Course Overview
This course analyzes the international relations of the Middle East from a historical, theoretical, and contemporary perspective. We will examine different theoretical approaches to the Middle East, the history of the region (the formation of the Middle East state system, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab cold war, the Persian Gulf conflicts, the rise of political Islam), as well as contemporary issues, such as the effect of the Arab Spring on the international politics of the region, the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, WMDs in the Middle East, and American policy towards the region.

The outline of the course is roughly chronological, but we will be referring to more theoretical questions throughout the course. The historical analysis serves not only to provide you with a background to current affairs; it provides a means to examine general questions in the study of international politics. I will begin almost every class discussion with an international relations puzzle. We will especially address these questions:

• Which international relations theories best capture the dynamics of the Middle East, particularly the causes of conflict and cooperation?
• What has been the role of transnational ideologies and identities in the international relations of the region?
• How has the formation of the Middle East state system affected its later development? Why has the system been so durable?
• What have been the interests of outside powers in the region? What effect have they had on the region and how has their role changed over time? To what extent have developments in the region hinged on the interference of outside actors or the initiative of local actors?

Course Goals
The purpose of the course is to give you a solid foundation for understanding the international relations of the Middle East, which is done by giving you a grounding in history of the region and contemporary affairs and by exploring how broader conceptual and theoretical issues enlighten events and vice versa.

More broadly, the course contributes to the Political Science Department’s Learning Outcomes by:
• Gaining an understanding of the subfield of international relations by studying the international politics of an important region and the international relations theories that apply to those politics (Learning Outcome #1).
• Thinking critically and analytically about political processes, such as what has driven the patterns of conflict and cooperation we see in the region (Learning Outcome #2).
• Answering political questions with careful research design and rigorous analysis (Learning Outcome #3). This is accomplished particularly with your research paper about a contemporary issue in the region.
• Writing and speaking with originality and clarity, providing reasons and evidence to support claims using proper citation of source material (Learning Outcome #4). This is accomplished especially via your class participation and research paper.

Reading
There are four books to purchase:
1. Ian Bickerton and Carla Klausner, *A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 8th Edition (Routledge, 2017). (If you purchase the 6th or 7th edition you need to get a hold of the later chapters you are missing.)

The rest of the reading material will be posted on Learning Suite.

Note: The reading load for this course is demanding. It is essential to keep up to date with the assigned reading. You will not be able to benefit from and contribute to class discussion if you don’t do the reading. The quizzes are meant to incentivize you to keep up. If you are not interested in reading a lot, this is not the course for you.

For those of you that are more visual or oral learners, I have listed below documentaries that cover some of the issues we are examining. Some of them are very good and have clips from key participants themselves. You can use these to supplement some of the readings.
• The 50 Years War: Israel and the Arabs (PBS). From the founding of Israel to the 1990s. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSAD9pS8Nlw&t=2758s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSAD9pS8Nlw&t=2758s)
• The Gulf War (PBS Frontline). The 1990-1 Gulf War. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAQdvyRIHco](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAQdvyRIHco)
• Bush’s War (PBS Frontline). The 2003 American invasion of Iraq. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqV85YcGPKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqV85YcGPKQ)
• Losing Iraq (PBS Frontline). The Bush and Obama administrations’ policy toward Iraq in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIR2hEqWHnY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIR2hEqWHnY)
• The Arab Awakening (Al Jazeera). Multipart series in the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8_4OzV8DLw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8_4OzV8DLw)
Class Rules
It is my goal to create a learning friendly environment. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, see me as soon as possible. See also the University’s policy towards students with disabilities at the end of this syllabus. We will have discussions that I hope are vigorous and respectful, where everyone participates. Conduct that makes other students unwelcome to participate will not be tolerated. See in particular the University’s policy towards sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, below. In addition, please refrain from distractions, i.e., turn your phone and the wireless signal on your computer off. The research shows your efforts to multitask while taking notes does not work. You would be better off with a pen and paper.

Assessment
Quizzes (25%): There will be several relatively short in-class quizzes. These will consist of basic questions mostly from the reading but also include a map quiz.

Midterm (20%): The midterm will cover material from the readings and lectures. The exam will be in the testing center, February 22-23.

