

Course Syllabus

History 524-01: Middle East-United States Relations (Fall 2020)

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)

Office Hours: T 9:30 AM–12:30 PM and by appointment via WebEx

STRUCTURE & SCOPE

Welcome! This course is centered on two key questions: how did relations between the Middle East and the United States, which were largely peripheral to each other's interests and concerns at the end of the 18th century, change to become so important and intertwined in the present, and what have been the consequences of this process of interaction and change? While the questions are simple, the answers are rich and complex.

While learning about these topics, you will also consider the different broad structures which potentially shape foreign relations for both state and non-state/transnational actors. Arguments about the role of military and geopolitical power, economic interests, culture, religion, ideology, transnational communities, and historical memory in shaping opinions, actions, and outcomes will all be covered. You will be asked to analyze the significance of these different factors and the interplay between them.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

There are five books assigned to everyone for the course. Books with a "****" after them are available for free as ebooks through the UNCG library. The books can also be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional readings will be provided as pdfs or weblinks within the course modules.

Additionally, you are required to read eight of the thirteen books listed as secondary source options (listed below). Many of these are available as ebooks via the UNCG library; otherwise you will need to acquire the book for your use. These books will be the basis of seven two-page papers and a presentation (details below).

Assigned Books

Bacevich, Andrew. *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History*. New York: Random House, 2016.

Makdisi, Ussama. *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations: 1820-2001*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2010. ****

Shannon, Matthew K. *Losing Hearts and Minds: American-Iranian Relations and International Education during the Cold War*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017. ***

Walther, Karine. *Sacred Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821-1921*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. ***

Yaqub, Salim. *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. ***


GRADING

Discussion	20%
Presentation	10%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	15%
Paper 3	15%
5 Short Papers	25%

Grading will be on the following scale: A = 93 and up; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; F = <73

READINGS AND LECTURES

What would be Monday's classes will be posted as videos for you to view on your own time; Wednesday's classes will be held from synchronously from 3:30 PM to 4:45 PM and dedicated to discussions and presentations (see below).

In each week's module there will be assigned readings and lecture videos. A module's readings and lecture videos will be posted by the Wednesday of the week of the preceding module if not earlier. For a full calendar of assigned readings, see the [Weekly Reading List.pdf](#) .

DISCUSSION


A substantial portion of Wednesday classes will be dedicated time where you will be required to discuss the assigned readings for that week. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, your discussion grade for that day may be half or zero credit. You will be given one excused absence for any reason (i.e. your lowest discussion score will be dropped), but no more, so plan accordingly.

You are required to complete the readings listed for a discussion day **before** Wednesday classes. Most of that class will be devoted to you and your fellow colleagues discussing the readings for that day and how they relate to course themes, so if you do not read beforehand, you will not be able to engage in discussion with your colleagues or me in a meaningful way. Furthermore, you will receive partial credit for attendance, but you will not receive full discussion credit without regularly and thoughtfully participating in discussions about the readings in class. The aim is to have a discussion of ideas occur between your classmates, with limited guidance from me.

You will earn points based on the quality, rather than the quantity, of your remarks. Comments with specific examples that demonstrate you have thoughtfully read assigned materials will earn points; off-topic or vague comments will not. Constructive responses to your classmates, which show you are listening and considering their opinions whether you agree or disagree with them, are especially encouraged.

Common sense respect is required. Likewise, when discussing ideas, you are required to be respectful of other people's arguments. Critiques and disagreements over the ideas we discuss are expected and even encouraged, but this does not permit anyone to be offensive or abusive toward others. I reserve the right to remove anyone from class for disrespectful behavior.

PRESENTATION


You will give a presentation on one of the additional books (secondary source options) you read. You will summarize the main arguments of the book, where it fits within the larger historiography, the types of evidence and logic used, and your assessment of the effectiveness of the author in defending their claims. Important: Do not submit a short paper for this book (you will not receive credit for it if you do). Presentations will be twelve to fifteen minutes long. Presentations will be graded on the thoroughness of the reading and the skillfulness of the transmission of information. Details can be found here: [HIS 524 Supplemental Secondary Source Readings, Presentation, and Five Papers.pdf](#) 

PAPERS

You will have three longer paper assignments in this class. Each paper will be 6 pages, double spaced, begin with a clear thesis which responds to the prompt, and have thoughtful examples and analysis that demonstrates your thesis. Late submissions of papers will result in a loss of one percent of the paper's total value per day late. If you experience an extenuating circumstance, let me know as early as possible, and at my discretion some or all point deductions might be waved.

