
SO 238: Sociology of Middle Eastern Society

Fall 2017

Wednesdays 3:00 – 6:00

Professor: Stacy Keogh George, PhD

Office: Lindaman 201E

Office hours: Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 | Wed: 9:00 - 12:00 | By appointment

Blackout hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00 – 5:00 | Fridays all day

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an interdisciplinary course. It is intended to introduce students to the study of the Middle Eastern region. The primary focus of the course is to present a general overview of the Middle East region with attention to its people, cultures, social structures, religions, politics, economics, and dynamics of the various communities comprising contemporary Middle Eastern society or societies. The course incorporates, lecture, discussion, videos, group projects, guest speakers and cultural experience. Students are required to participate in class discussions that are based on weekly assigned readings. By the end of the course, students are expected to become adept at interpreting current events in Middle Eastern society and contribute to building bridges for understanding about the Middle East

This course meets the **Global Perspectives** general education requirement. Global Perspectives courses ask students to think about their roles as global citizens by engaging consistently with Western and/or non-Western cultures and systems outside the United States through rigorous examination of primary sources and/or participating in relevant experiential learning activities that cultivate empathy and respectful discourse. Upon completion, students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and analyze how aspects of global diversity are manifested through social and historical structures and cultural expressions.
- 2) Integrate faith perspectives into their understanding of global diversity and justice, in the context of Whitworth's Christian faith traditions, and recognizing the value and influence of non-Christian worldviews.
- 3) Use theoretical or disciplinary perspectives to recognize commonalities and differences across national boundaries and to address inequalities, power, and privilege in an interdependent world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Present an overview of Middle Eastern society with attention to its geography, history, religious variation, and demographic characteristics.
- Develop an understanding of the dominant culture of Middle Eastern society through the investigation of the following major social institutions: religion, family, political order, and economic order.
- Become aware of the various different subcultures of Middle Eastern society as they contribute to the diversity, complementarity, integration, and social stratification of Middle Eastern communities.
- Explore the following four current issues facing the Middle Eastern society: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; the Arab Spring, the Middle East and international relations, the experiences of Arab Americans in the United States, and prospects for normalcy and peace in the future.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sorenson, David S. *Introduction to the Modern Middle East, 2nd edition.* Westview Press, 2014

Naber, Nadine. *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics, and Activism.* New York University Press, 2012.

Journal articles and publications on Blackboard

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Weddady, Nasser and Sohrab Ahmari (eds) *Arab Spring Dreams: The next generation speaks out for freedom and justice from North Africa to Iran.* Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.

- Available in Bookstore

Sizer, Stephen. *Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel, and the Church.* Inter-Varsity Press, 2007

- Select chapters available on Blackboard – For class use only

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 15% | Attendance/Participation |
| 5% | Geography Quiz |
| 10% | Country Presentation |
| 30% | Article Reports |
| 30% | Tests (2 @ 15% each) |
| 10% | Final Paper |

Attendance & Participation – 30 points

Because this class only meets once per week, it is imperative that you attend ALL class sessions. Each absence results in a 1% deduction from your final grade, up to 5 absences when you will receive a 0 for Attendance and Participation and me be excused from the class.

Please note that you are responsible for all material covered in class whether or not you attend.

Therefore, it is strongly suggested that you befriend at least one other student in the class with whom you could exchange notes should you be absent. I will not distribute my lecture and discussion notes under any circumstances. If you need to miss a scheduled exam or submit a paper late for legitimate reasons, you must contact me before the due date to make alternate arrangements.

Geography Quiz – 10 points

You will have one Geography quiz during the second week of class. You will be asked to identify all countries highlighted in class, their capitals, other major cities, and bodies of water. Your study guide can be found on pages xxii – xxiii in the Sorenson book (highlighted region).

Country Presentation – 40 points

In addition to knowing where all countries and cities are located, students are also required to present (in pairs) on a country highlighted in the book. You may rely only on the material presented in the book, as well as other updated materials (articles, news releases, etc). These presentations should be 15 to 20

minutes, giving the class a basic understanding of the social dynamics in place in that country. Given the economic, political and social diversity in each country, the structure of the material presented may vary by group.

Article Reports

Each week, students will look for a current event piece that relates to the topic assigned for that week. Students will then write a brief report that briefly (3 -4 sentences) summarizes the article, provides intelligent reflection on the topic, and relates the article back to course material and/or other sociological concepts. These reports should be $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 page (single spaced, Times New Roman Font, 1" margins, no headings).

Reports should come from periodicals dated no more than 12 months prior to the date the assignment is due (for example, if your paper is due on 9/12/17, you must find an article between 9/12/16 and 9/12/17). Paste the link to the article at the top of your paper.

Students must select a reputable* news source from the 10 periodicals listed below:

- 1.** *The New York Times*
- 2.** *The Wall Street Journal*
- 3.** *The Washington Post*
- 4.** *BBC*
- 5.** *The Economist*
- 6.** *The Atlantic*
- 7.** *Foreign Affairs*
- 8.** *Politico*
- 9.** *National Public Radio*
- 10.** *TIME magazine*

* <https://www.forbes.com/sites/berlinschoolofcreativeleadership/2017/02/01/10-journalism-brands-where-you-will-find-real-facts-rather-than-alternative-facts/#3a527ea9e9b5>

Tests – 30 points each

Students will be required to take two tests in this course: a midterm and a non-cumulative final exam. Tests will consist primarily of multiple choice, identification and short answer. More details will be provided on the study guide provided a week before the test.

Final Paper - 20 points

Students will submit a 4-5 page (double spaced, Times New Roman Font, 1" margins). This will be due on SafeAssign (Blackboard) during finals week. Papers must address one of the following three topics:

- a) Compare and contrast the development of the democracy in 2 countries in the M.E.
- b) Explain the role of religious institutions in creating social change (for better or worse) in 2 countries in the M.E.
- c) Describe how stereotypes of the “Middle East” may have developed in the United States, and what can we do to address these issues?

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1

6-Sep Course Introduction: Why “Middle East”?

Reading: 1. Sorenson, Ch 1

Week 2

**13-Sep Geography Quiz
Post 9-11 world
Politics & The Economy**

Reading: 1. Sorenson, Ch 3 & 4

2. Pick and article from *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*
<http://www.brill.com/middle-east-journal-culture-and-communication>

Assignment Due: Article 1 (due 9/12 @ midnight)

Topic: Review and reflect on the article you chose above (cite author, date, title)

Week 3

20-Sep Religion in the M.E.

Guest: Yousif Kabarra (Islamic Cultural Center of Spokane)

Reading: 1. Sorenson, Ch 2

2. PEW Report on Religion in the Middle East

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/middle-east-north-africa/>

Assignment Due: Questions for Guest Speaker

Article 2 (due 9/19 @ midnight)

Topic: Coptic Christians in the M.E.

Week 4

27-Sep Guest Speaker: Dr. Raja Tanas (Prof. Emeritus)

Reading: 1. Sorenson, Ch 14 & 16

2. Costly Friendship

<https://www.thenation.com/article/costly-friendship/>

Assignment Due: Article 3 (due 9/26 @ midnight)

Topic: Updates on the Israeli Palestinian conflict

Week 5

4-Oct Religious Violence & Social Movements

Reading: 1. Bb: “Joshua’s Jihad? A Reexamination of Religious Violence in the Christian and Islamic Traditions” (Blackboard)

2. [Religion and Violence at the Mosque in Jerusalem 2017](#)

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2017/07/religion_and_violence_at_the_mosque_in_jerusalem.html

Assignment Due: Article 4 (due 10/3 @ midnight)

Topic: Any religiously motivated act of violence in the US or in the M.E.

Week 6	11-Oct	Terrorism Impact of Conflict
Reading:	1. Bb: "War, Rivalry, and State Building in the Middle East" 2. Despite the 'miracle' alliance against it, Islamic State will be hard to defeat http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/despite-the-miracle-alliance-against-it-islamic-state-will-be-hard-to-defeat	
Assignment Due:	Article 5 (due 10/10 @ midnight) Topic: Social impact of war (institutions, specific people or groups, etc)	

Week 7	18-Oct	Non-violent Movements in the M.E. Test Review
Reading:	1. Bb "The Potential Impact of Palestinian Nonviolent Struggle on Israel: Preliminary Lessons and Projections for the Future" 2. A Study in Middle East Nonviolence www.nytimes.com/2010/10/08/movies/08budrus.html?mcubz=2	
Assignment Due:	Article 6 (due 10/17 @ midnight) Topic: Any religiously motivated act of non-violence in the M.E.	

Week 8	25-Oct	Test 1 Movie & Movie Review
Assignment Due:	Movie Review due at the end of class	

Week 9	1-Nov	Presentations (Groups 5- 9) Gender & Islam in the M.E.
Reading:	1. Sorenson, Ch 5-9 2. The Changing Face of Saudi Women www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/02/saudi-arabia-women/	
Assignment Due:	Article 7 (due 10/31 @ midnight) Topic: Women's activism in the Middle East	

Week 10	8-Nov	Presentations (Groups 11- 16) Refugees
Reading:	1. Sorenson, Ch 11-16 2. Muslim asylum-seekers and refugees: negotiating politics, religion and identity in the UK https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/muslim-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-negotiating-politics-religion-and-identity-in-the-uk	
Assignment Due:	Article 8 (due 11/7 @ midnight) Topic: Updates on the Syrian refugee crisis	

Week 11 5-Nov Presentations (Groups 10, 17-20)
Arab Spring

Reading: 1. Sorenson, Ch 10, 17-20
2. Excerpts: *Arab Spring Dreams: The next generation speaks out for freedom and justice*

Assignment Due: Article 9 (due 11/14 @ midnight)
Topic: Remnant movements of the Arab Spring

Week 12 22-Nov THANKSGIVING - NO CLASS

Reading: 1. Book: *Arab America*

Week 13 29-Nov Arab American Experience
Islam in the US/Nation of Islam

Reading: 1. Book: *Arab America*
2. PEW Research on US Muslim Population
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/01/06/a-new-estimate-of-the-u-s-muslim-population/>

Assignment Due: Article 10 (due 11/28 @ midnight)
Topic: Incidents or stories involving Arab Americans (good or bad)

Week 14 6-Dec Test 2
Movie and Reflection

Assignment Due: Study!

Week 15 13-Dec FINAL PAPER
Due on Safe Assign before 3pm