

**POLS 247**  
**Contemporary Middle East Politics**  
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County  
Common Course Outline

**Description**

**POLS 247 – Contemporary Middle East Politics:** Examines 20th and 21st century Middle East politics and policy and their relationship to the Western Powers, Russia and China. Students explore complex current issues in a political and historical context for understanding the Middle East. Topics include U.S. foreign policy in the region, the role of Islam, terrorism, the politics of oil, arms proliferation, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian Question, nationalism, globalization and the Gulf Wars. Students investigate the social, religious, economic, cultural and political impact Middle East nations have on the U.S. and with each other.

**Pre-requisites:** POLS 101 and POLS 111 or permission of the Program Coordinator

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify countries in the Middle East region;
2. describe middle eastern geography, political systems and natural resources;
3. discuss Middle East history and culture and its impact on other regions;
4. explain the Middle East region's religious diversity and its significance to states and cultural values;
5. outline the features of Islam and the different sects in the religion;
6. debate the complexities of the Middle East relationships between different states, peoples, international organizations, and terrorist groups;
7. outline the backgrounds of the current conflicts;
8. explain the growth of terrorism and terrorist groups in the Middle East and their platforms;
9. discuss the causes and outcomes of warfare in the Middle East since World War II;
10. analyze the role of the United States in shaping events since World War II, nation building and impact on the region;
11. evaluate the role of the political, economic and social interest of the United States in the region;
12. explore the political and historical roles played by Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Middle East;
13. explain the challenges of establishing peace in the Middle East;
14. assess current events considering the cultural and historic legacies of the region, using a variety of technological resources; and
15. find, evaluate, use and cite academic sources on political issues and events based on criteria discussed in the course according to the timeliness, credibility and reliability.

The Common Course Outline (CCO) determines the essential nature of each course.  
For more information, see your professor's syllabus.

## **Major Topics**

- I. Meet the Middle East
  - a. History, religion and the region
  - b. Religious and ethnic minorities
  - c. History, beliefs and impact of Islam
  - d. Government structures and bringing democracy to the Middle East
- II. American involvement in the region
  - a. U.S. History in the Middle East: from Barbary Pirates to Iraq
  - b. Arab Israeli conflicts and cooperation
  - c. U.S. and Iran: CIA, Shah, 1979-1981 hostage crisis, Iranian Revolution, nuclear development
  - d. U.S. and Iraq: Saddam Hussein, 1991 Gulf War, 2003 Gulf War
  - e. Role of oil in Middle East politics
- III. Terrorism and the Middle East
  - a. Terrorist: national/religious affiliations and sponsors
  - b. Terrorism emerges from the post-Cold War era
  - c. The Middle East after 9/11
  - d. What do the terrorists like Hamas want
- IV. Inside the region: people, politics and behavior
  - a. Role of women in society
  - b. Media information age in Middle East politics
  - c. Globalization and the future

## **Course Requirements**

Grading will be determined by the individual faculty member, but shall include the following, at minimum:

- Five collaborations, debates, oral presentations and/or online discussion forums about current political events and topics
- Four examinations
- A research assignment or project on a selected topic of interest that is approved by the instructor

Written assignments and research projects: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources in their research and cite sources according to the style selected by their professor.

## **Other Course Information**

This course is a Political Science elective.

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