

A STUDY OF MIDDLE EAST
CULTURES AND POLITICS
CURRICULUM
FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Distance Learning Site: RCC/Glenns

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Definition

The Middle East is the geographic and cultural region located in southwestern Asia and northeastern Africa. The geopolitical term Middle East was first used in 1902 and originally referred to the Asian region south of the Black Sea between the Mediterranean Sea to the west and India to the east (*Middle East*, p.1). Today the term refers to the area extending from Libya or Egypt (depending on the source) in the West to Iran or Afghanistan and Pakistan (again, depending on the source) in the East. Collectively, the term includes the Asian countries of Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel (and the Israeli occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, and the African countries of Egypt and Libya. A broader, more cultural definition might also include the N. African Muslim countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Sudan and the Asian countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan (*ibid*). A study of Middle East cultures and politics would therefore be defined as an exploration of the cultural, political and geopolitical realities of the region described above.

Rationale

After the September 11th, 2001 attacks against the United States, it is tragically apparent that global politics and regional conflicts affect all Americans. As American citizens, we cannot afford to turn a deaf ear towards political and societal issues in other parts of the world. The Middle East has been a political hot spot for centuries, and especially in the 20th century to now, conflicts there have been escalating and resentment towards the U.S. and other Western nations has grown dramatically. It is imperative that students acquire the information necessary to evaluate and analyze the myriad issues -- historical, cultural, political etc.-- affecting the clashes between cultures that are occurring today in the Middle East, and by

extension, within the U.S. According to Collins, Czarra and Smith in *Guidelines for Global and International Studies Education (2001)*:

“All evidence indicates that global issues and problems are growing in magnitude and will neither go away nor resolve themselves. They require action. In turn, that action--if it is to be effective--requires citizens who are trained and willing to deal with difficult and complex global issues. Students should leave school reasonably informed and concerned about one or more of the major global issues, problems, or challenges facing the human race” (p. 1).

It is part of the American democratic ideal that informed citizens will elect informed leaders. As part of that ideal, this curriculum aims to inform students specifically about the geopolitical realities of the Middle East. According to Susan Graseck in *Teaching Foreign Policy in the Post Cold War Era*, “...the American public needs to come to terms with the changing international environment in order to provide a framework or standard to guide policymakers. It is a part of the job of educators at this juncture in history to help students understand these new issues... ” (p.1). Given the seriousness of the American “War Against Terrorism”, it is important that students gain a broader understanding of the complexities involved in Middle East politics, U.S. foreign policy in the region, the historical context behind the current conflicts, and the cultures involved.

It is also important that students recognize cross-cultural commonalities in human experiences in order to gain a deeper and more appropriate appreciation of both our similarities and our cultural differences. Who are Middle Easterners? What are their histories? How has Islam shaped the Middle Eastern perspective? What are some of the comparative themes between Islam, Christianity and Judaism? Answering these questions should generate among students an expanded understanding of the many peoples and nations that make up the Middle East and should foster a resistance to stereotyping that so often occurs when views are developed outside the realm of sound scholarship.

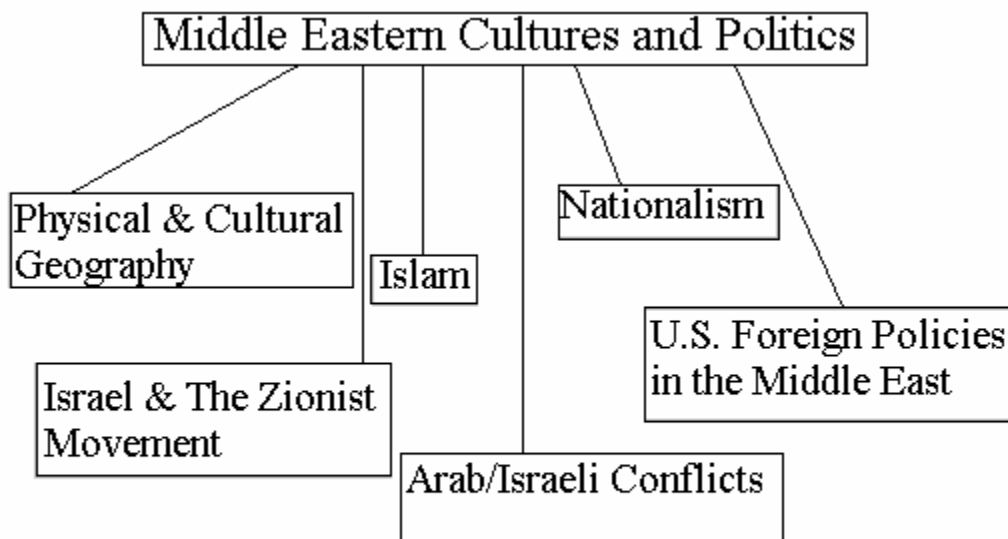
This curriculum is geared toward community college students seeking to gain a greater understanding of Middle East politics and culture, and who wish to know more about what part Western cultural, political and economical influences have played in shaping the current realities of the

Middle East region.

