

Regional Politics, Cooperation, and Conflict in the Middle East, MC324a

Fall 2007

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Office hours: MW 9:30-11:30, or by appointment

Class Meets MW 12:40-2:00, 340 Case Hall

Course Overview and Organization:

This course will focus on the conditions for conflict and cooperation among states, and between states and non-state actors, in the modern Middle East. We will analyze various levels of causation for conflict in the Middle East, as well as the conditions for and process of successful peace negotiations. Although we will start the class with an examination of both theory concerning cause of war and war termination, and its application to the Middle East more broadly, we will analyze Iraq, Israel, Syria, the emerging Palestine, and Lebanon with much greater depth. We will pay particular attention to the war in Iraq, and scenarios for how the war could end, as well as the Israeli-Arab conflict. We shall examine and simulate the ongoing quest for peace in the Middle East. Our own simulations of regional negotiations will take place during the same time that the actual regional peace summit takes place this November. We will focus on the main actors in negotiations between Israel and Syria, Israel and the emerging Palestine, and Israel and Lebanon, as well as the role of the United States, regional actors, and the international community in facilitating negotiations. All three dyads of conflict have included war, as well as periods of serious negotiation. We will examine conditions for conflict and cooperation as they relate to non-state actors involved, as well as state actors. We will analyze how, even in the midst of violent conflict, unofficial negotiations can pave the way to cooperation and official negotiation and what the conditions are for successful negotiations. The books we will be reading as a class are very recent books published by top scholars in the field analyzing conditions for war and successful negotiation, insurgency and counter-insurgency, the multiple and at times conflicting motivations of the various actors, and the role of culture in negotiating behavior. We will also be reading books by scholars who were participants in the negotiations themselves and those that are active in peace movements.

The class will be divided into 9 working groups or teams. Each team will represent one of the aforementioned actors and mediators. Each team will be collectively responsible for researching, writing position papers on, and negotiating on behalf of the actor they are representing. Each team will decide how it is going to organize itself and reach decisions (consensus or majority rule). You will need to determine who the most relevant actors are who influence foreign and security policies for your state, especially in regard to potential peace negotiations. These can include political parties, particular bureaucracies, non-state actors and movements, or particular leaders. The team will allocate projects for which each team member will be individually responsible. These assignments will require research and the preparation of position papers on and representation of key domestic political parties, interest groups, and political leaders. Each team

will determine the policy of their state by simulating the interaction between competing domestic interests and their perceptions of regional and international interests and pressures. As a result of these negotiations each team must write their team negotiating position paper. The team position paper should reflect the relative influence and power of the various groups and leaders within the government. The team paper of the United States should contain its strategies for mediating, specify what kinds of influence and persuasion they intend to use, as well as alternative positions and a framework they might propose to further progress in the negotiations. The culmination will be the simulation of direct negotiations between an Israeli and Syrian teams, another Israeli team and the emerging Palestinian team, and a third Israeli team and a Lebanese team, facilitated by three respective American teams to mediate the three sets of negotiations. This will result in three different peace agreements to resolve the three different conflicts.

Because this class requires from you more individual responsibility and cooperation with, and dependence upon your fellow team-mates, it is absolutely essential that you work hard and keep to deadlines in this class. The success of each team and of the simulation as a whole depends on each and every student conscientiously doing his or her fair share of the work (research, writing position papers, and negotiating). Much of the responsibility for the specific allocation of the individual assignments, making sure that they are completed on time, and collating and integrating the individual reports will be done by the students themselves in their teams.

Course Objectives:

This course has four main objectives:

- 1) To examine the different layers of causation for both conflict and cooperation and to be able to apply different approaches to explaining particular cases of conflict and cooperation.
- 2) To examine and compare selected cases from the Middle East in order to analyze the role of domestic politics including ideology, nationalism, religion, leadership, regime type, competing political cultures, as well as regional politics and power balances and international influences, in order to better explain causes of conflict and cooperation among these groups who are at war. Students will learn a lot about the domestic politics and foreign policies of Israel, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and the emerging Palestine. Through these comparative case studies they will be able to examine a variety of different sources of conflict and conditions for cooperation depending on the varied balance of power between different actors, varied interests and ideologies, the strength of the state or state in the making and whether it has a monopoly on the use of force, whether there are non-state actors involved, etc. We will also examine how the different conflicts impact one another.
- 3) To have students realize the complexity of various examples of conflict and cooperation in terms of the domestic politics, regional politics, and the negotiating process and format itself. By having students represent actors with whom they are least sympathetic, or represent a mediator that tries to understand both sides, the hope is also that students learn

to better understand all sides to a conflict.

