



Course No.: 4040246

Course Title: Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States

Course Title in Hebrew: ערב הסעודית ומדינות המפרץ

Year: 2023-2024 Spring (תשפ"ד)

Lecturer: Mr. Robert Silverman

Program: Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

Course duration: Second semester, 2 weekly academic hours

Format: Lecture

Credits: 2

Pre-Requirements: The Modern History of the Central Arab Lands and Turkey

Office Hours: Sundays, 15:00-16:00

Lecturer's Contact Information: silverrj99@hotmail.com

Course Description: The course assumes a basic familiarity with the broad lines of modern Middle Eastern history, to allow a focus on the Gulf region. The course is based on weekly class lectures in English, some devoted to overarching themes, and others to specific countries. Thematic lectures will touch on all the countries of the region. The instructor will present the material in a lecture format, allowing time for discussion (in English or Hebrew, as the lecturer understands Hebrew.)

Course Objectives: This course will give students a nuanced, multi-disciplinary understanding of the present-day Arab countries of the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman), from foreign relations and domestic politics to economies and societies. Students will acquire a basic understanding of what distinguishes each of the six countries, how they differ from and resemble one another in the management of key challenges (Islam, tradition, oil, migration, relations with the powers and Iran, gender relations), and will become familiar with the most reliable sources for following Gulf events, in Arabic and English.

Requirements:

Final Paper (1,500 - 2,000 words, in English or Hebrew): 100%

Passing Grade: 60.

Subjects and Required Reading:

Session 1: **Introduction:** Why study the Gulf region? Overview of class subjects and required readings. **Saudi Arabia I: Building a multi-ethnic kingdom.**

Required reading:

David Howarth, *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud* (London: Collins, 1964), "Capture of a Capital" and "Bedouin At War," pp. 13-32.

Wilfred Thesiger, *Desert, Marsh & Mountain* (London: Flamingo, 1979), pp. 33-34, 41.

Required Viewing:

Trump, Tillerson, Ross dance with swords in Saudi Arabia: <http://bit.ly/38yK0wG>

Optional viewing:

Bas Ya Bahar ("The Cruel Sea" with English subtitles) Kuwait, 1972
<http://bit.ly/37wUAEq>

Session 2: **Saudi Arabia II: Oil Development from foreign concessions to state companies.**

Required reading:

Ali Al-Naimi, *Out of the Desert: My Journey from Nomadic Bedouin to the Heart of Global Oil* (London: Penguin, 2016), "The Oil Beneath our Feet," pp. 9-24.

Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Free Press, 2009), "Crisis in the Gulf," pp. 750-762.

Session 3: **Saudi Arabia III: Wahhabism and the Threat of Terrorism.**

Required reading:

Lawrence Wright, *The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to The Islamic State* (Knopf, 2016), "The Kingdom of Silence," pp. 89-124.

Session 4: **The Upper Gulf States of Kuwait and Bahrain.**

Required Reading:

Ismaeel Naar, "25 Years On, Iraq's Kuwait Invasion Remains a Source of Bitterness," August 2015, *Al Arabiya*, <http://bit.ly/2NVPkIV>

Megan O'Toole, "Palestine-Kuwait Relations: Ice Has Started to Melt," *Aljazeera*, August 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/8/6/palestine-kuwait-relations-ice-has-started-to-melt>

Alan Taylor, "The Bahraini Uprising Four Years Later," *The Atlantic*, January 21, 2015, <http://bit.ly/3aNpn1x>

Session 5: **The Lower Gulf States of Oman and Qatar.**

Required reading:

Giorgio Cafiero, "Oman's New Era," January 2020 <http://bit.ly/2uCWfjC>

Kristian Ulrichsen, "How Qatar Weathered the Gulf Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, June 2018, <https://fam.ag/2O0ZcLk>

Session 6: **The United Arab Emirates: Federalism and Strategic Planning.**

Required Reading:

Jim Krane, *City of Gold: Dubai and the Dream of Capitalism* (New York: St. Martin's, 2009), "It's Sheikh Rashid's World – We Just Live in It," pp. 65-80.

Robert F. Worth, "Mohammed bin Zayed's Dark Vision of the Middle East's Future," *New York Times Magazine*, January 12, 2020. <https://nyti.ms/2RsAbuh>

Session 7: **Internal Development I: Economics, The Resource Curse and Efforts to Diversify.**

Required reading:

Daniel Lazare, "Will the Saudi Kingdom Collapse Under the Resource Curse?" *American Conservative*, April 3, 2018, <http://bit.ly/2O1Xj0D>

Session 8: **Internal Development II: Society, Focus on Women and Migrant Workers.**

Required reading:

Rajaa Alsanea, *Girls of Riyadh*, translated by Marilyn Booth (London: Penguin, 2016), pp. 1-19

Madawi al-Rasheed, "Saudi Women Can Now Travel Without Consent, but this Progress is Fragile," *The Guardian*, August 2, 2019, <http://bit.ly/2GrQjpS>

Human Rights Watch, *Migrant Workers in Qatar*, 2019, <http://bit.ly/38HlrgY>

Human Trafficking Center, April 2019, "The Kafala Labor-Sponsorship System in the Gulf States," <http://bit.ly/3aM7Oio>

Session 9: **Internal Development III: Doing Business in the Gulf.** Guest Speaker Eli Epstein, partner in several business projects in the UAE.