Content Source

The content sources for this curriculum are the geopolitical, historical and cultural realities of the Middle East region. For the purpose of this curriculum, the following definitions of terms apply. Geopolitics can be defined as “influences of geography on politics: the relationships that exist between a country's politics and its geography and population distribution, or the influences that geography and population distribution have on political relations between countries” (Encarta online). Culture can be defined as “shared beliefs and values of a group: the beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior of a particular nation or people” (ibid). History can be defined as “what has happened in the past: the past events of a period in time or in the life or development of a people, an institution, or a place” (ibid).

Content Structure for A Study in Middle East Cultures and Politics



Course Aims

This curriculum aims to provide students with a broad understanding of the geopolitical and cultural realities of the Middle East region; to foster an appreciation of the varied cultures in the Middle East in order to discourage stereotyping; and to promote an awareness of how geopolitical realities in the Middle East affect U.S. foreign policies and, in turn, how U.S. foreign policies affect Middle East geopolitical realities.

Course Goals

The goals of this curriculum are to:

1. Instill a basic understanding of the geopolitical forces shaping the Middle East region.
2. Foster an understanding and appreciation of the cultures that make up the Middle East.
3. Illustrate commonalities between our culture and those we will analyze, and familiarize students with cultural differences as well, in order to discourage cultural stereotyping and prejudice.
4. Promote a deeper understanding of the Israeli/Arab conflict.
5. Increase awareness of how Western foreign policies in the region have influenced current Middle East politics and conflicts.
6. Encourage thoughtful consideration of the difficulties many average Middle East citizens face in their day to day lives in order to foster an understanding of how frustration and anger can occur.

A Study of Middle East Cultures and Politics

Scope and Sequence

Community College Course

16 weeks (6 Units)

Classes will meet 3 times weekly for 1 hour each, or 2 times weekly for 1 1/2 hours each. 16th week is reserved for review and final.

Unit One (one week)

- Physical & Cultural Geography
 - The Middle East on the Map
 - Nations Within the Middle East Region

Unit Two (four weeks)

- Islam
 - Historical Setting: Muhammed, Mecca and the Spread of Islamic Thought and Culture
 - Comparative Study of Islam, Christianity and Judaism
 - Islam in Politics
 - The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism

Unit Three (two weeks)

- Nationalism
 - The Legacy of Colonialism
 - A Search for Identity

Unit Four (two weeks)

- Israel & The Zionist Movement
 - How Israel Was Born
 - The Political Consequences

Unit Five (two weeks)

- Arab/Israeli Conflict
 - Wars, Occupations and the Intifada
 - An Impasse in the Peace Talks Again

Unit Six (four weeks)

- U.S. Foreign Policies in the Middle East
 - U.S. National Security
 - U.S. Relations with Oil Nations
 - Current Problems: Refugees, Poverty, Terrorism, Economic Development, War, Human Rights

Review & Final (last week)

UNIT ONE

PHYSICAL & CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

The Middle East on the Map; Nations and Cultures
Within the Middle East Region
(one week)

GOAL:

Provide students with accurate knowledge of the geographical area of the Middle East.

Develop student awareness of the nation states and cultures that comprise the Middle East region.

RATIONALE:

Locating and defining the Middle East region on a map of the world may seem like a simple task, but in fact, it can be complex. What does the term Middle East mean? Are nations included in the scope of the region due to geography or religious and ethnic similarities? Afghanistan, for instance is geographically located in the Near East. Culturally, however, it is often included as a Middle Eastern country. The same is true for Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia -- all of which are North African countries which have cultural and religious ties to the Middle East, and are often included in maps of the Middle East. Also, many Americans consider all Middle Easterners to be Arabs. While it is true that people of Arab descent are the majority population, and Arabic is the most widely spoken language, there are other significant ethnic groups and languages in the region. Turks, Kurds, Persians (Iranians), and Jews are just some examples. Currently, the world's economy relies heavily on the continued supply of Middle Eastern oil. In addition, the region is highly volatile and poses a constant threat to world peace. Therefore, educating students about the geographic and cultural make-up of the region is a vital first step in understanding the Middle East and the issues shaping the region today.

OBJECTIVES:

Define the term Middle East.

Identify the Middle East region on the map.

List the nations that are always judged to be part of the Middle East, and those that are sometimes included based on ethnicity and/or geographic

proximity.

Outline the ethnic groups in the Middle East and identify the size of their populations, where they live, and what languages they speak.

Identify cultural characteristics common to the region.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend lectures covering the objectives for this unit.

Handouts for class discussion and comparison: *Map of the Middle East*. (Encarta online). *Maps of the Middle East -- Source CIA*. (Geography at About).

Handout for class discussion and comparison: Lists of countries in the Middle East. Discussion will include student debate over why some countries might be listed on one source, yet omitted from another.

View assorted photos including the: Saudi Arabian Desert, Arid Plains Near the Tigris, Istanbul, Turkey, Arabs of Yemen, Pilgrimage to the Kaaba, Village Market, Oman Oil Well in Bahrain, Egyptian Pyramids (Encarta online).

Handout for class discussion: *Middle East*. Headings include: Land & Resources, People, Climate, etc...(Encarta online pp. 1 - 10).

Handout for class discussion: *Dress* -- An illustrated discussion of types of clothing worn in the region (Aramco. Pp. 152 - 153).

Assignment: Using a blank map, have students research and fill in the map devising their own key to illustrate one of several possible topics. Examples include ethnic groups, rainfall, agriculture, monarchies, etc....

REFERENCES:

Aramco and Its World: Arabia and the Middle East (1980) Edited by Ismail I. Nawwab, Peter C. Speers, and Paul F. Hoyer. Washington, D.C.: Arabian American Oil Company.

Krooth, Richard & Moallem, Mino (1995). *The Middle East: A*

Geopolitical Study. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc.

Maddy-Weizman, Dr. Bruce. (1997). *Middle East States and the Approaching 21st Century* [electronic version]. Middle East Review of International Affairs. Vol. 1, Number 4 - December 1997.
<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/index.html>

Middle East [electronic version]. Encarta Encyclopedia Online.
<http://www.encyarta.msn.com/>

Middle East [electronic version]. Geography at About.
<http://geography.about.com/mbody.htm>

UNIT TWO

ISLAM

Historical Setting: Muhammed, Mecca and the Spread of Islamic Thought and Culture; Comparative Study of Islam, Christianity and Judaism; Islam in Politics; The Rise of Islamic Fundamentalism
 (four weeks)

GOALS:

Generate a broad understanding of Islam, especially in relation to its influence on world affairs.

Analyze Islamic ideologies and traditions in order to discourage stereotyping.

Explore Islamism as an avenue for social change.

RATIONALE:

No study of Middle Eastern cultures and politics would be complete without a thorough analysis of Islam. Islam is the world's fastest growing religion. Though it originated in the Arabian Peninsula during the 7th century, it has since spread to all five continents and has grown to over 1 billion followers (*Islam*. Encarta. p. 1). Today in the U.S. there is a lot of confusion and fear surrounding Islam. Even before the September 11th attacks, militant Islam had been depicted by the West as "...anti-Western, anti-Israeli, anti-woman, and anti-democratic (Krooth & Moallem, p. 102). Unfortunately, there is a lot of solid evidence which supports this view. Repressive Islamist regimes

and, of course, the September 11th attacks are but two examples. It is therefore important that students learn the differences between Islam, one of the world's great religions, and Islamism, the term used to define political movements based on Islamic fundamentalists ideals. It is also important for students to explore the possibility that Islamism, in some forms, could be used successfully as a positive force for social change in the Middle East. Islam, which in Arabic means "Peace, surrender of one's will to God", is based on the teachings of Muhammed, who began preaching the faith in Mecca around 610 A.D. Islam is a monotheistic religion which is based on many of the same principles as Judaism and Christianity. Followers of the Islamic faith, "...recognize the divine origins of the earlier Hebrew and Christian Scriptures," and consider Islam to be both "...a restoration and continuation of their [Jewish and Christian] traditions" (*Islam*. Encarta. p.2). Jewish and Christian prophets, including Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus, are considered by Muslims to be earlier messengers of God, and many of their teachings are written in the Quran, the Islamic holy book (Oxford, p. 7). Muhammed is considered by Muslims to be the last and greatest in this series of prophets (ibid). Since its inception, Islam has played a vital role in Middle Eastern cultures and politics, and it continues to today. According to John L. Esposito, "Islam today is the dominant symbolic and ideological force in the Muslim world, informing social institutions (education, clinics, hospitals, social welfare services, and banks) and politics" (Oxford, p.x). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, an awareness of its place in world history, and an analysis of Islam in relation to Middle Eastern geopolitical issues are important aspects of any study of Middle Eastern politics and cultures.

OBJECTIVES:

Outline the historical events and conditions that led to the early spread of Islam.

Identify the benefits to Western cultures in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, art, medicine and philosophy due to interaction with Islamic scholars during the Middle Ages.

Outline the basic tenets, traditions and sects of Islam.

Compare Islam to Judaism and Christianity.

Explain Islam's historical roles associated with governing.

Describe the differences between Islam and Islamism.

Describe the current conditions in the Middle East which lead to the growth of Islamic fundamentalists movements.

Illustrate Islamism's relation to social change.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend lectures covering the objectives for this unit.

