Revised Syllabus

March 30, 2020

Great Powers in the Middle East:
The Continuing Battle over Oil, Trade Routes, and God

Global Studies 222/Political Science 222/LEAD 222/History 396
Spring 2020
Monday - Thursday, 2:35 – 3:50 pm

Requirements:

This class will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In order to receive a grade of pass, a student must pass each of the following:

First analytical paper (5-7 pages, due April 6)
One, two-page post to the class’ Glow discussion board. This post will be written collectively during your participation in a 3 or 4 person group.
Three, two-page response papers to small group discussions.
Second analytical paper (6-8 pages, due May 22)
Two, two-page reaction papers to films listed in the syllabus.
You have already completed one of these papers, in reaction to The Battle of Algiers. The second reaction paper may be about any of the films listed in the original syllabus and is due by May 15 (you may submit it prior to this date, if you would like). The films are available on Glow, in the Course Media Gallery folder. If you prefer, you may write about a film not mentioned in the syllabus, with the instructor’s permission. Each reaction paper should identify one or two ideas from the film that you consider important; indicate whether you agree/disagree with these ideas; and explain why.

Class Participation, during discussion of lectures and during small group discussions.
Students are required to attend every class and assigned discussion.

Map Quiz.
You have already completed this assignment.

The corona virus has created challenges that vary widely from student to student. If these requirements for a pass are not manageable for you, please contact me and we can discuss adjustments on a case-by-case basis.
Technical Points:

We will use Zoom for our class meetings and discussions. You are welcome to use it for small group discussions, as well. Note that, if you initiate a meeting as a student, Zoom limits the length of the meeting to 40 minutes (this restriction does not apply to meetings that the instructor initiates). If you want to hold a conversation that lasts more than 40 minutes, you will need to convene a second meeting.

The following video (13 minutes) explains how to log-in to Zoom and use it:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbnyQwsVbiY&list=PLKpRxBfeD1kEM_11ld3N_Xl77fKDzSXe&index=37&t=0s

This video shows how to schedule a meeting (1 minute):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhZW3iyXV9U&list=PLKpRxBfeD1kEM_11ld3N_Xl77fKDzSXe&index=21

This video explains how to host a meeting (10 minutes):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygZ96J_z4AY&list=PLKpRxBfeD1kEM_11ld3N_Xl77fKDzSXe&index=4

The responses to the survey that I distributed during the break indicate that the large majority of our class has access to an internet connection that is sufficient for participation in a Zoom discussion. However, we may find that some colleagues’ connections are not quite fast enough. If this is the case, these colleagues can connect with audio only (this is not ideal, but it still allows for participation). It is also possible to connect to Zoom by phone, which entails dialing a phone number that Zoom provides.

If possible, please connect your computer to your modem using an Ethernet cable (CAT-6, if possible) rather than wi-fi. An Ethernet cable can be acquired through Amazon or other online seller, and is not expensive. It provides a faster and more stable connection than wi-fi.

In addition:
- shut down all unnecessary applications and close all unnecessary browser tabs. It is also a good idea to restart your computer before joining a class with Zoom.
- If you are sharing your Internet access with others, ask them to limit their use during class meetings, if possible.

A Note on Courtesy in an Online Setting

As we move to an online format, the norms of civility and respectfulness that inform our interactions on campus still apply. These norms include respecting the privacy of participants in our lectures and discussions. Do not share Zoom codes with persons who are not registered for the class. Do not record video, audio, still captures, or any other course content without written consent from the instructor. In addition, do not record or share video, audio, or still captures of your classmates without their permission.
Class Schedule

Our group meetings will be held, to the extent possible, during our regularly scheduled class time – Monday-Thursday, 2:35 – 3:50. However, in order to function more effectively in an online environment, we will meet in smaller groups of either 8 or 9 (when we discuss lectures) or 4 or 5 (when we hold small group discussions). These meetings will last for roughly 20-30 minutes. In order to accommodate all the groups, some groups will meet outside of our usual class time. I will announce the time for each group meeting well in advance. Please do your best to participate at the time you’ve been assigned. However, if an assigned time is genuinely unworkable for you, let me know and we will make adjustments.

Class Meetings

My approach to redesigning the class has focused on covering a smaller quantity of material well, with rich discussion and writing assignments, rather than covering a larger amount of material in a more superficial manner. We will concentrate on Zelikow and May (Deconstructing Suez), US interests in the Middle East, and the growing role of China in the region. The downside, of course, is that we will not discuss several interesting and important readings from the original syllabus, such as Stephen Kinzer’s All the Shah’s Men (which deals with the US-sponsored coup in Iran in 1953) and Robert Jervis’ work on the psychological dimensions of foreign policy decision making. If you are interested in discussing these materials, let me know. I am happy to arrange additional discussions about them.

April 6:

Philip Zelikow and Ernest R. May, Suez Deconstructed, 1-86.

To prepare for this class:
- complete the reading
- watch the mini-lecture, which will be posted to Glow on Wednesday, April 1.
- think about the questions at the end of the lecture and be prepared to discuss them.
- identify one question to ask about the reading.

April 9:

Philip Zelikow and Ernest R. May, Suez Deconstructed, 87-129

To prepare for this class:
- complete the reading
- watch the mini-lecture
- think about the questions at the end of the lecture and be prepared to discuss them
- identify one question to ask about the reading
April 13:

Discussion Class. The expectations for this class are explained in a separate handout.

April 15

I will distribute a survey to ask for your feedback on the course so far. Please respond to this survey promptly.

April 16:


To prepare for this class:
- complete the reading
- watch the mini-lecture
- think about the questions at the end of the lecture and be prepared to discuss them
- identify one question to ask about the reading

April 20:


To prepare for this class:
- complete the reading
- watch the mini-lecture
- think about the questions at the end of the lecture and be prepared to discuss them
- identify one question to ask about the reading

April 23:

Discussion Class. The expectations for this class are explained in a separate handout.

April 27:


Optional:


April 30:


Optional:


May 4:

Discussion Class. The expectations for this class are explained in a separate handout.

May 7:


Optional:

Applied History Project, Harvard: [https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project](https://www.belfercenter.org/project/applied-history-project)

May 11:


May 14:

Discussion Class. The expectations for this class are explained in a separate handout.

**MAY 15: SECOND REACTION PAPER TO A FILM DUE, 4:30 pm.**

Please send it to me by email at bkr3@williams.edu. You may submit this paper earlier in the semester, if you choose.

**MAY 22: SECOND ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE, 4:30 pm.**

Please send it to me by email at bkr3@williams.edu.

Optional activities

I am happy to organize other optional discussions. As mentioned earlier, we could discuss materials from the original syllabus that are not covered in class. In addition, each of you will watch one of the films posted on Glow and write a reaction paper about it. If you would like to discuss a particular film with me and other students who watched it, let me know and we will set up a meeting. Another possibility is to hold a discussion about current developments in the Middle East. For example, the corona virus is likely to have a profound impact on the region. We could examine this or other topics. I would circulate a few articles prior to the meeting, which we would then discuss. If you would like to pursue any of these ideas, let me know.

I am very open to your suggestions about other activities and, more generally, about the course. I am new to online teaching. If you have ideas about how to take full advantage of this opportunity, please let me know.