

CET Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Jordan

Course Title: (AM/ECON 340) Arab & Islamic Culture and Economics in the Middle East

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Economics / Middle East Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

For however many theories there are about the labor market and economy in the Middle East, actual jobs are few. Despite openness to successful American and European economies, Middle Eastern economies struggle for stability. Aid and training from these strong world economies have not abated the high unemployment rates and rampant poverty. It is within this framework that the course addresses the effect of Arab and Islamic cultures on Middle Eastern economies, labor markets, and business. This course examines these economic theories, and investigates why they are ineffective in achieving growth and contributing to job creation. The course also touches on potential solutions proposed by local governments.

Objectives

During this course, students:

- 1) Describe and evaluate the cultural and religious factors that impact conceptual understandings of Middle Eastern economies and marketplaces.
- 2) Differentiate between cultural and religious impacts on Middle Eastern economies.
- 3) Discuss and debate the challenges faced by Middle Eastern marketplaces and economies.
- 4) Conceptualize the obstacles to economic development in the region and evaluate the feasibility of potential solutions to economic challenges.
- 5) Develop an understanding of the ethnic, religious, economic, political and cultural background of the Arab World.
- 6) Draw relationships between important business actors and political and religious figures of the Middle East.
- 7) Analyze Middle Eastern economies as they relate to external influences and modern economic theories.

Course Requirements

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Class attendance, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy, is critical for success in the course. Students are expected to actively participate in classroom discussions and lectures. Late submissions are not accepted. Field based excursion include visits to marketplaces and guest speakers.

Homework consists of weekly presentations in which students research a course topic and present it to the class while leading a discussion on their assigned subject and submitting a short paper. Other assignments may include conducting opinion polls or questionnaires in Amman and presenting findings in class to draw connections between readings and the reality/ideology of the marketplace in Amman.

Small Projects and Presentations

Students complete several small class presentations throughout the course, with guidance from the instructor with respect to potential sources, including the opinions of locals, roommates, language partners. Students compare and contrast the viewpoints of different individuals regarding class topics and evaluate secondary sources as well. Presentations in front of the class last approximately 15 minutes and include a question and answer period at the end. All students provide a written summary of their presentation to the instructor for each project.

Final Project

Each student selects a final research project topic of interest and presents the final project before their teachers (and language partners and roommates if schedules permit). Each student will submit a written report between 10 and 15 pages on A4 sized paper, utilizing examples from the course material to support his or her arguments. Students submit an outline of 500 words, followed by a first draft of 1000 words. After editing corrections on content and style, students submit a final draft followed by a meeting with the instructor for feedback.

Grading

- Participation: 40%
- Homework: 20%
- Small Projects and Presentations: 10%
- Final Project and Presentation: 30%

Readings

Kuran, Timur. *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East*. Princeton University Press; 2012.

Marsh, Donna. *The Middle East Unveiled*. How To Books; 2010.

Nasr, Vali. *The Rise of Islamic Capitalism*. Free Press (Council on Foreign Relations); 2010.

Owen, Roger. *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914*. I.B. Tauris; 1993.

Rodinson, Maxime. *Islam and Capitalism*. Saqi Essentials; 2007.

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Shechter, Relli. *Smoking, Culture, and Economy in the Middle East*. I.B. Tauris; 2006.
Tripp, Charles. *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism*. Cambridge University Press; 2006.

Additional Resources

Ali, Abbas. *Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organizations*. Elgar Publishing; 2005.

Barlow, Robin. *Economic Growth in the Middle East, 1950-1972*. International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 14; 1982.

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/100887/ECON033.pdf?sequence=1>

Jaffe, Amy. *Political, Economic, Social, Cultural, and Religious Trends in the Middle East and Their Impact on Energy Supply, Security and Pricing*. Rice University James Baker Institute for Public Policy.

http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/a8d62800/TrendsinMiddleEast_MainStudy.pdf

Noland, Marcus. *Islam, Economic Growth and the Middle East*. Global Dialogue, Vol. 6; 2004. <http://www.worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=302>

Outline of Course Content

Each topic is covered in 3-4 weeks.

Topic 1 – Culture and Economics

- Relationship between culture and economics
- Islamic economics and human investment (children, boys, men, women, etc.)
- Understanding economics relationship to technology, culture, production, consumerism, ownership, exchange regimes

Topic 2 – Ethics and Religion

- Ethics of Islamic economics in comparison to other systems; differentiation between systems
- Impacts of Islam on economics during Ramadan with respect to ownership, inheritance, Islamic customs and charity, Eid
- Role of Islamic principles versus practices with respect to economics

Topic 3 – Business and Banking

- Gifting and exchanges in the context of modern Middle Eastern economics
- Offers and orientation of business practices towards consumers
- Islamic banking and differentiation between other types of banks

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- Cultural and religious influences from historical traditions of feudalism, slavery, and class systems on the economics of the Middle East
- Case studies: tourism and telecommunications (cultural and religious impacts on marketing)

Topic 4 – Comparative Systems

- Islamic economic systems in comparison to socialist and capitalist economic systems
- Transition of Middle Eastern economies first from “family” structures to business and companies
- Strengths in culture with respect to land, government, water, foreign interactions, exchange regimes