American Foreign Policy and the Middle East: The Case of the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian Conflict

GOVT070 CM-01, Undergraduate Course
Dr. Ilai Saltzman
Meeting Days and Times: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00-13:10, Kravis Center, LC 61
Office hours: Thursday 9:30-11:30, 245 Kravis (and by appointment via email)
Email: ilai.saltzman@cmc.edu
Office phone: (909) 607-3798

Course Description:

The course is intended to reconstruct American diplomacy in the Middle East as it unfolded during the last six decades or so with an emphasis on the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflicts. In addition to analyzing major issues and developments such as Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, the Camp David Conferences of 1978 and 2000, and the Gulf War of 1991, it will seek to integrate the Arab-Israeli framework into the broader analytical framework of such issues as alliance formation, alliance politics, and patron-client relations.

Course Objectives

This course aims to provide you with an in-depth understanding of major themes, historical events, and personalities in American-Israeli relations. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the nature of America’s “special relationship” with Israel; U.S. arms sales and foreign aid to Israel; the roles of the “Israel lobby,” the Christian Right, and public opinion; and U.S. mediation efforts in Arab-Israeli peacemaking. You will become familiar with the key players and issues, as well as with the complexities of U.S. diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. On the whole, The course is intended to provide students with the tools needed to follow with a critical eye day-to-day events in the Middle East and to gain their own perspective on what the US can, should and should not do.

Assignments and Grading:

1. Reading the assigned materials
2. Attendance – 10%
3. Actively participating in discussions – 10%
4. Research proposal – 15% (due march 14th)
5. Presentation in class – 15% (guidelines below)
6. Participation in simulation– 10%
7. A final paper (12-15 page) – 40% (due midnight May 9th)

Grading Scale:


Research Proposal

The objective of the proposal is to provide an overview or summation of the project that will eventually evolve into the final paper. As such, the proposal should include the following sections:

1. Introduction: research question, importance/relevance, contribution and novelty, initial conclusions.

2. Literature review: what are the major works associated with the topic. Are there any general trends that you managed to identify in the literature? What are the main questions that writers often refer to when dealing with your topic? What kind of methodology will you use (single case, diachronic analysis, comparative etc.)?
3. Bibliography: items that you used for reference in the proposal and items that you intend to use in the final paper.

**Presentation in class**

Each student will choose a topic for the presentation in consultation with me, and this can be your topic for the final paper. After coordinating the topic and schedule for the presentation, you will be in charge of preparing a 15-20 minutes presentation in class of the bibliographical items listed in the syllabus.

After the presentation, we will conduct a discussion with the presenter leading and outlining several questions to be discussed. You should try and generate good, original and provocative, and stimulating questions that will generate lively discussion. Be imaginative as you wish, and even integrate topics from different meetings.

**Final Paper**

The final paper will be an expansion of the research proposal with the same original sections supplemented with an empirical analysis of the issue. Please come and see me at least once in order to discuss your topics. You are, of course, invited to consult me as much as you can via email or in person.

Some general remarks:

1. The paper will be 12-15 pages long (double space). Use “Times New Roman” font size 12 with an introduction, footnotes, bibliography and a cover page (please number and justify your papers).

2. You may choose any style for the references/footnotes/endnotes/bibliography, but you have to be consistent about this choice throughout the paper. You can consult the Center for Writing and Public Discourse on any content or format-related issue (see below).

3. There is no specific number of items you must use in this paper, but remember: “the more the better”.

4. “Wikipedia” and all other online encyclopedias are not a legitimate source for this paper. Whenever possible, you should use scholarly items such as books, edited volumes, journals and respectable daily/weekly/monthly publications such as newspapers, magazines, etc. (see some names below under “Notes on Schedule, Reading and Topics”). When using online sources, be very critical and cautious as there is so much unreliable data on the web.

**Classroom Code of Conduct**

In order to do well in this course, you need to attend all class sessions, do all assigned readings, actively listen to and focus on lecture material, take notes, and don’t be afraid to ask questions or participate in discussions. I often times use “cold calling”, i.e. calling on students regardless of whether they have raised their hands or not, in order to encourage in-class discussion, so you should be attentive and familiar with the reading materials.

