

International Relations 248

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Spring 2015

Instructor: Phil Arena

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday

1:00-3:00pm

and by appointment

This course consists of two parts. First, we will discuss the origins and resolution of Israel's intense rivalry with neighboring Arab states, particularly Egypt. Second, we will discuss the escalation and persistence of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Game-theoretic models will appear throughout the course, but no prior exposure is required or assumed. The only mathematical background that is necessary for this course is high school algebra (which you might want to brush up on).

Understand that the goal of this class is not to account for every factor contributing to the conflict, nor to assess blame or cast moral aspersions on the actors involved or those who sympathize with them. You are encouraged to ask questions or to challenge my (necessarily) simplified historical narrative, but if your goal is to force your views on others or to air grievances before a captive audience, this is not the course for you.

Lecture material will be drawn from Ian Bickerton and Carla Klausner's *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. This book is not required, but students who are interested in getting the most out of this course may wish to pick up a copy.

Grading

Grades will be determined by two take home exams, collectively worth 60% of your final grade, and 2 homework assignments, collectively worth 40% of your final grade.

The exams will be multiple choice, each containing 30 questions. Correct answers will be worth 4 points each. Thus, you need only answer 25 questions correctly in order to receive a 100. Many of the questions will require you to *apply* material from class, rather than simply regurgitate it. That is, you will not always find the answers to the questions in the lecture material, no matter how good your notes, but those of you who truly understood the material will be capable of seeing how the arguments presented in class imply an answer.

The homework assignments will require you to work with game-theoretic models presented in class or to interpret the results of some statistical analysis pertaining to those models. Though most of the questions will be technical, they will mostly involve plugging numbers into inequalities or interpreting tables and graphs. I will also provide tips sheets to help walk you through this. Where I expect most students to struggle is with the final part of each assignment, where you will be asked to evaluate a claim about international politics using the material presented in class. The more you engage with the technical material, the easier this part of the assignment will be. You may even notice that the more technical parts of the assignment tend to point you in the right direction when it comes to the last question.

The first exam must be turned in before 5:00 pm on Friday, March 6th. The second exam must be turned in before 5:00 pm on Friday, May 8th.

Letter grades are determined as follows:

<i>A</i> 92.50+	<i>B</i> 82.50 – 87.49	<i>C</i> 70.00 – 77.49
<i>A–</i> 90.00 – 92.49	<i>B–</i> 80.00 – 82.49	<i>D</i> 60.00 – 69.99
<i>B+</i> 87.50 – 89.99	<i>C+</i> 77.50 – 79.99	<i>F</i> 0.00 – 59.00

Course Policies

Lecture slides, exams, homework assignments, answer keys, and tips sheets will be distributed online. I will generally notify you when new material is posted, but it is nonetheless your responsibility to check regularly for updates.

Though I do not take attendance, note that the exams will be drawn entirely from lecture material, and you will often be unable to infer the answer from the slides alone.

Late exams and assignments will be penalized by 10 points for every day that they are late.

There will be **no extra credit** offered in this course.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of [academic integrity](#).

Accessibility Resources

Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with physical or learning disabilities.

You may find more information about resources made available by the university [here](#).

Conflict With Arab States

- **1:** The Puzzle of War
- **2:** Explanations of War and Peace
- **3:** History I
 - Chapters 1–8 of B&K recommended

Conflict with the Palestinians

- **4:** Explanations of Terrorism and Insurgency
- **5:** History II
 - Chapters 9–16 of B&K recommended