

**IS 471**  
**International Politics of the Middle East**  
VMI Department of International Studies and Political Science  
M-F 12:30-2:30, SS 449

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30-12:30

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- *A History of the Modern Middle East (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)* – William Cleveland and Marin Bunton
- *The Middle East (12<sup>th</sup> Edition)* – Ellen Lust

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed as an extensive exploration of the international interactions of Middle Eastern states, drawing on both the comparative and international relations subfields of political science. The states relevant to our discussion represent those Near Eastern states on the European and Asian periphery that are frequently characterized as unique given the importance of Islamic religious traditions, dependence upon oil exports, and more recently, domestic political instability. This cluster of geographically proximate states shares a unique set of political, economic, and security challenges in the twenty-first century.

In order to assess the prospects for order or disorder in the Middle East, students will, through a process of critical analysis and reflection, gain a broad understanding of not only the historical, structural, and cultural context of states within the region, but also how these domestic-international linkages influence foreign policy behaviors. The course will examine the interplay of numerous variables that improve our understanding and ability to rigorously analyze the politics of the Middle East, including the impact of colonialism, nationalism and nation-state formation, influence of major powers in the region, political economy and export dependence, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

**STUDENT OBJECTIVES:**

- Gain a better understanding of international politics in the Middle East, developing an understanding of what makes the Middle East both unique and similar to other regions in the international system.
- Develop analytical tools to understand, evaluate, and respond to international problems through qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- Critically evaluate arguments surrounding controversial issues to the region.
- Develop arguments on issues of international politics and communicate those arguments effectively.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:**

Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner:

Participation -----	10%
Response Papers-----	30%
Final Paper-----	30%
Final Examination -----	30%

**Participation** accounts for 10% of the final grade. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, simulations, and activities. In order to participate effectively, students will need to complete the readings before their assigned class sessions. Since the topics are generally controversial and multi-faceted, students will be expected to be civil and tolerant of viewpoints that may differ from their own.

**Response Papers** account for 30% of the final grade. You are responsible for turning in 3 papers responding to a question regarding Middle Eastern politics. In your responses, you will synthesize the material from class and critically analyze the causal relationships proposed by the authors. You will be expected to engage the material, analyze the theoretical claims, and provide original insights into the relevant research puzzle. Each assignment should be 1000-2000 words.

**Final Paper** accounts for 30% of the final grade. In ten to fifteen pages, identify the set of causal variables that you believe comprise the most compelling “causal recipe” to explain interactions of states within the Middle East. To develop your argument, you will build on your analysis from the term’s response papers, providing an explanation of how the pool of possible variables interact to produce regional political outcomes. Finally, to provide support for your argument, you will provide a brief comparison of your proposed causal recipe applied to another region of the world, with the purpose of providing support for your recipe’s generalizable relevance. You will imbed within your paper analysis of ongoing issues confronting the region and conclude with practical policy solutions.

**Final Examination** account for 30% of the final grade. The exam will cover material from both class discussion and the readings and will require retention and application of course material. The exam will consist of three to five short answer questions and two essay questions. In the essay questions, students are expected to provide analysis of a political or economic concern relevant to the region and demonstrate sufficient factual knowledge to support their argument.

**News Sources:**

To be successful in the classroom, on exams, and in their papers, students are expected to maintain an awareness of ongoing developments within the region and should regularly review some portion of the following English-language news sources.

**Al Jazeera:** <http://english.aljazeera.net/>

**BBC Online:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/middle\\_east/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/middle_east/default.stm)

**The Daily Star:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb>

**Haaretz:** <http://www.haaretz.com>

**Jerusalem Post:** <http://www.jpost.com>

**New York Times:** <http://www.nyt.com>

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Section 1**

#### **Understanding the Middle East in the Context of International Politics**

##### **May 21 - Introduction**

##### **May 22**

- "Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability." *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2012.
- "A Special Report on the Arab World: Waking from its Sleep." *The Economist*, July 25, 2009.
- "The Middle East: Evolution of a Broken Regional Order" – Paul Salem. *Carnegie Paper*, July 2008.