As a courtesy to your fellow students and myself, please do not carry on lengthy conversations with one another in class. Texting and sleeping in class are also inappropriate, even if you do not mean either of these as a personal slight. If you intend to use a laptop during class time, please sit in the back of the class room so you will not distract other students. Laptops should be solely used for academic purposes, and not for emails, surfing the net and other non-course related activities. I may occasionally walk around the classroom so be aware that violation of this request will result in completely banning the use of laptops and similar devices.

Lastly, be courteous and respect the opinions of your classmates.

**Plagiarism Statement (From RDS’ Graduate Student Handbook)**
Plagiarism means the use of the thoughts ideas words, phrases or research of another person or source as one’s own without explicit acknowledgment. In keeping with this definition, all work, whether written or oral, submitted or presented by students at the College as part of course assignments or for College sponsored extracurricular activities, must be the original work of the student unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

Cheating on examinations of any kind (quizzes, midterms, finals, etc.) includes copying another student’s answers, exchanging information, using notes or books unless expressly permitted to do so by the instructor, or gaining access to examinations prior to the actual taking of such examinations. Other examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, copying or preparing another person’s work; buying prepared papers; fabricating laboratory reports or experimental data; gaining unauthorized access to computer data or other privileged information; or supplying false or forged documents to a college official.

Assisting anyone to engage in any of the violations described above qualifies as academic dishonesty.

The faculty of Claremont McKenna College is firmly committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Each faculty member has the responsibility to report cases of academic dishonesty to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), which has the duty of dealing with cases of alleged academic dishonesty. When informed of such a case by the instructor, the Committee receives statements and other evidence from the instructor and the student. If aspects of the facts are in dispute, the Committee, by itself or through a designated subcommittee, investigates through interviewing the instructor, the student, and any other relevant witnesses and considering other evidence. If the Committee finds that academic dishonesty has taken place, it then decides upon a punishment, such as suspension. The Committee determines the punishment after due consideration of all circumstances. Any penalty with regard to grades is the prerogative of the instructor.

Late Submission Policy

As a general rule, I prefer that students submit their papers on time unless they have a concrete and relevant reason (illness, family crisis etc.) that was brought to my attention as early as possible. But in order to avoid different types of plagiarism discussed in the previous section, I will accept late submission. Yet papers submitted after due date will result in a half grade penalty (A→A-, B→B-, etc), so contact me as early as possible in order to resolve such problems before it is too late.

CMC’s The Center for Writing and Public Discourse

Since you are expected to write a final research paper, you are strongly encouraged to use the superb services provided by CMC’s Center for Writing and Public Discourse. The Center’s highly trained student consultants can review drafts of papers at any stage of the writing process from any and all disciplines, including the Senior Thesis and class presentations. Consultants assist CMC students with issues related to argumentation, clarity of prose, and overall quality of composition. To schedule an appointment with one of the Writing Consultants, please use the following link https://www.cmc.edu/TracWeb40/ You may also call extension 74142 to schedule an appointment. Consultations are also available on a walk-in basis.

Disability Support Services

Claremont McKenna College is committed to providing equal access to its programs, services and facilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and subsequent amendments. The Dean of Students Office is responsible for coordinating disability support services for students, with other College departments assisting in the provision of accommodations for students. If you have any other questions related to Disability Support Services at Claremont McKenna College, please contact Julia Easley at 909-607-7377 or jeasley@cmc.edu. Her office is located on the first floor of Kravis Center, Room 137.

General Reading
Throughout the semester we will extensively use the following two items that can be purchased in Huntley Bookstore and online (amazon.com, half.com, etc.). They provide a comprehensive yet coherent account about American foreign policy in the Middle East.

Peter L. Hahn, Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East since 1945 (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005).


For more information on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in general and in the context of the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian Conflict, you may also want to sneak a glimpse at the following sources as well


Notes on Schedule, Reading and Topics

1. I will make every effort to maintain the following schedule of readings and lecture topics. However, we may need to make changes in light of contemporary events or because we spend more time on a particular topic than I had anticipated. In case of such delay, I will make an announcement in class.

2. I uploaded, or created links to, the reading materials. It is located in our course’s section in Sakai at the bottom of the page where the syllabus is also posted. All journal articles have a link to their original web location and you can access all these online sources from any on-campus computer or by using CMC’s wireless network.

3. As you can clearly see, I compiled a rather lengthy syllabus but this is not designed to scare you. The items should be used for your presentations, proposals and final papers. For class, you may choose to read 4 items. You are free to choose which items to read based on length, date of publication, attractiveness etc. But I recommend reading the parts from our two textbooks (Hahn/ Baxter and Akbarzadeh) in order to get the broader understanding of the issues and supplement it with 2 other items that are more specific.

