Introduction

As summer 2007 approaches, the War in Iraq rages, the crisis in Lebanon continues, Palestinian forces engage in inter-group strife, and Iran continues its plan to acquire nuclear technology. Indeed, one must not look far in order to find something in the news pertaining to a region dubbed by historians as “the cradle of civilization.” Unfortunate as it may be, that same region which provided the foundation for the great civilizations that came to be finds itself today in the midst of uncertainty and turmoil.

In this course, we seek to explore the politics of the Middle East, from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east. This is certainly a tall order and, as must be the case, we will be limited in terms of how much we can cover. My goal, broadly speaking, is to provide you with a sufficient background in the history, politics, geography, and demography of this region. By doing so, I hope that you will be prepared to pursue the next step: addressing many of the theoretical and practical issues that come up.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by a tracking system. Every student has the option of choosing Track 1, an exam-based track, or Track 2, a paper-based track. Students MUST pick the track they wish to tack prior to Exam 1.

TRACK 1: There will be two exams, each worth 40% of your grade. Both of these will be non-cumulative, meaning that exam two will cover only the subjects covered between exam one and exam two. Exam one will be given at the start of Week 2 (see below) and exam two will be given at the beginning of Week 4 (see below). Participation will count for 20% of your grade. Included in this grade is coming to class prepared (i.e., having done the readings) and engaging in discussion/presenting questions.

TRACK 2: A short research paper (10-15 pages, double spaced, one-inch margins) that counts as the remaining 80% of your grade. This paper will take the form of a country study. Each student is free to choose any country in the region, but preference is given to those which we do not cover in great depth. The details of the assignment will be provided in the first week of class. Participation, like in Track 1, counts for 20% of the grade as well.
As popular of a topic as the Middle East is, there are few good texts out there. For this course, I have chosen a few texts that are “as good as it gets.” These should be available at the bookstore or, more cheaply, online. The first two are must-haves, while the others are recommended. I will place the relevant readings from the recommended texts on reserve at the library.

**Required:**
* Cleveland, William. *A History of the Modern Middle East.*

**Recommended:**
Khomeini, Ayatollah. *Islam and Revolution* (Volume 1).
Milton-Edwards, Beverley. *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East* (2nd ed.)
Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones.*

**Course Outline**

*N.B. Starred (*) readings are required – others are recommended but optional.*

7/16: Course logistics; introduction

**Week 1: Historical Introduction**

7/17: Pre-history, classical era, Byzantine Empire, and the Rise of Islam
*Readings:* *Cleveland Ch. 1-2*

7/18: The Crusades, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Rise of the Ottoman Empire
*Readings:* *Cleveland Ch. 3*

7/19: The Decline of the Ottoman Empire, Tanzimat, and the lead up to World War I
*Readings:* *Cleveland Ch. 4-8*

7/20: The End of the Ottoman Era, the Era of Mandates, World War II and its aftermath
*Readings:* *Cleveland Ch. 9-13, Owen Ch. 1, Milton-Edwards Ch. 1*

**Week 2: The Forging of the Modern Middle East**

7/23: EXAM 1

7/24: Nasserism, Pan-Arabism, and Monarchy
*Readings:* *Cleveland Ch. 14-17, Owen Ch. 2-3*

7/25: The failure of secularization, the rise of fundamental Islam, and the “troubles”
Readings: *Cleveland Ch. 18-20, *Owen Ch. 4 and 9, Qutb (all)

7/26: Islam and the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf War
Readings: *Cleveland Ch. 21-23, Khomeini (all of part I), Milton-Edwards Ch. 5

7/27: The Middle East since the Gulf War
Readings: *Cleveland Ch. 24, *Owen Ch. 12

Week 3: Ethno-Religious Minorities and Conflict

7/30: Muslim minorities: Kurds and Berbers
Readings: Nissan Part I, Milton-Edwards Ch. 8

7/31: Lebanon: Druze, Maronites, and the Lebanese Civil War I
Readings: Nissan Part II and Part III

8/1: Lebanon: Druze, Maronites, and the Lebanese Civil War II
Readings: Nissan Part III

8/2: Copts in Egypt, Assyrians in Syria and Iraq, and Armenians
Readings: Nissan Part III

8/3: Palestinians, Jews, and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
Readings: Nissan Part IV

Week 4: Political themes, prospects, and conclusion

8/6: EXAM 2

8/7: Economics, the legacy of Nasserism, and Oil
Readings: * Owen Ch. 7

8/8: Future of democracy, parties, and military regimes
Readings: * Owen Ch. 8 and 10, Milton-Edwards Ch. 6

8/9: Identity, ideology, and prospects for the future
Readings: * Owen (conclusion), Nissan (conclusion), and Qutb (conclusion)

8/10: Presentation of papers and PAPERS DUE!