##### **May 23**

- "Theories of Interstate and Intrastate War: A Level of Analysis Approach" – Jack Levy. In *Managing Global Chaos* edited by Chester Crocker and Fen Osler Hempson with Pamela Aall pp 3-27.
- "The Security Dilemma Revisited"- Charles Glaser. *World Politics* 50: 171-201
- "The State in the Middle East and North Africa" – Lisa Anderson. *Comparative Politics* 20(1): 1-18

##### **May 24 - TBA**

### **Section 2**

#### **History and Culture**

##### **May 28**

- **Response Paper 1 Due: Sources of Regional Order**
- Chapters 1-3 in Cleveland and Bunton

##### **May 29**

- Chapters 4-5 in Cleveland and Bunton

**May 30**

- Chapters 6-8 in Cleveland and Bunton

**May 31**

- Chapters 9-11 in Cleveland and Bunton

**June 3**

- **Response Paper 2 Due: Historical and Cultural Sources of Regional Politics**
- Chapters 12-14 in Cleveland and Bunton

**June 4**

- “The Muslim World and the West: the Roots of Conflict” – Ismael Hossein-Zadeh. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 2005.
- “Jihad in the Modern World” – Abdul Hakim Sherman Jackson. *The Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 2002(Spring/Summer)
- “Bread, Freedom, Independence: Opposition to Nazi Germany in Lebanon and Syria and the Struggle for a Just Order.” - Götz Nordburch. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28(3): 416-427.

**Section 3****Domestic Politics and Political Economy****June 5**

- Chapter 3-5 in Lust

**June 6**

- “Pax Asiatic versus Bella Levantina: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East” – Etel Solingen. *American Political Science Review*. 101 (4): 757-780.
- “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games” – Robert Putnam. *International Organization* 42: 428-460.
- “The Domestic Sources of International Regimes: The Evolution of Nuclear Ambiguity in the Middle East” – Etel Solingen. *International Studies Quarterly* 38(4).

**June 7**

- Chapter 2 in Lust
- “Foreign Policy Restructuring: Egypt’s Disengagement from the Arab-Israeli Conflict Revisited” – Ibrahim Karawan. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18(3): 325-338.
- “The Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy Behavior in Middle Eastern Enduring Rivalries” – Christopher Sprecher and Karl DeRouen Jr. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1(1): 121-141.

## Section 4 International Politics and Foreign Policy in the Middle East

### June 10

- **Response Paper 3: Domestic Economic and Political Sources of Foreign Policy Choice**
- Chapters 7 & 8 in Lust
- “The Quagmire of Arab Democracy” – Hilal Khashan. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 14(1)

### June 11

- “Lebanon Springs Forward” – Oussama Safa. *Journal of Democracy* 17(1): 22-37.
- “Does the Hamas Victory Advance Peace in the Middle East?” – Shahram Akbarzadeh. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60(2): 201-206.
- “Jihad vs. McWorld” – Benjamin Barber. *The Atlantic Magazine*, March 1992.

### June 12

- “Democratization and War” – Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder. *Foreign Affairs*. Summer 1995.
- “McJihad: Islam in the US Global Order” – Timothy Mitchell. *Social Text* 73 20(4): 1-18
- “Islam and Democracy: Micro-Level Indications of Compatibility” – Steven Hoffman. *Comparative Political Studies* 37(6): 652-676.

### June 13

- Cleveland and Burton 15
- “Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?” – Amy Hawthorne. *Carnegie Paper* 44.
- “The Politics of Incoherence: The United States and the Middle East” – James A. Bill and Rebecca Bill Chavez. *The Middle East Journal* 56(4): 562-575.

