
TOPICS: CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST in Fall 2019 (ME3091C)

Course Code	ME3091C	Professor(s)	Ziad Majed
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	
Class Schedule	MR: 12:10-13:30 in C-102	Office Hours	By appointment
Credits	4	Email	zmajed@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

The course will present and discuss different theories “explaining” conflicts. These theories interpret each the reasons behind conflicts, the political, social and cultural mechanisms leading to them, and the processes of their development.

It will focus on four case studies:

1. Palestine/Israel

The Arab/Palestinian Israeli conflict is one of the oldest continuing conflicts in the world today.

It is a major reason behind many tensions and crises surrounding it. It has been an excuse or a justification for international interventions, coup d'états within Arab countries, and it has shaped the political thought of three generations in the region.

Palestine/Israel is also a fertile ground for anti-American stances in the Arab (and Muslim) World with all the consequences of such stances (when it comes to the relationship between popular masses, westernized elites, regimes allied to the US, Islamist and nationalist movements, etc..).

It is as well a case illustrating the United Nations' limited authority when it comes to imposing resolutions and/or ending occupation.

2. Lebanon

The Lebanese conflict is a one where civil and internal clashes meet regional and international ones.

The political structure of Lebanon based on confessionalism since its independence in 1943, its modern history since 1840 (with the *Motassarifiyah*) and then 1920 (with the creation of “*Loubnan al-Kabir*”), its conflicts and wars (1958 and then 1975 through 1990) and its new

severe crisis (since 2004/2005), with Syrian and Israeli interventions and invasions, with the Palestinian cause strongly present, and with the Saudi Iranian rivalry, make the situation close -whenever a tension arose - to explosion.

Lebanese themselves are divided, regarding not only internal problems, but also when it comes to the positioning of their country towards regional conflicts. Their divisions often take confessional lines bringing tensions to the political institutions, and making compromises difficult.

3. Iraq/Iran,

The Iraq Iran war, known as the first gulf war (1980 – 1988) is one of the bloodiest wars in the second half of the twentieth century.

The war had its huge economy (mainly based on oil – the two countries are among the biggest producers), its regional dimension between an Islamic (Shiite) revolutionary Iran, and a Baathist Iraq (trying to “promote” Arab Nationalist and Sunni narratives to mobilize support). The conflict was also the arena of international interventions, development of “containment” theories, and a laboratory for conventional and non-conventional weapons.

It ended with a return to an agreement that both countries rejected when the war started. Its direct repercussions were among roots of the following conflicts and gulf wars.

4. Syria

The Syrian revolution against the Assad regime (of March 2011) turned as of 2012 into an armed struggle then a full-scale war. The war involved regional actors (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc...), Shiite militias and Sunni Jihadists from all over the world, and international actors (Russia, the USA). By 2017, no political solution was found, the UN Security Council remained paralyzed and the human cost of the war made Syria the worse Humanitarian disaster since WWII.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the Middle East and History major requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

Students will explore the historical roots of Middle Eastern conflicts. They will examine their constructions, narratives, images, economies and social mobilizations. They will finally analyze their consequences and implications in the region and worldwide.

Course Outline

Outline:

Week I

Overview of the course, the methodology, and Introduction to the region, its modern history and the construction of its conflicts.

Week II

Theories of conflict:

- Essentialism/Primordialism : Ancestral hatreds and civilizations' clashes
- Constructivism
- Instrumentalism (the role of political entrepreneurs and their positioning, tactics, and objectives).
- The sociology of mobilization
- The Media phenomenon in covering conflicts (live coverage and the contamination effect), and the role of footage and testimonies in bringing attention to them (or feeding them)?

Some notions on Conflict resolution

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- The UN role and the UN commissions (the “International Community”?)
 - Regional orders and regional institutions’ roles
 - Mediations, committees, initiatives, quartets, etc...
 - Conferences, confidence building and Track 2 diplomacy

Week III

Palestine/Israel: historical background, 1882 – 1947

The Ottoman Empire, the Zionist movement, the British mandate, the Jewish migration, the demography, the revolts and the question of Palestine.

Palestine/Israel: 1947 to 1967

The UN partition and the Arab Israeli wars.

Week IV

Palestine/Israel: 1968 to 1990

The regional and international contexts, the cold war, the confrontation between Arab axes, the birth of a national Palestinian movement, the black September in Jordan, the Lebanese phase of the PLO, the Last “State to state” Arab Israeli war (1973), Camp David, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the first Palestinian intifada.

Week V

Palestine/Israel: 1991 – 2017

Madrid process and Oslo agreements, the rise of Iran and of Islamist movements allied to Teheran (Hezbollah, the Islamic Jihad and Hamas), the conflicts within Palestinian ranks, the demographic and political transformations within the Israeli society, the assassination of Rabin, the Russian immigration phenomenon and the rise of the Israeli Far right parties, the deadlock, the wars by proxy, the UN recognition of Palestine and the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli capital.

Week VI

Lebanese War(s): Historical Background

The formation of Lebanon, its independence and its political system;

Lebanon 1958, and 1969 - 1974, the first civil war, and the years preceding the second one.

Week VII

Lebanese War(s), 1975 – 1990

Internal divisions and alliances, the war, its regionalization, the Syrian and the Israeli invasions and occupations, the changing actors, the Taef agreement and the peace accords.

Week VIII

Iraq/Iran war: an introduction

Iraq and the Saddam regime, the Islamic revolution in Iran, Iraq's invasion of Iran.

Week IX

Iraq/Iran war: 1980 - 1988

The war, the mobilizations, the regional alliances, and the international context.

Week X

Iraq/Iran war

The economy of the war, its consequences, the situation in the Arab/Persian gulf after Eight years of combats, the making of new conflicts.

Week XI

Syria (2011 – 2017): from a revolution to a full-scale war

The state and the society in Assad's Syria

The popular revolution of 2011

Week XII

Syria (2011 – 2017): from a revolution to a full-scale war

The armed struggle and the war

Regional interventions, Iran's policies and Shiite militias, Sunni jihadists, Daesh and the declaration of the Caliphate, US intervention against Daesh, the Russian intervention against the Syrian opposition.

Week XIII

Syria (2011 – 2017): from a revolution to a full-scale war

Syria today, the ongoing war and the different scenarios.

Conclusions for the course and Lessons learned.

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Final Exam 40 %

Final paper 40%

Class participation 20%

Other