View video *Islam: Empire of Faith*, produced by Robert Gardner for the PBS Empire Series. Use several class periods. Analyze and discuss after each viewing.

Handout: Islam Vocabulary Sheet. Have students match a variety of Islamic terms with descriptions. Discuss.

Assignment: Students will be asked to write a short essay, choosing one of several possible topics including, but not limited to, Muhammed -- his influence on world history; Islam -- interaction with European cultures during the Middle Ages; Islamic intellectuals -- contributions to world scholarship, Islamism -- its role in Muslim society, etc....

Handout for class discussion: *The Islamic Resurgence* (Huntington, 1996).

Handout for class discussion: *U.S. Policy Toward Political Islam* (Zunes, 2001).

Assigned Reading: *Islam and Christendom* by Jane I. Smith (Oxford, pp. 270 - 305). Analysis and class discussion

Assigned Reading: *The Compatibility of Islam and Democracy* by John L. Esposito (Oxford, pp. 675 -684). Analysis and class discussion.

View photos of Muslims on pilgrimage to Mecca.

Invite a practicing Muslim to attend class and answer questions about Islam.

REFERENCES:

Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). *The Islamic Resurgence*. Excerpted from

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Islam: Empire of Faith. A Gardner Films production in association with PBS and Devilliere Donegan Enterprises.

Krooth, Richard & Moallem, Minoo (1995). The Middle East: A Geopolitical Study. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc.

Nicholson, Reynold A. (1975). The Mystics of Islam: An Introduction to Sufism. New York, NY: Shoken Books.

Oxford History of Islam (1999). John L. Esposito, Editor. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Zunes, Stephen (2001). *U.S. Policy Toward Political Islam* [electronic version]. Foreign Policy in Focus. Vol. 6, Number 24.
www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org

UNIT THREE NATIONALISM

The Legacy of Colonialism; The Search for Identity
(2 weeks)

GOALS:

Generate an understanding of the relationship between colonialism and nationalism in the Middle East.

Provide knowledge of how nationalism has shaped the region geographically, culturally and politically.

Assess how nationalistic ideologies continue to shape the Middle East region today.

RATIONALE:

Geography and politics today in the Middle East has been determined by nationalistic movements in the region which began in the 19th century. According to Stephen Zunes in an *Overview of Self-Determination Issues in*

the Middle East, “Much of the ongoing violence in the Middle East is related to aborted struggles for self-determination and is rooted in the colonial legacy” (Zunes, 2001). Prior to WWI, the region was unified for almost 500 years by the Ottoman Empire, though European colonialism, which began in the region in the 18th century, competed with Ottoman rule during the latter Ottoman Empire era. After WWI and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, European countries (specifically England, France, Russia and Italy) divided the rest of the region into continued colonially ruled areas. The Ottoman Empire was relegated to the area of present day Turkey. By the mid-20th century, uprisings based on nationalistic ideals led to freedom from European colonial rule throughout the region. Efforts to unify the region under the ideal of pan-Arabism failed, and the nation states, which are geographically based on prior colonial borders, emerged. Nationalistic struggles continue in the region today. The failures of many Middle East nations to provide adequate material and spiritual fulfillment for their populations, and a strong resistance to Western acculturation, has led to continued searches for identity among the peoples of the Middle East. Pan-Islamism is a result of these searches. So too are movements based on ethnic, cultural and tribal ties. This unit will provide students with an analysis of the processes by which today’s Middle Eastern nation states emerged focusing on nationalism as the primary agent for change during the 20th century, on the relationship between the legacy of colonialism and nationalistic movements, and on the present day search for identity among Middle Eastern peoples. Politics and culture in the Middle East today cannot be fully understood without this analysis.

OBJECTIVES:

Discuss the scope and duration of the Ottoman Empire.

Outline European colonialism in the Middle East during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Describe how the rise of nationalism during the latter 19th and early 20th centuries eventually led to the end of foreign rule in most Middle Eastern nation states by the mid 20th century.

Discuss the significant role Islam had, and still has today, in the emerging and continuing nationalism of Middle Eastern nation states.

Explain the factors behind Arab resistance to Western acculturation.

Define Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism.

Outline the rule of Gamal Abdul-Nasser of Egypt and his role as a leader of pan-Arabism.

Illustrate the failure of pan-Arabism to unify the Middle East.

Explain the lingering effects of colonialism on today's Middle Eastern nation states, especially in areas of government, economics and national borders.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend lectures covering the objectives for this unit.

Compare maps of the region during different eras. Maps studied should include: 1. A map of the region (and beyond) at the height of the Ottoman Empire. 2. A map of the region at the height of European colonialism. 3. A map of the region immediately following WWI. and 4. A map of the region today.

Assigned Reading: *Ottoman Empire* (Encarta article, pp. 1-8).

Assigned Reading: *European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States* by S.V.R. Nasr (Oxford pp. 549 - 599).