## Section 5 Regional Conflict and Cooperation

### June 14

- Chapters 16-18 in Cleveland and Button

### June 17

- **Final Paper Due: International, Regional, and Domestic Sources of Middle Eastern Politics**
- Chapters 19-21 in Cleveland and Button

### June 18

- Chapters 22-24 in Cleveland and Button

## June 19

- “The Obama Presidency and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” - Feldman and Shikaki. *Middle East Brief*.
- “The Syria-Israel Negotiations: Who Is Telling the Truth?” – Patrick Seale. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 29(2): 65-77.
- “Israel and Lebanon: A Precarious Relationship” – Faten Ghosn. In *The Middle East- Peace by Piece* edited by Hassan Barari, 105-120. (<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/amman/06836-book.pdf> )

## June 20 - Final Exam

### Disabilities and Accommodations:

If you are a cadet with a documented disability, who will be requesting accommodations in my class, please make sure you are registered with the Office of Disabilities Services, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Post Infirmary, 464-7667, and provide me with an Accommodations letter outlining your accommodations. I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your needs.

### Classroom Rules:

No tobacco products, food, beverages beyond water in a closed container, or gum are allowed. Profanity and racial or gender slurs will not be tolerated. Use of personal electronic devices during class is prohibited – unauthorized devices will be confiscated.

### Work for Grade Policy:

The below work for grade policy is taken directly from “Part IV: Academic Regulations” of *Regulations for the Virginia Military Institute*, under “Cadets’ Responsibilities”:

“Work for grade” is defined as any work presented to an instructor for a formal grade or undertaken in satisfaction of a requirement for successful completion of a course or degree requirement. All work submitted for grade is considered the cadet’s own work. “Cadet’s own work” means that he or she has composed the work from his or her general accumulation of knowledge and skill except as clearly and fully documented and that it has been composed especially for the current assignment. No work previously submitted in any course at VMI or elsewhere will be resubmitted or reformatted for submission in a current course without the specific approval of the instructor.

In all work for grade, failure to distinguish between the cadet’s own work and ideas and the work and ideas of others is known as plagiarism. Proper documentation clearly and fully identifies the source of all borrowed ideas, quotations, or other assistance. The cadet is referred to the VMI-authorized handbook for rules concerning quotations, paraphrases and documentation.

In all written work for grade, the cadet must include the words “HELP RECEIVED” conspicuously on the document, and he or she must then do one of two things: (1) state “none,” meaning that no help was received except as documented in the work; or (2) explain in detail the nature of the help received. In oral work for grade, the cadet must make the same declaration before beginning the presentation. Admission of help received may result in a lower grade but will not result in prosecution for an honor violation.

Cadets are prohibited from discussing the contents of a quiz/exam until it is returned to them or final course grades are posted. This enjoinder does not imply that any inadvertent expression or behavior that might indicate one's feeling about the test should be considered a breach of honor. The real issue is whether cadets received information, not available to everyone else in the class, which would give them an unfair advantage. If a cadet inadvertently gives or receives information, the incident must be reported to the professor and the Honor Court.

Each cadet bears the responsibility for familiarizing himself or herself thoroughly with the policies states in this section, with any supplementary statement regarding work for grade expressed by the academic department in which he or she is taking a course, and with any special conditions provided in writing by the professor for a given assignment. If there is any doubt or uncertainty about the correct interpretation of a policy, the cadet should consult the instructor of the course. There should be no confusion, however, on the basic principle that it is never acceptable to submit someone else's work, written or otherwise, formally graded or not, as one's own.

The violation by a cadet of any of these policies will, if he or she is found guilty by the Honor Court, result in his or her being dismissed from VMI. Neither ignorance nor professed confusion about the correct interpretation of these policies is an excuse.

## **Department of International Studies Work for Grade Policy:**

Work for Grade in this department is generally of the following types.

1. Written quizzes, tests, or examinations
2. Book reviews
3. Research papers, policy memoranda, briefing papers, and discourse analysis – identification and analysis of the critical difference is in the findings and opinions of scholars on issues of interest to the discipline.

Cadets are permitted and encouraged to study with their peers to prepare for quizzes, tests and exams. However, when a cadet takes either written or oral quizzes, tests, and examinations, answers must be his/her own work without help from any other source including notes or consultation with others.

In the case of book reviews, research and other papers, as described in “2” and “3” above, research and composing of such works must be done by the cadet alone. Cadets are permitted to use spell and grammar-checking facilities.