Details on prompts, instructions, and grading criteria for each paper will be posted as we near the start of the assignment under either the "Paper 1," "Paper 2," or "Paper 3" document under the "Files" tab on Canvas.

You will also be required to submit five two-page papers (double spaced) on five different supplemental readings throughout the semester. These papers should cover the following three points, roughly sequentially: First, what are the main arguments of the book (and, if clear, how does the arguments of the book fit within historiographical debates)? Second, what evidence, sources, methods, theories, and/or logics are utilized in the book to defend its arguments? Third, what critiques do you have of the book, and where might the field further advance after this work? Important: Do not submit a short paper for the book you present on (you will not receive credit for it if you do). Details can

be found here: [HIS 524 Supplemental Secondary Source Readings, Presentation, and Five Papers.pdf](#) 

STUDENT TO STUDENT MESSAGE BOARD

If you click on the “Discussions” tab you will see a pinned discussion titled “Student to Student Message Board.” This is a place where students can post or reply to messages about anything related to the course. It is intended as a way for students to connect and collaborate, such as forming a study group.

ETIQUETTE

Throughout the course, whether in video meetings, online discussion boards, or assignments, you are required to be respectful of other people and their arguments. Critiques and disagreements over the ideas we discuss are expected and even encouraged, but this does not permit anyone to be offensive or abusive toward others. I reserve the right to remove anyone from class for disrespectful behavior.

General behaviors to avoid include (but are not limited to): flaming, doxing, using or posting offensive images or language that is outside the scope of course materials, posting suspicious websites, and advertising yours or others’ businesses or products.

TECHNOLOGY

This course requires the capability of the student to use and regularly access a computer, a word processor, pdf files, the internet (including videos), and a webcam. The UNCG library is a resource for technology access.

On protecting your personal data and privacy, see https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/acceptable_use/ (Links to an external site.).

If you encounter a technology problem, contact UNCG Information Technology Services as soon as possible. They have online, phone and walk-in options for technical support, all listed here: <https://its.uncg.edu/Help/> (Links to an external site.). If a technology problem poses the possibility of preventing you from completing coursework, communicate this to myself as soon as possible, too, so we can see if we can mitigate any negative impacts on your learning and grade.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

UNCG provides a variety of useful services for you, the student. Check them out!

The UNCG Library (<https://library.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)) has a wealth of books, articles, archival materials, and other media resources, computers, inter-library loan services, and knowledgeable staff.

The UNCG Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)) provides assistance with writing assignments; contact staff members to set an appointment either in person or via instant-messaging.

The UNCG Speaking Center (<https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)) provides assistance in improving your skill and confidence in public, group, and individual speaking.

If you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) (<https://ods.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)). I prioritize making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and I will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me to receive accommodations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro prohibits any and all forms of academic dishonesty. It is the student's responsible to know what constitutes academic integrity and academic dishonesty, and to be familiar with UNCG policies on academic integrity laid out here: <https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/> (Links to an external site.). Students who engage in an academically dishonest act (such as plagiarizing part of a paper or cheating during an exam) will receive a grade of "F" in the course and be reported to the Academic Dean for possible additional disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university. Do not attempt it.

All writing assignments (reflections, papers, etc.) are subject to a plagiarism check through the website <https://www.turnitin.com/> (Links to an external site.). This website compares the text of your paper to text up on webpages, in scholarly works, and within its massive database of student papers submitted to schools around the world. If you purchase a paper to pass off as your own, it is possible the paper may contain portions reused and sold to other students as well. So do not plagiarize or purchase papers, whether only a portion of your paper or its entirety.

COMMUNICATION

I will make periodic announcements regarding important information about the course, accessible in the "Announcements" tab. Likewise, I will provide feedback on assignments under comments. I might also send you a message via Canvas or an email to your UNCG email address if needed. It is your responsibility to monitor and read all of these communications in a timely manner.

I am happy to answer your questions by email or message in Canvas. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on weekends and holidays), but I'll usually reply sooner.

I also encourage you to meet with me at my office hours or at another arranged time. My office hours will be held via WebEx; go to the Webex tab to schedule or launch an appointment.

USEFUL WEBSITES

History Department Facebook

page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/> (Links to an external site.)

History Department Website: <https://his.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

SYLLABUS MODIFICATIONS

I reserve the right to modify or alter any part of the syllabus as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements about any alterations.

COVID-19 AND GENERAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation.

Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling 336-334-5874, visiting the website

at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.) or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> (Links to an external site.) or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes.

[Shield Our Spartans](#)