

# **MIDDLE EAST CROSSROADS**

*Spring semester 2025*

Thursday 14:00 – 16:30

This syllabus presents binding information about the course and its use is solely for this course and this semester. In case students discover any shortcoming or an issue which is not sufficiently clarified, they are encouraged to consult with the lecturer as early as possible.

## **LECTURER**

Mgr. Eva Taterová, M.A., Ph.D. ([evataterova@gmail.com](mailto:evataterova@gmail.com))

## **ANNOTATION**

The Middle East went through turbulent political and socio-economic changes during the second half of the 20th century which fundamentally affected not only geostrategic situation of the region but in some cases also had the significant impacts on global politics. The issues such as decolonization, military conflicts, religious radicalism and extremism, and last but not least the oil shocks have shaped the current international relations. This course aims to introduce and to discuss some of these important crossroads in a context of the development of the region in 20th and 21st centuries.

## **ASSESSMENT METHOD**

The students should be able to analyze and understand these issues in a complex way. In order to get this knowledge it is essential to study the literature and come prepared to the class. The attendance is not mandatory however the students are highly encouraged to attend the lectures. Participation and activity in the class is recommended and invited, but not a must in itself. If students decide not to participate, they will not obtain any activity points. Students are, however, invited to participate and discuss by stating their opinion on topics done and materials read. It is, therefore, necessary for students to address all required reading materials before coming to the class dedicated to that particular topic.

### **Grades**

A	92 - 100
B	84 - 91
C	76 - 83
D	68 - 75
E	60 - 67
F	less than 60 points

### **Presentation**

Each presentation is about 20 minutes long and consists of a short summary/background to the given topic, critical analysis of the problem, questions for in-class discussion, and Literature and sources. The topics will be chosen by the students from the list available in IS.

Points: 30 points

## **Movie Review – Persepolis (2007)**

Film Link: [https://archive.org/details/persepolis\\_202211](https://archive.org/details/persepolis_202211)

Watch the animated film Persepolis and write a three-page review that critically analyzes its main themes. Your review should be structured into two parts. Provide a concise overview of the movie, focusing on its key events, characters, and central themes. Then critically examine the film’s portrayal of Iranian society and the broader political themes. Consider the following questions (you are not limited to these):

- What does the movie reveal about Iranian society?
- Why did the theocratic regime succeed, and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
- How do totalitarian regimes gain and consolidate power?
- Can the Iranian regime survive in today’s Middle East?

Length: Approximately three pages (1.5-spaced), no citations needed, AI assistance not allowed. The work must be entirely your own.

Deadline: March 20, midnight.

Points: 30.

## **Final exam**

Final exam will consist of five open questions which will require longer answers (3-4 paragraphs). Students will be asked to prove that they have acquired knowledge about the topics covered throughout the course and can critically discuss the dynamics in the region.

Points: 50 points

Date: May-June 2025

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**February 20: Introduction: scope of the course, organization of the course, and course requirements**

**Looking Back: Middle East in last 100 years.**

Readings: LEWIS, B. *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*. Simon and Schuster (2009), 387-417.

**March 6: Carving up the Middle East in and after WWI: Was Europe lucky, evil, or smart?**

Readings: KURŞUN, A. M. *Deconstructing the Sykes-Picot myth: Frontiers, boundaries, borders and the evolution of ottoman territoriality*. All Azimuth (2019), 9(1), 83-104. Online: <http://www.allazimuth.com/2019/03/29/deconstructing-the-sykes-picot-myth-frontiers-boundaries-borders-and-the-evolution-of-ottoman-territoriality>

The Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917). Available from: <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/the%20balfour%20declaration.aspx>

**The Pragmatic Superpowers: Winning the Cold War in the Middle East.**

Readings: FULLER, G. E. “*The Middle East in US-Soviet Relations*.” Middle East Journal, vol. 44, no. 3, 1990, pp. 417–430.

**March 20:**

**Iranian Revolution 1978: Great Satan, Little Satan demonizing epithets and the spread of anti-western propaganda in the Middle East.**

Readings: SELIKTAR, O. – REZAEI, F. *Iran, Revolution, and Proxy Wars*. Palgrave (2020), s. 1-20.

**Movie review:** [https://archive.org/details/persepolis\\_202211](https://archive.org/details/persepolis_202211)

### **April 3:**

**The Suez Crisis: New Saladin of the Arab World and a final confirmation of European decline.**

Readings: PODEH, E. “*The Struggle over Arab Hegemony after the Suez Crisis.*” Middle Eastern Studies, vol. 29, no. 1, 1993, pp. 91–110.

**1990s as the Decade of Hope: Does peace even have a chance in the Middle East?**

Readings: BARAK, O. “*The Failure of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, 1993-2000.*” Journal of Peace Research, vol. 42, no. 6, 2005, pp. 719–736.

### **April 17:**

**Global Jihadism: Clash of civilization confirmed?**

Readings: HAMMING, T. R. “Global Jihadism after the Syria War.” Perspectives on Terrorism, vol. 13, no. 3, 2019, pp. 1–16.

**Interpreting the Arab Spring: Can democracy work in the Middle East?**

Readings: GREWAL, S. – MONROE, S. “*Down and Out: Founding Elections and Disillusionment with Democracy in Egypt and Tunisia.*” Comparative Politics, vol. 51, no. 4, 2019, pp. 497–518.

**May 15: Current events in the Middle East**

Readings: KATZ, M. *When the Friend of My Friends Is Not My Friend: The United States, US Allies, and Russia In the Middle East.* Atlantic Council, 2019.

### **Final exam**

Education at FSS MU assumes that students are familiar with study regulations and they refrain from fraudulent fulfilment of their obligations, especially plagiarism, that is, appropriation of somebody else’s thoughts for one’s own and publication of thoughts of other authors without proper quotation. Plagiarism represents a most serious offence in the academia as it contradicts

the mission of the university and meaning of studying. From legal point of view, plagiarism equals a theft of someone else's intellectual property. Fraudulent fulfilment of students' obligations is not tolerated under any circumstances and each such case will be punished by conditional expelling from the university. Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the issue of plagiarism and the ways how to avoid it.