

**GEOG 226**  
**Geography of the Middle East**  
**Spring 2006**

Dr. Amy Mills      [amills@sc.edu](mailto:amills@sc.edu)

Department of Geography  
Callcott Social Sciences Building 310

Class meets: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Callcott 201

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:45-11:45 and Wednesdays 11-12 Callcott 310

Teaching Assistant:      Natalie Jensen [jensenn2@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:jensenn2@mailbox.sc.edu)

A student in this course will use geographic concepts to: 1) develop an understanding of historic and contemporary cultures and environments in the Middle East and; 2) examine current topics and debates in the Middle East as local expressions of geographic connections to the region and to global processes. The course begins with an overview of the region and then focuses on subregions with specific country examples and special topics in social, cultural, and political geography. Among the topics to be covered are: expansion of Islam, Islamic cities, and medieval Islamic geography; colonial and national boundaries; urbanization and poverty; environmental resources in culture and politics; gender, veiling, and Islamic feminism; and current debates in society and culture.

The two mid-terms and final exam are non-cumulative. They will draw questions from lectures, assigned readings, films, and handouts. They will include a variety of assessment strategies, including essay questions. The two mid-terms will also include map identification. A study guide for each exam will be provided in advance. Students are responsible for the assigned readings and handouts, the material covered in lecture, and the films shown in class. If a student has an excused absence on the day that a film is shown, it is her/his responsibility to approach the instructor and arrange an alternative viewing. Attendance is required. If a student has more than three unexcused absences, the instructor is required, according to university regulations, to consider lowering the final grade a full grade (Full is A to B, B+ to C+, etc.) Excused absences required notification to be presented to the instructor. If a medical excuse is presented, it must state that the student was unable (due to illness or injury) to attend class. A note that indicates just a visit to the doctor will not be accepted.

**Required Texts:**

- *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*. Second Ed. Deborah Gerner and Jillian Schwedler, eds. Lynne Rienner Press, 2004.
- *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*. M. Gettleman and S. Schaar, eds. New York: Grove Press, 2003.
- *A History of the Modern Middle East*: William Cleveland. Westview Press, 2004.
- Additional short readings will be put on reserve in the library.

**Grading:** There are five components to the evaluation and final grade assigned for this course.

1. Media Geography Journal	12.5%	50 pts.
2. Reading Check	12.5%	50 pts.
3. Mid-term Exam	25%	100 pts.
4. Mid-term Exam	25%	100 pts.
5. Final Exam	25%	100 pts.

There are 400 total points possible. The final grades are assigned according to the scale below:

A	90%-100%	(360-400 points)
B+	87%-89%	(348-359 points)
B	80%-86%	(320-347 points)
C+	77%-79%	(308-319 points)
C	70%-76%	(280-307 points)
D+	67%-69%	(268-279 points)
D	60%-66%	(240-267 points)
F	0- 62%	(0-239 points)

**Media Geography Journal:**

**Objective:** This project is designed to have you observe the media reports on the Middle East more closely, to compare reporting from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, and to write about it. It offers an opportunity to synthesize your understanding of textbook and lecture material and relate class topics to the current events that you read about daily. Detailed information on this assignment will be distributed in class and on Blackboard.

Evaluation: I will read journals randomly throughout the semester. Therefore, your journal is always “due”, and you need to write regularly.

Please note: You may not cut and paste from online newspaper articles or other online sources: all writing in the journal must be your own. If I discover that you have plagiarized a journal entry, you will receive zero credit for the Media Geography Journal grade for the entire semester and I will report the plagiarism to the University. Please feel free to ask me what counts as plagiarism if you have any questions about this; if you don’t ask a question I assume you understand.

### **Reading Check:**

I will distribute each week, in class and via posting on Blackboard, a “Reading Check” list of terms to know and questions about the lecture and reading. Much (not all) of the exam material will come from these review sheets. Doing the Reading Check sheets will also help you participate in class discussion. These sheets are due on the dates indicated on the syllabus. You are allowed to miss this assignment once during the semester. I will grade Reading Checks at random to be sure you’re completing them. Late Reading Checks will not be accepted.

### **Participation:**

You are expected to participate in the course by completing all the assigned reading and speaking in class. Learning in this class will only succeed if everyone participates and together we create a good place for discussing ideas. This class is intended to be a friendly, safe environment for expressing a diversity of points of view. Disagreement with the articles or with the perspectives in class is allowed and even encouraged. However, you must use facts to substantiate your opinions. Negative bashing of another point of view, unsubstantiated assumptions or rumors, or the use of stereotypes or other unscholarly or unkind words are not allowed and may be penalized. My part of this contract is to present, through lectures and readings, a balanced set of perspectives and to help you evaluate them for yourself. As an academic and a researcher, I am committed to trying to understand all points of view. I do not communicate any personal political opinions in class.

