



**Course No.:** 1070005

**Course name:** American Foreign Policy in the Middle East

המדיניות האמריקנית במזרח התיכון

**Lecturers:** Dr. Eran Lerman and Mr. Robert Silverman

**Program:** Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

**Format:** Seminar (שו"ס)

**Credits:** Two credits

**Course duration:** first semester, 90 minutes per week

**Pre-Requirements:** History of the Middle East I

**Course Objectives:** The goals of this course are two-fold. First, the student at the end of the course will be familiar with the range of US interests and values at stake in the Middle East, and be able to use this familiarity to analyze future issues in US foreign policy. Second, the student will use tools to aid his or her approach to understanding of the United States, including language skills and knowledge of American political culture, both critical in achieving this understanding.

**Course Description:** The course assumes a basic familiarity with the broad lines of Middle Eastern history. It introduces the main governmental and non-governmental players and the persistent interests and values in the conduct of US foreign policy. We will narrate and discuss the milestones of US involvement in the region, starting with American oil companies signing the first oil concession in Saudi Arabia in 1933, President Roosevelt's meeting with Saudi King Abdel Aziz in 1945, and President Truman's recognition of Israel in 1948. Through discussion and analysis of US administrations' major achievements and failures in the Middle East, the student will gain an understanding of how US Interests and values, sometimes conflicting and sometimes coalescing, define US policy. The course ends with a discussion of

whether or not the US should gradually withdraw its military troop presence from bases throughout the region.

The course is based on class lectures in English. Both lecturers will address each class, with alternating leads each week. The required readings are in both English and Hebrew. Class papers can be written in either language, at the student's choice. The lecturers will present the material with English vocabulary lists and outlines, and allow time for questions and discussion (in English or Hebrew as the students desire).

### **Requirements:**

Midterm paper of 2-3 pages profiling an issue or personality in US foreign policy – 20 percent.

Final Paper of between 5-10 pages, in either English or Hebrew, analyzing a hypothetical US foreign policy issue that is to occur in the future - 80%.

Passing Grade: 60.

### **Subjects and Required Reading**

**Class 1: Historical Background and Introduction of the Players - President and National Security Council, State and Defense Departments, CIA, Congress, Private Companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (Lerman and Silverman co-lead)**

Required reading:

מייקל אורן, עוצמה, אמונה ודמיון: אמריקה במזרח התיכון, מ-1776 ועד ימינו (ירושלים: שלם, 2019), עמ' 35-82.

**Class 2: US Enters the Middle East - Oil Companies in Saudi Arabia, The Second World War, Recognition of Israel, and the Cold War (Lerman lead)**

Required reading: נאום טרומן על הדוקטרינה, מרס 1947

Required Viewing:

"Truman Doctrine", ב-The Avalon Project:

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/trudoc.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp)

"What is Saudi Aramco? CNBC Explains," August 9, 2018,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1f6VO7Slhk>

**Class 3: 1950s and 1960s – US Intervenes in Iran and Lebanon, Flirts with Arab Nationalism and Expresses Concern Over Dimona (Silverman lead)**

Required reading:

מיילס קופלנד, משחק האומות: על מוסר וחוסר-מוסר בזירה הפוליטית (ירושלים: שוקן, תש"ל), עמ' 155-196.

הנרי קיסינג'ר, דיפלומטיה (ירושלים: שלם, תשס"ח), עמ' 501-528.

**Class 4: Johnson and the Six Day War of 1967 - A New Era Begins (Lerman)**

Required reading:

Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2015), pp. 102-76.

**Class 5: Nixon, Faisal and the 1973 War - US Marginalizes the USSR in the Middle East; Arabs Deploy the Oil Weapon (Silverman)**

Required Reading:

חילופי המברקים, 20 אוקטובר 1973, מסמכים 47 ו-48:

<https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB98/>

Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991) pp. 715-744.

Required Viewing: Arab Oil Boycott, *NBC Nightly News*, October 17, 1973,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCLRIVxOH-Q>

### Class 6: **Kissinger, Carter, Sadat and Peace Between Israel and Egypt (Lerman)**

Required reading:

הנרי קיסינג'ר, משבר: ניהול מדיניות החוץ במלחמת יום כיפור וביציאה מווייטנאם (ירושלים: שלם, תשס"ה), עמ' 303-256.

