



ONLINE SEMINAR

MIDDLE EAST GEOPOLITICS

MISSION

The aim of this course is to analyze the region's big picture politics, digging deep enough to comprehend the current processes.

We will take nothing for granted, and the "established true" will be used as a trigger to get to the roots of the regional permanent state of crisis.

OBJECTIVES

Towards the end of this Seminar students will have acquired sufficient analysis tools to understand the background of the diverse conflicts that are plunging the region into anarchy and fragmentation. By doing the follow-up of the weekly events, students will become familiarized with the constant changes, and will be able to make their own assessment.

PROFESSORS

Fernando Laborde and Agustín Claret are graduates of International Relations of 'Salvador University' and both share an interest in the Middle East contemporary history, politics, and ongoing developments. Their theoretical knowledge is complemented with practical experience living and travelling throughout the region.

DYNAMIC

This Seminar is dictated in English and is oriented for students interested in the region's contemporary history and current developments. The dynamic of the Seminar consists in interactive classes, complemented with selected texts, live discussions and ideas exchange about the region current events.



Cátedra
Fernando Laborde
Agustín Claret





UNIVERSIDAD DEL SALVADOR

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
SEMINAR

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
STUDIES

PROGRAMME (2021)

CLASS:		<i>Middle East Geopolitics</i>			
PROFESSORS:		<i>Fernando Laborde, Agustín Claret</i>			
TOTAL HOURS PER WEEK:		<i>3</i>	TOTAL HOURS:	<i>54</i>	
SEAT:	<i>Center</i>	COURSE:	<i>133</i>	SHIFT:	<i>Night</i>
ACADEMIC YEAR:		<i>2021</i>			
URL:					

1. CYCLE:

BÁSICO		SUPERIOR/PROFESIONAL	X
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2. PROFESSORSHIP'S COMPOSITION:

PROFESSOR	E-MAIL
<i>Fernando Laborde</i>	fernando.laborde@usal.edu.ar
<i>Agustín Claret</i>	aclaret@usal.edu.ar

3. BACHELOR'S AREA IN WHICH THE SEMINAR IS LOCATED:

The seminar is imparted within the framework of International Relations and Political Sciences Bachelor Degrees and is also available for overseas students.

4. COURSE/SEMINAR FUNDAMENTATION:

Historically, the region known to us as the Middle East has set the pulse of international western politics in many ways. Ancient and modern great powers have been struggling over centuries for the dominance of these territories, identifying them as essential for their interests. In some cases, they have also influenced great powers domestic politics. Both local and foreign rulers have been fighting for it among themselves behind different banners: religion, politics, ethnicity, access to strategic resources, and even symbolism.

The main purpose of this course is to get a glimpse of the processes which lead to the region current fragile situation. Studying power configuration in the Middle East will help us to understand the main actors behavior, interests and how they relate to each other.

Cradle of Western culture and bridge towards the East, the events which have been taking place here haven't gone overlooked by the rest of the world. As shown in recent crisis, an unstable Middle East has consequences all over the world, especially in Europe, but also in countries like the United States and Russia. Even more, new actors as China, India or South Korea, who hadn't taken an interest in the region before, are now getting involved in economic and demographic processes.

5. OBJECTIVES:

The aim of this course is to analyze Middle East politics big picture, digging deep enough to comprehend the current processes. We will take nothing for granted, and the questioning to the "established true" will be used as a trigger to get to the roots of the regional constant state of crisis.

The idea is that the students acquire sufficient analysis tools to understand the background of the diverse conflicts that are plunging the region into anarchy and fragmentation. By doing the follow-up of the weekly events, it is expected that the students get familiarized with the constant changes, in order to make their own diagnostic.

6. TIME ALLOCATION:

	Lectures	Practical Sessions	Total
Work load	38	16	54

7. UNITS, CONTENTS & MATERIALS:

UNIT 1: REGION INTRODUCTION

Introduce students to the current regional political map. Delimit our study area. Facts. We will apply Edward Said's Orientalism approach as a starting point to analyze the region relations with the West. Also we will focus on understanding the role of media coverage to discriminate reality from stereotypes constructions.

UNIT 2: CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN MIDDLE EAST

Though Middle East as a political, economic, social and demographical entity have more than five thousand years, it's current institutional and national structures were shaped by the Eurocentric World Order. To understand the influence that colonial powers exerted in this nations, and how the independence processes and the nation-states construction were carried out, will give us an idea of the current conflicts that currently are taking place in this region.

