

# Arab-Israeli Conflict Simulation Mentor Seminar

Fall Term 2006      Wednesdays 11-1, 2229 SEB

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*Office hours Wednesdays 1-2:30 in 2202 School of Education, or by appointment*

**AIC Project Website:** <http://aic.conflix.org/>

## Course Purpose

This course is based on the idea that the most meaningful learning happens when one is actively engaged in a purposeful activity. By participating in AIC as a mentor, we hope that you will get a chance to think deeply about (among other things) how people learn to take diverse perspectives, what it takes to foster thoughtful discourse, and the nature of diplomacy itself.

AIC is also a project in the School of Education, and part of its purpose is to develop new ways that technology can support meaningful learning experiences with high school students. We hope that each mentor seminar will generate ideas that will help make AIC a better activity next time.

## Commitment

Each year hundreds of students and many teachers participate in AIC. A significant part of their experience depends on the work of the mentor team. Because your role is so important, we ask that you make a commitment to fulfilling your responsibilities until the end of the term. By taking this course, you are taking on the job of a teacher.

## Course requirements

Your responsibilities include the following:

- 1) **Learn the simulation.** Read the rules, learn how to use the website, and be familiar with the characters and the scenario. There will be several activities in the first few weeks related to this.
- 2) **Check in on-line every day** during the 9 weeks of simulation "play." Yes, you really need to check in to the game EVERY weekday. You should schedule AT LEAST AN HOUR a day for this. If you absolutely cannot get on line a certain day, you *must* let Jeff know by e-mail or phone and make sure one of your colleagues can cover for you. Exactly what you will do on-line, and how we will divide up the mentoring work, will be discussed in the first several meetings.
- 3) **Attend the weekly meetings.** There will be many issues that come up as you go along, and while you should contact Jeff immediately with urgent issues, the meetings are the place to solve problems together and share ideas. Seminar meetings are also times for you (and your team) to determine what needs to be done in the simulation. If, because of unavoidable circumstances, you must miss a meeting, you must contact Jeff ahead of time.
- 4) **Reflect on what you do.** We want to know what was challenging, what was frustrating, what was rewarding, and what you think could be done to make AIC better for the

participants as well as the mentors. Take note of these thoughts as you have them, and bring them up in the seminar. There will be periodic written assignments that will ask you to engage in specific reflective tasks.

5) **Keep a Folder.** I'll ask you to hand it in at the end of the term, when it should include the following:

- Written assignments that have been returned to you.
- Your **web watch assignments**
- Weekly logs** of the teams you are responsible for (we'll have a special form for you to use for this)

## **Grades**

*Grades will be determined as follows:*

Quality and consistency of online mentoring work (40%)      Seminar participation (30%)

Class assignments (20%)      Final Reflection (10%)

\*You must do the work on time without "prodding," and if you are unavoidably unable to do your work at a certain time, you must give the rest of your group as much notice as possible and arrange for another mentor to cover for you. Every time an assignment is late or you miss a day on line without prior notice, it will affect your grade. In general, because of the nature of AIC, it is not possible to make up missed work. Doing an excellent job some of the time cannot make up for missed work.

## **For class on 9/13:**

1) Please read the excerpt from "Cradle and Crucible" and study the timetable of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict posted by the PBS Program **P.O.V.**, which you'll find at: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2001/promises/timeline.html>

Come to class next week with any questions you have about any of the above.

Some discussion questions we'll discuss next week:

**What were the problems faced by Arab regimes/leaders in the post-Ottoman era?**

**What were the problems faced by the French and the British?**

2) Read Jon Papernick's "An Unwelcome Guest" short story and be prepared to discuss your reactions to it. We are sure to be discussing these questions:

**What did the story make you think about? How might it be relevant to the work that we'll be doing?**

## **3) For everyone not writing a character profile:**

**"4 questions about your character"—due in class on 9/13**

Using the character profile found on the AIC website (see the next section for instructions on accessing the web site), and at least two other sources (please list these sources along with your responses), I would like for you to prepare a 1-2 page written response to the following questions (with a brief explanation for each response).

\*What are the key strategic considerations for your person (and his/her country or organization) as pertains to the Middle East? With whom are they hoping to curry favor, and who might they be at odds with? Are they in a power struggle with another country?

\*\*What does your character see as the most important policy goal for their country to try to attain?

\*\*\*Who does your character see as their major constituency in their country, the people they least want to anger?

\*\*\*\*What does your character see as the major impediment to a negotiated settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis?

