

GEOGRAPHY 226
GEOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

BULLETIN INFORMATION

GEOG 226 - Geography of the Middle East (3 credit hours)

Course Description:

A regional geographic approach to the environmental, social, economic, and political aspects of the Middle East (Southwest Asia and north Africa) with emphasis on contemporary problems.

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

This course uses a regional geographic approach to examine social, economic, environmental, and political aspects of the Middle East (Southwest Asia and north Africa), with an emphasis on contemporary problems. We will approach the region of the Middle East from a human geography perspective and will not attempt to cover the entire region. Rather, students in this course will use geographic concepts to: 1) develop an understanding of particular 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 a historical geographic overview and then focuses on thematic issues and special topics in social, cultural, economic, and political geography. Two major goals of the course are: to understand a selection of current issues and historical topics from the diverse cultural perspectives of the people who live in the Middle East; and to gain contextual information and use geographic concepts to examine stereotypes about the Middle East that circulate in American popular and political media.

ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of Geography 226 students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate foundational knowledge of the human geography of the Middle East.
2. Explain the local and global geographic contexts that shape issues of current debate in the region.
3. Evaluate diverse perspectives on contemporary regional geographic and social problems.
4. Use interdisciplinary sources (including memoirs, films, essays, news articles, websites, and interviews) to identify local points of view expressed by people of the Middle East.
5. Conduct original research on media representations of a particular Middle East news story from diverse locations within and outside the Middle East as a means to understanding the impact of local perspectives on news reporting within a global context.
6. Employ human geographic concepts in analyzing the factors that condition cultural, economic, and political processes in the Middle East.
7. Critique fundamental assumptions behind the concept of the region in geography

SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS

1. *The Middle East Today*. By Dona Stewart. Taylor and Francis, 2009.
2. We will use additional readings which will be posted on Blackboard (look in Course Documents for a folder of each week's materials including readings and reading prompts) at least a week before they're due. Films assigned instead of readings are available on reserve at the library. You need to watch the film at the library in a viewing room, so don't leave this until the last minute.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS

1. **Three Exams:** The three exams will draw questions from lectures, assigned readings, films, and handouts. They will include a variety of assessment strategies, including essay questions and map identification. Use the blank map and document called "locations for review" in the maps folder on Blackboard, under Course Documents, to prepare. A study guide for the content of each exam will be provided in advance.
2. **Media Geography Research Paper:** 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 using geographic concepts. 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. A main goal for this project is to keep you frequently reading about all kinds of ongoing current affairs in the Middle East. On your pop quizzes I will sometimes ask you to identify a story you read that week.
3. **In-Class Pop Quizzes:** I will post each week, on Blackboard, a reading prompt that includes a list of terms to know and questions about the lecture and reading. Working with these reading prompts will help you participate in class, and will prepare you for the pop quizzes in class.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS

<u>Week 1:</u>	Class 1:	Introduction: geographic approach to the region
<u>Week 2:</u>	Class 2:	Geographic Overview Stewart: Ch.1 Jad Choueiri music video Prepare reading prompt
	Class 3:	Geographic Overview Stewart: Ch.2 Prepare reading prompt

- Week 3:**
- Class 4:** Geographic Overview
Beaumont "Water Efficiency"
 - Class 5:** Historical Foundations
Stewart: Ch. 4
Prepare reading prompt
- Week 4:**
- Class 6:** Historical Foundations
Islam: Empire of Faith film on reserve
 - Class 7:** Making the Modern Middle East
Stewart Ch. 5
Prepare reading prompt
- Week 5:**
- Class 8:** Making the Modern Middle East
Goldschmidt "Roots of Arab Bitterness"
Karmi "1948"
 - Class 9:** Exam #1
- Week 6:**
- Class 10:** States and Geopolitics
Stewart: Ch.3
Prepare reading prompt
 - Class 11:** States and Geopolitics
Stewart: Ch.6
- Week 7:**
- Class 12:** Egypt, Iran, and Turkey
The Yacoubian Building film on reserve
Prepare reading prompt
 - Class 13:** Egypt, Iran, and Turkey
Satrapi, "Persepolis" memoir excerpt
- Week 8:**
- Class 14:** Egypt, Iran, and Turkey
Özyürek, "Miniaturizing Ataturk"
 - Class 15:** Egypt, Iran, and Turkey

Media topic +4 news articles due

- Week 9:** **Class 16:** Contemporary Islamist Thought
Stewart Ch. 7
Krista Bremer “In God’s Name”
Prepare reading prompt
- Class 17:** Exam #2
- Week 10:** **Class 18:** Economic Challenges
Stewart: Ch. 8 (also p.141-142)
Prepare reading prompt
- Class 19:** Economic Challenges
Boys, Girls, and the Veil film on reserve
- Week 11:** **Class 20:** Arab-Israeli Conflicts: Conflict Resolution
Stewart: Ch. 9
Prepare reading prompt
- Class 21:** Arab-Israeli Conflicts: Conflict Resolution
The Inner Tour film on reserve TCL
Review maps: powerpoint online
- Week 12:** **Class 22:** Globalization, Reform, Social Change
Stewart: Ch.11
Prepare reading prompt
- Class 23:** Globalization, Reform, Social Change
NYTimes on “Egypt, Facebook”
- Week 13:** **Class 24:** Exam #3
- Class 25:** Gender and Sexuality
Jihad for Love film on reserve TCL
- Week 14:** **Class 26:** Gender and Sexuality

Class 27: Conclusion
Class wrapup Media Geography Research Paper Due

Week 15: **Class 28:** Conclusion
Class wrapup