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U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

What are the United States' interests in the Middle East? Who and what determine those interests? And how are those interests pursued? This course addresses these questions in two parts. First, we will consider the domestic American debate on foreign policy in the Middle East, exploring key Middle Eastern trends; America's regional interests; and the political actors and factors that shape U.S. policy in the Middle East. We will then turn to America's actions and relationships in the region, assessing American policy dilemmas across a wide variety of countries and events. Students should leave this class with a strong understanding of the challenges that the U.S. faces in the Middle East, as well as an informed viewpoint regarding how well America is meeting those challenges.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING:

Map Quiz (Week Two):	5%
Participation:	25%
Midterm Paper (6-8 pages)	30%
Final Paper (10-12 pages)	40%

REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED:

-Map Quiz: At the beginning of class during Week Two, I will pass around a blank map, and you will have to label the countries and capitals of the Middle East. (The location of each capital will be starred within each country.) This will be very straightforward, but I will take it seriously, because one cannot properly understand Middle Eastern geopolitics without understanding the region's geography in its most basic form.

-Participation: A seminar lives and dies by student participation. You are expected to arrive in class having done all of the readings, and it is highly recommended that you come with notes that outline the major arguments of each reading and the relevant evidence that various authors bring (or do not bring) to support their arguments. This will make for a livelier, more informed discussion, and it will enhance your grade.

Also, this is probably the appropriate space in which to state the obvious: U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East is a contentious issue. All views are welcome in this seminar and, no matter how strongly you may disagree with your classmates on any given issue, you are expected to keep the debate respectful.

-Midterm Paper: I will hand out three questions at the end of Week 6, which will ask you to address broad themes from the first five weeks of readings and discussion. You will choose one of these questions and write a 6-8 page response. **Please do not go over 8 pages, and do not change spacing, font-size, margins, etc.**

A final version of the syllabus will be available on the first day of class.

-Final Paper: I will hand out a list of books that deal with U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East broadly. Your assignment will be to choose one of these books, read it, and provide a detailed, critical review, drawing from our course readings and discussions. **Please do not go over 12 pages, and do not change spacing, font-size, margins, etc.**

Books You Should Buy

- Bass, Warren. Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance. New York: Oxford, 2004.
- Bronson, Rachel. Thicker Than Oil. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Gardner, Lloyd C. The Road to Tahrir Square: Egypt and the United States from the Rise of Nasser to the Fall of Mubarak. New York: New Press, 2011.
- Klare, Michael T. Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004.
- Lewis, Bernard. The Political Language of Islam. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Miller, Aaron David. The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace. New York: Bantam Books, 2008.
- Packer, George. The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005.
- Quandt, William. Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Slavin, Barbara. Bitter Friends, Bitter Enemies. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007.
- Tabler, Andrew. In the Lion's Den: An Eyewitness Account of Washington's Battle with Syria. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2011.

SECTION I: Introductory Discussions

1: Key Themes in Middle Eastern Politics

- *Nationalism*
 - Fouad Ajami, "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1978/1979): 355-373.
 - As'ad Abu Khalil, "A New Arab Ideology?: The Rejuvenation of Arab Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 46.1 (Winter, 1992): 22-36.
- *Islamism*
 - Bernard Lewis, The Political Language of Islam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 1-42.
 - Graham E. Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* 81.2 (Mar.-Apr. 2002): 48-60.
- *Authoritarianism*
 - Oliver Schlumberger, "Arab Authoritarianism: Debating the Dynamics and Durability of Nondemocratic Regimes," in Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes, Oliver Schlumberger, ed. (Stanford University Press, 2007): 1-20.

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2: What Are America's Interests in the Middle East?

*** MAP QUIZ AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ***

- Kenneth Pollack, A Path Out of the Desert: A Grand Strategy for America in the Middle East (Random House, 2008): 5-68
- Eric Trager, "The Moderate Muddle," Review of A Path Out of the Desert, in *Commentary* (Oct. 2008): 62-65.
- Richard Haass, "The New Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* (Nov./Dec. 2006): 2-11.
- Philip E. Auerswald, "The Irrelevance of the Middle East," *The American Interest* (May/June 2007): 19-37.

3: What/who Determines America's Interests in the Middle East?

- *Lobby Groups?*
 - John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby," *London Review of Books* (23 Mar. 2006): 3-12.
 - Mitchell Bard, "The Arab Lobby: The American Component," *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2010): <<http://www.meforum.org/2773/arab-lobby>>.
- *American Public Opinion?*
 - Walter Russell Mead, "The New Israel and the Old," *Foreign Affairs* (Jul./Aug. 2008): 28-46.
- *Strategic Interests?*
 - Martin Kramer, "The American Interest," *Azure* (Fall 2006): 21-33.

GUEST SPEAKER: TBA (Aim is to find someone who worked on the Middle East in an administration who can speak to the various factors that influence decision-making; top choice would be Bruce Riedel.)

