

MENNO SIMONS COLLEGE
In affiliation with the University of Winnipeg
Conflict Resolution Studies
At Eastman Education Centre in Steinbach

Critical Issues: War and Peace in the Middle East
CRS-3262/3 -360 Section 001
Winter 2007
Tuesday evenings 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

COURSE OUTLINE

INSTRUCTOR: David S Pankratz
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OFFICE HOURS: by appointment only

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine issues such as land, resources, and religious identity at the root of conflicts in the Middle East, focusing on understanding various perspectives on these issues, rather than attempting to convince of any one perspective. The course content will be provided by a variety of speakers, with readings, assignments and discussion that are designed to help the student engage with and reflect on what is presented.

OBJECTIVE

This course is intended to provide students with the opportunity to hear and discuss a wide variety of viewpoints on the situation and events in the Middle East, centring primarily on Palestine/Israel, but including other countries in the region as well, particularly Iraq. The student will come to a better understanding of the situation in Israel/Palestine within the broader context of social, economic, political, emotional, religious and other forces that have led to the current situation and continue to have a significant impact on it. More broadly, the student will have the opportunity to move beyond models of explanation which are overly dependant on reference to particular incidents, or particular understandings of the situation. It is expected that the student will exit the course equipped to engage meaningfully with many different viewpoints on the Middle East.

FORMAT

Your instructor will act as 'host' for the class. We will meet in the first class to get acquainted, to understand the interests of both students and professor, to review the basic requirements of the course, and to learn and practice skills in discussing emotionally-laden topics about which we disagree, such as the topic of this course. Subsequently, a different speaker will present each week, who will share his or her views on the situation and on recent events. In the latter half of each class, we will take some time to review what has been learned, discuss the content in the light of personal viewpoints and the views already brought to the class by others, with a view to enriching our own understanding of this very difficult region.

ASSIGNMENTS

The student will be evaluated by a series of assignments throughout the course. There will be no final examination. The assignments and due dates are listed below.

ASSIGNMENTS*	DATE DUE**	VALUES
Dialogue Facilitation:	Due as scheduled:	10%
Media Log part A:	Due date (February 27)	20%
Media Log part B:	Due date March 20:	20%
Response(s) to news story:	Due March 20 at the latest:	10%
Position paper:	Due March 27:	40%

* Typed assignments are preferred over handwritten assignments, but the latter will be accepted if legible.

** If you are unable to submit an assignment on the required date, you must inform me before this date, and be able to provide written proof (if requested) of the reason for not submitting the assignment on time. If no arrangements have been made prior to the due date, the mark for the late assignment will be reduced by the equivalent of one letter grade level.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

1. **Dialogue Facilitation:** Each student will be assigned a particular class for which to prepare questions and to assist the class in engaging the speaker in a meaningful exchange about his/her presentation. This would involve:
 - o summarizing the readings,
 - o preparing questions for the speaker out of the readings and earlier presentations.
2. **Response to News Story:** Write a single op-ed piece, or two letters to the editor about recent newspaper articles related to the topics and events discussed;
3. **Media log** which consists of:
 - a. A list of the news stories on a daily basis – headlines and a brief description of the content (three sentences);
 - b. An annotation of at least 15 stories, noting:
 - i. The date, time, media source
 - ii. Summary of media presentation
 - iii. The significant (new) information in that story
 - iv. The stance from which the story is written
 - v. A brief response to the story
 - c. identify themes and trends in the growing compendium of stories
 - d. an appendix briefly describing the media sources used – ownership, other relevant information

If there is a shortage of local media stories on the Middle East, some of the stories may be gleaned from the Internet, in which case the comments about the source will be of particular importance;
4. A **position paper** articulating your position on the situation in the Middle East as of the date of the paper. The position must be as clearly stated as you can, supported with material from the classes, supplemented by your own additional readings, experiences and articulated perspectives.

STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS

For the position paper, any one of several academic formats – such as University of Chicago style, Modern Language Association style, and American Psychological Association style – is acceptable, provided it is used consistently. Information about these forms will be provided upon request.

For other assignments, a format that communicates effectively is appropriate. We will discuss dialogue formats and letters to the editor in the first class; the media log is a matter of personal style within the constraints of good communication and clarity.

COURSE EVALUATION

Developing skills in discussing difficult topics is part of the objective of this course. Therefore students will be expected to communicate clearly, knowledgably and fairly on the issues presented in the course. All written work must be well informed, well organized, and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (based on its value toward the final grade). The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades and is then translated into a letter grade according to the following scale.

Marking Scheme

A+	=	90-100%			
A	=	85-89	C+	=	65-69
A-	=	80-84	C	=	60-64
B+	=	75-79	D	=	50-59
B	=	70-74	F	=	0-49

NOTE: Section VII of the U of W General Catalogue provides further information on U of W policies re grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. MSC encourages all CRS students to take up any disputes regarding grades first with your instructor, then the Chair of the College Review Committee (the MSC Academic Dean), the U of W Appeals Committee.

WITHDRAWAL DATE

Final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty – **March 2, 2007**. If you are considering withdrawal from this course, please talk to me about it first.

A note about Menno Simons College

Menno Simons College (MSC) offers this course in affiliation with the University of Winnipeg (UW). MSC coordinates interdisciplinary programs and offers courses in Conflict Resolution Studies and International Development Studies in cooperation with several UW departments. All courses offered by MSC are subject to UW Senate approval and policies, and are open to all UW students.

MSC was established by UW in 1989 to develop programs based on the needs of our time and on the distinctive contributions that the Mennonite community can bring to these areas. MSC is part of Canadian Mennonite University. Additional information about MSC and the MSC Student Association activities is available from the MSC office in Room 210, 520 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg.

COURSE OUTLINE

This is a preliminary outline intended to provide a general idea of topics to be covered. The actual schedule will change as the course progresses and as student interest interacts with the course material. Some topics may be added and others not fully covered.

Week 1 – January 9, 2006 - Introduction, common ground dialogue, media awareness
Speaker: David Pankratz, Lesley Hughes

Week 2 – January 16 - History of anti-semitism and the holocaust
Speaker: Shelley Faintuch

Week 3 – January 23 – History of Jews in Europe, early Israeli state
Speaker: Henry Heller

Week 4 – January 30 – the nature of modern armed conflict; Iraq
Speaker: Rick McCutcheon

Week 5 – February 6 – The Peace Process(es)
Speaker: Tami Jacoby

Week 6 - February 13 – Education and the Prospects for Peace
Speaker: Howard Davidson

Week 7 – February 20 – The Israeli experience, the prospects for peace
Speaker: David Goldberg

Week 8 – February 27 - the Palestinian experience
Speaker: Shehnaz and Bassam Hozaima

Week 9 – March 6 - the PLO, Lebanon, Hezbollah
Speaker: Abed Moussa

Week 10 – March 13 – The Lemon Tree discussion
Speaker: Jim Carr and ??

Week 11 – March 20 – The Bible and Modern Israel
Speaker: Gordon Matties

Week 12 – March 27 – Grassroots and NGO (peace and/or advocacy) movements, Concluding Discussion
Speaker: David Pankratz