4) To provide students with opportunities to improve critical thinking, reading, writing, and speaking abilities. The objectives of this class are to develop the students' skills in conducting original research, collaborating with others in a team project, the writing of positions papers, and learning and utilizing negotiating techniques. Particular attention will be given to developing argumentation skills, both orally and in writing, through written assignments, in class discussions and weekly discussions on ANGEL, in class debates, and simulations. We will focus on the use of logic and evidence to build an argument, and address weaknesses and exceptions in order to determine the limits of an argument.

Evaluation Criteria: I use the following criteria for assessing work:

4.0 – Your work is excellent relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements; you not only make strong, organized arguments that make good use of evidence and link theory to empirical cases, but also are able to recognize the limits of those arguments through thoughtful assessments of alternative explanations. Your work is probing, perceptive, and well expressed.

3.0 – Your work is good relative to the level of course requirements; it demonstrates very good command of the materials, is well written, and insightful.

2.0 – Your work meets requirements of the assignment, demonstrates adequate command of materials, and is fairly well expressed. Please note that an average grade is a 2.5.

1.0 – Your work meets minimum requirements for credit but shows weaknesses in the mastery of material and expression.

0.0 – Your work is unsatisfactory for credit because of major problems in understanding and expressing that understanding of course material.

Office Hours and Availability: I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of the 4 hours a week I have devoted to office hours. Please do contact me if you cannot make the office hours due to your class schedule, and I will be happy to make an appointment with you at another time. Please come with questions concerning lectures, readings, or assignments, or if you would just like to discuss the reading, relate the reading to what you are doing in another class or your past experiences. I encourage you to come to office hours with outlines for all written assignments, so that we can discuss your ideas and so that I have the opportunity to advise you. I also encourage you to write outlines for answers to possible essay questions on the midterm and final, and I would be happy to discuss those with you in office hours as well. I am also happy to comment on rough drafts of papers. My door is open to you, and I look forward to having stimulating discussions with you outside class (over lunch and in office hours), as well as in class. I would like everyone to succeed, and am available to help you do so.

Evaluation:

The final grade will be based on the following:

1) Midterm Exam, Wednesday, October 10, 15%

The mid-term will cover all material covered until the exam. It will consist of short answer

questions (you will explain in a paragraph certain terms, concepts, or statements made by a particular author) and one longer essay question. It is an opportunity for you to show your knowledge of the readings, and to be able to integrate and synthesize the readings and lectures in order to creatively analyze questions raised in the course.

2) Final Exam, Thursday, December 13, 15%

The final will be comprehensive. It will consist of short answer questions, and two longer essay questions. You must take the exams at the designated time, unless you have been given permission from me prior to the exam due to an emergency.

3) Written work, 35%

a. Individual bibliographies for individual position paper, 5%

Due Wednesday, October 3 at the beginning of class.

Include at least 10 different sources. The main references should be scholarly studies (books and journals) of the particular interest groups/political parties/or bureaucracies of the state that you are representing and their interests and goals visa a visa the designated rival country. These journals include the leading journals in political science and those specialized journals dealing with individual states (American Political Science Review, World Politics, International Security, Security Studies, International Organization, Foreign Affairs, MERIP Reports, Israel Studies, Israel Affairs, Palestine – Israel Journal, and the Journal of Palestine Studies. There are a range of somewhat more popular, yet serious periodicals (e.g. Jerusalem Report and Economist) that have relevant articles as well. A good place to start is by checking the bibliographies of the required and recommended reading for class.

The consulates, political parties, and think tanks of the country you are representing can also be valuable sources of information, especially on their bargaining positions. Some of them have on-line news services, reports of the media in their country and/or the Middle East more generally. You can also get daily free subscription of Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper. Only the better newspapers like the New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, and the Los Angeles Times have decent coverage of the Middle East.

b. Individual position paper of relevant actor/interest group, 10%

Due at the beginning of class, Wednesday, November 21.

