

The George Washington University
Department of Geography

Geography 154
Geography of the Middle East & North Africa
Spring 2007

Classroom: 2020 K St. Room 20

Day/Time: Mon 3:30pm – 6:00pm

Instructor: George R. Hofmann, Jr.
Office: 1957 E Street, Suite 512
Office Hours: Mon: 1:00pm – 2:00pm;
Tue: 4:00pm – 5:30pm
& by appointment

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Course Description:

The world region known as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is not at peace. The cradle of civilization, where humans first made the transition from hunter-gatherers to farmers and a more settled existence, exhibits a character that is all too frequently less than settled. Home to the world's three major monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – the 21st century finds these religions in conflict with each other, both within the region and beyond its borders. Courted for its vast energy resources – a principal ingredient of the global economy – the world finds the steady and guaranteed availability of those resources increasingly at risk. Seemingly intractable problems appear as the norm, with few solutions in sight.

This course will familiarize students with both the physical and human geography of the Middle East and North Africa. Further, it will explore the genesis and status of the major issues and problems that confront the nations of the Middle East and North Africa today. At its conclusion, students should have an understanding of the relationship between the lands and their inhabitants. Further, they should have an understanding of the major political, cultural and social issues confronting the region and have some thoughts on how they might possibly be resolved.

Graded Requirements		
<u>Event/Requirement</u>	<u>Percent of Final Grade</u>	<u>Due/Scheduled</u>
Research Paper Proposal	5%	Feb 26, 2007
Map Quiz	5%	Mar 5, 2007
Phase I Exam	20%	Mar 26, 2007
Issue Briefing & Paper	15%	Apr, 2007 (TBA)
Research Paper	25%	Apr 16, 2007
Phase II Exam	30%	May 2, 2007

Course Schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Jan 22 (1)	Introduction	None

Jan 22 (2)	Introduction to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	Held, Ch 1 (3-12); Gerner, Ch 1 (1-4); Ch 2 (5-14)
Jan 29 (3)	History: Antiquity to the 7 th Century	Gerner, Ch 3, (33-38) <u>Guest lecturer:</u> Mr. Wesley Reisser
Jan 29 (4)	Topography & Landforms	Held, Ch 2 (13-25; 48-60) Hammond (8-9)
Feb 5 (5)	Water Issues	Held, Ch 2 (25-34) Gerner, Ch 2 (14-20)
Feb 5 (6)	Early Religions & Origins of Islam	Held, Ch 4 (98-110) Gerner, Ch 12 (363-386) Hammond (14)
Feb 12 (7)	Climate & Weather & Agriculture	Held, Ch 2 (34-48) & Ch 5 (137-157) Hammond, (16-17)
Feb 12 (8)	History: 7 th Century to the Present	Gerner, Ch 3 (38-78)
Feb 19 (-)	No class – President’s Day	
Feb 26 (9)	Oil Issues	Gerner, Ch 8 (249-272) Held, Ch 6 (159-187) Hammond (12-13) Paper Proposal Due
Feb 26 (10)	Ethnicity & Language & Gender Issues	Gerner, Ch 10 (299-334) Held, Ch 4 (94-98, 110-121) Gerner, Ch 11 (335-362)
Mar 5 (11)	Map Quiz (30 minutes)	
Mar 5 (12)	Population & Urbanization	Gerner, Ch 9 (274-298) Held, Ch 4 (85-94, 121-136) Hammond (10-11)
Mar 12 (-)	No class – Spring break	
Mar 19 (13)	Migration Issues	<u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Dr. Marie D, Price, Chair, Dept. of Geography
Mar 19 (14)	Politics of MENA & Economies of MENA	Gerner, Ch 4 (79-129) Gerner, Ch 7 (211-247) Held, Ch 7 (189-215)
Mar 26 (15)	Phase I Exam (75 minutes)	Review all previous material
Mar 26 (16)	Geopolitics & International Relations Issues	Held, Ch 8 (217-264) Gerner, Ch 5 (131-168)

Apr 2 (17)	Issue Briefing #1 (30 min) Turkey	Held, Ch 18 (529-557) Hammond, 28-29
Apr 2 (18)	Issue Briefing #2 (30 min) Iran	Held, Ch 19 (559-587) Hammond, 40-41
Apr 9 (19)	Issue Briefing #3 (30 min) Israel & Palestine	Gerner, Ch 6 (169-210) Held, Ch 12, (363-373) Hammond, 32-33 <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Mr. Wesley Reisser
Apr 9 (20)	Issue Briefing #4 (30 min) Lebanon	Held, Ch 11 (319-337) Hammond, 30-31 <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Mr. Wesley Reisser
Apr 16 (21)	Issue Briefing #5 (30 min) Jordan	Held, Ch 10 (291-308) Hammond, 34-35 Term Paper Due
Apr 16 (22)	Issue Briefing #6 (30 min) Syria	Held, Ch 9 (267-289) Hammond, 30-31 <u>Guest Lecturer:</u> Dr. David Rain
Apr 23 (23)	Issue Briefing #7 (30 min) Egypt	Held, Ch 17 (501-528) Hammond, 46-48
Apr 23 (24)	Issue Briefing #8 (30 min) Gulf States	Held, Ch 15 (433-470) Hammond, 36-39
Apr 30 (25)	Issue Briefing #9 (30 min) Iraq	Held, Ch 13 (377-406) Hammond, 38-39
Apr 30 (26)	Issue Briefing #10 (30 min) Saudi Arabia	Held, Ch 14 (407-432) Hammond, 36-37
May 2 (27) Wednesday <u>Designated Monday</u>	Phase II Exam (2 hours)	All material from Mar 26 (Session 16) forward.
May 2 (28)	Phase II Exam (cont.)	

Required Texts:

Gerner, Deborah J. and Jillian Schwedler (2004) *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Pub. Inc.

Hammond. (2006) *Atlas of the Middle East and North Africa*, Canada: Hammond, Inc.

Held, Colbert C. (2006) *Middle East Patterns: Places, People and Politics*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Some suggested websites:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk> – Then click on “Middle East” for current news stories.

www.bbc.co.uk – Under “Explore” on the left side of the screen, type in any subject you want (e.g., “Iran,” “ Hamas”) and you will get lots of hits (current and recent news stories)

www.onlinenewspapers.com – For the Middle East, go to the “Middle East” drop-down button and chose a country. There are some English newspapers here. Be cautious about what you believe from these sources.

www.cia.gov – Click on The World Fact Book for current data/statistics (including some geographic data) on any country in the world.