



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS  
Department of Public Affairs and Social Policy

## **SOC 3336: Culture and Conflict in the Middle East**

*Syllabus*

### **Instructor:**

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Professor and Director

Department of Criminology

Office and Office Hours: Green Hall, Room 3.202

11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Monday and Wednesdays or by appointment

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### **Graduate Assistants:**

Galia Cohen

### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide the student with an overview of the Middle East. We cannot hope to provide an in-depth examination of the geography, culture, languages, literature, religions, and history of the Middle East in one undergraduate course! Specific focus will be on Middle East patterns as reflected in the political divisions and countries that comprise the region. Whenever possible, significant attention will be given to specific cultural and historical events that have helped shape the current structure of this Middle East. It is a fascinating area of the world, often characterized by wonderfully rich and diverse cultures, the birthplace of monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism), the home to varied tribes and ethnicities, and the location of unique geographical formations. Sadly, it has also been an area historically replete with violence and conflict. The primary objective of the course is to enable the student to comprehend the vastness of the Middle East and explore the major divisions of places, peoples, and politics comprising this unique area of the world.

### **Required Reading:**

Selected readings will be delivered in class. See the attached schedule for a list of readings.

- Layachi, A., **Global Studies: The Middle East**, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011)
- Gettleman, M.E. and S. Schaar (editors), **The Middle East and Islamic World Reader** (New York: Grove Press, 2012)

In addition to the above textbooks, various handouts will be presented in class or placed on reserve in the library. Students are also advised to stay on top of current disaster events and debates by reading a local or national newspaper, or the electronic editions of *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com>), or *The Washington Post* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>).

## Learning Objectives:

At the end of this class, students will be able to:

1. Define the geographical area of the Middle East, naming specific countries, places, physical attributes, and primary population centers.
2. Understand and discuss the historical development of the Middle East, from the “cradle of civilization” to modern cities of technology and sophistication.
3. Compare and contrast the major cultures, religions and ethnicities often observed in the Middle East.
4. Describe the various unique geographical regions of the Middle East.
5. Understand and discuss the primary political issues in the Middle East that continue to be the roots of conflict in this area.
5. Discuss the future of the Middle East, and impact of this important region on the economic and political security of the United States.

## Grade Evaluation:

Grades will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Two Major Examinations** (Examination #1 and Examination #2). Each exam will constitute 30% of your final grade and cover all class lectures, discussion, reading assignments and materials designated on the schedule previous to each examination. The examinations will consist of a combination of true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short-essay questions.  
60% of final grade
2. **Four Quizzes**. A total of **five** short quizzes will be presented in class consisting of multiple choice and/or fill-in-the-blank questions. The lowest grade for the five quizzes will be eliminated; therefore, each quiz is worth 5% of your final grade.  
20% of final grade
3. **One Written (5 to 7 page) Report**. The student will present a 5 to 7 page, double-spaced, typed paper reporting on any issue, topic or experience directly relating to the Middle East. The topic may include any aspect of the culture, history, people, geography, literature, or political issue involving the Middle East. Much more on this assignment will be discussed in class. Reports are due on **April 29, 2013**. Late papers will NOT be accepted.  
20% of final grade.
4. **Class Discussion**. Since this class is an upper division seminar, students are expected to come to class well prepared to discuss the previous readings assigned for that day. Comments should be thoughtful, analytical, and well-substantiated. Rash statements made without support will not be tolerated, and will deter from a positive grade. Therefore, please think before you speak!  
No direct percentage of the final grade; rather a Plus or Minus that may be critical in determining border line issues.

## **Tentative Schedule of Lectures and Reading Assignments:**

Week 1: January 14 and 16

Welcome and Introduction to the Course

- Layachi Text: Country Reports
- Layachi Text: Articles 1 and 2
- LECTURE: Physical and Cultural Geography of the Middle East

Week 2: January 21 (no class) and 23

The Geography of the Middle East

Population Centers – Groupings of People – Countries

Physical Geography

- Hand-Out Material
- LECTURE: Physical and Cultural Geography of the Middle East

Week 3: January 28 and 30

Religions of the Middle East

- Layachi Text: Article 3
- G & S Text: Chapter I
- LECTURE: Understanding Islam
- LECTURE: Understanding Christianity

Week 4: February 4 and 6

Religions of the Middle East

- Hand-Out Material
- LECTURE: Understanding Judaism (Cohen)

Week 5: February 11 and 13

Ancient History to World War I

The Importance of World War I and Colonization of the ME

- G & S Text: Chapter II
- G & S Text: Chapter III
- LECTURE: WW I and the Middle East

Week 6: February 18 and 20

The Holocaust and Israeli History (Cohen)

- G & S Text: Chapter IV
- Hand-Out Material
- LECTURE: WW II and the Aftermath

Week 7: February 25 and 27

Arabs and Zionists: The Continuing Struggle

- G & S Text: Chapter V
- LECTURE: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Cohen)

Week 8: March 4

Review

March 6

**EXAMINATION #1**

- **Covering Layachi Text: Articles 1, 2 & 3;**
- **G & S Text Chapters I, II, III, IV, and V;**
- **All Hand-Out Materials to Date**

Week 9: March 11 and 13

**Spring Break – No Class**

Week 10: March 18 and 20

Geo-Politics of Oil and Middle East

- G & S Text: Chapter VI
- LECTURE: The Geo-Politics of Oil in Post WWII Middle East

Terrorism and Radical Islam

- G & S Text: Chapter VII and VIII
- Hand-Out Material
- LECTURE: Understanding Terrorism in the Middle East

Week 11: March 25 and 27

Regional Area Focus: Eastern Mediterranean Countries

- Layachi Text: Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria
- Layachi Text: Article 9
- LECTURE: The Levant (Syria and Jordan)
- LECTURE: Lebanon (Hijal)

Week 12: April 1 and 3

Regional Area Focus: Israel (Cohen)

- Layachi Text: Israel
- Layachi Text: Article 11

Week 13: April 8 and 10

Regional Area Focus: Western Arabi (The North African Countries)

- Layachi Text: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia
- Layachi Text: Articles 5, 10 and 12
- LECTURE: Western Arabi
- LECTURE: Morocco (Gorieki)

Week 14: April 14 and 17

Regional Area Focus: Iraq, Iran and Turkey

- Layachi Text: Iran, Iraq, Turkey
- Layachi Text: Article 4, 6 and 13
- Hand-Out Material
- LECTURE: Turkey
- LECTURE: Iraq and Iran

Week 15: April 22 and 24

Regional Area Focus: Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula

- Layachi Text: Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Yemen
- Layachi Text: Articles 7, 8 and 14
- LECTURE: The Saudi Peninsula

Week 16: April 29

**WRITTEN REPORTS ARE DUE ON APRIL 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Women and Gender Issues in the Middle East

Literature and Poetry of the Middle East

- Layachi Text: Article 15
- Hand-Out Materials
- LECTURE: The Beauty of the Middle East
- LECTURE: The Future of the Middle East

May 1

**EXAMINATION #2**

- **Covering Layachi Text: All Individual Country Reports;**
- **Layachi Text: Articles 4 through 15;**
- **G & S Text Chapters VI, VII and VIII;**
- **All Hand-Out Materials during the second half of the course)**

Week 17: May 6

*Food and Beverages of the Middle East !!*