IS 244: Issues in Middle East Politics  
CRN 28440  
Rhodes College, Spring 2008

Prof. David Romano  
Office: 111 Buckman Hall  
Office Hours: M/W 12-1 p.m.  
T/Th 1-2 p.m.  
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Course Description

This class focuses on the foreign policies of selected Middle Eastern states. The course will refer to realist and liberal paradigms’ views of the state as a rational actor, of individual decision makers, unintended policy results, and the need to balance domestic and external policy imperatives. The central pedagogic concern revolves around understanding how and why various Middle Eastern states choose the policies they do.

Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation -- 10%  
Mid-Term -- 25%  
Paper Proposal – 5%  
Research Paper -- 35%  
Final Examination -- 25%

The paper proposal should consist of a 1-2 page description of the topic you wish to investigate -- an analytical puzzle related to the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states. Your proposal should indicate how you propose to address the analytical puzzle in question, and why it is an important question. The proposal should also include a preliminary bibliography of sources you plan on consulting (i.e. sources you will have access to rather than what you wish the library had, or items you are requesting from inter-library loan). The bibliography need not list more than 10 sources, and does not count towards the 2 page limit of this proposal. Proposals turned in after the due date will still receive full attention from me, although they will be marked “zero” for grading purposes.

The research paper must not exceed 15 pages (not including citations and bibliography). A late penalty of 2% per weekday will be levied on papers turned in after the due date, and no paper shall be accepted after the last day of class. E-mailed, faxed or on-line submissions of assignments will not be accepted.
The mid-term and final exam consist of identifications and essays questions.

**Required Texts**


2. Readings not from the above book will be available in my faculty public folder for download.

**Other Course Requirements**

**News media:** Students must keep abreast of current events in the Middle East. Print media such as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *Ha’aretz* (Israeli paper available in English – [http://www.haaretz.com/](http://www.haaretz.com/)), and *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Egyptian paper available in English – [www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/](http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/)) are all useful sources. BBC World News or CNN International (more so than North American CNN) also provide useful broadcast media information. Various news radio sources, especially NPR, may also prove informative. Especially regarding the Middle East, every news media provides only a partial picture of complex issues, however, and students are encouraged to remain wary of sometimes very subtle bias (particularly when viewing documentaries or various web sites). One of the objectives of this course is to help students gain valuable information on the Middle East from a variety of news sources while remaining alert to various editorial biases.

**Films:** Several films will be shown during and outside of class time during the semester (details on showing time and location will be announced as soon as they are available). Some of these films will be required for the course, while others will simply be recommended. If you plan to view a required film on your own, you should first check to see if it will be available from the video store.

**Academic Integrity:** All provisions of the *Rhodes Honor Code* will be vigorously enforced. Definitions of plagiarism will be reviewed in class, and any students having additional questions (such as proper citation practice in essays) are encouraged to see me during office hours or by appointment.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Active student participation is essential and greatly encouraged. At the same time, everyone (including the course’s professor) must try to remain humble about their opinions, courteous to their fellows, curious, and eager to engage in polite debate. Uncivil discourse, personal attacks, or disruptions to the classroom atmosphere (cell phones, consistent tardiness or leaving early, etc.) will not be tolerated.

**Attendance:** 5% of the course mark will be based on class attendance, with another 5% based on in-class participation. Any student who receives below a ‘C’ in any of the class assignments must thereafter attend all classes without exception; failure to do so will provoke referral to the Dean of Students and may lead to a failing mark in the course. Unexcused absences from an examination will lead to a failing mark for that examination (no make-ups). Excused absences (illness, death in the family, and jury duty, for example, but not personal travel arrangements, participation in athletic
events, and other extra-curricular activities) are subject to approval from the course instructor. At the course instructor’s discretion, students who miss too many classes may also be asked to follow the same attendance policy as those with a grade below ‘C’ on an assignment.

Students With Disabilities: If you have a disability recognized by Rhodes College, I encourage you to register with Student Disability Services (843-3994) to help me accommodate your needs as well as possible.

**Schedule**  
M/W/F 13:00-13:50

**Week 1**  
**Introduction**

*Readings:*  
None

1/9  Introduction  
1/11  Lecture (levels of analysis)

**Week 2**  
**Foreign policy making**

*Readings:*  

1/14  Lecture  
1/16  Lecture  
1/18  Discussion

**Week 3**  
**Foreign policy making in the Middle East**

*Readings:*  

1/21  *No class (Martin Luther King Observance)*  
1/23  Lecture  
1/25  Discussion

**Week 4**  
**Iraq**
Readings:  

1/28 Lecture
1/30 Lecture
2/1 Discussion

Week 5 Syria

Readings:  

1/4 Lecture
2/6 Lecture
2/8 Discussion

Week 6 Iran

Readings:  

2/11 Lecture
2/13 Lecture
2/15 Discussion

Week 7 Egypt
Readings:  

2/18 Lecture  
2/20 Lecture.  
2/22 *Paper proposals due in class*. Discussion.  

**Week 8** Review and Mid-Term Examination  
2/25 Catch-up and Review  
2/27 *Mid-term Examination*  
2/29 Film – *The 50 Years’ War* (PBS Documentary)  

*Spring recess begins 5 p.m. 3/3 and ends 8 a.m. 3/7*  

**Week 9** Israel  
Readings:  

3/10 Lecture  
3/12 Lecture  
3/14 Discussion  

**Week 10** The Palestinian Authority  
Readings:  
1. Rex Brynen, “The Palestinians and Confidence Building Measures in the Arab-

3/17 Lecture
3/19 Lecture
3/21 Easter (no class)

Week 11 Turkey


3/24 Lecture
3/26 Lecture
3/28 Discussion.

Week 12 Kurdish Pseudo-State Actors


3/31 Lecture
4/2 Lecture
4/4 Discussion
Week 13  Saudi Arabia


4/7  Lecture.

4/9  Lecture


Week 14  Post-9/11 U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East


4/14  Lecture

4/16  Lecture

4/18  Lecture and discussion.

Week 15  Conclusions and Future Prospects for the Region -- Discussion


4/21  Catch-up and discussion

4/23  Catch-up and discussion

4/25  *Last Day of class – course review.*