

## REL 372 Section 001: Adv Stdy Mid East European Rel

3 Credit Hours

Primary Instructor: Dr. Steven Jacobs

Syllabus subject to change.

### Office Hours

Tuesdays 11:00-12:00 & 2:00-3:00

Thursdays 11:00-12:00 &

By Appointment

### Prerequisites

From the Student Records System

No prerequisites found.

One course in either Religious Studies or Judaic Studies or Permission of the Instructor.

### Course Description

The reassertion of religious values for political ends in the Middle East suggests a need for reconsideration of the process of social change. Whereas in Western societies, religion, in the main, has [seemingly?] declined as a political force (despite the current moment, at least in the United States), ethnic, cultural, and religious factors are dominant in personal behavior and political activity in the Middle East. Islamic revitalization can be related to the extraordinary wealth stemming from the production of oil in Islamic countries, the common hostility to Israel, and to the attempt to forge an Islamic political position vis-à-vis the challenges of Westernization and modernization.

Although Israel, unlike the Arab states, is a political democracy in which there is no *officially-sanctioned* state religion, there remains a close and complex relationship between religion and politics. The question of whether Israel is a "Jewish state" or "state of the Jews" remains open. The same question can be posed of Islamic countries: Are they countries of Muslims or Muslim states? Muslim countries are thus faced with different choices: Can they accept a particular view of modern civilization and merge their cultures and identities with it? Or turn their backs on the West and return to a perceived lost theological/religious-political ideal? Or reach a harmonious balance between the West and their own inherited traditions? This course seeks to explore these and other complicated and complex questions through lectures, readings, media and student presentations, and will attempt to arrive at a class consensus regarding the future of the region, now made even more difficult as a result of the "Arab Spring" or "Arab Awakening" beginning in the last few years.

### Student Learning Outcomes

1. *To introduce students to the countries of the Middle East in terms of their histories, their political realities, their cultural vibrancies, and their religious communities:* Students will be able to orally present an in-depth overview of one country of their choosing addressing the above concerns, and will be evaluated according to the "Oral Presentation Evaluation Rubric" included in the syllabus.
2. *To attempt an understanding of the complexities of the region and the ongoing tensions and disharmonies, especially among the religious communities of Jews, Christians, and Muslims:* Students will write a 3-5 page Reaction/Response Paper to Wright's *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East*, demonstrating writing fluency and proper written presentation.
3. *To attempt an understanding of the serious differences which continue to exist among and between the countries of the Middle East and which, more often than not, result in an ongoing cycle of intermittent violence and "cold peace":* Student teams which engage in a debate on the topic "Resolving the Middle East Israeli-Arab/Palestinian Conflict" by publicly presenting concrete suggestions and demonstrating good public speaking skills in the context of the give-and-take of debate. Students will be evaluated according to the "Oral Presentation Evaluation Rubric" included in the syllabus.
4. *To attempt an assessment of the various peace proposals which have thus far surfaced regarding the above conflict from a list included in the syllabus, their merits and/or demerits, and the realistic possibilities for success or failure:* Student will write an analytical paper drawing upon their own thinking and outside sources of 3-5 pages according to the above criteria demonstrating writing fluency and proper written presentation. Students will be evaluated according to the "Research Paper Grading Rubric" included in the syllabus.

## **Outline of Topics**

1. What is the Middle East?
2. Islam: Past & Present
3. Arab Nationalism: Past & Present
4. Judaism: Past & Present
5. Zionism: Past & Present
6. Modern Turkey
7. Revolutionary Egypt
8. State of Israel
9. Palestinian Authority
10. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
11. Republic of Lebanon
12. Iraq Today
13. Iran Today
14. The Arabian Peninsula
15. The Middle East: Present & Future?

## **Exams and Assignments**

1. Country Presentation
2. Reaction/Response Paper
3. Debate Participation
4. Peace Proposal Paper

## **Grading Policy**

- 10% = Class Participation
- 20% = Country Presentation
- 20% = Reaction/Response Paper
- 20% = Peace Proposal Paper
- 10% = Debate Participation
- 20% = Final Exam

## **Policy on Missed Exams & Coursework**

Student and Instructor will work out specifics for missed work.