SECTION II: Case Studies of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

4: The U.S. and Persian Gulf Oil

- Michael T. Klare, Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum (Metropolitan Books, 2004). Read 1-112, 146-202.
- Anthony H. Cordesman, "The One True U.S. Strategic Interest in the Middle East: Energy," *Middle East Policy* 3.1 (Mar. 2001): 117-127.
- Flynt Leverett and Jeffrey Bader, "Managing China-U.S. Energy Competition in the Middle East," *Washington Quarterly* 29.1 (2005): 187-201.

5: The U.S.-Saudi Relationship

- Rachel Bronson, Thicker Than Oil (Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Robert Vitalis, "Thinner Than Air," Review of Thicker Than Oil. *Middle East Report* 242 (Spring 2007): 44-45.
- David Ottaway, "The King and Us: U.S.-Saudi Relations in the Wake of 9/11," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2009): 121-131.

6: The War on Terror

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- Thomas Kean and others, The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004). Download report at <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.htm>. Read chapters 2, 3.4-3.7, 4-6, 9-12.
- Tim Fernholz and Jim Tankersley, "The Cost of bin Laden: \$3 Trillion Over 15 Years," *National Journal* (6 May 2011): <<http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/the-cost-of-bin-laden-3-trillion-over-15-years-20110505>>.
- Abe Greenwald, "What We Got Right in the War on Terror," *Commentary* (Aug. 2011): 15-27.

***** MIDTERM PAPER WILL BE HANDED OUT THIS WEEK *****

7: The Iraq War

- George Packer, The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005).
- George W. Bush, Decision Points (Crown Publishers, 2010). Read chapter 8, "Iraq," pages 223-271.
- Steven Simon, "The Price of the Surge," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2008): 57-76.
- Stephen Biddle, Michael E. O'Hanlon, and Kenneth M. Pollack, "How to Leave a Stable Iraq," *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2008): 40-58.

GUEST SPEAKER: (Aim is to find someone who was involved in the planning and execution of the Iraq war; top choice would be Douglas Feith.)

***** MIDTERM PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS *****

8: The U.S. and Iran

- Barbara Slavin, Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies (St. Martin's Press, 2007).
- Ray Takeyh, "A Time for Détente with Iran," *Foreign Affairs* (Mar./Apr. 2007): 17-32.
- Eric S. Edelman and others, "The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran: The Limits of Containment," *Foreign Affairs* (Jan./Feb. 2011): 66-81.
- Barry Posen, "We Can Live With a Nuclear Iran," *The New York Times* (27 Feb. 2006): <<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/27/opinion/27posen.html>>.

9: The U.S. and Syria

- Andrew Tabler, In the Lion's Den: An Eyewitness Account of Washington's Battle with Syria (Lawrence Hill Books, 2011).
- Joshua Landis, "The U.S.-Syria Relationship: A Few Questions," *Middle East Policy* (Fall 2010): 64-73.
- MORE READING TBA (i.e., to reflect current debates given the ongoing turmoil in Syria)

10: The U.S. and Lebanon

- Reading TBA

11: The U.S. and Egypt

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- Lloyd C. Gardner, The Road to Tahrir Square: Egypt and the United States from the Rise of Nasser to the Fall of Mubarak (New Press, 2011).
- Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* (Mar./Apr. 2007): 107-121.
- Eric Trager, "The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2011): 114-126.

***** LIST OF BOOKS ON WHICH FINAL PAPER CAN BE BASED HANDED OUT AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS *****

12: The U.S. and Israel

- Warren Bass, Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance (Oxford, 2004).
- Casey L. Addis, "Israel: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service* (14 Feb. 2011): <<http://opencrs.com/document/RL33476/2011-02-14/>>.
- Jeremy M. Sharp, "Foreign Aid to Israel," *Congressional Research Service* (10 Sept. 2010): <<http://opencrs.com/document/RL33222/>>.
- Robert Satloff and Chas Freeman, "Israel: Asset or Liability? A Debate on the U.S.-Israel Relationship," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (Mar. 2011): <<http://washingtoninstitute.org/templateC04.php?CID=97>>.

13: The U.S. and Arab-Israeli Peacemaking

- William Quandt, Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967 (University of California Press, 2001). Read chapters 1, 6-7 (Pages 1-22, 177-242).
- Aaron David Miller, The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace (Bantam Books, 2008). Read chapter 3 and parts 3 and 4 (pages 75-124, 235-385).
- Elliott Abrams and Michael Singh, "The End of the Peace Process," *World Affairs* (Fall 2009): 69-76.

GUEST SPEAKER: TBA (Top choices are Aaron David Miller or Daniel C. Kurtzer.)

14: The Future of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

- READINGS TBA (Will probably focus on "Arab Spring"; I will examine new books on the topic as they come out.)

***** FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS *****