

PSC 345 A: Politics of the Middle East and North Africa
Fall 2018 / MW 8:00-9:50 / KBB 214

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Office Hours: Monday (10am-1pm); Thursday (noon-2pm)

Objective:

Depending on how you count, there are approximately 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. These countries range in size from Algeria (which is 2,381,741 km² in total area, roughly one-third the size of the continental United States) to Bahrain (which is 765 km² in total area, barely a quarter the size of Hillsborough County). Islam is the dominant religion of the region though some countries practice primarily its Shia variant, others its Sunni variant, and Israel goes contra the norm by embracing Judaism as its official religion. In most countries in the region interspersed among these religious majorities are significant religious minorities. Arabic is the region's most popular language though large populations converse in Persian, Turkish, Tamazight, Armenian, and Hebrew as well a diverse array of European languages. Though oil is the first thing that comes to mind for many in the West when they think about the Middle East and North Africa, Saudi Arabia is sitting on the world's largest reserve but countries like Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan must import petrol to meet domestic demands. Most of the Middle East and North Africa land mass is arid though most of the region's population lives in Mediterranean coastal cities or in fertile river zones.

We will study the politics of this diverse region straddling the nexus of Africa, Europe, and Asia. This exploration is divided into three distinct parts. First we use the work of Edward Said as a prompt to explore, and hopefully exercise, some of our cultural biases regarding the Middle East. Then we chart a crash course through the region's political history tackling major themes from the dawn of civilization through the present paying attention to issues that are generally regional and those that are more precisely focused. Next we will look at a few specific topics that contemporary political scientists focusing their research on the Middle East are looking at. Topics include the role of religion, governance structures, the political economy, war and peace, and social transformations. These topical discussions are supplemented with student presentations concentrating on specific countries and people/events that complement the broader theoretical conversations.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the material, attended lectures regularly, done the readings, completed all assignments diligently, and studied for exams, should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- The student will understand that the Middle East and North African (MENA) region as complex and diverse.
- The student will be able to identify significant historical and contemporary trends in MENA Politics.
- The student will be able to explain and analyze issues and debates within the MENA political science community pertaining to governance, development, conflict, and social issues.
- The student will know in great detail about one of the course's thematic issues (religion, governance, economics, conflict, terrorism, social issues) in a single MENA country.

Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a contract between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly and bring it to class. You are expected to read EVERYTHING assigned on the syllabus, which averages around 100 pages per week. You are also expected to attend EVERY lecture. Visiting me on occasion during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or projects will not hurt either. Reading regularly *Al Jazeera's* Middle East news page will also not only help you pick up a few more points on occasional quizzes, but will help you understand the contemporary ramifications of the histories and concepts we study. If you do these things you will do very well in the course. If you do not do these things you will not do so well in the course.

You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in 7 areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Pop Quizzes (10%) – At least seven times throughout the semester I will administer a pop quiz during the first five minutes of class covering the readings assigned for that day with a bonus question stemming from a recent *Al Jazeera's* Middle East news story. Only your top five scores will be counted towards your final grade making your best five quizzes worth 2 percent of your grade each. If you miss a quiz either through tardiness or absence you will receive 0 points. As you have a two quiz leeway, there are no make-up quizzes for any reason.

Said Book Review (10%) – Over the first two weeks of the semester you will read Edward Said's *Orientalism* in its entirety. The book challenges our perceptions of the Middle East and North Africa. On Wednesday 5 September you will turn in a 1-3 page book review (single-spaced and hardcopy) explaining the text's fundamental argument and offering your enlightened critiques of the work. A book review should not be a laundry list of things you thought about while reading Said or a complete summary of each chapter, but rather a well-organized, informed, and thoughtful synthesis of Said's main points and a critique of the work's strengths and weaknesses as well as personal reflections. Late papers will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day without an excused absence.

Map Quiz (5%) – There is a political map of the Middle East and North Africa attached to this syllabus. You should begin learning this map immediately. On Monday 17 September you will be presented with a similar map of the Middle East and North Africa sanitized of place names and asked to identify 10 of these countries randomly selected by your professor. You will also

be expected to know the name of these countries' capitals. Learning where these countries are early on will help you understand what is going on in future discussions. There will be no make-up map quizzes without an excused absence.

Exam #1 (20%) – Given out in-class on Monday 1 October. The exam will cover all material from the readings and in-class discussions for weeks 1 through 5. If you miss a class over this period, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your colleagues. The closed book exam will include both multiple choice and short essay questions. There will be NO review sheet. Excused late or early exams will only be given in extreme and well-documented circumstances at the professor's discretion. Unexcused late exams will be penalized at a rate of 10 points per day. If you miss an exam it is YOUR responsibility to contact me on the day of the exam or sooner to schedule a make-up.

Exam #2 (20%) – Exactly like Exam #1 in format but covering material from weeks 1 through 10. It will be administered in-class on Monday 5 November. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #1.

Exam #3 (20%) – Exactly like Exams #1 and #2 in format but covering material from weeks 1 through 15. It will be administered in-class during the exam period on Wednesday 12 December. A heavy emphasis will be placed on lessons covered after Exam #2.

Student Topical Lectures (15%) – Beginning in week six and continuing through the completion of the semester our regular readings will often be supplemented with short country case studies. From each of these country case studies I have selected a topic that complements my lecture. You and your peers are responsible for preparing and presenting the material on these topics. Monday of week 2 each student will randomly draw an assigned topic/country to do a presentation on later in the semester. Available days to present are marked on the syllabus as "presentations." Once you have selected a topic you may trade with a classmate if there is mutual consent but by the end of September you should consider your presentation topic and date set in stone.

Though you have quite a bit of flexibility when it comes to the style of your presentation, you are welcome to use PowerPoint and/or multi-media if you deem it beneficial. Presentations should run approximately 20 minutes. Twenty-five minutes is the absolute maximum amount of time we can dedicate to any one presentation. You may find my grading rubric on our course Blackboard site behind the Assignments tab and will be evaluated on the thoroughness and accuracy of your factual content, appropriateness of the material presented to the topic of the day's class, and ability to lead a discussion that educates your colleagues on a particular slice of Middle Eastern or North African politics and challenges them to think more deeply about the course.

If, for any reason excused or unexcused, you cannot attend class on the assigned date of your presentation there are no make-ups. You may instead turn in a research paper on your selected topic (10-15 pages double-spaced) that will be distributed to the class via Blackboard. I will consider this paper an alternative assignment and it will be due no later than two weeks from your scheduled date of presentation.

If you do not understand what is expected of you with regard to any of these assignments it is your responsibility to seek clarification in a timely manner which your professor will gladly provide.

Important Due Dates:

Said Book Review	Wednesday 5 September
Map Quiz	Monday 17 September
Exam #1	Monday 1 October
Exam #2	Monday 5 November
Exam #3	Wednesday 12 December
Student Topical Lectures	Weeks 7 - 14

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale</i> *
A	4.0	93-100
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

*I will round up at the .5 and NOT before. For example, if you earn an 87.49 you will receive a B for the class. If you earn an 87.5 you will receive an AB. The only exception to this rule concerns the line between a D and an F. If you make below 60 points, even if it is by the smallest fraction of a point, I will NOT round up.

Required Texts:

- ASW** Anderson, Seibert, and Wagner. *Politics and Change in the Middle East* (10th ed).
- GAS** Gasiorowski. *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa* (7th ed).
- Al Aswany** Al Aswany. *The Yacoubian Building*
- Said** Said. *Orientalism*.
- Wright** Wright. *The Looming Tower*.
- ☪ Reading available through UT Blackboard.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via Blackboard.

Week 1 (August 27 – 31)

- Monday* Introduction
Readings: ∅ syllabus
- Wednesday* Orientalism I – What is (not) the Middle East?
Readings: *Said* chapter 1.

Week 2 (September 3 – 7)

- Monday* LABOR DAY
- Wednesday* Orientalism II – Why do we understand the Middle East the way we do and what harm does this understanding cause? (**SAID BOOK REVIEW Due**)
Readings: *Said* chapters 2 and 3.

Week 3 (September 10 – 14)

- Monday* *The Life of Muhammad*
Readings: None, we will watch a PBS documentary during the class period.
- Wednesday* Pre-Islamic (Dawn of time – 632 CE), Pre-colonial (623 CE – 1800 CE), and Western Imperial (1800 CE – 1914 CE) eras
Readings: *ASW* chapters 1, 3 and 4.

Week 4 (September 17 – 21)

- Monday* **MAP QUIZ** and *Lawrence of Arabia*, Part I
Readings: None, we will watch a film that covers the late colonial period in the Middle East. Though it is consistently rated as one of the top ten best ever produced in the English language and informative it is oft criticized for cultural appropriation and fetishizing of the “orient.” Pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the film.
- Wednesday* *Lawrence of Arabia*, Part II

Week 5 (September 24 – 28)

- Monday* A precise of the Post-colonial era (1914 CE – Present)
Readings: *ASW* chapters 5 and 6.
- Wednesday* *The Yacoubian Building* and lives lived in the contemporary Middle East
Readings: *Al Aswany*

Week 6 (October 1 – 5)

- Monday* **EXAM #1**
- Wednesday* Islam - The religion and political identity
Readings: *ASW* chapter 2; and excerpts from ∅ Pipes, Daniel. 2002. *In the Path of God*. Edison, NJ: Transaction Books; and ∅ Eickelman, Dale and James Piscatori. 1996. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 7 (October 8 – 12)

- Monday* Government I – Custodians, Ayatollahs, and Brotherly Leaders
Readings: ASW chapters 9 and 10; ﷻ Hamdi, Mohamed Elhachmi. 1996. “Islam and Democracy: The Limits of the Western Model.” *Journal of Democracy* 7 (April): 81-85.
Presentations: Iran’s Grand Ayatollah Khomeini (GAS chapter 3 - **EEE**) and Oman’s Sultan Qaboos (GAS pp 187-192 - **LL**).
- Wednesday* Government II – The Arab Spring and Democracy’s Opening
Readings: ﷻ Anderson, Lisa. 2011. “Demystifying the Arab Spring.” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (3): 2-7; ﷻ Gause, Gregory. 2011. “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring.” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (4): 81-90; and ﷻ Ajami, Fouad. 2012. “The Arab Spring at One.” *Foreign Affairs* 91 (2): 56-65.
Presentations: Mohamed Bouazizi of Tunisia (GAS chapter 17 - **PDML**) and Libya’s National Transitional Council (GAS chapter 14 - **AXG**).

Week 8 (October 15 – 19)

- Monday* Economies I - Oil Economies and Non-oil
Readings: ASW chapter 11.
Presentations: Dubai’s Burj Khalifa (GAS pp 180-187 - **PPA**) and Khat Farming in Yemen (GAS chapter 7 - **ECG**)
- Wednesday* Economies II – Class Conflict
Class Alternative: Instead of meeting as a class, you will watch PBS Frontline’s *Saudi Arabia Uncovered* on your own.

Week 9 (October 22 – 26)

- Monday* Conflict I – Israel/Palestine I
Readings: None, we will watch *Paradise Now* during the class period.
- Wednesday* Conflict II – Israel/Palestine II
Readings: ﷻ Shuster, Mike. 2002. “The Mideast: A Century of Conflict.” *NPR*; ﷻ Sagy, Shifra, Sami Adwan, and Avi Kaplan. 2002. “Interpretations of the Past and Expectations for the Future Among Israeli and Palestinian Youth.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 72 (1): 26-38.
Presentations: Israel’s Yitzhak Rabin (GAS chapter 11 - **ES**) and the Palestinian BDS Movement (GAS chapter 12 - **LHN**).

Week 10 (October 29 – November 2)

- Monday* Conflict III – Sunni/Shia
Readings: ﷻ Valley, Paul. 2014. “The vicious schism between Sunni and Shia has been poisoning Islam for 1400 years – and it’s getting worse.” *Independent* (19 February); and ﷻ Gause, F. Gregory. 2014. *Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War*. Brookings Institution: Washington, DC.
Presentations: Bahrain’s Al Bandar Report (GAS pp 169-175 - **RAB**) and Iraq’s Badr Organization (GAS chapter 5 - **SCD**).
- Wednesday* Conflict IV - Secular/Religious
Readings: ASW chapter 8; and ﷻ Pew Research Center. 2010. “Most Embrace a Role for Islam in Politics.” *Global Attitudes Project* (2 December).
Presentations: Algeria’s Islamic Salvation Front (GAS chapter 16 - **KSSL**), Turkey’s Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (GAS chapter 2 - **LJP**).

Week 11 (November 5 – 9)

NOVEMBER 5 - LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW

- Monday* **EXAM #2**
- Wednesday* Terrorism I - 9/11 and its aftermath
Readings: **Wright**

Week 12 (November 12 – 16)

- Monday* Terrorism II – Syria and Northern Iraq’s Fertile Ground
Readings: ∅ Rodgers, Lucy, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare. 2016. “Syria: The Story of the Conflict.” *BBC* (11 March); and ∅ Polk, William R. 2013. “Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad.” *The Atlantic* (10 December).
Presentations: Syria’s Battle of Aleppo (*GAS* chapter 2 - **BWW**).
- Wednesday* Terrorism III – ISIS
Readings: None, we will watch PBS Frontline documentaries *Escaping ISIS* and *The Secret History of ISIS* during the class period.

Week 13 (November 19-23)

- Monday* Social Issues I - Women’s Political Roles in the Middle East and North Africa
Readings: ∅ Eltahawy, Mona. 2012. “Why Do They Hate Us?” *Foreign Policy*, May/June; ∅ Fisher, Max. 2012. “The Real Roots of Sexism in the Middle East (It’s Not Islam, Race, or ‘Hate’).” *The Atlantic*; and ∅ Badran, Margot. 2005. “Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond.” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 1 (1): 6-28.
Presentations: Saudi Arabia’s Manal al-Sharif (*GAS* chapter 4 - **LP**) and Jordan’s Lina Khalifa (*GAS* chapter 10 - **MME**).
- Wednesday* HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Week 14 (November 26 – 30)

- Monday* Social Issues II – Diasporas
Presentations: Lebanese Brazilians (*GAS* chapter 8 - **ARG**); Qatar’s World Cup (*GAS* pp 175-180 - **ALP**); Berbers of Morocco (*GAS* chapter 15 - **DE**).
- Wednesday* International Relations I - Regionalism
Readings: ∅ Mellon, James G. 2002. “Pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism, and inter-state relations in the Arab World.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8 (4): 1-15.
Presentations: Egypt and the Non-Aligned Movement (*GAS* chapter 13 - **ACCG**), Kuwait and the Gulf War (*GAS* pp 161-169 - **ACMF**).

Week 15 (December 3 – 7)

- Monday* International Relations II - US Foreign Policy
Readings: ∅ Zakaria, Fareed. 2001. “The Politics of Rage: Why do they hate us?” *Newsweek* 15 October
- Wednesday* What we should know about the Middle East?
Readings: ∅ Stein, Jeff. 2006. “Can you tell a Sunni from a Shiite?” *New York Times*, 17 October.

*** EXAM #3 in class from 8:30am-10:30am on Wednesday 12 December ***

General Classroom Information:

These are a few things every student should know.

Emergency Conditions - In case of any adverse condition or situation which could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access www.ut.edu for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to Blackboard for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Special Needs - If there is a student who requires accommodations because of any disability, please go to the Academic Success Center in North Walker Hall for information regarding registering as a student with a disability. You may also call (813) 257-5757 or email disability.services@ut.edu. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information.

Classroom Disruption Policy – Every student has the right to a comfortable learning environment where the open and honest exchange of ideas may freely occur. Each student is expected to do his or her part to ensure that the classroom (and anywhere else the class may meet) remains conducive to learning. This includes respectful and courteous treatment of all in the classroom. According to the terms of the University of Tampa Disruption Policy, the professor will take immediate action when inappropriate behavior occurs.

Mental Health Counseling – College can be a stressful time in a young person's life. The American Psychiatric Association published a recent study of college students observed over the course of a single academic year. Over 60% of students reported feeling things were hopeless one or more times, almost 40% of the men and 50% of the women reported feeling so depressed that they had difficulty functioning one or more times, and 10% of the students reported seriously considering attempting suicide at least one time. If at some point during your time at UT you begin to feel depressed or out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to counsel you on the problems you are having coping with academic life, but there are dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UT's Health and Counseling Center located at 111 North Brevard Ave. (behind Austin Hall) who you may feel more comfortable disclosing certain types of non-academic problems to. The time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your grade has deteriorated. Their email is healthcenter@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 813-257-7777 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

Title IX Statement - Sexual violence includes nonconsensual sexual contact and nonconsensual sexual intercourse (which is any type of sexual contact without your explicit consent, including rape), dating violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and stalking. You may reach out for confidential help or report an incident for investigation. If you choose to write or speak about an incident of sexual violence and disclose that this violence occurred while you were a UT student, the instructor is obligated to report the incident to the Title IX Deputy Coordinator for Students. The purpose of this report is to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The Deputy Coordinator or his or her designee will contact you to let you know about the resources, accommodations, and support services at UT and possibilities for holding the perpetrator accountable. If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, you can speak confidentially with the following individuals: - The Victim's Advocacy Hotline 813.257.3900; Dickey Health & Wellness Center (wellness@ut.edu) 813.257.1877; Health and Counseling Center (healthcenter@ut.edu) 813.253.6250. They can connect you with support services and discuss options for holding the perpetrator accountable.

Academic Assistance – The Academic Success Center (academicsuccess@ut.edu) in North Walker Hall offers free peer tutoring, credited academic skills courses, national testing services, and services for students with disabilities. The Saunders Writing Center (323 Plant Hall, x6244) aids students with their writing projects. The Public Speaking Center (KBB 200, speakingcenter@ut.edu) offers students help with presentations. You pay for these services through your tuition and there is no shame in using them if you need help with your course work. I am more than happy to discuss any academic issues you might have during office hours but if I think one of these services can help you be more successful I will not hesitate to recommend it.

Academic Integrity – Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any other behavior that is contrary to University standards of behavior will not be tolerated. Students caught violating any aspect of the University of Tampa's Academic Integrity Policy will be penalized in all cases. Penalty ranges from "0" on an assignment to "F" for the course without regard to a student's accumulated points. Students may also face expulsion. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the policies of the university regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating such policies. Policy information is found at: <http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/en/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy>

Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of things you can do to help me maintain this image as well as some things you can do to reveal it as a mirage. Doing more of the former and less of the latter will make me happy whereas the converse will make me sad!

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture, and vice versa, the lectures and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions in an intelligent way – There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the classroom. Most of my lectures have a built in component for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better than students who do not on exams. So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while you will find that you do not have to pretend any more. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills. If you are worried about your peers' impressions of you forget about it. Those who value education will find your contributions useful and those who roll their eyes are dull and uninteresting.

DO NOT be tardy or leave class early – If you come in late to class enter quietly and sit somewhere where you will not disturb other students. Classes will begin promptly as scheduled so you will need

to copy notes from one of your colleagues on lecture days if you feel like you have missed something important. On assignment days you will not be given extra time for your tardiness. If you show up without an excuse 5 minutes before an exam is finished, you will only have 5 minutes to finish the assignment. If you miss an assignment because of tardiness you will need to consult that assignment's make-up policy.

Class is done when I say something to the effect of "see you next class" and not before. I will do my best to end class on time if not a few minutes earlier. There will, however, be some class periods where I might need to go over time by a minute or two to finish an important point. Out of respect for your fellow classmates you should NOT begin filing papers into your book bags before class has officially ended. I realize that there will be classes where you have a job interview or a club activity or a plane you need to leave early for. By all means let me know before class that you need to leave early, arrange with someone in class to take notes for you, and do not miss your important event.

DO NOT use cell phones, computers, or recording devices in class – There is a boatload of research suggesting students learn more during lectures when they take notes the old fashioned way with paper and a pen or pencil. Even if you do not buy this evidence or consider yourself an outlier, electronic devices prove distracting to your neighbors.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that will appear on the exam. Anything in the readings or lectures is fair game for an exam. Things covered in both readings and lectures, which I post online in the form of Powerpoint slides, are slightly more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit assignment to a student who initiated the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for my courses unreliable measures of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume every student who enters my class wants to take away a greater understanding of the world and that the grade (s)he receives is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge (s)he has gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a low B (3.0) or a high C (2.0). This grade represents both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course and few will. On the other hand it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students who I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students who I would rather never see again. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I have made a mistake I will consider changing a grade only after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than ten days

after receiving your graded assignment to file a complaint. 2) You must submit in writing (*typed* and *printed* out) a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the department chair. Challenges that resemble “I’m an A student so there is no way this paper is a B,” “I was making a good argument it just did not come across in my paper,” “I was having a bad day can you cut me some slack,” or “I need to pass this class to graduate” will be summarily dismissed as they do not speak to the quality of the work.

DO NOT send me an email unless it’s an emergency – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails can become burdensome. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class. So how can you decide if an email is an emergency? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?
- 2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?
- 3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. Also if you submit an assignment by email I will NOT grade it. Most assignments I have submitted via Turnitin and those few which require hardcopies there is a drop box on the outside of my office door.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat FEEL FREE to drop by my office during office hours. I keep five hours per week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – The UT catalog has a section on “excused absences.” It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late papers. You know about them well in advance and a last minute illness or death in the family should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment or have a colleague do so on your behalf. Excuses for missed exams or presentations are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will almost always be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student. For each assignment listed in this syllabus there is a detailed policy regarding late penalties. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above.

DO understand that I am interested in discussing your progress in the course with you – If you have a parent, coach, drill sergeant, etc. who is interested in learning about your status in this course feel free to share it with them. I post grades on Blackboard and the syllabus explains in detail my weighting formula so you have access to all the information I do regarding your current standing in the class and may share it with anyone you want.

Map of the Middle East and North Africa

