

History 524-01: United States-Middle East Relations (Spring 2018)
Time and Place: T 3:30-6:20pm, MHRA 1206

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)
Office Hours and Location: TR 11:00 AM-Noon & by appointment, MHRA 2116

STRUCTURE & SCOPE

Welcome! This course is centered on two key questions: how did relations between the United States and the Middle East, 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 seven assigned books 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. In addition to these seven books, there will also be two short articles that will be assigned and made available on the course website.

Assigned Books

Allison, Robert. *The Crescent Obscured: The United States and the Muslim World, 1776-1815*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995. ***

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

Gualtieri, Sarah. *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. ***

Mousavian, Seyed Hossein. *Iran and the United States: An Insider's View on the Failed Past and the Road to Peace*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

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

McAlister, Melani. *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. ***

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

Online Articles

Oren, Michael. "The Ultimate Ally." *Foreign Policy* (April 24, 2011)
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/25/the-ultimate-ally-2/#>

Vitalis, Robert. "Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf." *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 2 (2002).

GRADING

Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Participation	20%
Presentation	10%
Take Home Midterm	30%
Take Home Final	40%

Grading will be on the following scale: A+ = 97 and up; A = 94-96; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = <60

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Daily class attendance and participation is mandatory. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, your participation grade for that day may be half or zero credit. You will be given one excused absence for any reason (i.e. your lowest participation score will be dropped), but no more, so plan accordingly.

You are required to complete the readings listed below each week **before** arriving to class on Tuesday. Part of each 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 not receive full participation 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. The daily readings are listed at the end of this syllabus under the heading "Class Topics & Assignments."

Common sense respect (not texting or surfing the web or listening to headphones during class, etc.) 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.

JOINT PRESENTATION

Every student will participate in a collaborative presentation with one or more of their fellow students one week in this course. The presentation will be ten to fifteen minutes long and will discuss the readings for that week. I will send you instructions on Canvas as to how dates will be selected and what you will be expected to cover in your presentation. Presentations will be graded on the thoroughness of the reading and the skillfulness of the transmission of information.

TAKE HOME MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

History is primarily a written craft, and writing is a distinct process of obtaining and relating knowledge. One of my goals is to improve your ability to write a clear argument with the use of evidence, a skill that will benefit you in almost any field or occupation.

You will have two take home exams, a midterm and a final. Both will have you provide short essay answers to multiple questions. Each exam will require a total of 8-10 double-spaced typed pages. Each response should begin with a clear thesis that responds to the prompt and have thoughtful examples and analysis which demonstrate your thesis and synthesize the readings of the course. And do not forget that the key to writing a good essay is reading over it and REVISING it several times!

Essays will be graded by the following criteria:¹

- ACCURACY: Does my paper show that I have thoroughly and accurately examined the assigned materials?
- CLEAR THESIS: Does my paper begin with a clear and interesting thesis statement indicating what I am arguing?
- ARGUMENT: Have I substantiated my thesis with a clear argument?
- SYNTAX AND WORDING: Have I used proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling? Is my writing clear and straightforward, with mostly active voice and active verbs?
- DIRECTIONS: Do I follow all of the directions of the assignment?

I encourage you to discuss your ideas and theses, as well as returned exams, during my office hours or by appointment. I am also happy to read an introductory thesis or a single paragraph before the exam is due. Out of fairness, however, I will not read an entire exam draft.

¹ Paper grading rubric adapted from rubric used by Emily S. Rosenberg

I require that you submit both a hard copy of your exam in class and an electronic version to turnitin.com by the start of lecture on the day the assignment is due. Late papers (either hard copy, electronic, or both) will be marked down 10% per day late, starting with the day the assignment was due (so if you submit the paper after class on the first day, it will be marked down 10%; the following day marked down 20%, etc.)

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/>. 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 suspension or expulsion from the university. Do not attempt it.

CONTACTING ME

I encourage you to meet with me at my office hours or at another arranged time. You can also ask me questions by email. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on the weekends), but I'll usually reply sooner.

USEFUL WEBSITES

History Department Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/>

History Department Website: <https://his.uncg.edu/>

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 regarding any alterations.

CLASS TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 – 1/9 – Introduction to Course and Major Issues in US-Middle East Relations

No Readings or Assignments Due

Week 2 – 1/16 – Early Encounters and Imaginings

Allison, Introduction, Chapters 1-5

Week 3 – 1/23 – Early Collaborations at the Dawn of the Modern Era

Allison, Chapters 7-9

Makdisi, Introduction, Chapter 1

Week 4 – 1/30 – Imagined Communities and Growing Ties

Walther, Introduction, Chapters 1-4

Week 5 – 2/6 – Civil Wars, Nation-Building, and Immigration

Makdisi, Chapter 2

Gualtieri, Introduction, Chapters 1-3

Week 6 – 2/13 – The Ottoman Empire, the United States, and World War I

Walther, Chapters 7, 8, Conclusion

Makdisi, Chapter 3

Week 7 – 2/20 – Oil and New Relationships during the Interwar Years

Gualtieri, Chapters 4-7

Vitalis, “Black Gold, White Crude”

Week 8 – 2/27 – World War II, the Dawn of the Cold War, and the Creation of Israel

Makdisi, Chapter 4

Oren, “The Ultimate Ally”

McAlister, Prefaces, Introduction, Chapter 1

Week 9 – 3/6 – BREAK WEEK

Week 10 – 3/13 – From Operation Ajax to the 1967 War

Midterms Due

Makdisi, Chapter 5

Week 11 – 3/20 – New Terrors and a New Petrodollar Order

Makdisi, Chapter 6

McAlister, Chapters 2-4

Week 12 – 3/27 – The Iranian Revolution and the Carter Doctrine

Mousavian, pages x-72

Bacevich, Introduction, Chapter 1

McAlister, Chapter 5

Week 13 – 4/3 – Arms and Hostages

Bacevich, Chapters 2-6

Mousavian, pages 73-102

Week 14 – 4/10 – Intifadas, the Gulf War, and Al-Qaeda

Makdisi, Chapter 7

Bacevich, Chapters 7, 8, 11

Mousavian, pages 102-162

Week 15 – 4/17 – September 11, the Global War on Terror, and the US Invasion of Iraq

McAlister, Conclusion

Bacevich, Chapters 12-14

Mousavian, pages 163-222

Week 16 – 4/24 – The More Things Change?

Makdisi, Epilogue

Bacevich, Chapters 15-18

Mousavian, pages 223-292

Finals Week

T 5/1 – Take Home Final Due by 11:59 PM