Final (25%): The final exam will cover material from the readings and lectures. It will be comprehensive. If you cannot take the final exam on the day it is scheduled, which is April 25, please do not enroll in this course.

Paper (22%):
I detail this assignment below, after the course outline.

Participation (8%)
The basis of this grade will be the quantity and quality of your participation in class discussion, weighted especially to your engagement in your peers’ research projects, including your written feedback to your peers’ research project, discussed below.
**Tentative Course Outline**
(This is a rough guide for where we will be. I will keep you updated via email and Learning Suite to let you know what specific readings are required to complete before each class.)

**Introduction to the Course and Region – January 8**
Questions: What constitutes the Middle East? What are the major features that affect the international politics of the region? What are we going to be doing in this class?

Reading:
- This syllabus – all of it!

**Theories of International Relations and the Middle East – January 10**
Questions: What theories of international politics help us explain the international relations of the Middle East? To what extent can a focus on the distribution of power, ideological factors, political economy and/or the security of regimes illuminate how states interact in the region?

Readings: (skim these works to get the gist of the arguments – we will be returning to them later).

**The Formation of the Modern Middle East – January 17, 22**
Questions: How did the Middle East state system we more or less still have come about? How did changing conceptions of identity shape the formation of this system, and how did the system shape conceptions of identity?

Readings:

**The Cold War, the Arab Cold War, and the Arab Israeli Conflict – January 24, 29**

Questions: How did the Cold War affect outside intervention in Middle East politics? What was the Arab Cold War and what international relations theories best account for this rivalry?

Readings:


**1967 Six Day War and its Aftermath – January 31**

Questions: What were the causes of the 1967 war? Was it a preemptive war? An inadvertent war? What were the consequences of the 1967 war?

Readings:


**Isolation of Egypt and the Emergence of the Gulf – February 5, 7**

Questions: Why was there peace between Egypt and Israel and how did it change the Arab-Israeli dispute? Why and how did the states around the Persian Gulf emerge as major actors in the international politics of the region in this period?

Readings:

• Gause, *International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, chapter 2.

• Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, 106-118
The Islamic Revival – February 12, 14, 20
Questions: What were some of the causes and international consequences of the emergence of political Islam in the region? How did the Iranian Revolution affect the international politics of the region?

Readings:

Lebanon and Review – February 21
Questions: How has Lebanon been a microcosm of Middle East politics, and how does it represent some of the themes we have been discussing?

Readings:

Midterm, February 22-23 in the Testing Center

American Primacy in the post-Cold War: Gulf Conflict, Peace Process, and Political Islam – February 26, 28, March 5
Questions: Why did the United States expand its presence in the region in the aftermath of the Cold War, and what were the consequences of this? What explains the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the response? What caused the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and why did it flounder? What were the different tactics of political Islamists and how regimes dealt with them?

Readings:

2003 Iraq War and Aftermath – March 7
Questions: Why did the United States invade Iraq? What were the consequences of this event and the subsequent occupation for the region?

Readings:

**Iran in the Region – March 12**
Questions: Is Iran still a revolutionary state? What has prompted the recent concerns of Iranian influence in the region? How has the region and Saudi Arabia in particular responded to Iran?

Reading:

**WMDs in Middle East – March 14**
Questions: What explains the pattern of nuclear proliferation (or lack thereof) that we have seen in the region? How has the introduction of nuclear weapons changed (and not changed) the international politics of the region, and what would be the effect of further proliferation? What do Syria and Iraq’s deployment of chemical weapons tell us about the political impact of their use?

Readings:
• The country profiles of Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website: http://www.nti.org/learn/countries/.


**Israeli-Palestinian/Hezbollah Conflict, March 19**
Questions: What explains the outbreak of war between Hamas, Hezbollah and Israel? What is the likely trajectory of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Is the two state solution dead?

Reading:

**Arab Uprisings and Aftermath – March 21, 26, 28**
Questions: To what extent did the upheavals of the Arab Spring change the international relations of the region? What has been the role of outsiders – both within the region and without – in the revolts? What is the future of political Islam, and how does this affect the international politics of the region?
Readings:


**Student Papers – April 2, 9, 11 (Professor at a conference on April 4 – no class)**

**US Policy in Middle East – April 16**

Questions: How influential is American policy in shaping the region? What are the debates over what American interests in the region should be and what strategy achieves those interests? Is it likely there will be a shift in American policy going forward?

