

**Fall 2016**  
**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**Dr. Mehrzad Boroujerdi**

PSC/MES/PAI 684.M001  
Office: 100 Eggers Hall  
Office Hours: Tu 1-4 pm

Class Time: Tu 9:30-12:15  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The international relations of the Middle East are generally characterized as being driven by unending conflict and political tension. Competition over natural resources, external interventions, wars, local political upheavals, and sectarian tension anchor the region's history. These factors plus competing claims of nationalist and supra-identities complicates the assessment of historical and political causes. The main objectives of this course are to help students understand how International Relations theories and conceptual tools can be applied to the Middle East and what are the determinants of the foreign policies of states and non-state actors in the region. The course is divided into two parts. Part one will introduce students to the internal and external dimensions of the emergence of the Middle East state system. In part two we will examine a series of controversial case studies (Arab-Israeli conflict, nuclear proliferation) that are part of the landscape of contemporary Middle East. By mixing the analysis of issues and themes, the course aims to show students the interconnectedness of regional and international factors.

**COURSE PHILOSOPHY:** You should consider this seminar a collective exercise in critical thinking. My role is to steer class discussion and engender an informal participatory class environment where we can all search collectively for a broader understanding of the subject matter. The readings will introduce you to some of the more important scholarship on the subject, and they will form the springboard for class discussion. Please keep in mind that the present structure of the course reflects my interests and ideas about the key forces in the international politics of the Middle East. However, I welcome a broadening of aims and interests through your input. Also, please take note that this syllabus represents the *anticipated* scheduling of lectures/readings/assignments; changes may be made to suit the actual composition and competencies of the class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Participation: In addition to being physically present, I expect you to be mentally present! Hence, you should complete all assigned readings *before* each class meeting so that you are familiar with the concepts, facts, theories, and controversies to be discussed. Furthermore, you can engage in discussion through the course page in Blackboard (<http://Blackbord.syr.edu>) and the course listserv ([IRME@listserv.syr.edu](mailto:IRME@listserv.syr.edu)). Both you and I will use these venues to (a) post interesting or informative e-mails about the subject matter of the course, and (b) respond to points and issues raised by the instructors or your peers.

Debates: Any discussion of the "International Politics of the Middle East" is filled with controversial minefields. Because of vigorous public advocacy and intense popular and scholarly interest, the arguments on different sides of various controversial issues are highly developed and refined. I have chosen several controversial topics that are intended to foster discussion and debate in our classroom. I chose these questions based on the belief that even though it is not necessary to agree with an opponent's point of view, it is always wise to understand it. The debates will involve at least two

students each time representing two sides of an issue. Each side can use PowerPoints, handouts or other instructional tools during their debate sessions (these should be emailed to me before your presentation). When you prepare to debate a topic, you need to do more than merely choose your initial and basic arguments. You need to become very familiar with the literature on the topic and become able to anticipate both your opponent's central arguments and how they will likely respond to your own. Remember that an argument is more than an assertion. Arguments are supported by evidence and include warrants that connect the evidence back to the central claim. Hopefully, you should be able to find substantial sources of evidence in your reading assignments. However, you should also feel free to do additional research through the Internet.

Research paper or journal of notes: You can choose *one* of the following two options for the primary assignment:

(a) Turn in a "journal of notes" (a reading log with critical commentary and opinion) on seven weekly topics (this includes books and articles) mentioned in the syllabus on *December 6*. In your seven entries (each of which must be 3-4 double spaced pages), you are expected to analyze, compare, and contrast works read in the seminar by entertaining the following set of questions: (a) what is the author's *thesis*?; (b) what are the primary *assumptions* the author holds (and expects readers to accept) in arguing that thesis?; (c) what are some *useful concepts* s/he presents?; (d) how does the reading *relate to previous readings*?; (e) what are the major *strengths and weaknesses* of the argument?; and (f) what are the *implications for academic research* if the author's thesis and underlying assumptions are valid or true?

