

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Intensive Arabic Language in Amman

Course Title: Modern History of Conflict in the Middle East: Influences on the Arab Spring

Course Code: AM/LANG 310

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Arabic Language / Political Science, History, Middle East Studies

Language of Instruction: Arabic/English

Prerequisites/Requirements: Open to all program participants

Description

The Arab world is currently experiencing monumental upheaval and huge transitions in demographics, economics and politics. Some (those who ascribe to the maxim, "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it") attribute these changes to an ignorance of the region's history. Others claim that current events are the result of conspiracies against the region or the greed of major world powers for natural resources. Still others attribute these changes to the Arab world's sinking into the depths of religion, resulting in the disabling of civic life.

This course sheds light on these competing views, providing a detailed examination of the historical background of the region and its impact on current events. The course examines the events which spurred the Arab Spring, as well as the historical reasons that the Arab Spring spread to some countries but did not take hold in others. This course questions the role of history in current events and takes a critical look at the impact of cycles of violence, war, victory and reconstruction on future generations and identity formation.

This course begins meeting a few weeks into the program, after a period of intensive instruction in MSA and Jordanian dialect. Depending on the number of students enrolled, the course may be split up into smaller groups so instructors can devote personalized attention to students at varying levels of Arabic to ensure all students are able to actively participate in the larger class meetings. Class sections make up approximately one-third of the total class hours, while large group meetings and activities make up the remaining two-thirds.

Objectives

In this course, students:

- Build a foundational understanding of the historical background of the region, and its war and peace processes through an Arab lens
- Analyze connections between past and current events
- Learn to integrate various sources of information from multiple perspectives
- Gain knowledge of the vocabulary of war and peace; arms and demonstrations; government and opposition groups
- Conduct research and create surveys in a diverse Arab environment

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- Debate opinions different from their own, and learn to solidify and support their own ideas using multiple resources

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend all class sessions and actively participate in classroom discussions and lectures.

They are also required to prepare an oral presentation, the topic of which will be approved by the professor. The requirements for that project are as follows:

1. Identify and use relevant sources on the chosen topic
2. Incorporate the current views of Jordanians through information gathered by conversations with language partners and roommates
3. Present personal opinion on the topic
4. Give a 15 minute presentation, with additional time allocated for student Q&A
5. Submit a paper, written in Arabic and 8-10 pages in length, on the topic

Additionally, students are expected to write a final research paper on a topic of their choosing, typically expanding on one of the topics covered during the course. Students present their final research projects to the class. A final exam at the end of the semester is a comprehensive review and examination of all course material.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

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| • Participation and attendance | 30% |
| • Oral presentation and paper in Arabic | 30% |
| • Final exam | 20% |
| • Final research paper | 20% |

Primary Texts

غالي، بطرس بطرس. برز، شيمون. فرسي، أندري. ستون عاماً من الصراع في الشرق الأوسط: شهادات التاريخ. دار الشروق. 2007.

Ghali, Boutros, Boutros. Peres, Shimon. Versailles, Andre. *Sixty Years of Conflict in the Middle East: Historic Testimonies*. Shorouq Publishing. 2007.

Shlain, Avi. *Lion of Jordan- The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace*. Vintage. 2009.

Supplementary Texts

Readings and information may be taken from online sources such as newspapers, academic articles and research papers; other various media channels; lectures from visiting politicians; and/ or eyewitnesses to the events or personal stories and testimonies.

Demystifying the Arab Spring. Foreign Affairs. 3 Apr. 2011.

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Kings for All Seasons: How the Middle East's Monarchies Survived the Arab Spring. Brookings Doha Center Publications. 24 Sept. 2013.

The Foreign Policy of Hamas. Council of Foreign Relations. 1 Feb. 2000.

After Gaza. International Crisis Group. 2 Aug. 2007.

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1—Overview of Wars in the 20th Century (2 weeks)

- An overview of the historical background of both war and peace efforts in the Middle East
 - Arab-Israeli War of 1948
 - Suez Crisis - October 29, 1956
 - Samu Incident - the morning of October 13, 1966
 - Six-Day War or “The Setback”- June 5-11, 1967
 - Battle of Karameh - March 21, 1968
 - Yom Kippur War 1973
 - Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty - Menachem Begin, Jimmy Carter and Anwar Sadat at the Camp David Accords 1978

Topic 2—Peace Plans (1 week)

- The New Middle East Plan and the Saudi Peace Initiative of April 1981
- Jordanian-Israeli Peace Plan - July 25, 1994
- 2006 Lebanon War
- Gaza War of 2008-2009
- Gaza War of 2012

Topic 3—Civil Wars and the Formation of Identity (1 week)

- Investigate how previous events helped to form ideas of nationality and identity throughout the region, and particularly in Jordan
- Civil Wars in the Middle East
 - Black September - Jordan, September 1970

Topic 4—Syrian and Lebanese Civil Wars (1 week)

- 1982 Lebanon War and its results
- Entry of Syrian Troops - January 21, 1976
- Syrian Civil War 2011

Topic 5—The Muslim Brotherhood (1 week)

- History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt
- History of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria

Topic 6—Islamic Movements (1 week)

- History of Islamist movements in the Middle East: objectives and regional relationships
 - Hamas
 - Islamic Jihad

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- Hezbollah

Topic 7—Inter-Arab Alliances & Wars (1 week)

- Arab political alliances and their impact on stability, security and the economy
- The differences between Arab and Islamic countries and the tensions which led to
 - Iran-Iraq War
 - Iraq-Kuwait War
 - Egyptian-Syrian tensions after the 1973 War

Topic 8—Relation to “The Other” in the Middle East (1 week)

- “The Other” and Arabs; “The Other” and Muslims; the historical background of changing “the other” since the emergence of Israel; the role of Arab media on perceptions of “the other”
- The impact of the Iranian Revolution and the formation of the concept of “the other”
- Political background of religious symbols and alliances
 - Hassan Nasrallah
 - Bashar Al-Assad
 - King Abdullah
 - Khaled Meshaal
 - Erdogan
 - Religious Figures

Topic 9—Advent of the Arab Spring (1 week)

- Arab Spring, where and why?
 - Tunisia
 - Egypt
 - Syria
- Linking the historical background of conflict in the region to the emergence of the Spring’s events

Topic 10—Regional and Global Allies & Rivalries (1 week)

- Arab alliances and rivalries on regional and global levels
 - Arab League
 - Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
 - NATO
 - Russia and America

Topic 11—Legitimacy of the Arab Spring (1 week)

- The Arab Spring: conspiracy theory or just demands for change and salvation from tyranny?
- Why the Arab Spring was selective and did not include all dictatorships

Topic 12—Geopolitical Axes (1 week)

- US Role in the Arab Spring: alliances with Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood
- Russia, China, Hezbollah, Iran and Syria as another axis of power

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- The roles of these two axes in the region and whether they lead to peace, armistice agreements, or a third world war