

Meeting Time: Thursdays: – 4:30 – 7:10 pm
Room: Exploratory Hall 2310
Credit Hours: 3

FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name : Maction Komwa, PhD
Room : 2414 Exploratory Hall
Office Hours: MW – 10:30 am – Noon | Thursdays – 11:00 -Noon (*If these times are not convenient, please feel free to make an appointment*)
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Course Description

The course covers, environmental, economic, and social factors of differentiation of regional structure and distribution of resources in North African and Middle Eastern countries.

This course provides an overview of the dynamic region known as the “Middle East and North Africa.” Considering the extensive media coverage and ongoing interest (military and otherwise) in the region, we will consider mainly the environmental, economic, political, and social elements. We begin by examining the very definition of the region as a coherent unit, as well as its physical and cultural landscapes. Then we explore the economic, political, social, and environmental processes underpinning change and conflict in the region. This course is designed to give you an overview of a geographical approach to studying the Middle East and North Africa. Although this is a course in regional geography, it is not possible to examine every country nor to exhaustively cover every issue facing the region; therefore, we will take a thematic approach and incorporate different places into the discussion of various spatial processes. We will examine these themes through readings, films, short response papers, and a final research project.

Course Objectives:

Upon course completion, a student will be able to:

- identify and describe various geographic features of the Middle East and North Africa
- compare patterns of human activity and human-environment relations.
- critically analyze economic & political dynamics across the region of the Middle East & North Africa;
- examine economic, social, and environmental consequences of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization in Middle East and North Africa;
- develop an understanding of the diversity of the Middle East;
- develop your critical thinking skills through reading, discussion, and writing;
- critically examine what you hear about the Middle East and understand some of the many perspectives that exist on the region so that you can critically evaluate what you hear.

Required Textbook:

- Understanding the Contemporary Middle East. Edited by Julian Schwedler. 4th Edition

Recommended Atlas Textbook:

Atlas of the Middle East and Northern Africa. Hammond. Mapmakers for the 21st Century.
Additional Readings will be posted through the Blackboard as required.

Teaching and Assessment

GGS 325/533 is being offered as a combined undergraduate and undergraduate course. Our weekly meetings will comprise lectures, group or student-led discussions, guest lecturers, and class videos. Active participation is required in all sessions for students to pass this course.

Assignments and Grading

The components of your assignments and grade are listed in the table below:

Description	% grade	
<p>Reaction and Analysis short papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (These papers will consist of reaction to topics discussed in class, series of movies, and documentaries). • In these reaction papers, you will submit a short paper, no more than two pages summarizing the real and ethical issues directly from unfiltered voices of the people. • Some of the issues regarding the documentaries, movies would be posted first on the blackboard for a moderate online discussion which you should all participate. This could also help you hear voices of your classmates before you analyze and submit your reaction paper. • By the end of the course through these short reaction papers, you will be able to explore the social & historical contexts and learn the truth about the area despite the exotic stereotypes associated with the 	15%	
<p>Map Exercises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will build your map literacy and ability to analyze spatial information through these assignments. Knowing geographical location, place, regions, movement of objects from one location to another, etc. are part of the geography themes that you will learn from these activities. • You will then be able to understand the spatial nature of geography and how each place, or region is examined, analyzed and compared with other places or regions. 	15%	
<p>Online Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be weekly discussions beginning week 3 – week 12. I will lead the discussion by posting a topic related to the concepts and weekly reading(s) or assigned documentary/movie. • You should demonstrate engagement with course readings by your own contribution through online discussion forum. • You will satisfy the discussion if you first post your own thoughts about the subject then respond to the viewpoints of other classmates. They will be graded on a 5-point scale, 5 being excellent. • Through these online discussions, you will have the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of another person’s perspective and to empathize with others. 	5%	
<p>Examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be two non-cumulative, in-class <i>closed-book</i> examinations (<i>Mid-Term and a final examination</i>) for undergraduates and only <i>Mid-Term exam</i> for graduate students. • We’ll take some time to talk about study strategies and answer any possible review questions you may have a week before the exam. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Each exam will contain objective (multiple-choice) and short-answer questions, Fill-in the blank questions with exception for graduate students who will take short-answer and essay type questions.</i> 		
	<i>Mid-Term Exam</i>	15%
	<i>Final Exam for GGS 323 Students only</i>	30%
<p>Quizzes and in-class Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quizzes will be administered both online through the Blackboard or in-class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They are designed to make sure that you have read and understood the readings, practice and prepare you for exams, and help you revise the key points discussed in class or through the readings. • In-class assignments such as group discussion, simulation activities are designed to assess your understanding of the readings and your ability to apply course concepts learned in class. 	10%	
<p>Group Project Presentation for GGS 323 Students GGS 533 Individual Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GGS 323 students will be divided into groups for the final project of three students each. Each group or individual (GGS 533 students) will design and develop a well-researched project with a particular issue in the course materials or discussions on documentary, movie, readings, lecturers, etc., and intend to expand the research further beyond class discussions. You will be able to express beyond what you have learned in class 	10%	
Final Paper for GGS 533 Students	30%	

Late assignments will be penalized at 5 points per day. Activities more than 4 days late automatically receive zero points. FYI - if you submit your assignment past the deadline even if it is 1 minute late (*i.e.* 12 midnight instead of 11:59 pm), I will consider that as late submission, so you should plan your time accordingly.

- There will be no make-up on Quizzes and Exams unless accompanied by compelling evidence or in the case of **University-excused absences**.