Handouts for class discussion: Part I: *European Interest (Middle East, p. 10)*. Part J: *World War I and Aftermath (Middle East, p. 11)*. Part K: *Uprisings and Independence Movements (Middle East, p. 11)*. Part M: *Islamic Revival and the Iranian Revolution (Middle East, pp. 12 - 13)*.

Handout for class discussion: *Overview of Self-Determination Issues in the Middle East* (Zunes, 2001).

Handout for class discussion: *The Link of Local and Global Economy and Culture* (Krooth & Moallem, pp. 108 - 117).

Interview guest lecturer: invite an Arab American to class in order to discuss reasons for family immigration to the U.S. Example: Many Iranians

immigrated to the U.S. just prior to the 1979 Iranian revolution. Nationalism and frustration directed toward the pro-Western leadership were significant factors leading to the Revolution. Repression of civil liberties (often violent) before, during, and after the Revolution caused many Iranians to flee. Similar experiences can be found among Arab American immigrants from other Middle Eastern countries as well.

REFERENCES:

Beinin, Joel (1999) *The Working Class and Peasantry in the Middle East, From Economic Nationalism to Neoliberalism* [electronic version]. Middle East Report. Vol. 29, Number 1 pp. 18-22

Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). *The Islamic Resurgence*. Excerpted from *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster

Krooth, Richard & Moallem, Mino (1995). *The Middle East: A Geopolitical Study*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc.

Middle East [electronic version]. Encarta Encyclopedia Online.
<http://www.encarta.msn.com/>

Oxford History of Islam (1999). Edited by John L. Esposito. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Zunes, Stephen (2001) *Overview of Self-Determination Issues in the Middle East* [electronic version]. Foreign Policy in Focus.
<http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/selfdetermination/regions/mideast.html>

UNIT FOUR

ISRAEL AND THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

How Israel Was Born; The Political Consequences
(two weeks)

GOALS:

Examine when and how the Zionist movement began and how it served to establish Western support for the establishment of a Jewish nation.

Assess the impact that the creation of Israel has had on neighboring Arab nations and on the Palestinians.

RATIONALE:

In order to understand the current antagonism between Arab nations and Israel (and by association the U.S. due to continued financial and ideological support of Israel), it is important to look at the history of the Zionist movement. Most historians agree that the formal recognition and support by Western nations of Israel as an autonomous Jewish nation was not, as many believe, primarily motivated by the idealistic Zionistic doctrine that Jews had an inherent right to reclaim their “homeland” in order to practice their religion and cultural lifestyles free of persecution. Rather the support of Israel by Western nations was primarily motivated by political, economic and military self-interest on the parts of the nations involved (Lilienthal, 1978). This self-interest was also the motivation behind the post WWI divvying up of the Middle East between Britain, Russia and France. Prior to this new imperialism, Arab leaders had been promised national autonomy in exchange for their crucial assistance in overthrowing the Ottoman Empire (ibid). Arab distrust and resentment towards the West gained momentum when that promise was broken, and the Zionist movement and eventual establishment of Jewish Israel served to further that resentment and distrust. Today, over 100 years after the first Jewish immigrants from Russia began flocking to Palestine (and for the most part in the early years living in peaceful cooperation with their Palestinian neighbors), the conflict between Arabs and Jews remains bitter, with no satisfactory reconciliation in sight. Discussing and analyzing the historic events and the Zionist doctrine that led to the creation of Israel is an important step in understanding the complexities and difficulties in Middle Eastern politics today.

OBJECTIVES:

Illustrate the historic events and ideologies that led to the 1947 U.N. resolution calling for a separation of Palestine into separate Jewish and Palestinian states.

Define the roots of Arab distrust towards Western nations.

Compare the 1916 British assurance in the McMahon letter to Hussein ibn Ali, which promised Arab independence after WWI, with the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1917 between Britain, France, Russia and Italy, which outlined how the Middle East region would be divided as colonies after WWI, and

with the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which promised British support for a national Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Outline the impact the creation of Israel has had on neighboring Arab nations, including, but not limited to, dealing with Palestinian refugees, sharing fresh water supplies, and losing land areas in the aftermath of wars.

Discuss the difficulties Palestinians face in their day to day lives due to living under Israeli occupation.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend lectures covering the objectives for this unit.

Handout for class discussion: “A Middle East Chronology: 1882--1988” (Friedman, p. xi) (to be supplemented by an additional list of major events in the Middle East since 1988).

Assigned reading: *The Creation of Israel Revisited* (Lilienthal. pp. 46-100). Analysis and class discussion.

Assigned reading: *Zionism in Retrospective* (Don-Yehiya, pp. 267-276). Analysis and class discussion.

Handout for class discussion: *A Zionist Point of View* (Krooth & Moallem, pp. 63-65).