UNIT 3: DECESIVES WARS AND CONFLICTS

We will study certain conflicts and wars held during the XX century second half that represented a turning point in the Middle East. The rise of Arab Nationalism, the reliance of Israel on its army, the

Palestinians situation, the Islamic Revolution and other processes are in some way spins-off of unresolved conflicts. Also, we will get into specific conflicts that changed the game, like the Lebanese civil war or the Iraq – Iran war.

UNIT 4: RADICALIZATION, EXTENSION AND WORLDWIDE IMPACT

Western powers involvement in Middle East and the radicalization of conflicts derives in worldwide extension of them. In this process the direct victims of the violence were not the only ones. Whole cultures were flagged as violent and authoritative governments made their arguments based on security issues. Though political mobilizations as the Arab Spring seemed to be a game changer, the results of it showed that changing power structures are much more difficult than expected. In this unit we will focus in how did we get to the current political map of the Middle East.

8. METHODOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Classes will be developed through three different methods: lectures, debates and media analysis. Over the three of them the student participation is highly expected. Lectures will be based on given bibliography and will provide the students with the necessary background to engage in the debates and media analysis. Both are aimed to develop student criticism and to encourage them to think and express by themselves.

9. EVALUATION / APPRAISAL:

The student will be evaluated taking into account the average of three grades:

- i) a midterm exam,*
- ii) its participation during the course,*
- iii) a fifteen minutes oral presentation of a chosen Middle East political actor.*

10. FINAL EXAMINATION:

The average of the mentioned three grades will be the final grade

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- *Said, Edward “Orientalism”, Vintage, New York 1979.*
- *Mansfield, Peter “A History of the Middle East”, Penguin, New York 2013.*
- *Dawisha, Adeed “Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century”, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 2016.*
- *Roy, Olivier “The Politics of Chaos in the Middle East”, Columbia University Press, New York 2008.*
- *Pappé, Ilan, “Israel/ Palestine Question”, Routledge, London 1999*
- *Said, Edward, “The Question of Palestine”, Vintage, New York 1992.*
- *Morris, Benny, “One State, two States”, Yale University press 2009.*
- *O’Ballance, Edgar “Civil War in Lebanon, 1975 – 1992”, Palgrave Macmillan, New York 1998.*
- *Kepel, Giles, “Beyond Terror and Martyrdom – the Future of Middle East”, Belknap 2008, London 2008.*
- *Keddie, Nikkie “Modern Iran”, Yale University Press 2006.*

- Lewis, Bernard “What went Wrong?, Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response”, Oxford University Press, New York 2002.
- Fisk, Robert “The Great War for Civilization”, Vintage, New York 2007.
- Reese, Erlich “Inside Syria”, Prometheus Books, New York 2014.
- Dabashi, Hamid “The Arab Spring”, Zes Books, New York 2012.
- Hashemi Nader “Sectarianization”, Oxford University Press, New York 2017.

12. ESTIMATIVE CALENDAR:

Week	Units	Theor y	Practice	Tutorship	Appraisal	Other
1	UNIT 1: Class Introduction	X			X	
2	UNIT 1: Orientalism	X			X	
3	UNIT 2: After the Ottoman Empire fall	X				
4	UNIT 2: British and French in the Middle East	X				
5	UNIT 2: Root of conflict	X	X			
6	UNIT 3: Arab Nationalism	X	X			
7	UNIT 3: The Arab – Israeli issue/ Six days war	X	X			
8	UNIT 3: Islamic Revolution and Yom Kippur war	X	X			
9	Midterm exam					X
10	UNIT 4: Lebanese Civil War	X	X			
11	UNIT 4: Islamization of politics/ Oil and politics	X	X			
12	UNIT 4: Oslo Accords and Gulf War	X	X			
13	UNIT 4: September Eleven as a game changer	X	X			
14	Final Presentations					X
15	Final Presentations/ Conclusions					X
16	Region current situation and seminar wrap-up					
17						
18						

Methodology: Combination of live and recorded clases, compounded with home assignments and presentations. All Tuesdays 8 am.

Beginning: Tuesday 3rd of August 2021.

Last class: Tuesday 09th of November 2021.