Presidential Directive NSC-63, The Carter Presidential Library and Museum:

<https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/directives/pd63.pdf>

### Class 7: **US Response to the Iranian Revolution, Support for Iraq and the First Gulf War of 1991 (Silverman)**

Required reading:

נאום בוש בפרל הארבור, 28 באוקטובר 1990

Remarks to Officers and Troops at Hickam Air Force Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii:

[www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18972](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18972)

Optional Viewing: *Argo* (2012 winner of Oscar for Best Film: CIA agent poses as the producer of a science-fiction film as part of a daring mission to rescue six American diplomats hiding in Iran after the 1979 Take-Over of the US Embassy)

<https://www.netflix.com/title/70231922>

### Class 8: **Clinton, the Oslo Accords and Beginning of the War with al-Qaida in 1998 (Lerman)**

Required reading:

Dennis Ross, *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel relationship from Truman to Obama* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015) pp. 256-298

## Class 9: 9/11 and the Second Gulf War of 2003 and Its Aftermath (Silverman)

Required reading:

John Lewis Gaddis, "Ending Tyranny: The Past and Future of an Idea," *The American Interest* 4(1) (September-October 2008), pp. 6-15.

דניס רוס, על מדינאות: מדיניות החוץ האמריקאית בעולם ובמזרח התיכון בעבר ובעתיד (תל אביב: מטר, 2009) עמ' 247-302.

## Class 10: From Obama to Trump and Biden – The Obama Doctrine and its Antitheses (Lerman)

Required reading: Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *The Atlantic* (April 2016) <https://theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

"Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People."

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/peacetoprosperty/>

## Class 11: US Domestic Politics and the Middle East (Silverman)

Required reading:

Walter Russell Mead, *Arc of the Covenant, The United States, Israel and the Fate of the Jewish People* (NY: Knopf, 2022), "The American Left and Israel," pp. 491-516.

Required viewing: "Debate: Anti-Zionism is Anti-Semitism," *Intelligence Squared*, July 26, 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1VTt\\_THL4A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1VTt_THL4A)

## Class 12: US Military Policy and the Middle East (Lerman)

Required reading:

Michael Gordon, *Degrade and Destroy, The Inside Story of the War Against the Islamic State, from Barak Obama to Donald Trump* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022), pp. 387-398.

**Class 13: Wrap Up. Should the US Withdraw from the Middle East? (Lerman and Silverman co-lead)**

Required Reading:

Steven Cook, "This is the Moment that Decides the Future of the Middle East, If the US is Done Fighting for Saudi Arabia's Oil, It's Done Fighting for the Entire Region," *Foreign Policy*, Sept. 17, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/17/this-is-the-moment-that-decides-the-future-of-the-middle-east/>

Ezzedine Fishere "US Withdrawal from the Middle East is a Costly Mirage," *The Washington Post*, January 20, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/01/27/us-withdrawal-middle-east-is-costly-mirage/>

Optional Viewing:

"Wait Just a Minute: Martin Indyk on US Middle East Policy," Dec. 16, 2021, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atyzlesNJ14>

"Fossil fuels are 80% of the World's Energy and Their Use is Still Growing," Alex Epstein, *The Realignment Podcast*, June 3, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50007P9D840>

Background reading

אורן, מיכאל, בן ברית: חיי כגשר בין ישראל לארצות הברית (תל אביב: ידיעות אחרונות, 2015).

אורן, מיכאל, עוצמה, אמונה ודמיון: אמריקה במזרח התיכון, מ-1776 ועד ימינו (ירושלים: שלם, 2019).

אורן, מיכאל, ששה ימים של מלחמה (תל אביב: דביר/שלם, 2004).

גלבע, איתן, ארצות הברית וישראל: תשתית היחסים המיוחדים (תל אביב: משרד הבטחון, תשנ"ד).

וימן, דיוויד ס', הפקרת היהודים: אמריקה והשואה, 1941-1945 (ירושלים: יד ושם, תשנ"ג).

קיסנינג'ר, הנרי, משבר: ניהול מדיניות החוץ במלחמת יום כיפור וביציאה מווייטנאם (ירושלים: שלם, 2004).

שטיין, קנת, מדינאות אמיצה: סאדאת, קיסנינג'ר, קרטנר ובגין והחתימה לשלום ערבי-ישראלי (תל אביב: מערכות, 2003).

Gordon, Michael R. and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon, 2006).

Kaplan, Robert, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

Ross, Dennis, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2004).