Assignment: Ask students to write a short essay describing life in modern Israel from either the Jewish or Palestinian perspective. Students may use any of the suggested references below or choose to do their own outside research.

REFERENCES:

Abourezk, James G. and Bookbinder, Hyman (1987). *Through Different Eyes*. Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler Publishers, Inc.

Don-Yehiva, Eliezer. (1998). *Zionism in Retrospective* [electronic version]. *Modern Judaism*, 18.3, pp. 267-276.

Friedman, Thomas L. (1989). *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Farrar

Straus Giroux.

Israel (1987). Library of Nations. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books.

Krooth, Richard & Moallem, Mino (1995). *The Middle East: A Geopolitical Study*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc.

Lilienthal, Alfred M. (1978). *The Zionist Connection; What Price Peace?* New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

Peres, Shimon (1993). *The New Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

Segre, Dan Vittorio. (2000). *Neutrality and Coexistence in the Middle East*. [electronic version]. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 11.4, pp. 84-97.

Winternitz, Helen, (1991). *A Season of Stones; Living in a Palestinian Village*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press.

UNIT FIVE

ARAB/ISRAELI CONFLICTS

Wars, Occupations and the Intifada; An Impasse in the Peace Talks Again
(2 weeks)

GOALS:

Analyze the wars between Israel and neighboring Arab nations between 1948 and the present.

Examine how the region's national borders have changed since 1947.

Review the peace process and the problems associated with achieving lasting peace in the region.

Evaluate how the Israeli/Arab conflict has produced anti-U.S. sentiments in the Middle East.

RATIONALE:

The Middle East has been in turmoil for over a century. During the 20th century, while Middle Eastern nations were breaking free of colonial rule,

Arabs saw the creation of Israel as another form of colonialism centered squarely in the heart of the Muslim world. Tensions had already been high between Jews and Arabs since the aftermath of WWI when Jewish immigration to Palestine escalated. Immediately following the 1947 U.N. resolution to partition Palestine, war between Israel and its neighboring Arab nations erupted. Armed conflict between Israel and Arab nations continued off and on for the next 25 years, and continues today in the Palestinian occupied territories, though the Palestinians do not yet have their own state and are not well armed. There has, at times, been progress in the peace process. Peace treaties between Israel, Egypt, and Jordan, have reduced tensions and kept full-scale war from breaking out again in recent years. The Israeli withdrawal of occupying troops from southern Lebanon in 2000 has also reduced tensions. However, attempts to negotiate peace between Israel and the Palestinians have failed again and again, and are currently at another impasse. Tensions will remain high between Israel and the rest of the region until a solution is found. Unfortunately, there seems to be no immediate viable solution. The situation is dire and the consequences severe, not only for the Israelis and Arabs, but for the U.S. as well. U.S. support of Israel is one of the primary factors behind anti-U.S. sentiment in the Muslim world, and terrorist attacks directed against U.S. interests abroad had already been escalating prior to the September 11th attack. In addition, both Israel and Iraq have nuclear arms. Nuclear war in the region is not out of the realm of possibility. As Eduard Shevardnadze, Soviet Foreign Minister said after his 1989 tour of the Middle East, "...the development of events in the region may spiral, becoming twisted by the logic of military confrontations. The region is threatened by an arms race which, sooner or later, may grow into a nuclear catastrophe" (Hadar, p. 12). It is important, therefore, for students to understand the scope of the problem between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and the implications for the U.S.

OBJECTIVES:

Illustrate how Israel's boundaries have changed since the 1947 U.N. resolution.

Differentiate between Israel proper and Israeli occupied territories.

List and discuss the wars between Israel and Arab nations since 1948.

Identify the issues that hinder attempts at peace between Israel and neighboring Arab nations, and between Israel and the Palestinians. These

issues include: terrorism, security, land, conditions of Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, fresh water resources, refugees, and Israeli colonization.

Outline UN resolutions pertaining to Israel and discuss Israeli and U.S. response to them.

Describe the Palestinian diaspora.

Discuss the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 and the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1997.

Explain what the Intifada uprising is and when it began.

Define the term “jihad”.

Describe U.S. financial and military support of Israel and how that support is construed by Arab nations.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

View video: Brooking Institution Address by Nabil Shaath, Minister of Planning & International Cooperation, Palestinian Authority. Topic: Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. 1 hr. (Washington Journal, 2001). Analyze and discuss.

View video: *Conflict in the Middle East* (Geography at About). (an Israeli perspective). 30 minutes. Analyze and discuss.

Compare maps of UN proposed partition of Palestine with Israeli territory after the 1949 armistice (Westwood, p. 14).

Compare maps of Israel after the wars in 1967 and 1973 and after the Camp David Accord (Israel, p. 25).

Assigned reading: *A State Born in Strife* (Israel, pp. 16 - 60).

Handout for class discussion: *Palestine in a Century* (ARIJ & LRC).

