Since the end of World War Two, violent conflict in the Middle East has varied in type and intensity. This has included inter-state wars, external power intervention, sub-state violence, and protracted social conflicts. To understand these patterns, this course explores the causes and consequences of violent political conflict in the region. This year’s course will focus on two conflicts: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the 2003 US invasion of Iraq. The course is seminar based requiring student led discussion of readings, analytical writing, and participation in simulated negotiations.

Primary Texts
*Middle East Report, *The Iran-Iraq War 30 Years Later*, Winter 2010 (available later in the semester)

Grading and responsibilities
Reaction papers/attendance 20%
Theme Papers (3) 30%
Course paper (10% outline, 5% presentation) 50%

Requirements:
This is a seminar course dependent upon student participation. **It is emphatically not a lecture based course.** Please bring copies of the readings to class each week (beginning week 2 until week 14). To facilitate participation, each student will write a 1 page “reaction paper” to that week’s readings. The point of these papers is NOT TO SUMMARIZE the readings but raise a question or discussion point to think about. Papers are due by each Sunday by 9pm and should be uploaded to the appropriate forum on the Blackboard classroom site.

Three theme papers are required. The first paper will focus on theory and debates and will be due 1/28. The other two papers can be done on any of the other three cases, Iraq (due 2/25), America (due 3/25), or Israel-Palestine (due 4/22). We will agree on the paper selections the first week. Each 5 page paper will draw directly on at least 3 readings from that theme or case. What is the debate or approach under examination in these readings? How do the authors go about making and supporting their arguments? Compare, contrast, or make your own argument to conclude the paper. Aside from each grade, these papers are also building blocks for the type of course paper that you will eventually produce.
The course paper is a 15 page research paper or analytical review of several works in the style of The New York Review of Books, The London Review of Books, or The Boston Review. Please familiarize yourself with this type of disciplinary writing in which several books or articles focused on a similar topic are discussed. In addition to reviewing the argument of each book, a review also draws out larger issues of the subject under review and makes an argument of its own. A course research paper can be on a theme or case of your own choosing but it must broadly align with course themes. We will meet within the first weeks of class to establish your project. A 3 page narrative, outline, and bibliography of your paper is due Week 8. The last week of class each student will give a 5 minute overview of their project and findings.

Themes and Cases

**Week 1**  
**Theory Approaches I:** How does war shape states? Are other factors at play in how war has historically affected states?

1/10, 12, 14


Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” focus on pp. 169-172; 181-186


**Week 2**  
**Theory Themes II:** Wars in the developing world and particularly since the end of WWII are seen as different. How is war and security in the developing world different from the classic conceptions?

1/17  
*Martin Luther King Day*

1/19, 21


Week 3  **Theory Themes III:** Turing to the Middle East specifically and keeping in mind the first week debate Tilly/Kurtz, how has war shaped or not shaped political and economic development?  
*(Mandatory Theme Paper Due Friday)*

1/24, 26

Steven Heydemann, “War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East,” in *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East*, edited by Steven Heydemann, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 1-30


1/28  **NO CLASS (Papers can be emailed by class time)**

Week 4  **Case Study I, Iraq:** We will prepare for the Rosen book by setting the stage for Iraq prior to 2003. Since 1980, what were the primary political and economic changes in the country? How did the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein view their own political challenges?

1-31, 2/2, 4


Please read this Wikileaks document and compare it to Gause’s arguments above:  “SADDAM’S MESSAGE OF FRIENDSHIP TO PRESIDENT BUSH” US Embassy, Baghdad, Ambassador April Glaspie, July 1990
Week 5  Occupational and Civil War: Was the invasion of Iraq doomed to failure? Or could different policies have led to a more successful post-invasion? Consider how Rosen frames and evidences the impact of the invasion and occupation on Iraqi society.

2/7, 9, 11


Jason Brownlee, “Can America Nation Build?” World Politics 59 (January 2007)

Nir Rosen, Aftermath, Part One, pp. 3-119.

Week 6  Debating the Surge: The downturn in violence since 2007 has been hotly debated. American officials credit the surge in American troops as the vital factor. What is Rosen’s argument and evidence?

2/14, 16, 18

Nir Rosen, Aftermath, Part Three, pp. 221-376; and Epilogue

Week 7:  Transnational effects: How has the invasion of Iraq impacted the region? What were the expectations, what has been the reality, and how does this intersect with prior theory expectations?

(Theme Paper Option Due Friday)

2/21, 23, 25

Fouad Ajami, “Iraq and the Arabs” Foreign Affairs, 82:3 (Jan/Feb 2003)

Nir Rosen, Aftermath, Part Two and Chapter 10
Week 8:  Case Study II, Conflict in the Middle East and American Exceptionalism: This case study reverses the lens and examines how parts of American society and politics have viewed, been impacted, and derived meaning from events in the Middle East.
(3 page outline of course paper due)

2/28, 3/2, 4

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, Introduction, Chapter 1

Week 9  Spring Break
3/7-3/11

Week 10  African Americans and Israel: How have different parts of American society engaged the Middle East? In particular, how did the Civil Rights Movement and African American leadership identify with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How did non-Jewish parts of American society react to Israel and the 1967 War?

3/14, 16  Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, Chapters 2 and 4

3/18  NO CLASS

Week 11  Terrorism, Islam, and Oil: Terrorism, Islam, and Oil have been issues in American society and politics long before 9-11.
(Theme Paper Option Due Friday)

3/21, 23, 25

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, Chapters 5 and Conclusion
Week 12  **Case Study III, Israel and Palestine:** The Israel-Palestine conflict has defined much of the region’s instability and insecurity. What comprises revisionist Israeli history? How are the powers of the modern state envisioned by Focault and expressed by Gordon’s focus on occupation?

4/4, 6, 8

Ilane Pappe, “Post-Zionist Scholarship in Israel”


Neve Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, Chapter 1

Week 13  **The 1967 War:** The war’s aftermath radically reshaped the conflict for both parties through Israel’s occupation of the West bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. How did Israeli authorities go about normalizing the occupation? What were the political economic aspects of this control? How did these policies affect Palestinian society and politics?

4/11, 13, 15

Gordon, pp. 48-70; 71-92


Week 14  **Occupation by the 1980s:** How did Israeli control over local sovereignty affect Palestinian nationalism and resistance? What is “savage restraint” and what explains Israeli uses of violence? More broadly, how was the occupation changing? How can we describe the status of the occupation today?

(Theme Paper Option Due Friday)

4/18, 20, 22

Gordon, pp. pp.93-115; 116-222


Week 15

4/25  Paper presentations