10 page paper analyzing the interests and goals of your actor/party/bureaucracy as they relate to peace with the designated adversary, as well as articulated specific positions in regard to the variety of issues on contention. American team members will analyze previous American efforts in that particular conflict dyad, and provide a detailed framework which can form a constructive basis for negotiations.

c. Team negotiating position paper for designated state, 10%

Due at the beginning of class, Wednesday, November 28.

15 page paper analyzing the interests and goals of your nation in regard to the particular conflict your team is handling and provision of specific positions for negotiation. Include alternative positions for each issue area, optimal and red line positions.

- d. Final Paper of Agreement and/or disagreement on the pertinent issues, 10%
Due, Monday, December 10
15 page final agreement specifying in detail the points of agreement and possible disagreement.

All papers should be written in double-spaced and in 12pt font. Include footnotes and a bibliography for each paper. Put in the footnotes as you write your initial draft, otherwise you are almost guaranteed to forget to put some in if you wait until the end, and then are in danger of plagiarism. Example for citing a book in a footnote, Itamar Rabinovitch, *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs 1948-2003*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 24-25.

You are welcome to re-write your individual position papers. If you choose to do so, your final grade for the paper will be the average of the two grades that you receive for the original and for the re-write.

4) Class participation, 35%

- a. Participation in discussions over common readings, 11%

On-time attendance to all classes is expected. Every student can miss up to two classes during the semester (excluding simulation and debate days) for being sick, having to go to a wedding, job interview, etc. Therefore, be careful to use these two, if you need to, wisely. Any additional absence, unless there is a real medical reason that the doctor describes in writing or immediate family emergency, will negatively influence the participation grade. If you miss a handful of classes, you will automatically receive a very poor participation grade. Students must faithfully complete a close reading of assigned readings before class, and participate regularly in class. In these discussions, both in and outside of class, you will have the opportunity to engage the viewpoints of other students, make connections among the readings and link theory with empirical examples, and ask clarifying questions. This participation also includes participation in the formal debate on Iraq.

- b. Weekly responses to web discussions based on reading, 8%

Discussion question(s) regarding each week's reading will be posted for your response on Thursday and they will be due before class on Monday. Participation in web forums will enable you to come to class prepared for discussion, and will give you an opportunity to discuss the material outside of class. I will be checking, and at times participating in, these

discussions.

c. Participation in negotiations to determine state's position, 8%

Every member of each team must participate in the negotiations, based on their well researched and presented individual papers. You must articulately and persuasively lobby for your positions, provide creative alternatives, while also understanding the interests and positions of your adversary and showing some flexibility. Absence during any day of these negotiations will result in a zero for this part of the grade. Anyone who arrives late will also be penalized for that in terms of their grade.

d. Negotiation on final agreement, 8%

Every member of each team must participate in the negotiations, based on their well researched and presented individual papers. Absence during any day of these negotiations will result in a zero for this part of the grade. Anyone who arrives late will also be penalized for that in terms of their grade.

Extra Credit: There are three evening events listed on the syllabus including speakers and films related to the class. You are encouraged to attend one or more of these events and write a one page analysis of the speech or movie, for extra credit.

Required Readings: The following books are available at the books store. If you are able, it is recommended that you purchase them as these books will be read in their entirety or in major chunks.

- 1) Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY Cornell University Press, 2006).
- 2) Galia Golan, *Israel and Palestine: Peace Plans From Oslo to Disengagement* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007).
- 3) Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)
- 4) Itamar Rabinovitch, *The Brink of Peace: The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
- 5) Gilead Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations, 1999-2001* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 6) Tamara Cofman Wittes, *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process*, ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2005).
- 7) Knowledge of current events is expected for discussions and your papers. All students are required to regularly read the *New York Times* (which is readily available around the College).