Study a synopsis of United Nations resolutions pertaining to Israeli/Palestinian situation.

Handout for class discussion: Geopolitical Map of the West Bank (ARIJ & LRC).

Handout for class discussion: *Israeli Road Construction Threatens Middle East Peace* (Zunes, 2001).

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<http://geography.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.m%2Dw.com/cgi%2Dbin/nytmmaps.pl%3Fisrael>

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Hadar, Leon T. (1989). *Creating a U.S. Policy of Constructive Disengagement in the Middle East* [electronic version]. *Policy Analysis No. 125*. December 29, 1989.

Lilienthal, Alfred M. (1978). *The Zionist Connection; What Price Peace?* New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

Monitoring Israeli Colonizing Activities in the Palestinian West Bank & Gaza. Applied Research Institute in Jerusalem (ARIJ) and the Land Research Center (LRC) <http://www.poica.org/>

Peres, Shimon, (1993). *The New Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

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UNIT SIX

U.S. FOREIGN POLICIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

U.S. National Security; U.S. Relations With Oil Nations;
 Some Current Problems: Refugees; Poverty; Terrorism,
 Economic Development, War, Human Rights
 (4 weeks)

GOALS:

Analyze current U.S. foreign policies in the Middle East.

Assess U.S. relationships with allied oil nations and non-allied oil nations..

Explore U.S. support of Israel.

Analyze how U.S. national security issues affect foreign policy.

Evaluate the current socio-political problems occurring today in the Middle East.

RATIONALE:

This unit is intended to take what students have learned about the Middle East in prior weeks, and use that knowledge in informed debate about current U.S. foreign policy positions in the Middle East. In looking at U.S. foreign policy in the region, it is important to consider our relationships with friendly oil nations, non-friendly oil nations, non-oil nations struggling with economic development issues and Israel. We will also be considering some of the socio-political problems in Middle East societies today that help shape policy including, terrorism, poverty, economic development, refugees, warfare and human rights. In addition, U.S. national security is an area that

needs to be considered when examining foreign policies. With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. is the sole remaining super-power influencing the Middle East today. Our military controls the Gulf and our policies shape the region. In a region that has been shaped by international forces over a span of two centuries, further Western influence is often resented. Therefore, it is important for students to take an educated look at current U.S. policies in the Middle East. As a democracy, our nation values informed citizens and informed debate. For that reason, this unit will be organized in a way which offers students, informed, reasoned and respectful dialogue on these issues. Opinions studied will be varied.

OBJECTIVES:

Identify U.S. Foreign Policy options.

Compare and contrast U.S. financial and military aid with economic sanctions.

List the nations with whom the U.S. has friendly relations and explain why.

List the nations with whom the U.S. has strained or non-existent diplomatic relations and explain why.

Discuss the Persian Gulf War and explain the reasons behind the ongoing U.S. military operations occurring in and near Iraq.

Identify refugees -- who they are, how many there are, and where the refugee camps are located.

Explain how widespread economic problems in the Middle East causes unemployment and poverty.

Identify the frustrations which lead to resentment and anger directed toward America and Americans and ultimately to terrorism.

Identify democratic movements within Middle East nations, how the governments of the Middle East react to those movements, and how the U.S. is involved.

Discuss how the U.S. might look to past efforts to shape governments in the Middle East when considering how best to establish a new government in

Afghanistan -- a current objective in our “War Against Terrorism”.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES:

Students will attend lectures covering the objectives for this unit.

Handout for class discussion: *Creating a Policy of Constructive Disengagement in the Middle East* (Hadar, 1989).

View video *Palestinian Refugees: Seeking Refuge* (Farnsworth, 2000).

Handout for class discussion: *U.S. Security Assistance to Israel* (Yackley, 2001).

Handout for class discussion: *With the “Process” Dead, What are the Prospects for Peace?* (Middle East Policy Council un-edited transcript).

Have students read contrasting policy options concerning foreign policy in the aftermath of Sept. 11th and arguments supporting and refuting each option. Have students engage in debate. Options focus on answering the following questions. 1. Why did the terrorist attacks happen? 2. Who is the enemy? 3. What steps should we take in the coming weeks and months? 4. What should we do about security at home? 5. What should our long-term goals be? 6. What values are important to us? (Choices Education Program).

Handout for class discussion: *The United States and the Gulf States: Alliance in Need* (Kostiner).

Handout for class discussion: *The Working Class and Peasantry in the Middle East, From Economic Nationalism to Neoliberalism* (Beinin).

Assigned Readings: *Oil and the New Western Sphere in the Middle East* (Krooth & Moallem, pp. 117 - 131). *Strategic Policies and the Levers for Control* (Krooth & Moallem, pp. 155 -170). *Administrative Authority, State Power and Civil Society* (Krooth & Moallem pp. 210 -217). *The Peace Process and the Drive for Unity* (Krooth & Moallem pp. 217 -227).

Handout for class discussion: *A New Agenda to Counter Terrorism* (Gershman). A look at foreign policies in relation to new national security issues.

Handout for class discussion: *The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?* (Zakaria, 2001).

Quiz: Using a blank map of the Middle East, have students identify and color code which nations are allied with the U.S. and which nations are not.

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Curriculum Evaluation

Student Evaluations (2 samples).

Sample 1. Unit Three. Nationalism: The Legacy of Colonialism; The Search for Identity

The following questions are to be answered in an essay form. Students may choose two of the questions to answer.

1. Explain the lingering effects of colonialism on today's Middle East nation states, especially in areas of government, economics and national borders.
2. Describe how the rise of nationalism during the latter 19th and early 20th centuries eventually led to the end of foreign rule in most Middle Eastern

nation states by the mid 20th century.

3. Discuss the significant role Islam had, and still has today, in the emerging and continuing nationalism of Middle Eastern nation states.
4. Explain the factors behind Arab resistance to Western acculturation.

Sample 2. Unit 1. Physical and Cultural Geography: The Middle East on the Map; Nations and Cultures within the Middle East Region

1. Write the names of the Middle East nations in the correct locations on the map provided.



2. List the majority ethnic groups in the Middle East and identify the size of their populations, where they live, and what languages they speak.

Document Validation:

This curriculum project should be assessed by a panel of experts in the field of Middle Eastern Studies. The University of Virginia has a good Middle East Studies program, and faculty specializing in varying fields within the discipline. A committee including members from different departments within the Middle East Studies program at UVA would be ideal. It could include Patricia Wattenmaker, Associate Professor / Anthropology; William Quandt, Professor / Government and Foreign Affairs; Joseph Miller, Professor / History; and Peter Ochs; Professor / Religious Studies. After an evaluation and revision, it should be sent to Dr. Nanette Smith / Director of Educational Planning, Virginia Community College System, along with a completed VCCS 103 Form, for further evaluation on the appropriateness of inclusion of this curriculum as a community college course in Virginia.

Sample Letter:

Ann F. Perry
PO Box 445
Deltaville, VA 23043
(804) 776-9368
perryfam@oasionline.com

November 16, 2001

William Quandt, Professor / Government and Foreign Affairs
Middle East Studies Department
International Studies Office
University of Virginia
208 Minor Hall
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903 USA

Dear Professor Quandt,

I am a graduate student currently working towards teacher certification in Social Studies at the secondary level. As part of my course work, I was required to develop a working curriculum. I chose to develop a curriculum on Middle East Studies which I have titled *A Study of Middle East Cultures and Politics for the Community College* (a copy is enclosed). I am writing you today to request an evaluation of this curriculum. Due to the scope of

the material covered in this project, I have sent a letter and copy of the curriculum to other faculty in your department as well, in the hopes that several of you might have a chance to assess it, perhaps focusing on content related to your individual specialties.

I have enclosed a survey sheet for your convenience. Additional comments would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so much.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ann F. Perry
Deltaville, VA

Survey sheet for an assessment of *A Study of Middle East Cultures & Politics for Community College.*

1. Does the definition provided for *A Study of Middle East Cultures & Politics* adequately define the subject to be studied?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

2. Does the rationale provide a convincing argument in support of inclusion of this curriculum in a Community College environment?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

3. Does using the geopolitical, historical and cultural realities of the Middle East as the content sources for this curriculum offer an appropriate knowledge base on which to structure this program?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

4. Is the content structure an appropriate illustration of how information derived from the content sources should be arranged to support the purpose of this curriculum project?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

5. Are the course aims appropriate?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

5. Are the course aims realistic?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

6. Do the course goals adequately illustrate appropriate long-range program outcomes?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

7. Do the course goals support the course aims?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

8. Is the scope of this project too broad? (bearing in mind that a Community College course in Middle East Studies most probably would be the only class of this nature available to the target student population).

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

9. On the assumption that the breadth of the scope is appropriate, have suitable knowledge areas (reflected in the unit headings) been chosen?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

10. Does the sequence of the content offer the best way to order the content for optimal dissemination of the material?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

11. Are the unit goals appropriate measures of the desired overall outcomes for the units?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

12. Do the unit goals support the overall aims and goals of the curriculum?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

13. Do the unit rationales offer adequate reasons for providing the unit for students?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

14. Do the unit rationales adequately support the unit goals?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

15. Do the unit objectives offer appropriate competencies with which to measure student achievement and/or knowledge of the material covered?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

16. Do the suggested activities support the unit objectives?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

17. Are the references chosen to develop, support and implement this curriculum accurate, current, and appropriate?

Yes: No: Somewhat:

Comments:

Any additional comments would be highly appreciated. Thank you for your time and effort. Ann F. Perry

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