4. In addition to our readings for class, please keep up with international and regional events as we shall begin each meeting with a 10-15 minutes discussion of contemporary affairs. Please bring with you at least 2 newspaper clips. For this reasons, I suggest that you read a good daily (The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, etc.), check out journals like Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, The National Interest, The American Interest and magazines such as The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The Economist, etc. Foreign news sources are also valuable, from the Jerusalem Post to Ha’aretz and Al-Ahram and excellent Middle East news outlets such as Al-Monitor.

Part 1: Conceptual and Empirical Background

January 22: Orientation and Introduction


**January 24: How to Study the Israeli-Arab Conflict?**


**January 29: The Origins and Dimensions of the Israeli-Arab Conflict**


January 31: The Institutional and Ideational Sources of American Foreign Policy


George Washington, "Farewell Address, September 26, 1796." Available online http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp


February 5: Should the Middle East Matter to the United States?


February 7: American Foreign Policy and the Middle East to 1948

Baxter and Shahram Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, ch. 1-2.

Hahn, Crisis and Crossfire, pp. 1-9.


Part 2: The Creation of the Israeli-Arab Conflict and the Emergence of the “Special Relationship”

February 12: Truman, Recognition of Israel and the Israeli-Arab Conflict

Hahn, Crisis and Crossfire, pp. 22-28.

Baxter and Shahram Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, pp. 37-45.


**February 14: America, the Middle East, Imperialism and “Self-Determination”**


**February 19: The Suez War and American Deepening involvement in the Middle East**

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 46-49

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 30-34.


“Exchange of Letters- Eisenhower- Ben-Gurion- 7-8 November 1956.” Available online
February 21: The U.S. Confronts Arab Nationalism

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 35-46.


February 26: The Emergence of U.S.-Israel “Special Relationship”


Part 2: From the Israeli-Arab Conflict to the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian Conflict

February 28: The Cold War in the Middle East, the Six Days War
Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 49-56

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 50-55.

Johnson, *Lyndon Johnson and Israel*, ch. 2.


**March 5: The U.S. and the (re)Emergence of the “Palestine Problem”**?

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 55-57.


Johnson, *Lyndon Johnson and Israel*, ch. 4-5.


Henry Brandon, “Were We Masterful...” *Foreign Policy*, No. 10 (Spring 1973), pp. 158-170


**March 7: Nixon, Kissinger and the Coming of the Yom Kippur War**

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 56-60

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 57-61.


**March 12: From the White House to Cairo and Jerusalem and Back**

Edward R. F. Sheehan, “How Kissinger Did It: Step by Step in the Middle East,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 22 (Spring, 1976), pp. 3-70


**March 14: Carter's Camp David Success (research proposal due)**

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 61-64.


No Classes on March 19 and 21 (Spring Brake)

March 26: The First Lebanese War and the PLO

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, pp. 60-63, 136-142.

Hahn, Crisis and Crossfire, pp. 64-67, 87-91.


Zeev Schiff, “The Green Light,” Foreign Policy, No. 50 (Spring 1983), pp. 73-85.


March 28: The 1991 Gulf War

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, ch. 6.


Martin Indyk, “Peace without the PLO,” Foreign Policy, No. 83 (Summer 1991), pp. 30-38.

April 2: The Peace Process: The Oslo Era

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, pp. 142-144.
Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 91-98.


**April 4: No class (academic conference)**

**April 9: The Peace Process: The Decline of Oslo**

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 144-152.

Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire*, pp. 98-104.


**April 11: The Peace Process: the U.S. and the question of the “Process”**


April 16: The Clinton Legacy and the Peace Process in the George W. Bush Era


April 18: Obama’s First Term and the Middle East


**Part 3: Contemporary Challenges of American Foreign Policy in the Middle East**

**April 23: General Trends in Contemporary American Foreign Policy and the Arab Spring**


**April 25: Iran’s Nuclear Program**

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, ch. 4.


**April 30: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 177-183


May 2: Simulation (instructions and guidelines to follow)

May 7: Last Day of Class

Baxter and Akbarzadeh, US Foreign Policy in the Middle East, pp. 185-187.

Hahn, Crisis and Crossfire, pp. 133-135.

(Final paper due, Midnight of May 9th)

Good Luck!