Also regularly read *Haaretz* (English Edition, Internet) www.haaretzdaily.com and *Jerusalem Post* (Internet) www.jpost.com

Recommended Reading:

Those students who elect to do the honors option for the class should also purchase, Hussein Agha, Shai Feldman, Ahmad Khalidi, and Zeev Schiff, *Track - II Diplomacy: Lessons from the Middle East* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

Academic Integrity: James Madison College and Michigan State University policies on academic integrity and plagiarism will be strictly enforced in this course. See the James Madison College Handbook section, Standards and Expectations, and the MSU Academic Programs catalogue, for further information. You need to provide footnotes for ideas and facts that came from a source. Provide footnotes for quotations as well as for your paraphrasing of ideas and facts (refer to specific page numbers in your source). If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Honors Option:

The topic for the Honors Option will be understanding the unofficial dialogues between scholars, senior journalists, former government officials, and former military officers, and how they can establish common ground that forms the basis for official negotiations. We will analyze and critique Hussein Agha, Shai Feldman, Ahmad Khalidi, and Zeev Schiff's book, *Track-II Diplomacy: Lessons From the Middle East* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). The book is collaboration between two Israeli and two Palestinian authors who use their own experiences in Track-II talks as a basis for their analysis. Students will present critiques and analysis of each chapter. The written assignment is a 5 page book review. A 3.5 must be maintained in order to receive Honors credit. The honors designation for this course requires outstanding work in all aspects of the class, in addition to satisfactory completion of the additional work that is required of those participating in the honors option sessions.

Class Schedule and Readings:

August 27, M: Introduction to the class

Theoretical Background: Conflict and Cooperation

August 29, W: Causes of War and War Termination

Reading: "Why Nations Go To War," chapter 10 of John Stoessinger, *Why Nations Go to War*, 10th edition, 2008, pp. 387-400.

Chapter 1, "How States Make Decisions for War and Peace," and chapter 9, "Waging Peace: Choices and Consequences" in *From War to Peace*, Kegley and

Raymond, 2002, pp. 1-43 and 243-274.

September 3, M: **no class, Labor Day**

Regional Politics, State Formation, and Cultures

September 5, W: Historical background:

Reading: UN Human Development Report for the Middle East

The Contemporary Middle East, ed. Karl Yambert, 2006, chapters 1 and 2, “The Middle East” by David E. Long and Bernard Recih and “Patterns of Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East” by Colbert Held, pp. 1-25

Lisa Anderson, “Peace and Democracy in the Middle East: The constraints of Soft Budgets,” *Journal of International Affairs*, summer 1995, pp. 25-44.

September 9, S: Class invited over to my home, 2pm

First Case Study: The War in Iraq

September 10, M: History and Politics of Iraq, as well as the War

Reading: Phebe Marr, “The Land and People of Modern Iraq” and David Phillips, “The U.S. Occupation of Iraq,” in *The Contemporary Middle East*, ed. Karl Yambert, Westview press, 2006.

September 12, W: The Evolution of the Iraqi Insurgency and its Motives

Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 of Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq*

September 17, M: Composition and Way of Warfare

Reading: Chapter 3 of Hashim book

September 19, W: In class formal debate - whether the U.S. should stay or withdraw from Iraq

Reading: Conclusion and Epilogue of Hashim book, pp. 345-390

September 19, W: 7pm Israeli film, “Halleluyah” 118 Psych Building

September 24, M: Research Session with Terri Miller

Second Case Study: Conflict and Cooperation between Israel and Syria

September 26, W: History of Arab-Israeli wars

Reading: Chapter 1, “The Background,” in Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace: Israel and the Arabs 1948-2003*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) pp. 1-37.

October 1, M: Negotiations between Israel and Syria

Reading: “Assad on the Israel-PLO Accord,” *Middle East Quarterly* March 1994, pp. 81-85

Agha, Feldman, Khalidi, and Schiff, *Track-II Diplomacy*, chapter 7, “Israeli-Syrian Talks under Search for Common Ground”

Rabinovitch, *The Brink of Peace*, pp. first four chapters

October 3, W: Individual bibliographies due in class Negotiations between Israel and Syria

Reading: Rabinovitch, *The Brink of Peace*, chapters 5-7 and the conclusion

October 8, M: Review for midterm

October 10, W: **In Class Midterm**

Third Case Study: Conflict and Cooperation between Israel and Lebanon

October 15, M: War with Lebanon 1982

Reading: Ze’ev Schiff and Ehud Ya’ari, *Israel’s Lebanon War*, Forward and chapters 1-4, pp. 9-77, chapter 14 and afterward, pp. 286-308.

