

PSPA 319C: US in the Middle East
AMST 301: America in the Middle East

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Fall 2017

Seminar:
Thursdays, 3:30 pm-6:00 pm
CAMES Seminar room, Ada Dodge Hall

Office hours:
Monday and Wednesday
1pm-2:30pm in Jesup 201

This seminar explores the political, economic, and cultural relations between the United States and the Middle East. It seeks to explain the nature of American policy and the role of American non-state/societal actors and institutions through an examination of changing strategic assessments, cultural attitudes, political struggles, socioeconomic forces, and ideological trends within both the US and Middle East.

The basis for this seminar is a recognition of the limits of international relations scholarship to explain the nature of US policy and many aspects of the complex relationship between the US and the Middle East. So rather than a survey of the existing literature on US policy (covered in PSPA 237 and PSPA 311), this seminar explores the multidimensional history of political, economic, and cultural relations between the United States and the Middle East. In particular, it suggests that the definition of strategic interests and assessment about how best to pursue them are, in practice, shaped by cultural and ideological constructions, domestic political factors, and the actions of transnational non-state actors such as private firms, NGOs, the media, and expats in the region. Moreover, much of US-Middle East relations is shaped by actors and forces beyond official/executive US policy. Through readings, discussions, and diverse writing assignments the seminar seeks to engage students to critically think about the changing nature of the American presence(s) in the Middle East and the possible future course of US-Middle East relations.

Course Requirements:

Attendance, seminar participation & presentations:		(20% of course grade)
Weekly discussion question notes:		(10%)
Short Essay:	[Due Sept 14]	(15%)
Final project prospectus/bibliography:	[Nov. 16]	(10%)
Final project memo:	[Nov 30/Dec 7]	(10%)
Final paper	[Due December 18]	(35%)

Prerequisites: This seminar assumes students have some background in Middle East history and US foreign policy and/or international relations. Background in cultural studies, American studies and/or media studies would also be useful.

This course is a discussion-based seminar: Students should come prepared to discuss and question the readings. As noted below, students will prepare responses to the readings/discussion questions and upload them to moodle before class.

Weekly memos: On weeks when we meet to discuss readings [Weeks: 2-9, 11, 13], you are required to write a one page (maximum!) memo addressing one or more of discussion questions and/or readings. Discussion questions and a place to upload your memo can be found on moodle. Papers are due at noon the day of seminar. These will not be graded, but you receive 1 point for paper submitted on time, ½ point for a late paper.

Short essay: Addressing interests and identity in US policy. **Due Sept 14.**

Final project: For your final project, you will be working in teams to develop a class presentation and written report/paper on some issue relating to the "Trump Era." These projects are expected to draw on theories, methods, and other materials from the course but also require outside research. At the end of weekly seminars, the class will collectively discuss development of the "Trump era" and possible research topics/questions. We will formulate teams to conduct research and draft reports. While you will work in teams, each student will be responsible for his/her own paper and presentation.

Presentations will be given in the last two sessions of class. A preliminary memo (to be distributed to class) will be due before the session of your presentation. Prior to that, a project prospectus and bibliography will be due. You will submit a draft of the final paper, then rewrite/edit the draft based on feedback from peer reviewer. See deadlines listed below. Final paper **due December 18**. Length: **15-20 pages**.

Readings:

All readings will be posted on AUB's online course management system, Moodle. You can log in at: <http://moodle.aub.edu.lb/course/view.php?id=6157>

Please also see website for updates and revisions to readings, office hours, project updates etc..

August 31

1. Introduction: What role for "America" in the Middle East?

Michael Oren, "Apple pie and the Middle East," *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2007.

Steven Cook, "What Trump gets right about the Middle East," *Politico* July 5, 2017.

September 7

2. Overview: US interests and "Anti-Americanism," before/after the "American Century"

Ussama Makdisi, "'Anti-Americanism' in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History," *Journal of American History* (September, 2002), pp. 538-557.

Ted Widmer, "The challenge of imperialism," *Boston Globe*, July 15, 2007.

Alex Lubin and Marwan M. Kraidy, *American Studies Encounters the Middle East* (North Carolina, 2016), read only pp. 10-22.

Stephen Walt, "The United States Should Admit It No Longer Has a Middle East Policy," *ForeignPolicy.com* Jan. 29, 2016.