IS cadets are encouraged to make use of all VMI tutoring services to receive critical comments.<sup>1</sup> Cadets who do so and mark “Help Received” will not receive a lower grade on an assignment. Cadets are also permitted to seek critical comments on their written work from their peers. However, proof-reading and editing<sup>2</sup> of a cadet’s written work is not permitted.

Any exceptions to these rules, including the use of tutors, collaboration among cadets, and the use of computer style, spell and grammar checkers; must be explained in writing by the course instructor. Instructors are at liberty to stipulate exceptions only with the written approval of their department head.

**If you have any questions about the application of these rules, consult your instructor. Do not leave anything to chance.**

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<sup>1</sup> As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, critical comments are “general advice given on such matters as organization, thesis development, support for assertions, and patterns of errors. It does not include proofreading or editing.”

<sup>2</sup> As defined on page 27 of the academic regulations, “proofreading means correcting errors (e.g., in spelling, grammar, punctuation). It is the last step taken by the writer in the editing process. In addition to the corrections made in proofreading, editing includes making such changes as the addition, deletion, or reordering of paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words. A cadet may not have his or her work proofread or edited by someone other than the instructor.”



IS 471  
Response Paper Prompts

*Response Paper 1 – Sources of Regional Order*

While the Middle East possesses a unique cultural, historical, and economic context that has engendered a set of potentially unique political behaviors, the region also lies at an important geopolitical situation in the broader international system. Reflecting on your historical discussion in response paper 2, consider this 1904 statement by H. J. MacKinder in *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (p. 106):

*“Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;  
who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;  
who rules the World-Island controls the world.”*

Apply this statement on early twentieth century Eastern Europe to the contemporary Middle East. Comparing the two regions at different points in time, identify the set of relevant international variables and provide a clear theoretical statement on their influence on cooperation and conflict in the Middle East. You should then explain how variation in these international variables affects the potential for either future 1) economic development or 2) democracy within the region.

Your paper should be initiated with a clear thesis statement, followed by regional comparison and the presentation of evidence, concluding in the assessment of a prediction regarding economic or political changes within the region. Excellent papers will incorporate both contemporary as well as historical evidence in describing the interplay between the region and the broader international system.

*Response Paper 2 – Cultural and Historical Context*

Middle Eastern history has been characterized by periods of both great cooperation and prosperity as well as conflict and political instability. Reflecting on the Ottoman, inter-war, Cold War, and post-Cold War political environments, compare the historical time periods and

1. Provide a theory that explains the variation over time in the level of political violence within the region.
2. Identify a set of causal variables you believe to be relevant to explaining these outcomes, detailing the process by which these variables affect the outcome of political violence.
3. Explain how those same variables apply to another region's historical variation in conflict and cooperation.

In this paper, you will draw on the historical material from the course, applying theoretical and abstract ideas from the readings and class. Reflecting on historical observations allows for the generation of generalizable theories. Your paper should be initiated with a clear thesis statement, followed by historical evidence, defend the thesis statement against counter-theories, and a clear application of the thesis statement to some region other than the Middle East to demonstrate its broader applicability.

*Response Paper 3 – Domestic Economic and Political Sources of Foreign Policy Choice*

Domestic economic context provides the setting for political behaviors and foreign policy action. Critically evaluate Solingen's theory of interest group formation and conflict applied to the Middle East. In this paper you will:

1. Develop your own domestic theory of regional conflict, incorporating the Middle East's unique economic context.
2. Compare your theory with Solingen's.
3. Provide empirical support offering a defense of your argument and improved explanatory ability.

In this paper, you will draw on both abstract material from the course and statistical sources. In addressing Solingen's theory, you are expected to address Solingen's evidence, but are also expected to incorporate additional evidence of your own. Your paper should be initiated with a clear thesis statement, followed by theoretical comparison with Solingen and the presentation of evidence. Excellent papers will conclude their discussion by expanding their theory to another region, as Solingen chooses to do with East Asia.