

Pol. Sci. 121
Government and Politics of the Middle East

Spring 2001
Professor Lakoff

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Course requirements: mid-term exam (25 percent), final exam (75 percent). Term paper is optional. If paper is submitted, grades will be composed of midterm (20 percent), paper (40 percent) and final exam (40 percent). Term paper must be on a recommended or approved topic (see list below), between 2,000 and 2,500 words. Final deadline for submission of term paper is June 1. If submitted by no later than May 18, it will be returned with a provisional grade one week later, and may be revised and resubmitted; the higher of the two grades will count.

Required for purchase:

1. CQ Press, *The Middle East* (Ninth edition), paperback
2. Michael Field, *Inside the Arab World* (Harvard University Press), paperback

I. Overview

April 2 Introduction to the Work of the Course
April 4 Overview of the Region and its Conflicts
April 6 Regime Types and Explanatory Variables
April 9 "It's Not the Middle West:" Creedal Passion, Instability, and Violent Conflict in the Middle East
April 11 The Middle East in Early Modern History
April 13 The Middle East Since World War I
April 16 The Islamic Factor: Religion and Politics in the Middle East

Reading: *The Middle East*, chap. 1, pp. 3-10; chap. 5, pp. 156-193; chap. 6, pp. 195-215.
Inside the Arab World, chaps. 1-6, pp. 1-125.

II. Comparing the Regimes

April 18-20 Authoritarian-Dynastic: Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states; Authoritarian-Dictatorial: Syria; Libya; Totalitarian: Iraq

APRIL 23 MID-TERM EXAM

April 25-27 Authoritarian-Theocratic: Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan
April 30-May 2 Semi-Authoritarian Constitutional Monarchies: Jordan, Morocco; Semi-Authoritarian/Republican: Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia
May 4-7 Democratic: Israel, Turkey, Lebanon (1943-1975)
May 9 Prospects for Further Democratization in the Middle East

Reading: *The Middle East*, Part II, pp. 219-402
Inside the Arab World, chaps. 7-16, pp. 126-370

III. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

May 11 Zionism as Ideology and Movement
May 14 Palestine During British Rule Under the League of Nations Mandate (1920-1948)
May 16-18: From War to War—and Partial Peace (1948-1979)
May 21 The Rise of Palestinian Arab Nationalism and the PLO

May 23 Pressures for Resolution: The End of the Cold War, The Intifada (1987-91), and “Desert Storm”

May 25 The Oslo Accords, the Peace Process, the Second Intifada, and the Fall of Barak

May 28 Attitudes and Parties in Israel

May 30 Attitudes and Factions Among the Palestinians

June 1 Prospects for Ending the Conflict

Reading: *The Middle East*, chap. 2, pp. 11-76

Inside the Arab World, chaps. 17-20, pp. 345-424.

III. The U.S. and the Middle East

June 4-8 Defining and Pursuing the National Interest: U.S. Policy in the Middle East

Reading: *The Middle East*, chap. 3, pp. 77-123.

Optional Term paper

Submit a term paper on either a recommended or an approved topic. 2,000-2,500 words.

Recommended topics:

1. Whose Holy Land?

Various formulas have been proposed for resolving the conflict over “the Holy Land.” These include the “two-state solution” implied in the Oslo Accords; a hybrid of the two-state formula which would put Jerusalem under international control; bi-national statehood; a unitary state with no religious or ethnic basis; a unitary (Jewish) state with autonomy for Arab areas; and a division between Israel and an Arab state confederating the west bank and Gaza with Jordan. Considering the alternatives, which if any of these do you think most just and workable?

2. Islam and Democracy

Common to all Middle Eastern Muslim societies, David Pryce-Jones notes, “is the rule of a single power holder around whose ambitions the state has been arranged....Every Arab state is explicitly Muslim in confession. Nowhere is there participation in the political process corresponding to any conception of representative democracy. No parliament or assembly except by appointment of the power holder, no freedom of expression throughout rigidly state-controlled media, no opinion polls, nothing except a riot to determine what public opinion might be.” Is Islamic belief responsible for the failure of democracy to take root in these countries or are other factors equally or more responsible?

3. Religion and State

Is a “wall of separation” between religion and politics essential to civil liberty? Discuss in regard to tensions between religion and secularism in modern Israel, Turkey, or Egypt.

4. What Future for Iran?

Is Iran’s “Islamic Republicanism” evolving in the direction of western-style democracy or must it remain authoritarian so long as it stays true to the principles of its clerical founders?

7. Electoral reform in Israel.

Many democracies rely on proportional representation as their electoral system. In Israel’s case, however, it has been criticized for encouraging destabilizing fragmentation and political irresponsibility. Would Israel’s democracy be strengthened or weakened if this system of proportional representation were seriously modified or replaced?

8. The American Interest in the Middle East

What principles should guide American policy in the Middle East? How have these principles actually been followed since 1945?

9. Islam and the Status of Women

How is the status of women understood in Islam? Is this understanding compatible with the belief in universal human rights?

10. "Desert Storm": Right or Wrong?

Did the first Bush administration do the right thing (in terms of international law, morality, and defense of national interest) in assembling a coalition to use force to evict Iraq from Kuwait? Or was this really an exercise of superpower hegemony on behalf of the West's interest in maintaining its own power and controlling access to Middle Eastern oil, in which law and morality were merely convenient rationales?