October 17, W: Hezbollah’s War with Israel

Reading: Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

Ze’ev Schiff, “Israel’s War with Iran,” *Foreign Affairs* Nov/Dec 2006

Edward Djerjian, “From Conflict Management to Conflict Resolution” *Foreign Affairs* Nov/Dec 2006

October 17, W: 7pm, lecture by Yakov Katz, security writer for the Jerusalem Post, 339 Case.

Fourth Case Study: Conflict and Cooperation between Israel and the Emerging Palestine

October 22, M: Track II Negotiations – Video Conference with Professor Saliba Sarsar

Reading: Golan, *Israel and Palestine* chapters 10 and 11, “The Geneva Accord” and “The Nusseibah-Ayalon Petition”

Saliba Sarsar, “From Conflict Protraction to Peace Actualization in Palestinian-Israeli Relations” *Peace and Conflict Studies*

October 24, W: The Oslo Accords

Reading: Wittes, *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate*, chapter 1; Wittes, “The Goal of Cultural Analysis” and chapter 2, Quandt, “Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks” Golan, *Israel and Palestine*, chapters 1 and 2, introduction and the Oslo Accords

October 29, M: Camp David Negotiations

Reading: Golan, *Israel and Palestine*, chapters 3 and 4

Myron Aronoff, "Camp David Rashomon: Contested Interpretations of the Israel/Palestine Peace Process," forthcoming in *Political Science Quarterly*

October 31, W: Palestinian Negotiating Patterns

Reading: Omar Dajani, "Surviving Opportunities: Palestinian Negotiating Patterns in Peace Talks with Israel," chapter 3 of Wittes book

November 5, M: Israeli Negotiating Culture

Reading: Aharon Klieman, "Israeli Negotiating Culture" and Wittes, "Conclusion: Culture as an Intervening Variable," chapters 4 and 5 of Wittes book.

November 5, M: 7pm, Israeli film, "Green Chariot" 108 Bessey Hall

November 7, W: First hand account of the Camp David Negotiations

Reading: Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations*, chapters 1-11, pp. 1-104.

November 12, M: First hand account of the Camp David Negotiations

Reading: Sher, *The Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations*, chapters 12-22, pp. 105-232.

The Role of the U.S. and Regional Actors in Mediation and Facilitation

November 14, W: The U.S. Mediating Role

Reading: Golan, *Israel and Palestine*, chapters 4, "The Clinton Parameters," chapter 6, "Mitchell-Tenet-Zinni Recommendations," chapter 8 "President Bush: October 2001," chapter 9, "The Road Map – 30 April 2003"; chapter 13, "U.S. Israel Understandings: Bush and Weissglas Letters," Bassam al-Salhi, "American Policy and the Middle East Conflict" *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2007
Daniel C. Kurtzner, "The U.S. Must Get Tough in Promoting Arab-Israeli Peace Efforts," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2007.

November 19, M: Regionally based actors and the peace process

Reading: Chapter 7 of Golan book, "The Saudi Initiative-Arab League Resolution and UNSC Resolution"
Qais Abdul Karim (Abu Leila), "Arab Peace Plans: Initiatives That Lack Initiative," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2007
Al-Khativ, Ziad Abu Zayyad, Merhav, Baltiansky, Dickinson, "Roundtable: The Role of the International Community," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2007.
Shlomo Ben Ami, "Internationalizing the Solution," *Palestine-Israel Journal*, 2007.

Simulations of Negotiations Within and Between Actors

November 21, W: Individual position papers due at the beginning of class. Negotiations among separate Israeli, Palestinian, Syrian, Lebanese, and American teams to determine their respective positions, plans, and strategies.

November 26, M: Final negotiations among each team and preliminary drafting of team position paper.

November 28, W: Team position paper of the state each team represents due. Preliminary negotiations between Israel and the emerging Palestine, Israel and Syria, and Israel and Lebanon, mediated by different American teams.

December 3, M: Final stage negotiations, preliminary rough drafts of final agreements (and possible disagreements)

December 5, W: Review for the final

December 10, M: **Final agreements/papers due**

December 13, TH: **Final Exam**