## **Attendance Policy**

Required unless otherwise noted according to calendar included in syllabus.

## **Required Texts**

UA Supply Store Textbook Information

- **GELVIN, JAMES L / THE ARAB UPRISINGS:WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW**  
(Required)
- **WRIGHT / DREAMS & SHADOWS**  
(Required)
- **SORENSEN / INTRO TO THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST**  
(Required)
- **LEE / RELIGION & POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**  
(Required)
- **NANJI, AZIM / PENGUIN DICTIONARY OF ISLAM**  
(Required)

## Other Course Materials

Additional handouts to be distributed, if appropriate, during the course.

## Extra Credit Opportunities

Where appropriate by attendance at an event related to either Religious Studies or Judaic Studies and the submission of a 1-page typed response, one (1) point will be added to the final overall grade.

## Policy on Academic Misconduct

All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student.

The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

## Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit 133-B Martha Parham Hall East to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 133-B Martha Parham Hall East, before receiving academic adjustments.

## Severe Weather Protocol

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar, sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. If you are in a building, please move immediately to the lowest level and toward the center of the building away from windows (interior classrooms, offices, or corridors) and remain there until the tornado warning has expired. Classes in session when the tornado warning is issued can resume immediately after the warning has expired at the discretion of the instructor. Classes that have not yet begun will resume 30 minutes after the tornado warning has expired provided at least half of the class period remains.

UA is a residential campus with many students living on or near campus. In general classes will remain in session until the National Weather Service issues safety warnings for the city of Tuscaloosa. Clearly, some students and faculty commute from adjacent counties. These counties may experience weather related problems not encountered in Tuscaloosa. Individuals should follow the advice of the National Weather Service for that area taking the necessary precautions to ensure personal safety. Whenever the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Agency issue a warning, people in the path of the storm (tornado or severe thunderstorm) should take immediate life saving actions.

**When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the National Weather Service and to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take. The Office of Public Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways:**

- Weather advisory posted on the UA homepage
- Weather advisory sent out through Connect-ED--faculty, staff and students (sign up at myBama)
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM
- Weather advisories are broadcast via WUOA/WVUA-TV, which can be viewed across Central Alabama. Also, visit [wvuatv.com](http://wvuatv.com) for up-to-the-minute weather information. A mobile Web site is also available for your convenience.

**REL 224**

**"Introduction to Judaism"**

**Tu/Th 9:30-10:45 AM 207 MA**

**REL 372**

**"Religions, Politics, and Cultures of the Middle East"**

**TU 3:30-5:50 PM 210 MA**

**AUGUST**

**23 Thursday Introductions, Syllabus, Policies, etc.**

**28 Tuesday**

**30 Thursday**

**SEPTEMBER**

**4 Tuesday**

**6 Thursday**

**11 Tuesday**

**13 Thursday**

**18 Tuesday**

**20 Thursday**

**25 Tuesday**

**27 Thursday**

**OCTOBER**

**2 Tuesday REL 224: Reaction/Response Paper Due!**

**4 Thursday No Class; Mid-Semester Study Break**

**9 Tuesday REL 372: Reaction/Response Paper Duel**

**10 Wednesday REL 224: Midterm Grades Due!**

**11 Thursday**

**16 Tuesday**

**18 Thursday**

**23 Tuesday**

**25 Thursday**

**30 Tuesday**

## **NOVEMBER**

**1 Thursday**

**6 Tuesday REL 224: Research Paper OR Creative Project Due!**

**8 Thursday No Class; Out of Town**

**13 Tuesday REL 224: Oral Presentations of RP or CP**

**15 Thursday REL 224: Oral Presentations of RP or CP**

**20 Tuesday No Class; Out of Town**

**22 Thursday No Class; Thanksgiving**

**27 Tuesday REL 372: Peace Proposal Paper Duel**

**29 Thursday Last Day for All Tests, etc.**

## **DECEMBER**

**4 Tuesday REL 372: Debate: "Resolving the Middle East Crisis!"**

**6 Thursday Classes End**

**10-14 Mon.-Fri. Final Exams**

**12 Wednesday REL 224 9:00-10:50**

**14 Friday REL 372 3:30-6:00**

**15 Saturday Commencement**

**18 Tuesday Final Grades Due!**

# RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ OVERALL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis	10
Conclusion	9
Structure/Length	8
Evidence	7
Analysis/Content	6
Mechanics	5