Fawaz Gerges, *Obama and the Middle East: End of America's Moment?* (Palgrave, 2012), pp. 28-68. [Recommended]

Barak Obama, "Moment of Opportunity: American Diplomacy in the Middle East & North Africa," Remarks at the State Department, May 19, 2011. [Recommended]

John Waterbury, "Hate Your Policies, Love Your Institutions," *Foreign Affairs* 82, 1 (Jan-Feb, 2003): 58-68. [Recommended]

September 14

3. Politics, Interests, Culture, Identity: Explaining US Foreign Policy in the Middle East

William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Brookings, 2005), pp. 7-17.

Michael Hudson, "The United States and the Middle East," in Fawcett (ed.) *The International Relations of the Middle East* 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2009), pp. 308-330.

David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minnesota, 1992), pp. 1-15.

Waleed Hazbun, "Reading Culture, Identity and Space in US Foreign Policy," *Middle East Report*, No. 236 (Fall 2005): 44-6.

Samuel Huntington, "The Erosion of American National Interests," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 76, No. 5 (Sep.-Oct.1997), pp. 28-49. [Recommended]

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (California 2005), pp. 1-12, 29-42. [Recommended]

Douglas Little, "Orientalism, American Style," in *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945*, (North Carolina, 2002), pp. 9-42. [Recommended]

September 21

4. The early Cold War in the Middle East: Doctrines, propaganda, and covert action

David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minnesota, 1992/1998), pp. 23-32.

Melani McAlister, "Benevolent Supremacy," in *Epic Encounters* (California 2005), pp. 43-55.

Douglas Little, "Mission Impossible: The CIA and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East," *Diplomatic History*, (November 2004), pp. 663-701.

"U.S. Propaganda in the Middle East - The Early Cold War Version" *National Security Archive*, selections.

Ervand Abrahamian, "Now we know..." *History New Network*, July 5, 2017. [Recommended]

Peter Sluglett, "The Cold War in the Middle East," in Fawcett (ed.) *The International Relations of the Middle East* 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2009), pp. 44-60. [Recommended]

September 28

5. Arab Nationalism and contrasting views of the US role in Lebanon, 1958

Malik Mufti, "The United States and Nasserist Pan-Arabism," in David W. Lesch (ed.) *The Middle East and the United States*, 4th ed. (Westview, 2007), pp. 141-160.

Erika Alin, "U.S. Policy and Military Intervention in the 1958 Lebanon Crisis," in Lesch (ed.) *Middle East and the United States*, (Westview, 2007), pp. 122-140.

Richard J. McAlexander, "Couscous Mussolini: US perceptions of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the 1958 Intervention in Lebanon and the origins of the US-Israeli special relationship," *Cold War History* Vol. 11, No. 3 (August 2011), pp. 363-385.

Maurice M. Labelle Jr., "A New Age of Empire? Arab 'Anti-Americanism,' US Intervention, and the Lebanon Crisis of 1958," *International History Review*, 35, 1 (2013), pp. 42-69.

October 5

6. Modernizing the Middle East: Remaking in the American image

Richard Bulliet, "Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places," in *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (Columbia, 2006) read only 95-123.

Michael Hirsh, "Bernard Lewis Revisited," *Washington Quarterly*, (November 2004): 13-9.

Waleed Hazbun, "The Uses of Modernization Theory: American Foreign Policy and Mythmaking in the Arab World," in Marwan Kraidy and Alex Lubin, eds. *American Studies Encounters the Middle East* (North Carolina, 2016), pp. 175-206.

Nathan J. Citino, "The 'crush' of ideologies: The United States, the Arab world, and Cold War modernisation," *Cold War History*, 12:1 (2012): 89-110. [Recommended]

Waleed Hazbun, "A History of Insecurity: From the Arab Uprisings to ISIS," *Middle East Policy*, 22/3 (Fall 2015): 55-65. [Recommended]

October 12

7. Americans in Iran: Expats as agents

James A. Bill, "The United States in Iran: Diplomats, Intelligence Agents, and Policy Making," in *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (Yale, 1988), pp. 379-424.

Imam Khomeini, Speech of October 24, 1964.

Melani McAlister, "Iran, Islam, and the Terrorist Threat, 1979-1989," in *Epic Encounters* (California 2005), pp. 198-234.

Cord Hasen-Strum, "Terrorism: Why we can't shoot our way out?" *The Travel Agent* April 1986.

Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the American Bar Association," July 8, 1985. [Recommended]

"Public Report of The Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism," February 1986 [Recommended]

October 19

8. Rethinking the geopolitics oil and the Gulf

Melani McAlister, "King Tut, Commodity Nationalism, and the Politics of Oil, 1973-1979" in *Epic Encounters* (California 2005), pp. 125-40.

Robert Vitalis, "Oil: The Stuff of Mass Delusion," *Jadaliyya E-zine*, March 9, 2016.

