

Course Outline  
Geog 209- Spring 2017

Geog 209: Geography of the Middle East and North Africa- Spring 2017

- What/where is the Middle East
  - The concept of ‘region’
  - Maps, cartography and power
  - Orientalism: depicting and dissecting a ‘region’
- Physical terrain and environmental issues
  - Emphasis on dryness and water
    - Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and the Euphrates
- Peoples and places
  - Languages and religions
- Modern historical geography
  - From empires to states
    - The rise and demise of the Ottoman Empire
  - Colonialism/imperialism
  - Territorial boundaries of the state
    - Iraq as case in point
- States and nations
  - National-territorial conflicts
    - Israeli-Palestinian dispute
- Ethnic and religious politics
  - Stateless peoples, and minorities
    - The Kurdish issue
  - Sunni-Shiite sectarian divisions
  - Non-Muslim minorities
    - The case of Yazidi and Baha’i populations
- Social-political change
  - Iran and revolution
- The ‘Arab Spring’
  - Tunisia
  - Tahrir Square
- Syrian Civil War, Iraq, and the rise of ISIS
  - Refugees
- The US and the Middle East: from the First Gulf War to ISIS
- Development, inequality and migration
  - Peripheries of the ‘periphery’
  - Slavery for the World Cup 2022
- Globalization, culture change, and generation gap
  - A secular Middle East
  - Women and feminist movements
    - Politics under veil
    - ‘No women, no drive!’

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- The least-known minority: GLBTQI
- The youth, fashion, music and arts
  - Rap, rock and roll, alternative in the basement!

**These topics would make up the bulk of the class discussions. However, some topics might be replaced with new ones.**

### **Evaluations and Grading**

- Larger portion of the overall grade will be based on reading/film responses and research project
- There will also be a mid-term and a final, comprising less than half of the grade for the course
- Attendance is not taken (for grade), but absent students are highly likely to lose in-class quizzes

### **Reading Material**

- There will not be a specific 'textbook' in this course.
- Weekly readings will be based on different book chapters, article, and medium-length journalistic pieces