Exceeds Expectations (9-10)	Meets Expectations (8-9)	Approaching Expectations (6-7)	Does Not Meet Expectations (0-5)
Thesis clearly and provocatively advances an original argument	Clear and specific thesis that sets up the central argument(s)	Thesis vague or not central to implied argument(s)	No discernible thesis
Conclusions critically reflect on the topic and positions it within existing and future research	Conclusions are convincing and function to position paper within an external context	Conclusions superficial or unconvincing; relevance of the paper is not clear	No conclusions or connections to the world
Paper structure is fluid and guides reader through arguments; scope of paper is clearly defined and appropriate to the arguments; within length requirements	Paper is organized in a coherent and logical manner; scope of paper is appropriate; within 15% of length requirements	Paper inconsistently organized but attempts to guide reader through arguments; scope of paper may be too broad/narrow; within 20% of length requirements	Paper is disorganized and lacks coherent structure; scope of paper is unclear; significantly outside of length requirements
Engages with scholarly research; synthesizes and critiques the arguments of scholarly geographic research	Appropriately cites academic research to develop arguments; demonstrates comprehension of arguments and distinguishes argument from opinion	Uses academic sources inconsistently; arguments inconsistently supported by evidence; may contain unsubstantiated opinion	Does not cite relevant scholarly research to support arguments; arguments mostly unsubstantiated

Critically and insightfully engages topic; analysis central to argument; demonstrates engagement with different branches of geographic thought	Shows thorough understanding of the topic and goes beyond recitation of facts; may have minor factual or conceptual inconsistencies; engages with at least one branch of thought	Shows basic understanding of ideas and information; may have some factual, interpretive, or conceptual errors; connections not clear or shows lack of understanding of geographic concepts	Lacks an understanding of topic; no clear analysis
Grammar, punctuation, spelling are correct; formatting follows APA style conventions	Grammar, punctuation, and spelling mostly correct; evidence of proof reading; formatting generally consistent with APA, MLA or Chicago Style	Some grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors; appears not to have been proof read; formatting inconsistent	Grammar, spelling, or punctuation interfere with readability; little or no attempt to use style conventions

Grade Scale: **A** – 90-100%; **B** – 80-89%; **C** – 70-79%; **D** –



# ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION RUBRIC

	Category	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Outstanding	How to Improve
Relevance	Relevance of presentation to the audience	Mixed several irrelevant points together.	Points were mostly relevant to the audience.	All points were relevant to the audience.	
Content	Information presented	Used inaccurate irrelevant, or inappropriate level of information that might hinder communication.	Used accurate, relevant information.	Used varied information, of which all was accurate, relevant, and at the right level of detail.	
Organization	Overall organization of presentation	Used unclear organization to present ideas.	Presented ideas in a somewhat organized manner.	Presented ideas in a polished, well organized manner.	
	Introduction	Vague introduction. Didn't introduce topic well.	Introduced topic with one or two brief sentences.	Introduction captured audience interests and established the purpose of the presentation.	
	Body	Lacked facts or used inappropriate facts and examples that didn't support main ideas. No logical sequence of information.	Presented with a logical sequence but not presented in a fluent manner.	Used evidence and examples to support main ideas in a fluent manner.	
	Conclusion	No conclusion.	Vague conclusion.	Conclusion reinforced the main ideas in the presentation.	