Toby Craig Jones, "Don't Stop at Iraq: Why the U.S. Should Withdraw from the Entire Persian Gulf," *The Atlantic*, December 22, 2011.

Toby Jones, "Energy Security: Genealogy of a Term," *Middle East Report*, (Summer 2014): 6-9

Benjamin Smith, "The Great Ports Panic of 2006," *Middle East Report* (Fall, 2008): 40-44.

Toby Craig Jones, "After the Pipelines: Energy and the Flow of War in the Persian Gulf," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, 2 (April 2017): 417-425. [Recommended]

Ellis J. Goldberg, Review of "Special Forum on Oil" in *Security Studies* 25: 2 (May 2016), *ISSForum.org*, December 9, 2016. [Recommended]

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (Verso, 2011), pp. 171-187. [Recommended]

Robert Vitalis, "Oil and Grand Strategy," *The Montréal Review*, February 2013

October 26

9. Israel and US regional strategy

Martin Indyk, "The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East," speech to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, May 18, 1993.

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, (Penguin, 2008), pp. 49-77.

Michael Barnett, "Identity and Alliances in the Middle East" in Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security*, (Columbia 1996), read only pp. 432-447.

Kiera Feldman "The Romance of Birthright Israel," *The Nation* July 4, 2011.

Alex Lubin, *Geographies of Liberation* (North Carolina, 2014), pp. 142-175.

Mitchell Plitnick and Chris Toensing, "'The Israel Lobby' in Perspective," *Middle East Report* (Summer 2007): 42-47. [Recommended]

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, (Penguin, 2008), pp. 306-334 [Recommended]

Martin Kramer, "The American Interest," *Azure*, (Autumn 2006): 21-33. [Recommended]

ALPAC Briefing Book [Recommended]

November 2.

10. "Trump Project" planning

Meeting to work on final projects. Details to be announced.

November 9

11. USA as Empire? 9/11, American Exceptionalism, and the Iraq War

Michael Ignatieff, "The Burden," *New York Times*, January 5, 2003.

Thomas Friedman, "Four Reasons to Invade Iraq," *Slate.com*, January 12, 2004.

George W. Bush "President Discusses War on Terror at National Endowment for Democracy." Department of Defense, News Briefing Slides, September 29, 2005.

Gearóid Ó Tuathail (Gerard Toal), "'Just out looking for a fight': American affect and the invasion of Iraq," *Antipode*, 35, 5 (2003): 856-870.

Stephen M. Walt, "The End of the American Era," *National Interest*, (November–December 2011) 6-18.

Charles A. Kupchan, "America's Place in the New World," *New York Times* April 7, 2012

Steve Niva, "Disappearing Violence: JSOC and the Pentagon's new cartography of networked warfare," *Security Dialogue* 44,3 (2013): 185-202

November 16.

12. "Trump Project" planning

Meeting to work on final projects. Details to be announced.

Final project prospectus/bibliography due

November 23.

13. The Arab Uprisings and Obama

Waleed Hazbun "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Challenge of Postcolonial Agency: International Relations, US Policy and the Arab World," in Graham Huggan, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 217-234.

Jeremy Pressman, "US policy after the Uprisings," in *The Arab Spring* (Westview, 2017), pp. 272-287.

Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson "The End of Pax Americana," *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 2015, pp. 2-10

Marc Lynch, "What's really at stake in the Syria Debate," *War on the Rocks* October 10, 2016.

Reread: Obama, "Moment of Opportunity," May 19, 2011. [Recommended]

Mounira Soliman, "The Reception of U.S. Discourse on the Egyptian Revolution" and

Osamah Khalil, "The Counterrevolutionary Year: The Arab Spring, the Gulf Cooperation

Council, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East," in Marwan Kraidy and Alex Lubin, eds. *American Studies Encounters the Middle East* (North Carolina, 2016). [Recommended]

Stephen Wertheim, "Donald Trump's Plan to Save Western Civilization," *New York Times*, July 22, 2017. [Recommended]

November 30

14. Trump and the Middle East

Student Presentations

Readings: *to be determined*

Final project memos due

December 7

15. The "Middle East" in Trump's America

Student Presentations

Readings: *to be determined*

Final project memos due

December 11

Draft of final paper due

December 13

Review/comments on drafts due

December 18

***Final paper due ***

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Academic Integrity:

I expect all students to follow the AUB Student Code of Conduct. Cheating or plagiarism will result in course failure without further warning.

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Please let me know if you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning due to any kind of disability, mental health, medical condition, or family situation so we can discuss privately and attempt to make accommodations.

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