable accommodations can be made on an individual basis. All assignments are to be completed and submitted in English as well. Students facing difficulty with the medium of instruction should contact the instructor and seek help during office hours (or by appointment).

**Accommodation for Disabled Students:** If a student is facing difficulty in the course due to a disability or handicap, please contact the instructor immediately to arrange for an appropriate instruction method.

**Health Emergencies**: If a student or a student’s family member encounters a health emergency that can have significant impact on the student’s performance in the course, s/he should immediately inform the instructor. Failure to do so will result in absolutely no accommodations being made towards the course assessments.

**Modifications in Syllabus:** This syllabus was designed to convey course information and requirements as accurately as possible. It is important to note however that it may be subject to change during the course depending on the needs of the class and other situational factors. Such changes would be for the students’ benefit and they will be notified of them as soon as possible.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

(Note: This course schedule is subject to revisions under some unavoidable circumstances)

**Week 1 - Overview and Introduction Syllabus Overview** - **What is the ‘Middle East’? – I**

* Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Kylie Baxter. 2018. *Middle East Politics and International Relations: crisis zone. 1-20.*  New York: Routledge.
* Gasiorowski, Mark, and Sean L. Yom. 2017. *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa.* 8th. 10-40. New York: Rotledge
* Koç, Mehmet Akif. 2019. "Where is the 'Middle East'? : West-centric knowledge-power perception towards the ‘East’." *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 5 (2): 482-489.

**Week 2 - What is the ‘Middle East’? Context - I - A Historical Overview**

**Required Readings**

* Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Kylie Baxter. 2018. *Middle East Politics and International Relations: crisis zone. 1-20.*  New York: Routledge.
* Gasiorowski, Mark, and Sean L. Yom. 2017. *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa.* 8th. 10-40. New York: Rotledge
* Koç, Mehmet Akif. 2019. "Where is the 'Middle East'? : West-centric knowledge-power perception towards the ‘East’." *International Journal of Kurdish Studies* 5 (2): 482-489.

**Week 3: What is the ‘Middle East’? Context – II A Historical Overview**

**Required Readings**

* Halliday, Fred. 2005. *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology.* 1-164. London: Cambridge University Press.

**Week 4: The Formation of the State of Israel - Palestinian Politics: The Failure of the ‘Peace Process’**

**Required Readings**

* Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Kylie Baxter. 2018. *Middle East Politics and International Relations:crisis zone.* 20-83. New York: Routledge.
* Gasiorowski, Mark, and Sean L. Yom. 2017. *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa.* 8th. 96-138. New York: Rotledge
* Said, Edward W. 1980. Chapter 1, 2 and 3 In *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage.

**Week 5: The Iranian Revolution and Pan-Shi’ism**

**Required Readings**

* Gasiorowski, Mark, and Sean L. Yom. 2017. *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa.* 8th. 181-203. New York: Rotledge
* Wehrey, Frederic, David E. Thaler, Nora Bensahel, Kim Cragin, Jerrold D. Green, Dalia Dassa Kaye, Nadia Oweidat, and Jennifer Li. 2009. "Iran and Its Non-State Partners: Assessing Linkages and Control." In *Dangerous But Not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*. 81-128. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.

**Suggested Readings**

* Moin, Baqer. 1994. "Khomeini’s search for Perfection: Theory and Reality." In *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, by Ali Rahnema, 64-93. London: Zed books Ltd.
* Marandi, Seyed Mohammad, and Raffaele Mauriello. 2019. "The Khamenei Doctrine: Iran’s leader on diplomacy, foreign policy, and International Relations." In *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms*, by Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello and Deina Abdelkader. New York: Routledge.
* Hazal Muslu ElBerni, 2018, “Iran’s Security Dilemma in The Middle East: A Neorealist Approach to Iran’s Foreign Policy in Syria”. 1 (2) 115–139 Iran Calismalai Dergisi

**Week 6: The Political Economy of the Middle East**

**Required Readings**

* Richards, Alan, and John Waterbury. 2007. *A Political Economy of the Middle East.* 3rd. Westview Press. Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: The Framework of the Study, Chapter 3: Economic Growth and Structural Change, Chapter 5: Human Capital, and Chapter 6: The Emergence of the Public Sector.