**Your Character is \_\_\_\_\_**

### For Class on 9/20:

Read the handout containing the background essays on Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran and Saudi Arabia, and be prepared to discuss the question(s) of **how the recent history of these Arab nations contributed to the social and political tensions that exist today.**

**Character Profiles due today (see separate assignment sheet).**

### For class on 9/27, 10/4 and 10/11

We will be reading and discussing the book **"The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East,"** by Sandy Tolan (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2006). There will also be a written assignment connected to your readings due on October 11<sup>th</sup> (details in class).

**This book is available at Shaman Drum Booksellers, 315 S. State St. tel. 662-7407**

### AIC Website

The web site is at: <http://aic.conflict.org/>

To access the character profiles, click on **Dossiers**, and then **on the Characters** folder.

**Schedule (Other assignments and classroom activities will be added as needed)**

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
9/6	Introduction to AIC activity, History of the conflict (part 1) <b>Readings for next week:</b> Excerpt from "Cradle and Crucible" & "An Unwelcome Guest"	
9/13	History of the conflict (continued) <b>Readings for next week:</b> Handout on Iran and the Arab countries	4 questions about your character" <b>due today.</b>
9/20	Closer look at the countries of the Middle East <b>Readings for next week:</b> Lemon Tree, Chapters 1-5	Character Profiles <b>due today.</b>
9/27	<i>Phase 1 of activity (preparation period) begins</i> More on Israel and Palestine Preparation for simulation—Pt. 1 <b>Readings for next week:</b> "AIC Manual" (will	<b>Daily on-line mentoring work begins September 27th</b>

	be available at AIC website); Lemon Tree, chapters 5-10	
10/4	<i>Simulation Begins on October 9<sup>th</sup></i> Preparation for start of simulation—Part 2 Assignment of mentoring roles <i>Weekly, in-class team meetings begin</i> <b>Readings for next week:</b> Lemon Tree, chapters 11-14.	<b>Introductory posts due by noon, Friday, October 6th</b> Continue daily on-line work, start first log in class.
10/11	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings <b>Assignment:</b> Begin weekly “Web Watch” Journal	<b>Written Response to “The Lemon Tree” due today (Details in Class)</b> Continue daily on-line work, complete log.
10/18	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete log, <b>first weekly web watch due.</b>
10/25	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete log, <b>second web watch due.</b> <b>First Two Logs Handed in.</b>
11/1	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete log, <b>third web watch due.</b>
11/8	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete log. <b>NSA/Mentor Reflection Assignment Due (details in class)</b> No web watch due this week.
11/15	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete log, <b>fourth web watch due.</b>
11/22	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings <b>Assignment:</b> Final Reflection Paper (due in class 12/6)	Continue daily on-line work, complete log, <b>fifth and final web watch due.</b>
11/29	Group discussion of simulation, team meetings	Continue daily on-line work, complete <b>final log</b>
12/6	Debriefing <b>Final Class Meeting</b> <i>Simulation ends December 8th</i>	<i>Final Reflection paper due in class today, along with AIC folder (web watch essays, logs, returned written assignments)</i> <b>Final updates/summaries/NSA messages must be posted by Sunday, December 10th at 5:00pm.</b>

## Web Watch

Starting the week of October 18<sup>th</sup>, I will ask each of you to write a weekly AIC “web watch” essay, writing short, weekly essays for five weeks ending with the Thanksgiving holiday. The purpose for this assignment is to push each of you to spend some time exploring different perspectives on the Middle East, and different frames for understanding events taking place there. **You are free to choose the source for the article you read each week (several good sites are listed below), though I ask that you choose a different source each week, and that you draw primarily from non-Western sources.**

You could choose an editorial piece, or a news article on a topic of interest, or perhaps a governmental or organizational press release. I particularly want you to **look for a slant, or an implicit way of viewing events, or an assumption being made that jumped out at you.**

With each web watch essay, I want you to briefly describe what the article is about, and then I want you report the perspective taken in the article, on its own terms, to the best of your ability. Please put extra effort into thinking about how things look from the author’s perspective, and to offering your thoughts about how clearly and cogently the author makes her case.

As indicated, I will ask you to check out several sites over the course of the five web with assignments. Feel free to make selective use of **BBC Monitoring** or **World Press Review**, two excellent sites that incorporate a wide array of sources:

**BBC Monitoring** (these are daily translations from press around the world, including the ME). Your best bet to access this is through the UM Library. Go to the library main page at: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/>  
From there, go to electronic journals and newspapers under electronic resources. Type BBC Monitoring in the search field and select the second option you get, viewing it through ProQuest. You'll get a big list of links for each day's foreign language press. There is always a link to general excerpts from both Arab and Hebrew press, and there are usually translations of individual articles on relevant topics.

**World Press Review** This is a great resource for, as you might guess, newspapers from around the world. There is a great section on the Middle East at: <http://www.worldpress.org/mideast.htm>  
and you can also follow the link to WORLD NEWSPAPERS to get links to web-based papers, listed by country.

### *Suggested Websites*

#### **Jerusalem Newswire**

Right-wing Israeli news service.

<http://www.jnewswire.com/>

#### **Al-Ahram**

Based in Egypt, this "pan-Arab" paper is supportive of the Egyptian government, but is often critical of American and Israeli policy, and maintains an active bureau in Gaza.

<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/>

#### **Al Jazeera**

Independent news agency attached to a television station widely viewed in the Arab world.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/>

**Bitterlemons.org** "presents Israeli and Palestinian viewpoints on prominent issues of concern." Jointly written by Palestinians and Israelis sympathetic to the peace process.

<http://www.bitterlemons.org/>

**The Electronic Intifada (EI)** "publishes news, commentary, analysis, and reference materials about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from a Palestinian perspective. EI is the leading Palestinian portal for information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its depiction in the media." <http://electronicintifada.net/new.shtml>

#### **Haaretz**

Independent Israeli daily newspaper with a broadly liberal outlook both on domestic issues and on international affairs.

<http://www.haaretzdaily.com/>

### **Iran Daily**

“Reformist” perspective on the news, this is a paper where President Bush is coming in for his fair share of criticism these days.

<http://www.iran-daily.com/>

See also: <http://www.iran-press-service.com/>

### **Palestinian Information Center**

Official web site of HAMAS

<http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/am/publish/>

### **Arab News**

Saudi-based, pro-government English language daily

<http://www.arabnews.com/>

### **EUobserver.com**

Excellent source for EU policy information

<http://euobserver.com/>

The **European Union**'s web page on the Middle East peace process.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/mepp/index.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/mepp/index.htm)

**Pravda** is the official Russian news service.

<http://english.pravda.ru/>

see also **Gateway to Russia** (<http://www.gateway2russia.com/>) and **Russia Journal** ([www.russijournal.com](http://www.russijournal.com))

### **France Diplomatie**

Information on French foreign policy, published by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr>

### **The Washington Institute for Near East Policy**

An American “think tank” on the conservative end of the spectrum, generally supportive of administration policy

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>

### **MERIP - Middle East Research and Information Project**

Also American, but much more critical of American policy.

<http://www.merip.org/>

### **Al-Hayat**

Independent newspaper published in Beirut and London.

<http://english.daralhayat.com/>

### **Palestine Media Center**

Publishes articles sympathetic to the Palestinian cause from a variety of sources.

<http://www.palestine-pmc.com/>

**FromOccupiedPalestine.org** “is an independent online journal and resource archive of the Israel-Palestine conflict.” Generally critical of current Israeli and American Mideast policies.

<http://www.fromoccupiedpalestine.org/index.php>

### **Jordan Times**

Good source for pro-government perspective

[www.jordantimes.com/](http://www.jordantimes.com/)

also **Jordan News Service**: <http://www.petra.gov.jo/Default.asp>

### **Middle East Times**

British weekly keeps a close eye on the Egyptian government, even archiving stories censored (by Egyptian government censors) from its print edition.

<http://www.metimes.com>

### **Arabic News**

Selective daily country by country news, mainly from official Arabic sources.

<http://www.arabicnews.com>

### **The Daily Star**

This Lebanese independent paper is a good source of news in translation from across the Middle East, and is surprisingly frank in its editorial criticism of Syria.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/home.asp>

### **Miftah**

Readings and resources sponsored by “the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy.”

<http://www.miftah.org>

### **SyriaComment**

An American academic named Joshua Landis has a blog that focuses on Syria and Syrian-American relations:

<http://syriacomment.com>

### **Abu Aardvark**

Mark Lynch (of Williams College) writes more generally about the Middle East at:

<http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/abuaardvark/>

### **The American Task Force for Palestine (ATFP)**

ATFP pulls together a daily collection of links to opinion pieces, in the American and international press, regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. You can even have the collection of links e-mailed to you each day. It's a good source for articles with clear opinions.

<http://www.americantaskforce.org/news/roundup.htm>