

Middle Eastern Politics
POLS 425

Course Information:

Spring 2014
Classroom: CLR 308
Meeting Time: 9-9:50 a.m. MWF
Course Website: Moodle

Contact Information:

Instructor: Elizabeth Nyman
Email: enyman@louisiana.edu
Office: Mouton Hall 229
Office Hours: MW 11-1, T 9-12 or by appt.

Course Description and Objectives

This course provides a basic introduction to the politics of the modern Middle East. By the end of the course, students should be familiar with the different countries that make up today's Middle East as well as the politics of major issue areas there such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab Spring. I expect that students will keep up to date on current events as we move through the course, as these will often be discussed alongside the information we are covering in the readings. The course thus requires a range of readings, regular attendance and class participation.

Required Texts

Marc Lynch. 2012. *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*.

Ethan Chorin. 2012. *Exit the Colonel: The Hidden History of the Libya Revolution*.

David Lesch. 2013. *Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad; New Updated Edition*.

Gregory Harms and Todd Ferry. 2012. *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction, Third Edition*.

Course Requirements

(1) **Exam Papers:** There will be 3 exam papers due in this course, each worth 25% of the course grade. I will provide a paper topic over which students will write a 6-8 page exam response. These papers are open book, open notes, but the usual rules on plagiarism apply and students are not allowed to work together.

(2) **Movie Paper:** Students will have to write one short paper (3-4 pages) on the class movie. This paper is worth 10% of the course grade.

(3) **Participation:** Students are required to attend class regularly and participate actively in class discussion. Students will be graded on their participation in class discussion, and this will make up 15% of the course grade. Active participation is necessary to garner full credit, and this means that students are expected to have done the required reading in advance, to have considered the topic under discussion as they read, and to come to class with an active interest in the material.

Course Letter Grades

Final course letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: 59 and below

I will not respond to end of semester emails requesting a grade change.

Course Policies

Absences from Exams and Late Work: Makeup exams will be allowed when students are participating in formally sanctioned University events if proper documentation is provided to the instructor prior to the exam. Makeup exams will also be allowed in the case of an extraordinary circumstance if accompanied by sufficient documentation within two days after the exam. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.

Academic Honor Policy: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students committing these violations will be punished according to University policy. Be familiar with what constitutes plagiarism; ignorance is not an excuse. Consult Section V in the UL Lafayette Undergraduate Bulletin for the university definitions of plagiarism for more information about what constitutes an offense.

Courtesy in the Classroom: Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, please silence and put away all cell phones and other electronic devices during class time. Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit, and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please show respect for your fellow students by refraining from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you are in disagreement with them. Repeated disruption of class will lead to a reduction of your final grade.

Nondiscrimination Policy: UL Lafayette does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. This classroom is intended to be a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. If you have any suggestions as to how I can improve the learning environment in this course, please let me know. I will give all such suggestions serious consideration.

Health Issues and Disabilities: Students are encouraged to address any special needs or accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should speak with the Office of Disability Services at 337-482-5252 or ods@louisiana.edu and receive documentation. You can also visit the ODS website (<http://disability.louisiana.edu>) for information on ODS services and on eligibility requirements. Furthermore, if you are concerned about your physical and/or mental

well-being, I strongly encourage you to visit the UL Counseling and Testing Center, Saucier Wellness Center, OK Allen Hall, or call them at 337-482-6480. After hours help can be found by calling University Police at 337-482-6447 and asking to speak with the counselor on call.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure: Students with any sort of condition that may place them at risk during an emergency evacuation are responsible for preplanning their own evacuation strategies. You are also responsible for identifying yourself to your professor at the beginning of the semester and sharing information on your particular needs and your evacuation plan.

Course Outline**

Overview of the Middle East

Week 1 (Jan 15-17)	Introduction to Course
Week 2 (Jan 20-24)	Drawing Lines, Dividing Peoples
Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 20	
Week 3 (Jan. 27-31)	Islam

Arab Spring

Week 4 (Feb. 3-7)	Arab Spring (Lynch, all)
Exam Paper 1: Feb. 7	
Week 5 (Feb. 10-14)	Egypt
Week 6 (Feb. 17-21)	Libya (Chorin, all)
Week 7 (Feb. 24-28)	Libya continued
Week 8 (March 3-7)	NO CLASS

Mardi Gras: March 3-5

No Class: March 7

Week 9 (March 10-14)	Syria (Lesch, all)
Week 10 (March 17-21)	Syria continued

Exam Paper 2: March 21

Other Major Players

Week 11 (March 24-28)	Movie
Week 12 (March 31-April 4)	Iran
Week 13 (April 7-11)	Saudi Arabia

Movie Paper: April 11

Israel/Palestine

Week 14 (April 14-18)	The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Harms & Ferry, all)
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Spring Break: April 18-27

Week 15 (April 28-May 2)	The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict continued
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Final Exam Paper: TBD

**** The syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change if necessary.**