**Week 7: Mid-Term Exams**

**Week 8: The Arab Uprisings and the Democratization Theory**

**Required Readings**

* Stepan, Alfred, and Juan J. Linz. 2013. "Democratization theory and the 'Arab Spring'." *Journal of Democracy* 24 (2): 15-30.
* Dalacoura, Katerina. 2012. "The 2011 Uprising in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications." *International Affairs* 88 (1): 63-79.

**Suggested Readings**

* Hashas, Mohammad. 2019. " The Arab Right to Difference: Taha Abderrahmane’s concept of the awakened youth and the formation of modern Arab Nationhood." In *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms*, by Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello and Deina Abdelkader. New York: Routledge.
* Jamal, Amaney A. 2012. *Of Empires and Citizens: Pro-American Democracy or No Democracy at All?* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

**Week 9: Ideologies and Supra-State Identities**

**Required Readings:**

* Mohomed, Carimo. 2016. "The Parting of the Ways: A Qutbian Approach to International Relations." In *Islam and International Relations: Contributions to Theory and Practice*, by Deina Abdelkader, Nassef Manabilang Adiong and Raffaele Mauriello. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
* Thomas, Scott M. 2005. *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century.* 97-119. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Suggested Reading**

* Knudsen, Are John. 2003. *Political Islam in the Middle East.* CMI Report, Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.

**Week 10: International Security and Non-State Actors**

**Required Readings**

* Abdelkar, Deina. 2019. " The Geopolitics of the Wahhabi Movement: From the “Neglected Duty” to Daesh." In *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms*, by Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello and Deina Abdelkader. New York: Routledge.
* Pfeifer, Hanna. 2019. "Beyond Terrorism and Disorder: Assessing Islamist Constructions of World Order." In *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms*, by Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello and Deina Abdelkader. New York: Routledge.

**Week 11: Playground of the Superpowers I -** **The Role of China, United States and Russia in the Regional Politics**

**Required Readings**

* Akbarzadeh, Shahram, and Kylie Baxter. 2018. *Middle East Politics and International Relations: crisis zone.* 117-140*.*  New York: Routledge.
* Liangxiang, Jin. 2020. *China and Middle East Security Issues: Challenges, Perceptions and Positions.* Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies. https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2023.pdf.
* Stepanova, Ekaterina. 2020. *Russia's Foreign and Security Policy in the Middle East: Entering the 2020s.* Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies. <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2016.pdf>.

**Week 12: Playground of the Superpowers II - The Role of China, United States and Russia in the Regional Politics**

**Required Readings**

* Kurtzer, Daniel, and Maira Seeley. 2020. *The Middle East’s Evolving Security Landscape: Prospects for Regional Cooperation and US Engagement.* Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies.
* Sean L. Yom. 2020. *From Resilience to Revolution: How Foreign Interventions Destabilize the Middle East*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press
* Nikolay Kozhanov. 2016. *Russia and the Syrian Conflict: Moscow’s Domestic, Regional and Strategic Interests.* Berlin, Germany: Gerlach Press

**Suggested Readings**

* Timo Kivimaki. “The United States and the Arab Spring”. Journal of Human Security 9(1) (2013): 15–26

**Week 13: Collective Security and Multilateral Engagement in the Middle East**

**Required Readings**

* Almeizini, Khalid. 2020. "The UAE’s Security Perception in the Middle East: Regional Challenges, Alliances and the diversification of the Partner." In *Fostering a new security architecture in the Middle East*, by Salvia Colombo and Andrea Dessi, 201-221. Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies.
* Rehman, Aziz Ur. 2020. "Causes behind the Abraham Accord and its consequences for the Peace Process in the Middle East." *The Middle East International Journal for social sciences* 2 (2): 73-83. https://meijss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/MEIJSS-73-83-new-one.pdf.