



ITSS
International Team
For the Study of Security
Verona

Summer School Track: The Greater Middle East in the 21st Century

Module Convenor: Omri Brinner (omribr@yahoo.com)

Module Description

The Middle East has been an area of Western fascination for centuries. Its traditions, sites, origins, religions, and languages have captured peoples' imagination throughout the years. But ever since 9/11 its geopolitical significance has multiplied, its security has had a direct impact on the entire world and, last but not least, its future will determine much of what is at stake and being discussed today – from global warming, to terrorism, the tensions between authoritarianism and democracy, and more. The Greater Middle East track will examine and analyze some of the main trends and issues from the region. These include: Middle Eastern geopolitics and balance of power, the US' and other superpowers' involvement in the Middle East, the future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the global importance of the Middle East.

Aims

This track will help its participants to develop a deeper understanding of the Middle East, will enable them to analyze regional international relations through theoretical frameworks, and will expose them to the forces that set the region in motion. Furthermore, students will be familiarized with reliable sources regarding events and analysis on developments in the region.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, participants will be able to demonstrate the following:

Knowledge and understanding of:

- Better familiarity with the Middle East
- Understand the theoretical frameworks that stand behind regional practices
- Provide tools to analyze future regional developments
- Obtain a historical perspective of current events

Skills (specific to the module):

- Identifying regional trends
- Understanding “who’s against whom” and why
- Connecting historical events to contemporary issues

Transferable/employability skills (through the seminars):

- Verbal communication and presentational skills
- Understanding key concepts and theories
- Critical thinking
- Having a respectful and enriching debate
- Getting to know people from the Middle East and beyond

Teaching arrangements

The module is divided into **eight lessons** spread across **four weekends** on Saturday morning and afternoon, equalling **12 hours total**. Teaching sessions will be delivered remotely. Lessons feature **frontal lectures** (1 hour) and **short seminars** (30 minutes). The course will be divided into four subjects, each subject will be taught in two sessions. The 1-hour interactive lecture will include the introduction of the discussed issues, a PPT presentation, videos, “quizes” (more like questionnaires) and in two lectures (of different subjects, e.g., Israeli-Palestinian conflict and importance of the Middle East) there will be a guest speaker. The guest speaker is an expert on the subject matter and s/he will provide an added value to the class and its participants. **Participants are encouraged to engage**, contribute to scholarly debate, defend their arguments and, ultimately, share potential solutions to concrete problems.

The courses included in the track are as follows:

Saturday, June 11th, 2022

Lesson #1 & 2: “Middle Eastern geopolitics: Understanding the region through conflict, competition and cooperation”

What is the greater picture behind what we consume in the news? This course, taught by Omri Brinner (ITSS Verona) and Prof. Shaul Mishal (Reichman University, Israel) will contextualize and analyze current events in a wider regional and theoretical perspective. We will: enhance our geographic knowledge of the region and discuss why it matters; explore issues such as regional alliances and their fluidity; ask if countries such as Iran go “all in” in their foreign policies; review the Abraham Accords and analyze their significance for the next decade, and more.

Saturday, June 18th, 2022

Lesson #3 & 4: “Does the Middle East still matter?”

Examining how the Middle East came to have global strategic importance, Omri Brinner (ITSS Verona) will analyze if it still matters from a global POV and if it has new strategic significance. We will: discuss what the origins of the term “Middle East” are, and if it still fulfills the same function; examine its importance in the post-WWI world (1920 onwards) and see what has changed

and what stayed the same; identify modern-day issues, ask if the region has solutions to these problems, and more.

Saturday, June 25th, 2022

Lesson #5 & 6: “The US in the Middle East: September 12, 2001 to September 2021”

Success, failure, or somewhere in between? Omri Brinner (ITSS Verona) analyzes American policy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond since 9/11. We will: identify American successes and failures in relation to 9/11; ask what constitutes American success in the first place; look at the local public opinion on the role the US filled in the region and in specific countries; ask if the US will deploy troops in the region again in the foreseeable future, and more.

Saturday, July 2st, 2022

Lesson #7 & 8: “Israeli-Palestinian relations: What’s next?”

What does the future hold for Israeli-Palestinian relations on the spectrum between another intifada, stagnation, separation, and a federation? Omri Brinner (ITSS Verona) and Dr. Chuck Freilich (Columbia University) will: analyze maps of Israel and the Palestinian Territories – it’s more complicated than you think! – discuss whether a Palestinian state can be established and can flourish, considering the geographic and political landscape; review the role of leaders of both sides and how they contribute to a solution, or lackthere of; ask if a solution can originate from a bottom-up movement using peaceful measures such as music, food and culture, and more.

Module requirements

There are no formal requirements for this module. Everyone with an interest in the aforementioned topics is welcome.

Referenced sources/Supplemental materials

A full list of reading/viewing materials will be provided in due course.