



**Course No.:** 1070005

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

**Lecturer:** Mr. Robert Silverman

**Program:** Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

**Format:** Seminar (ס"ש)

**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 will understand the full range of US interests and values at stake in the Middle East - and will use this understanding to analyse current and future foreign policy issues. Second, the student will improve his or her English-language skills, and gain insight into American political culture, as a means to understanding American foreign policy.

**Course Description:** The course assumes a basic familiarity with modern Middle Eastern history. It begins by introducing the governmental and non-governmental players in the formulation of American foreign policy, the constitutional system of checks and balances, and the persistent interests and values in the conduct of policy. Then it proceeds over eight lectures to 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 and ending with the American government's managing relations in 2023 with four regional powers (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and Iran). American achievements and failures in the Middle East over the past 90 years will highlight how a differing mix of interests and values in different cases adds up to an ever evolving foreign policy towards the region. The course ends with four classes each analyzing a different constant element throughout the period under

discussion: domestic American politics, military presence, human rights and democratization, and regional perceptions of US as a reliable ally.

The course is based on class lectures in English. The required readings are in either English or Hebrew. Final papers can be written in either language, at the student's option, though the lecturer encourages students to write in English. The lecturer will provide students in advance of the lectures with English-language outlines of the subject matter, to aid in listening comprehension, and will allow time for questions and discussion in class.

### **Requirements:**

Final Paper of between 1,500 – 2,000 words, in either English or Hebrew, analysing a current American foreign policy issue or a hypothetical case that might occur in the future – 100 percent.

Passing Grade: 60.

### **Subjects and Required Reading**

**Class 1: Introduction of the Players - President and the Executive Branch, Congress, Corporations and Non-Governmental Organizations; Historical Background of American Encounters in North Africa and Levant**

Required reading:

Michael Oren, Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present (New York: Norton, 2008), pp. 41-79.

Or in Hebrew:

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

**Class 2: America Enters the Middle East - Oil Companies in Saudi Arabia, The Second World War, Recognition of Israel, and the Start of the Cold War**

Required reading:

President Truman's Address Before a Joint Session of Congress, March 1947:  
[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/trudoc.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp)

Required viewing:

"What is Saudi Aramco? CNBC Explains," August 9, 2018,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1f6VO7SIhk>

### **Class 3: 1950s and 1960s – US Intervenes in Iran and Lebanon and Flirts with Arab Nationalism**

Required reading:

Miles Copland, The Game of Nations: The Amorality of Power Politics (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1970), pp. 132-169.

Or in Hebrew:

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

Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1995), pp. 522-549.

Or in Hebrew:

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

### **Class 4: Johnson and the Six Day War of 1967 - A New Era Begins for US-Israel Relations**

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: 1970s: From the Yom Kippur War and the Oil Weapon to Peace Between Israel and Egypt**

Required Viewing: Arab Oil Boycott, *NBC Nightly News*, October 17, 1973,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCLRIVxOH-Q>

Required Reading:

Henry Kissinger, Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2003), pp. 259-305.

Or in Hebrew:

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

### **Class 6: From Low Tide to High Tide in the 1980s: The Iranian Revolution and the First Gulf War of 1991**

Required reading:

President Bush's Remarks to Officers and Troops in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, October 28, 1990: [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 Hollywood 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 7: 1990s: From the Oslo Accords to al-Qaida and 9/11**

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 8: The Second Gulf War of 2003 and Its Aftermath**

Required reading:

Dennis Ross, Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007), pp. 259-317.

Or in Hebrew:

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

### **Class 9: From Obama to Trump and Biden – Managing the Regional Powers of Saudi Arabia, Israel, Iran and Turkey**

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 10: US Domestic Politics and the Middle East**

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 11: US Military In the Middle East**

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 12: Democracy, Human Rights and The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations**

Required Reading:

Transparency International's Public Sector Corruption Perception Index 2022:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>

Freedom House's Global Freedom Status 2023: <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2023>

### **Class 13: Wrap Up: Should America Withdraw from the Middle East?**

Required Reading:

Robert Silverman and Steven Simon, "Restraint as a US Foreign Policy Strategy," *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, January 2023. <https://jstribune.com/simon-silverman-restraint-as-a-us-foreign-policy-strategy/>

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

David S. Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945 (New York: Pantheon, 1984)

Kenneth Stein, Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter and Begin and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace (New York; Routledge, 1999)

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

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

Kaplan, Robert, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1995). 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). שטיין, קנת, מדינאות אמיצה: סאדאת, קיסינג'ר, קרטנר ובגין והחתימה לשלום ערבי-ישראלי (תל אביב: מערכות, 2003).