Time management	Effective use of time	Didn't conclude presentation in assigned time or concluded earlier than the assigned time.	Kept to time limit and delivered in the assigned time.	Carefully timed so that it "fit" into the time allowed. Spent appropriate amount of time on topics, allowed time for questions, and answered questions effectively.	
	Environment	The presenter didn't care about establishing a comfortable environment.	The presenter had little control, but made as many adjustments as possible.	The presenter established a comfortable environment.	
Strategy	Controlling nervousness	Presenter's nervousness distracted the audience.	Presenter's nervousness was apparent only occasionally.	The presenter controlled nervousness so that it did not distract the audience.	
Presentation	Mastery of the subject	Read from notes most of the time. Searched for words frequently with long periods of silence.	Spoke with occasional hesitations without overly relying on notes.	The presenter showed evidence of being prepared by not overly relying on notes, and spoke in a fluent and spontaneous way.	
Practice	Verbal	Could not be understood because of inappropriate rate, volume, or articulation.	Could be understood, but the presenter's voice did not effectively enhance the presentation.	The presenter's use of his or her voice was natural and effectively enhanced the presentation.	
Delivery	Non verbal Expression	Did not exhibit poise or used ineffective or distracting hand or facial gestures.	Used positive hand and facial gestures.	The presenter was poised and hand and facial gestures were natural and effectively enhanced presentation.	

Visual Aids	Eye contact	Established no/indistinct eye contact.	Established eye contact with the audience.	Established direct, consistent eye contact with the audience.	
	Effective use of humor	No humor was used.	No humor was tried or humor was used in an intrusive way.	Any humor used in the presentation was effective and not offensive.	
	Use of visual aids	Included no graphics or pictures or used irrelevant and distracting visual aids.	Included graphics and pictures that were relevant to the topic	Used good quality visual aids that were appropriate for the setting.	
	Visual aids design	Included no graphics or pictures or used distracting/poor looking visual aids.	Graphics and pictures were visible to all	Visual aids were professional looking, and followed text size/amount guidelines. Graphics and pictures were attractive, creative and precise so as to enhance the presentation.	
	Effective management of visual aids	Included no graphics or pictures or the use of visual aids was distracting.	Used some kind of visual aids to facilitate the presentation.	The presenter effectively managed the use of visual aids to enhance the effect of the presentation.	
Overall	Overall impression	Very boring, unpleasant to listen to, very poor presentation.	Somewhat interesting. Could make some improvements.	Very interesting, pleasant to listen to, very good presentation.	

The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians has a profoundly tragic character. Two peoples deeply attached to the same land by historical memory, religion, and political necessity yet unable to fully trust each other, are condemned precariously to live together with the never-ending possibility that the day may come when one side drives out the other or both succumb to an apocalyptic nuclear finale.

Richard L. Rubenstein (2008), "The Witness-People Myth, Israel, and Anti-Zionism in the Western World," in Michael Berenbaum, ed., *Not Your Father's Anti-Semitism: Hatred of the Jews in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (St. Paul: Paragon House), 319.

# **"MIDDLE EAST"**

[According to the IATA – International Air Transport Association]

**Bahrain**

**Egypt**

**Iran**

**Iraq**

**Israel**

**Jordan**

**Kuwait**

**Lebanon**

**Palestinian Territories (Authority)**

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**Oman**

**Qatar**

**Saudi Arabia**

**Somalia**

**Sudan**

**Syrian Arab Republic**

**United Arab Emirates**

**Pakistan**

**Yemen**

## REL 372

### “Politics, Religions, and Cultures of the Middle East”

COUNTRY	SORENSEN	WRIGHT	LEE
Saudi Arabia	127-145		
Persian Gulf Emirates	146-174		
Yemen	175-189		
Iran	190-210	263-339	213-266
Iraq	211-228	381-420	
Egypt	233-253	65-136	81-120
Turkey	254-275		167-212
Syria	276-291	212-262	
Lebanon	292-306	137-211	
Israel	307-330		121-166
Jordan	331-346		
Palestine	347-364	19-64	
Tunisia	369-381		
Libya	382-393		
Morocco	394-410	340-380	
Algeria	411-424		