

Course:	M.A. (IRWA)
Course No:	WA 511
Course Title:	US Foreign Policy towards West Asia
Course Type:	Optional
Semester:	Monsoon
Course Teacher & Contact Details:	Name: Uma Purushothaman Room No.: 319 Email: umapurushothaman@mail.jnu.ac.in
Credits:	4
Contact Hours:	4 hours/week

Course Statement

The US has been the most dominant external player in West Asia since the end of World War II and the British withdrawal from the region. The region is vital to the US because of its geostrategic location, oil and gas reserves, large number of US military bases, terrorism, and the special relationships that the US has built with several states in the region like Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye. However, the US' relations with the states in the region have not always been stable. For instance, Iran, which was an ally during much of the Cold War is an adversary now. American administrations have tried different approaches to the region, but the key has always been to remain engaged with the region. This course traces the entire gamut of relations between the US and West Asia since the end of World War II to the present. It examines the strategic, ideological, and geopolitical imperatives that have motivated successive administrations' approaches to the region. Emphasizing on the interplay of global strategy, regional dynamics, and domestic influences, the course explores how American interests in oil, security, and geopolitical competition—particularly during the Cold War—have shaped its engagement with the region.

Students will explore the wider region by focussing on US approaches towards the sub-regions within West Asia like the Levant, and The Gulf. North Africa will be discussed in different modules in relation to specific events, wherever necessary. The dynamics in the approaches of the fifteen US administrations since the end of the second World War will thus be studied geographically for cohesiveness and to understand the fallouts of US policies. A chronological and thematic approach will also be used so that students can analyse key events, including the Cold War rivalry, the Arab-Israeli conflict, oil politics, interventions and wars, the rise of Political Islam, post-9/11 US security paradigms, and the US approach towards the Arab Spring.

The course is structured around four key modules:

- Introduction and Historical Context
- Israel and Palestine
- Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon
- The Gulf Region

Course Objectives

- To evaluate the historical and geopolitical context of US involvement in West Asia
- To examine domestic/IR determinants of US involvement in West Asia
- To analyse US policies and their regional implications
- To evaluate the consequences of US actions on local populations and international relations.
- To develop critical thinking about current US-West Asia relations

Learning Outcomes

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

- Analyse US priorities in the region
- Assess major doctrines of US policy in the region
- Develop an understanding of localised dynamics and their impact on US policy towards West Asia
- Contextually draw connections between regional policies and broader US strategy.
- Carry out comparative analyses of US policies towards different parts of West Asia

Evaluation Methods

Mid semester evaluation (50%)

- Book Review – 20%
- Term Paper- 30%

End semester evaluation (50%)

- End Semester Examination – 50 %

SIS Research Manual should be used as a guide for written assignments. This is available at https://www.jnu.ac.in/sites/default/files/SIS_Research_Manual_0.pdf

Students must maintain high degree of academic integrity, which includes abstaining from copying and plagiarism. For details on plagiarism and research ethics, refer to SIS Research Manual.

- **Course Outline**

The course seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the US role in West Asia and North Africa. Towards this end, the following key discussions will be held:

Module 1: Introduction and Historical Context

This module gives the background and historical context of US policies towards West Asia, focussing on:

- Overview of US foreign policy in West Asia
- The region's strategic importance to the US post-WWII
- The Making of US Policy towards West Asia: Institutions and Actors
- Approaches towards the Region: Republican vs Democratic

Module 2: Israel and Palestine

This module looks at US policies towards Israel and Palestine, focussing on the following:

- The creation of Israel and the US response;
- The Arab-Israeli conflict and US approach
- US support to Israel: economic, military, and political
- US approach to Palestine
- US mediation efforts and the peace process

Module 3: Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon

This module studies US policies towards the rest of the Levant, focussing on the following:

- Syria: US policy towards Syria during the Cold War and the USSR; The Syrian Civil War and US intervention
- Jordan: security cooperation; US aid
- Lebanon: US involvement in Lebanon during the Civil War; The role of Hezbollah and implications for US policy

Module 4: The Gulf Region

This module studies US approaches towards the Gulf region, focussing on:

- Iran: The 1953 coup and US intervention in Iran; The Iranian Revolution (1979) and its impact on US policy; US policy towards Iran's nuclear programme and US sanctions
- Iraq: US support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War; The First Gulf War (1991) and its consequences; US invasion of Iraq (2003) and its aftermath
- The GCC States: Origins of the US-Saudi relationship; The 1973 Oil Crisis and its effects on US policy; Relations post 9/11; US military presence in the region; arms sales; the Abraham Accords

Readings

Module 1: Introduction and Historical Context

Essential Readings

- Bard, Mitchell G. (1991), *The water's edge and beyond: defining the limits to domestic influence on United States Middle East policy*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Barrett, Roby C. (2007), *The Greater Middle East and the Cold War: US Foreign Policy Under Eisenhower and Kennedy*, London: Atlantic Books.
- Hudson, Michael C. (1996), "To play the hegemon: Fifty years of US policy toward the Middle East", *The Middle East Journal*, 50 (3): 329-343.
- Lesch, David W., (2003), *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, New York: Avalon Publishing.
- Terry, Janice J. (2005), *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, London: Pluto Press.
- Little, Douglas (2010), "The Cold War in the Middle East: Suez crisis to Camp David Accords", in M. P. Leffler & O. A. Westad (Eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 305–326.
- Rubin, Barry M. (1980), *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to the Cold War*, New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Bard, Mitchell (2011), *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America's Interests in the Middle East*, New York: Broadside Books.

Additional Readings

- Baxter, Kylie and Akbarzadeh, Shahram (2012), *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of anti-Americanism*, London: Routledge.
- Beattie, Kirk, (2016), *Congress and the Shaping of the Middle East*, New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Eleftheriadou, Marina (2023), “Christian Right and US Middle East Policy: Foreign Policy in The Service of God’s Will”, In Sotiris Roussos (ed.), *From Pluralism to Extinction? Perspectives and Challenges for Christians in the Middle East*, London: Transnational Press, 149-168.
- Gries, Peter Hays, (2015), “How ideology divides American liberals and conservatives over Israel.” *Political Science Quarterly* ,130(1): 51-78.
- Hahn, Peter L. (2006), “Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36(1): 38-47.
- Khalidi, Rashid (2009), *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East*, New Jersey: Beacon Books.
- Oren, Micheal B. (2007), *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Painter, David S. (1986), *Oil and the American century: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Oil Policy, 1941-1954*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Module 2: Israel and Palestine

Essential Readings

- Bar-Siman-Tov, Yaacov (1998), “The United States and Israel since 1948: A “Special Relationship”?”. *Diplomatic History*, 22: 231-262. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7709.00115>.
- Chamberlin, Paul Thomas (2012), *The global offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the making of the post-Cold War order*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilboa, Eytan (2023), “US-Israel relations at 75”, *Israel Affairs*, 29(3): 473-491, DOI: 10.1080/13537121.2023.2206210.
- Goldenberg, Ilan, Koplow, Michael and Wittes, Tamara Cofman (2020), “A New U.S. Strategy for the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict”, Washington D.C.: Center for a New American Security. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28650>.
- Hahn, Peter L. (2004), *Caught in the Middle East: U.S. Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mearsheimer, John J. and Walt, Stephen M. (2007), *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Quandt, William B., (2005), *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Additional Readings

- Abu-Lughod, Ibrahim (1990), “America’s Palestine Policy”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 12(1/2): 191–201, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41858944>.
- Aronson, Geoffrey (2013), “Policy Options in a Time of Transition: The US and the Israel-

Palestine Conflict”, *Middle East Journal*, 67 (2): 249–56.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/43698048>.

- Ottolenghi, Michael (2004), “Harry Truman’s Recognition of Israel”, *The Historical Journal*, 47(4), 963–988, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4091664>
- Indyk, Martin (2014), *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Zogby, James, Friedman, Lara, Telhami, Shibley and Walles, Jake (2019), “The United States, Israel and Palestine: An Assessment”, *Middle East Policy*, 26 (4): 5-26.

Module 3: Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon

Essential Readings

- Abadi, Jacob (2020), “Perception and reality in US-Lebanon relations”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 56(2): 305-326.
- Goode, James F. and Gendzier, Irene (1999), *Notes from the Minefield: United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958*, London: Routledge.
- Hof, Frederic C. (2019), *The United States in Syria: Why it Still Matters*, Washington D.C.: Atlantic Council. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20710>.
- Karakoç, Jekaterina (2013), “US Policy towards Syria since the early 2000s”, *Critique*, 41(2), 223-243.
- Sharp, Jeremy M. (2010), “Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations”, Congressional Research Services, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA518907.pdf>
- Moubayed, Sami (2012), *Syria and the USA: Washington’s Relations with Damascus from Wilson to Eisenhower*, London. I.B. Tauris.

Additional Readings

- Aruri, Naseer H. (1985), “The United States’ Intervention in Lebanon”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 7(4): 59–77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857792>.
- Fisk, Robert, (2002), *Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War*, New York: Nation Books.
- Khawaldeh, Ala and Hayajneh, Ayman (2023). United States Foreign Policy Towards Jordan from the Political and Security Dimensions from 1990 to 2017, *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations*, 11(22), 79-112, <https://doi.org/10.22456/2238-6912.127024>
- Landis, Joshua (2010), “The US-Syria relationship: A few questions”, *Middle East Policy*, 17(3): 64-73.
- Lesch, David W. (1992), *Syria And The United States: Eisenhower’s Cold War In The Middle East*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Module 4: The Gulf Region

Essential Readings

- Allison, Benjamin V. (2023), “Beyond the Arc of Crisis: Jimmy Carter and the Arab ‘Radicals’ 1978–79”, *Cold War History*, 24(1): 67–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2023.2253737>.

- Cooper, Andrew S. (2012), *Fateful Consequences: U.S.-Iran Relations during the Nixon and Ford Administrations, 1969-77*, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.17000167.v1>.
- Edwards, Alex (2014). *“Dual Containment” Policy in the Persian Gulf: The USA, Iran, and Iraq, 1991–2000*, London: Palgrave.
- Gresh, Geoffrey F. (2015), *Gulf Security and the U.S. Military: Regime Survival and the Politics of Basing* (1st ed.). California: Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvqsdj6>.
- Guzansky, Yoel and Shavit, Eitan (2018), *US-Gulf States Relations: Mutual Sobering?*, Institute for National Security Studies, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19394>.
- Guzansky, Y., & Shavit, E. (2020), *US-Saudi Relations: What Lies Ahead?*, Institute for National Security Studies, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep27825>.
- Kinzer, Stephen (2003), *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, Nashville, Tennessee: Turner Publishing Company.

Additional Readings

- Al-Barasneh, Abdulrahman (2015), “United States Foreign Policy towards the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) 2001-2008: Searching for Stable Security Framework”, University of Leicester, Thesis, <https://hdl.handle.net/2381/35931>.
- Alvandi, Roham, (2012), “Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The Origins of Iranian Primacy in the Persian Gulf”, *Diplomatic History*, 36(2): 337–372, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44376155>.
- Feierstein, Gabriel M., Saab, Bassel Y., and Young, Kenneth E (2022), *US-Gulf relations at the crossroads: time for a recalibration*, Washington D.C.: Middle East Institute, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/us-gulf-relations-crossroads-time-recalibration>.
- Khatib, Dania K. (2018), “US-Arab Gulf Relations amidst Regional and Global Changes”, *The International Spectator*, 52(2), 102–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2017.1311090>.
- Pollack, Kenneth M. (2017), *US Policy Toward Iraq*, Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03296>.
- Sterner, Michael (2020), *The Future for the Gulf/Europe/America Relationship: An American View*, in B.R. Pridham (ed.), *The Arab Gulf and the West*, London: Routledge: 228-233.