

Honors 303T: The Middle East

Instructor: Jonathan Taylor

Office: H429C

(714) 278-4762

email: jstaylor@fullerton.edu

Office hours: Tues, Thurs 1-2:30

Course Description:

This Middle East region is proving itself increasingly important in light of current events: terrorism, war, U.S. interventions, oil policy. This course will seek to give students a broad background in the geography of the region. This includes an understanding of the region's physical environment and landscapes; resources and resource issues; environmental problems; cultural landscapes; urban and rural forms; economic trends and patterns; and its political geography. The course will especially stress contemporary issues in the region including opposing movements towards unification and devolution; conflicts over development and modernization; oil and water politics; conflicts caused by changes in the ethnic and religious composition of the region; and outside intervention.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. To become familiar with the broad geographical contours of the Middle East and each of its subregions.
2. To appreciate the Middle East as a complex and dynamic region with political and economic significance for the rest of the world.
3. To understand the region's complex history and how this has resulted in its current geographical patterns.
4. To understand some of the major issues and problems facing the region and the role of geographical inquiry in understanding them.

Main text:

Ewan Anderson. *The Middle East*. 2000. London ; New York : Routledge

Additional readings:

Klare, M.T. *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict*. 2001. Metropolitan.

Roberts, J.M. The Penguin History of the World. 1990. Penguin
Richards and Waterbury, Political Economy of the Middle East. 1996
Assorted articles, op-ed pieces, editorials, web sites.
Other selected readings.

Grading Policy:

The coursework for this class will involve assigned readings, mandatory participation in online and classroom discussions, a book review, one or two short “reaction papers”, a map quiz, and two in-class essay exams. One will correspond to the first half of the semester, the other to the second half.

Your final grade will be calculated by the following formula:

2 exams, (20% each) – 40% total

reaction papers 10% total

In-class discussion/participation – 30% total

Book review – 10%

Map quiz – 10%

Exam and quiz dates are listed below.

Penalties for academic dishonesty and plagiarism will be severe, and will result in at minimum an automatic grade of F and potentially in expulsions from the University.

Attendance policy: None, but attendance will be reflected in your discussion grade.

Class Policies:

I discourage students from coming in late or leaving early for any reasons except medical emergencies. Your fellow classmates are here to learn, please treat them with respect by not distracting them.

General Education Requirements:

This course will meet the General Education requirements III. Disciplinary Learning C. 2.: Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences, and V. Cultural Diversity.

The learning goals for these categories are:

2. Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences (3 units minimum)

Courses in this category draw upon, integrate, apply, and extend knowledge and skills previously acquired in Category III. C. Disciplinary Learning: Social Sciences and require completion of appropriate courses in Category III. C. 1 as a prerequisite to enrollment. In addition, courses in III. C. 2. Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Social Sciences include the following goals for student learning:

- a. To understand broad, unifying themes in the social sciences from crossdisciplinary perspectives.
- b. To solve complex problems that require social scientific reasoning.
- c. To relate the social sciences to significant social problems or to other related disciplines.
- d. When deemed appropriate, to apply disciplinary concepts from the social sciences in a variety of settings, such as community-based learning sites and activities.

V. Cultural Diversity

Students must complete at least one three-unit course in category III.B.3, III.C.2, or IV that includes all of the following learning goals for cultural diversity:

1. To understand that culture is socially constructed and fundamental to social interaction.
2. To appreciate the complex relationships that gender, ethnicity and class bring to a discussion of society and culture.
3. To understand that because we live in an inter-connected world, we need to understand the diversity and relationships within and among cultures.
4. To recognize and evaluate how one's cultural history affects one's sense of self and relationship to others.

Course Outline: all dates and topics subject to change

Week 1:

August 26: Class introduction, current issues

August 28: Defining the region: Geographical Concepts

Readings: Anderson, Prologue and Introduction.

Week 2:

September 2: Physical setting

Readings: Anderson, Chapters 1-2.

September 4: Physical setting – environment

Readings: Anderson, Chapters 3-4.

Week 3:

September 9: Ancient civilizations

Readings: Anderson, Chapter 6 (pp.90-96), Roberts (pp.55-99)

September 11: Birth of Islam

Readings: Karen Armstrong, Islam, Chapter 1.

Week 4:

September 16: Video: Islam: Empire of Faith pt 1

Readings: Armstrong, Chapters 2-3.

September 18: Video: Islam: Empire of Faith pt 2

Readings: Armstrong, Chapters 4-5.

Week 5:

September 23: Resources and environment

Readings: Anderson, Chapter 5, Klare Chapter 7

September 25: Resources and environment cont.

Readings: Klare, Chapter 3

Beaumont, Peter. Water for peace in the Middle East: the sacrifice of irrigated agriculture in Israel? The Arab world geographer Vol. 3. No. 2. Summer 2000. p. 97-112

Week 6:

September 30: Economic geography

Readings: Anderson, Chapter 9

October 2: Economic geography cont.

Richards and Waterbury, selected sections, *Political Economy of the Middle East*. 1996

Week 7:

October 7: Cultural landscapes

Readings: Anderson, Chapter 8

October 9: Society and popular culture

Week 8:

October 14: Political Geography: Roots of conflict

October 16: Political Geography: Arab/Israeli conflict

Readings to be assigned

Week 9:

October 21: Video: Arab/Israeli conflict

October 23: Video: Arab/Israeli conflict

Readings to be assigned

Week 10:

October 28: Regional geography: Iran, Iraq, Turkey

October 30: Regional geography: Iran, Iraq, Turkey cont.

Readings to be assigned

Week 11:

November 4: Regional geography: The Maghreb

November 6: Regional geography: The Maghreb cont.

Readings to be assigned

Week 12:

November 11: Regional geography: Saudi Arabia and the Gulf

November 13: Video: Saudi Time Bomb

Readings to be assigned

Week 13:

November 18: Regional geography: Afghanistan

November 20: Rise of Islamism

Readings to be assigned

Week 14:

December 2: The U.S. and the Middle East

December 4: The U.S and the Middle East cont.

Readings to be assigned

Week 15:

December 9: War on terrorism

December 11: Demography and future of the region

Readings to be assigned

Week 16:

December 18: Final Exam