Readings:


**Taking Stock of the International Relations of the Middle East – April 18**

Questions: Which international relations theories best capture the dynamics of the Middle East, including the causes of conflict and cooperation? What has been the role of transnational ideologies and identities in the international relations of the region? How has the formation of the Middle East state system affected its later development? Why has the system been so durable? What have been the interests of outside powers in the region? What effect have they had on the region and how has their role changed over time? To what extent have developments in the region hinged on the interference of outside actors or the initiative of local actors?

Readings:

- Go back and read carefully the works assigned on January 10.

**FINAL EXAM – Wednesday, April 25, 3-6, In Class.**
You will write a paper on a contemporary issue in the international politics of the Middle East. I have listed some possible topics below to give you a sense of the type of questions that could make good topics. You are welcome to pick from these or fashion your own. No two people can write on the same topic. The topic can be a narrow empirical question, such as the one below on whether a different policy toward Iraq by the Obama Administration might have prevented the rise of ISIS, or a broader theoretical question, such as whether the region will see more nuclear proliferation. Whatever the nature of the topic, you will want to engage in the relevant literature. For example, the question on nuclear proliferation should delve into the scholarship on why states might or might not pursue nuclear weapons and apply it to the Middle East.

You will need to get your topic approved by me by January 31. I prefer that you come by my office hours to discuss it. You will turn in an outline of your paper on March 5, and I will set up 20-minute meetings with you that week to discuss the paper. On April 2, 9, and 11, we will have workshops on your paper. You will submit a rough draft of your paper to two of your colleagues that I will assign and they will provide you with comments on your paper. We will then have a discussion about the topics. I will provide details of how this will work in class. Your feedback on your peers’ papers and your contribution to the discussion is a part of your participation grade.

Here are some potential topics:

- Will there be more nuclear proliferation in the region? Why or why not?
- Could a residual force of American troops in Iraq have prevented the rise of ISIS?
- Are any international actors in favor of Iraq breaking up? Why or why not? What does this tell us about the durability of the Middle East state system?
- Is the partition of Syria and Iraq a way to reduce conflict in the Middle East? What does the literature on the subject say?
- What explains the relationship between Iran and Syria? Are there theories of alliances that can account for their alliance?
- Is the wave of political Islam receding? How is that manifested (or not) in country X?
- Should it be American policy to get rid of the Assad regime in Syria? If so, what should it be replaced with? If not, should the United States attempt to broker a settlement?
- What explains Russian policy toward the Syrian conflict?
- Is the two state solution dead, if so, what are the alternatives? If not, what can/should be done to revive it?
- How does the US policy towards Egypt illustrate its stance toward democracy promotion in the Middle East?
- What explains the Egyptian policy towards the Syrian civil conflict?
- Was international (US) intervention in Libya a mistake? What should/can the international community be doing now?
- To what extent will other outside powers such as Russia, China play a role in the future of the Middle East?
- What does the response to chemical weapons use in Syria tell us about whether there is a taboo against their use in the international community?
• How is the conflict in Yemen affected by the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran?
  What does this tell us about the influence of outside powers in the politics of the region?
• What is Saudi Arabia’s policy towards Syria and how does that exemplify some of the
tensions in its foreign policy between opposing Iran and opposing movements that favor
its overthrow?
• Why is there an ongoing dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar?

Final Paper
The final paper will be due at the last day class, April 18th. You will turn in a hard copy to my
office at 752 SWKT and also submit an electronic copy to turnitin via Learning Suite. As a
reminder, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. See an
elaboration of the University’s policy, and citations of additional resources, below. I will
provide more detailed instructions about the structure of the paper and other matters when we
discuss it in class. Below are some guidelines:

Length:
The paper should be about 8-10 pages. Sheer length does not indicate quality of research, but
shortness often indicates the lack of quality – the student has ran out of things to say given the
cursory nature of the research. The paper should be formatted in the normal way – times new
roman font, 12 point, double-spaced, one inch margins. Include the page numbers.

Citations/Research quality:
I will be looking to see whether you have a command of the literature on your given topic and if
you are effectively using the sources to prove your point. This is a research paper that you are
expected to be working on throughout the semester. I am expecting a serious engagement with
the scholarship. This takes time. It is painfully obvious when students attempt to write a
research paper at the last minute.