### **Rights and Responsibilities:**

Cell phones, pagers, other distracting devices, as well as food and drink are not allowed in the classroom. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the provisions contained in the current student handbook, Carolina Community (<http://www.sa.sc.edu/carolinacommunity/>) as the source of policies that govern this and all courses. Students in need of accommodation as provided for by the university policy should make their situations known to the instructor as soon as possible. All graded work in this course must be the product of individual effort. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students should pay special attention to the expectations of academic responsibility as discussed under “Academic Responsibility” [Student Affairs Policy STAF 6.25] in the Carolina Community student handbook. Violations of these rules may lead to severe grade penalties in the course and/or disciplinary action by the office of the dean.

**Course Calendar: Geography 226**  
**Geography of the Middle East, Fall 2006**

These dates, the reading assignments, and due dates may change. Changes will be announced in class. Reading assignments are to be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned. Readings with a \* are available on reserve in the library.

	Month	Day	Topic	Assignment
Week 1	Aug.	24	Course Introduction	
<b>Regional Geographic Patterns</b>				
Week 2		29	Environmental Patterns	Gerner: Ch.1+2, p.1-32; *Held p. 13-18; p.25-48
		31		Reading Check due
Week 3	Sept.	5	Population Patterns	Gerner: Ch.9, p.273-298; *Held p.7-26
		7		Reading Check due
Week 4		12	Early Islamic Geography	Cleveland: Intro, Ch.1+2: p.1-35; Gettleman p.5-21
		14		Reading Check due
Week 5		19	Medieval Islamic Geography	Cleveland: Ch. 3-4 p.37-80; *Gellens "Search" p.50-65; Gettleman p.82-84
		21		Reading Check due
Week 6		26	<b>Exam #1</b>	
<b>Geographic Themes in Country Examples</b>				
		28	<b>Geographic Themes in Country Examples</b>	Gerner: Ch.4, 79-92; **"Roots of Arab Bitterness" p.27-40
Week 7	Oct.	3	Egypt	Cleveland Ch. 103-117; Ch.11 p.193-204; Ch.15 p.301-322; Gettleman p. 69-75; p.281-284; p.288-293
		5		Reading Check due
Week 8		10	Iran	Cleveland p.185-192; p.275-277; p.288-299; p.423-440; Gettleman p.253-261; *Kinzer "Shah's" p.1-16
		12		Reading Check due
Week 9		17	Turkey	Cleveland p.175-185; p.277-288; Gettleman p.125-132; *Kinzer "Crescent" p.183-194; p. 223-236

		19	<i>No Class Fall Break</i>	
Week 10		24		Reading Check due
		26	Israel and the Palestinian Territories	Gerner Ch.6 p.169-210; Gettleman p.113-118; p.147-160
Week 11		31		
	Nov.	2		Film: <i>Inner Tour</i> Reading Check due
Week 12		7	<i>No Class Election Day</i>	
		9	<b>Exam #2</b>	
			<b>Contemporary Geographic Issues</b>	
Week 13		14	Local and Global Contexts for Political Radicalism	Gerner p.373-382; Cleveland p.441-450; Gettleman p.296-310; p.296-313; p.324-327
		16		Reading Check due
Week 14		21	New Geographies	Gettleman p. 266-273; Ch.8 p.317-349 (additional reading may be added to update for current events)
		23	<i>No Class Thanksgiving</i>	
Week 15		28		Reading Check due
		30	Geographies of Gender in the Middle East	Gerner Ch.11 p.335-362; *Falah "Representations" p.300-318; *White, "Paradox" p.123-135
Week 16	Dec.	5		Film: <i>Covered</i> Reading Check due
		7	Wrapup	
			<b>Exam #3 (Final Exam)</b>	

**PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO DR. MILLS. THANK YOU!**

**STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET**

1. Name on university records\_\_\_\_\_
2. Name you prefer I use in class\_\_\_\_\_
3. Your major\_\_\_\_\_ 4 . Class standing: \_\_Freshman; \_\_Sophomore; \_\_Junior; \_\_Senior
5. What would you like to get out of the course in terms of knowledge, skills, and final grade?
  
6. How much time and energy **per week** do you plan to put into the course?
  
7. Why are you interested in taking this course?
  
8. Do you or your family have any personal experience in the Middle East or with a Middle East culture?
  
9. Are there any conditions or problems that you think might affect your performance in this class? For example: health issues, test anxieties, participation in university athletics, difficulties with the English language, etc.