Required reading:

World Bank, "Doing Business 2020: Gulf Cooperation Council States Implement Record Number of Business Climate Reforms." <http://bit.ly/38yJGOu>

Session 10: **Foreign Policy I: Patron-Client Relationships from Britain to America.**

Required reading:

Bruce Riedel, *Kings and Presidents: Saudi Arabia and the United States Since FDR* (Washington: Brookings, 2019), "Obama and Trump, Abdullah and Salman 2009-2017," pp. 151-179

Session 11: **Foreign Policy II: Managing Relations with Iran.**

Required Reading:

"Fierce Foes, Iran and Saudi Arabia Secretly Explore Defusing Tensions," *New York Times*, May 1, 2021. <https://nyti.ms/3ieqaFH>

עוזי רבי ויואל גוז'נסקי, עורכים, מדינות המפרץ: בין איראן למערב (המכון למחקרי ביטחון לאומי, פברואר 2012). <http://bit.ly/38HYs5C>

Session 12: **Foreign Policy III: Israel and the Abraham Accords.**

Required reading:

"Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization Between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel," 15 September 2020, <https://bit.ly/2S9JtyH>

Robert Silverman, "Leading with the Private Sector in Saudi-Israeli Normalization," *Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 2023. <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-746983>

Session 13: **Wrap Up. Future of the Gulf: Internal Development, Foreign Policy.**

Required reading:

Mark C. Thompson, *Being Young, Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 281-293, 300-304.

Bibliography – Required Reading.

Ali Al-Naimi, *Out of the Desert: My Journey from Nomadic Bedouin to the Heart of Global Oil*, London: Penguin, 2016, pp. 9-24.

Rajaa Alsanea, *Girls of Riyadh*, translated by Marilyn Booth, London: Penguin, 2016, pp. 1-19.

David Howarth, *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud*, London: Collins, 1964, pp. 13-32

Jim Krane, *City of Gold: Dubai and the Dream of Capitalism*, New York: St. Martin's, 2009, pp. 65-80.

Bruce Riedel, *Kings and Presidents: Saudi Arabia and the United States Since FDR*, Washington: Brookings, 2019. Pp. 151-179.

Wilfred Thesiger, *Desert, Marsh & Mountain*, London: Flamingo, 1979, pp. 33-34, 41.

Mark C. Thompson, *Being Young, Male and Saudi: Identity and Politics in a Globalized Kingdom*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 2019, pp. 281-293, 300-304.

Lawrence Wright, *The Terror Years: From Al-Qaeda to The Islamic State*, Knopf, 2016, pp. 89-124.

Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power*, New York: Free Press, 2009, pp. 750-762.

Bibliography – Recommended Reading.

Books on Relations with the UK and US:

Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia*, New York: Oxford, 2006.

H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours*, London: George Allen, 1956.

David Heard, *Oil Men, Territorial Ambitions and Political Agents: From Pearls to Oil in the Trucial States of the Gulf*, Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2019.

J.B. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, New York: Basic, 1980

Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to The Present*, New York: Norton, 2007

Books and Articles on Politics:

Madawi al-Rasheed, *Contesting the Saudi State, Islamic Voices from a New Generation*, Cambridge UK: Cambridge, 2007

F. Gregory Gause III, *Oil Monarchies, Domestic and Security Challenges in the Arab Gulf States*, Washington: CFR, 1994.

Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans: A Survey of Political Instability in the Arab World*, New York: Vintage, 1975. [Note: See chapters on Oman and Dhofar Rebellion.]

Joseph Kechichian, *Power and Succession in Arab Monarchies: A Reference Guide*, Boulder: Rienner, 2008.

Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society: Oman under Sa'id bin Taymur, 1932-1970*, Brighton UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2006.

Robert Silverman, "An Arab Study of Jews," *Foreign Policy*, October 2009, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/06/an-arab-study-of-jews/>

Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising in Islam's Holiest Shrine and the Birth of Al Qaeda*, New York: Doubleday, 2007.

Books and Websites on Economy, Culture, and Society:

Hanan al-Shaykh, *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, translated by Catherine Cobham, New York: Anchor, 1989.

Geoffrey Bibby, *Looking for Dilmun*, London: Stacey, 2012.

Loring Danforth, *Crossing the Kingdom: Portraits of Saudi Arabia*, Los Angeles: UC, 2016.

Zahra Freeth, *Kuwait Was My Home*, London: George Allen, 1956.

Jadwa Economic Research,

<http://www.jadwa.com/en/researchsection/research/economic-research/macroeconomic-reports>

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, "Vision 2030" <https://vision2030.gov.sa/en>

Stephen H. Longrigg, *Oil in the Middle East: Its Discovery and Development*, 3rd edition, London: Oxford, 1968.

Abdelrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*, translated by Peter Theroux, New York: Vintage, 1989.