There are three main ways of citation: parenthetical, footnote, and endnote. I prefer footnotes.
Given the footnote method there are many different styles of citation. You may use Turabian
style as you did in PS 200, but you do not have to. Just pick a style and be consistent. With any
given style, of course, all the relevant information should be there so I can tell what type of
publication it is and easily locate it. Make the citations as specific as possible. For example, if
you are quoting an article, cite the page of the article rather than just the article as a whole.
Believe it or not, I have been known to look up specific citations to ensure accuracy. Include a
bibliography of works you have cited at the end of the paper.

Do not overuse quotes. You could use quotations when you are examining a particular text – for
example, a document in which a leader makes a claim for why he/she did something that you are
interested in. Often, however, points can be paraphrased and then cited. You do not want your
paper to be a string of quotations. On the other hand, be careful not to plagiarize. Plagiarizing
includes quoting texts without quotations and citation, but also a slight rearrangement of the
author’s sentence without quotation. See the university policies below.

Spelling/Grammar:
There should not be misspellings and grammatical errors, such as verb tense agreement. These errors are distracting and indicate an unfinished product.

**Organization:**
Your paper should be clear, crisp, and tightly argued. There should be no fluff. Your thesis should be clear, and everything in the paper should be directly related to testing that thesis. Subheadings are an essential part of coherent organization. I should be able to outline your paper with relative ease. There should be a clear flow to the paper: sections and paragraphs should logically flow from one to the next.

**Argument:**
Your paper should be making an argument, and your paper will be graded based on how well you make that argument. Is the argument logically consistent? Is there evidence that backs up the claims made? Does the paper anticipate and address counterarguments? Are rival hypotheses presented fairly? Is the conclusion backed by what was presented in the paper?

**Grade:**
The following is the grading criteria, in order of increasing importance, and an “A” example:
1. Nuts and bolts: The paper is properly formatted. There are no spelling or grammatical errors. Sentences are clearly written and sources are properly cited.
2. Organization: There is a clear and logical flow to the paper.
3. Tie:
   a. Research quality: It is evident this person has mastered the evidence surrounding her or his topic.
   b. Argument: The paper deftly uses evidence to argue a particular point, and handles rival hypotheses skillfully.

**FHSS Writing Lab:** Because you are taking a course in the College of Family, Home and Social Sciences, you can use the FHSS Lab resources for free. Do so! They have people there that can help you proofread/organize your paper. See: https://fhsswriting.byu.edu/Pages/home.aspx. Even if you do not use this service, it is always helpful to have someone else read your paper. Get a family member, roommate, or friend to give it a read.
University Policies

Plagiarism
While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://writingcenter.byu.edu/handouts/TheWritingProcess/plagarism.htm.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

Preventing & Responding to Sexual Misconduct
In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Brigham Young University prohibits unlawful sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. The university also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of "Sexual Misconduct" prohibited by the university.

University policy requires all university employees in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report all incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention in any way, including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Incidents of Sexual Misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at 9coordinator@byu.edu or (801) 422-8692. Reports may also be submitted through EthicsPoint at https://titleix.byu.edu/report or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours a day).

BYU offers confidential resources for those affected by Sexual Misconduct, including the university’s Victim Advocate, as well as a number of non-confidential resources and services that may be helpful. Additional information about Title IX, the university’s Sexual Misconduct
Policy, reporting requirements, and resources can be found at [http://titleix.byu.edu](http://titleix.byu.edu) or by contacting the university’s Title IX Coordinator.

**Students with Disabilities**
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

**Counseling and Psychological Services**
Many students at BYU struggle with stress, depression, and other emotional challenges. BYU’s office of Counseling and Psychological Services offers a variety of helpful services to deal with these very common issues. Counseling is available and free of cost for full-time students with concerns such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, interpersonal conflict, marital problems, self-esteem, social relationships, and stress management. All of these services, consistent with the highest standards of professional psychology, are provided in a confidential manner. Counseling and Psychological Services is located at 1500 WSC and by phone at 801-422-3035. Visit their website at [https://caps.byu.edu/](https://caps.byu.edu/) for more information or to make an appointment.