Grading Scale

What is the difference between a “B” and an “A”? The following will be your Letter Grade and Percentages to determine your final grade for this course.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98 -100%	B+	87 – 89%	C+	78 – 79%	F	below 60%
A	93 -97%	B	83 – 86%	C	70 – 77%		
A-	90 -92%	B-	80 – 82%	D	60 – 69%		

Course policies/My Expectations:

1. Students are expected to attend (on time) each class and be engaged when they are in class. The class will be interactive if all of us will be involved in discussing and learning the material.
2. For any planned absence, please inform the instructor in advance. It will be your responsibility to track down any missed material, assignments, etc. Any missed work without any supporting evidence will not be accepted.
3. Should circumstances arise that make you late, do not disrupt the class as you enter, take the first available seat and do not walk across the room.
4. In the event of any class cancellation, including inclement weather (e.g. snow), the class will resume where we left off, adjustments, if necessary, will be made later.
5. All students should be respectful to all other students in class or during debate or class discussion forum and simulation activities. It is common knowledge to say that people have different opinions, values and concerns during any assigned debate/discussion, therefore, it is important to maintain respect during class debated and discussion.
6. You should submit your own work in all your written assignments unless otherwise stated like in group activities or group project.
7. Cell Phones must be turned off during class. Zero tolerance!
8. What do we do about potential disruptions” in class?

What you can expect from me:

- There will be fair assessment of student work and treat each member of our class with respect.
- Will return your work on time
- Clear communicate of course information
- Available for any additional assistance during my office hours or any other arranged times and respond to your emails on time.

Academic Honesty: George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/org/honorcouncil/guidelines.htm>).

Additionally, note the following:

- You can discuss ideas on how to solve a problem in class or outside classroom, however, you should **NEVER**:
- submit an assignment that you write or finish yourself.
- submit assignment that you have used in another class – your assignment should be original
- cheat on an exam

University Services

George Mason University has a number of academic support and other resources to facilitate your success. Some of these resources are presented below:

- i. Counseling and Psychological Services [<http://caps.gmu.edu/>]
- ii. University Career Services [<http://careers.gmu.edu/>]
- iii. Writing Resources: Tutors at the Writing Center are available to assist you: Robinson B, room 213, 703-993-1200, writingcenter.gmu.edu
- iv. University Catalog: <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- v. University Policies: <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>
- vi. Library Study Rooms: library.gmu.edu/use/study-rooms
- vii. Student Technology Assistance & Resource Center (STAR): Provides all kinds of technology support: JC, room 229, 703-993-8990, bit.ly/2hWjI0y
- viii. Student Support & Advocacy Center: Assistance regarding healthy lifestyle and educational choices: SUB I, suite 3200, 703-993-3686, ssac.gmu.edu
- ix. Food Pantry: Access food and household items: SUB I, suite 3011, pantry@gmu.edu

Students with Disabilities

Students with documented and qualifying learning, physical and psychological disabilities should contact the Disability Services (ODC), which arranges for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and University policies. In order to arrange accommodations in each course, the student must present his/her professors with a letter from the ODC outlining the recommended accommodations at the beginning of the semester. Disability Services (ODC) website: ds.gmu.edu - SUB I, Room 2500. Telephone: (703) 993-2474.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

Diversity Statement

GMU promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.

Email Policy

GMU faculty and staff may only correspond with students through the students' GMU assigned email accounts. Emails sent from other accounts will not necessarily be answered. Course information will be shared via email. Please notify me if you would like your email to remain private and not shared with your classmates. *Gmail or Yahoo* accounts etc. will not be acknowledged.

Course Outline/Schedule

Date	Topic Description	Readings/Due Date
8/29	Introduction & Course Overview	None
9/5	Locating the Middle East <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying boundaries Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent Nile River Civilization 	Chapter 1 & 2
9/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Spring of 2011 and Popular mobilization The Historical-political Evolution I 	Chapter 14 & 3
9/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Historical-political Evolution II North Africa and the African Transition Zone 	
9/26	Water Issues & Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to fresh water Water shortages and diversion Water conservation 	Chapter 2 Page 19-26
10/3	Religion and Political dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secular States vs. Religious States Spatial diffusion of religion 	Chapter 12
10/10	Economic Geography of the Middle East and North Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Oil Boom Labor Migration and Remittance Economic Crisis and Structural Adjustment 	Chapter 7 <i>Exam Review</i>
10/17	Mid-Term Exam	
10/18	Population Distribution, Growth and Urbanization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth Poverty and inequality Urbanization 	Chapter 9
10/24	The Role of Women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and empowerment in an economic and social system Building the Nation through Women 	Chapter 11
10/31	The Israel & its Neighbors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Israel -Palestinian Conflict The history and dynamics of the conflict One Land Two People The Rocky Road to peace 	Chapter 6
11/7	Population Dynamics and Urbanization in MENA	Chapter 9
11/14	The role of GIS to understand Population Changes of MENA	Check article - Blackboard
11/21	<i>Final Group Presentation – GGS 325 students / Individual Presentation (GGS 533 Students) /Exam Review</i>	
11/28	Thanksgiving Recess – (No classes) --- [November 27- December 1]	
12/5	<i>Final Group Presentation GGS 325/ Individual Presentation / Final Individual Project Paper (Graduates)</i>	
12/12	Final Exam	4:30 pm – 7:15 pm

The course instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to the course content and office hours during the term. If these changes are made, they will be immediately notified to students through the blackboard explaining the nature of the change. All assignments and due dates can be accessed through the Blackboard – “Due Dates at a-glance