

# Middle East Relations

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Last Updated: Wed, 01/07/2026

**Course prefix:** INTA

**Course number:** 3260

**Section:** A

**CRN (you may add up to five):**  
30416

**Instructor First Name:** Rana

**Instructor Last Name:** Shabb

**Semester:** Spring

**Academic year:** 2026

## **Course description:**

This course is an in-depth introduction to the study of the politics of the Middle East. The course is divided into several thematic interrelated parts. First, an overview of International Relations theory will guide the analysis and approaches used to understand and analyze various dynamics in the Middle East. After understanding the theoretical underpinnings, the class will be divided into several general themes that are important to understand the Middle East's current affairs, priorities, and issues inclusive of (1) the emergence of the state system, (2) the role of non-state actors, (3) the evolution of governance and revolutions, (4) Arab-Israeli relations, (5) the Israeli Palestinian conflict, amongst other issues. Further, discussions in International Relations theory will help us understand the region and its place in the global political system. Based on the historical and theoretical background provided, students will emerge with tools and approaches to analyze social and political issues in the Middle East, grasp the nature of the interplay between international, regional, and local dynamics to explain Middle East politics, and understand the implications of the pressing issues in the Middle East for the global political system.

## **Course learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to analyze social and political issues in the Middle East (Research on the Middle East)
- grasp the nature of the interplay between international, regional, and local dynamics to explain Middle East politics (International Relations theory and the Middle East), and

- understand the implications of the pressing issues in the Middle East for the global political system (Globalizations and trade of the Middle East).

### **Required course materials:**

- A History of the Modern Middle East 7th Edition by William L. **Cleveland**
- International Relations of the Middle East 4th Edition by Louise **Fawcett** (978-0198708742).
- Additional materials (such as journal articles and current analysis) will be assigned during the semester, so **please check the syllabus posted on Canvas weekly for the latest readings**

### **Grading policy:**

#### **Attendance and Class participation (20%)**

Attendance is required and students must complete the assigned readings before class in order to participate in class activities. Absences will count against students' participation score. The class participation mark will be based on attendance AND the quality of your in-class oral comments as well as on the quality of your performance on written exercises that will be handed to you in class.

**Religious Holy Days:** Students who anticipate being absent from classes or miss the assignment deadlines due to religious observance should inform me by the end of the second week. Please note that assignment dates are fixed and no make-ups will be offered without an official/medical letter explaining your situation. For all other missed deadlines, I reserve the right to penalize your grades by 10% a day.

#### **In class presentations, worksheets, and quizzes (25%)**

**Worksheets:** Throughout the course, students will participate in different in-class activities, including discussions, small group projects and case analyses. In some of those activities, students will be required to complete written worksheets. There are three possible grades for the worksheets: check plus, check minus and 0. The lowest worksheet score will be dropped.

**Quizzes:** Students might be asked to complete several quizzes throughout the course. These short quizzes will have two short answer questions related to the readings for the class.

**Presentation:** Students will be asked to sign up for at least one class, for which they will present an analysis of the readings at the beginning of the class. They will present for 10 minutes and guide a 20 minute discussion following their presentation.

#### **Midterm Exam 1 (25%)**

This midterm exam will take place on February 26, 2025. More details will be provided before the exam.

**Final Research Project and Presentation: (20%+10%):** Research project aims to train students for a successful career in academia, journalism, and policy circles. You must get a confirmation from me for your country case, research question, literature research and presentation date no later than the third week of the course. I will give more details on the research project in the class.

The project involves students working on a topic involving an approved topic of their choosing. Each student is required to do:

1. A details one-page plan of their research topic (5 points)
2. 5-page paper single space on their topic (15 points)
  - Final paper due by email 11:59pm on April 20.
3. Present their topic in class (7-10 minute presentation; 5 minus Q&A) (10 points)
  - Presentations will take place the last day of classes.
  - Powerpoint recommended

**Grading Scale:** 100-90 A□ 89-80 B□ 79-70 C□ 69-60 D□ 59-0 F

### **Grade Change Policy**

Legitimate requests for grade changes are welcome. However, you should resist the temptation to file a frivolous request just hoping to “get lucky”. Simple computational or clerical errors should be brought to the professor’s attention immediately. Otherwise requests for grade changes must: i) be submitted in writing either electronically or in hard copy, ii) be submitted within 7 days of receiving the graded assignment, and iii) be no longer than 600 words and no shorter than 150 words. Requests for grade changes should identify what was required in the assignment, describe precisely how these requirements were fulfilled at a level above the received grade and address any relevant comments written by the professor on the graded assignment (if applicable) and explain why they do not apply. Note that grade changes requests can result in re-grades both up or down (or left unchanged). That is, if the greater scrutiny demanded by a grade change request reveals your assignment to deserve a lower grade than previously awarded, then the lower grade may be assigned.

### **Attendance policy:**

#### **Policy on Attendance and Absences**

Attendance is required, although each student can have 1 (one) unexcused absence without

penalty. Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification by the Office of the Dean of Student Life. Absences due to participation in Institute activities including school athletics will be excused upon verification by the registrar. Absences due to military service will be handled on a case-by-case basis and subject to verification.

In the event of an unexcused absence, you will NOT be granted any special accommodations including but not limited an opportunity to make up work for in-class exercises. Thus, if you miss class due to an unexcused absence, you are likely to suffer a grade penalty due to your inability to participate in an in-class exercise or in class discussion. You will also be responsible for any material, assignments, or announcements covered in class that you miss as a result of an unexcused absence.

Course participants will treat each other with respect. Constructive questioning and criticism are welcome, even encouraged. Personal attacks and insults are not. The rule of thumb here is that critical comments and questions should be maturely phrased in a manner that

**Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

**This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.**

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

**This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:**

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

**Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:**

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

**Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:**

- Intercultural Competence

- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion