Course Syllabus – Draft April 2018 (to be revised in May)

Fall 2018
POGO 750-008  The Middle East and International Security
Professor E. Laipson
Office: FH 530
Class: FH 475- Tuesdays, 4:30pm-7:10pm

This course addresses some broad questions about the Middle East region, its long history of inter-state and internal conflict, and the impact of the region’s instability on global security. It considers why the region is fraught with conflict, with attention to historical factors and more recent socio-economic trends. It considers the roles of extra-regional powers, particularly the US, Russia and China, and how their interests and global interests are affected by the chronic crises in the region. A major theme is efforts to build a sustainable regional security architecture. The course takes a thematic approach, rather than a chronological survey of conflicts.

Topics to be addressed:
- sources of conflict in the region
- military and security capabilities of states and non-state actors
- the roles of outside actors, including arms sales, security cooperation, mediation
- the search for a regional security system

Students will produce three 5-10 page papers
1. deep look into one of the conflicts/wars and how regional militaries performed
2. analysis of mediation efforts and peace efforts in one or more crises
3. research on one functional topic, such as a driver of conflict, or arms sales, or security cooperation techniques

The course will be divided into three modules:

Weeks 1-4  The Inside Story

Focus on Arab, Israeli, Turkish and Iranian perspectives: how do they tell the story?

The current landscape of the ME and its conflicts
Underlying causes, factors that perpetuate conflict
The history and legacies that haunt the region – the Arab-Israeli Wars, Arab ideologies
The status of the armed forces and security communities in key countries
Security Capabilities of non-state actors; ISIS, Hizballah, militias
Iran-Saudi geopolitical rivalry, competition for leadership
Local solutions to current sources of instability

**Weeks 5-9  Outside in: The Roles of Extra-regional powers: part of the problem or part of the solution??**

The Legacy of Colonialism
American Primacy – CENTCOM, regional security cooperation, status of agreements
Russia and China – their strategies and objectives
The roles of outsiders and security legacies of:
- Iraq Wars 1990 and 2003
- Syrian War
- Yemen

**Weeks 10-14 The Search for a Regional Security Architecture**

Past efforts to create a new regional security order:
- Baghdad Pact/Middle East Defense Organization (1950s)
- ACRS (Arms Control and Regional Security Multilateral Working Group) (1992-)
- Gulf Cooperation Council and US Strategic Cooperation
- Manama Dialogue
Regional Cooperation on Non traditional Security Issues  (water, climate, health)
Global Consequences of Middle East Instability

Required Readings (partial list)

The Century Foundation, Editor Michael Hanna
chapters to be assigned, available on line

Michael Yaffe, *The Gulf and a New Middle East Security System*

University of Nebraska Press, 2002
Chapters to be assigned; no need to purchase

Country Military Surveys from IISS, Military Balance, various years

James Quinliven, *Coup Proofing: Its Practices and Consequences in the Middle East*,
International Security, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999)
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396330701437751?needAccess=true