(b) Write one major research paper, 21-28 double-spaced pages long, focusing on a paradigm (i.e., Orientalism), concept (i.e., secularism), or problem/issue (i.e., state formation) examined in class. This paper, which should have a theoretical rather than a descriptive focus, is due on *December 6*.

In writing your papers, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Choose a topic that interests you and encourages you to think deeply. Remember that you are not asked to write a book review and should develop your own thoughts and argument.
- A good paper has a clear structure with an introduction, a middle section elaborating an argument, and a conclusion. A good introduction guides your reader through the evidence, which follows and informs him/her of the overriding purpose of your developed points. I strongly suggest that you have a single sentence that clearly articulates your thesis. It can be as direct as: "The argument of this paper is..." Once you have posed the underlying question and offered a thesis, the body of the essay should be used to defend the thesis.
- Defending your argument means carefully choosing and analyzing specific evidence, not simply repeating unsupported generalizations with slightly different wordings again and again. For an argument to be convincing, it is necessary to evaluate all possible sides of an issue. You cannot ignore significant contradictory evidence and counter-arguments and will need to address them specifically. The presentation of evidence should not merely be a mindless catalog of facts but rather a selective and careful analysis of details relevant to your case. To decide what evidence to use, lay out the full array of potential

evidence in advance of writing your essay. Then choose that which can be best developed.

- Do not repeat entire sections from books or articles. Quotations are occasionally effective, but you should not need the quotations to do the work for you. Quote only selectively, and quote only that which is particularly valuable as evidence. When using quotations, you must always indicate them using quotation marks or, if the quotation is long and needs “block quotation,” by a single-spaced indentation and a specific reference with page number.
- Try to consult a variety of sources (books, periodicals, internet sources, lectures, etc.). If you need to do research on a country for your paper, you may wish to consult the Library of Congress Country Studies at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>.

### **Learning Objectives:**

After taking this course, the students will be able to:

- Explore the contribution of theories and conceptual approaches to the study of the international relations of the Middle East
- Exhibit a familiarity with the structure and complexities of the international relations of the Middle East
- critically contextualize the role of superpowers, wars and Islamic ideology in shaping the regional configuration of power
- practice analytical thinking about the past and present in written mode
- demonstrate an ability to organize ideas, create and defend an argument, and use and cite sources properly in writing papers

### **Note to Undergraduates:**

Undergraduate students enrolled in the course to fulfill the senior seminar requirement for the Major in Middle Eastern Studies are expected to maintain the same attendance record, fulfill the same presentation requirements, and do the same amount of readings as the graduate students. However, their writing assignments will be somewhat less demanding. Instead of writing a 21-28-page paper, these students will be expected to turn in a 15-18-page paper or alternatively if they decide to do the “journal of notes” assignment, instead of writing 3 to 4 pages on each topic, they will be asked to write 2 pages on each assignment.

### **EVALUATION OF PAPERS:**

Your paper will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The strength of your basic position and its connection to the course and outside readings
- Coherence and persuasiveness of major thesis and arguments presented
- Ability to counter possible objections
- Form/style (spelling, grammar, and composition)

Papers will be graded down if they:

- Do not have a major thesis
- Are purely descriptive
- Do not show evidence that you have done the readings
- Suffer from sloppy/colloquial writing

- Are full of personal stories not related to the topic
- Rely on excessive quotations

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

Syracuse University’s academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university’s academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), [disabilityservices.syr.edu](http://disabilityservices.syr.edu), located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315.443.4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create learning environments that are useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, I invite any student to meet with me to discuss additional strategies beyond accommodations that may be helpful to your success.

## **FAITH TRADITION OBSERVANCES**

Syracuse University does not set aside non-instructional days for any religious holiday. SU’s religious observances policy, found at [supolicies.syr.edu/emp\\_ben/religious\\_observance.htm](http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm), recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students should have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes. Student deadlines are

posted in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, INCUSION AND RESOLUTION SERVICES**

The Code of Ethical Conduct is a statement of principles guiding the activities of all faculty, staff, and students. It provides, in part, that we: Respect the rights and dignity of all persons and recognize that discrimination or harassment in any form undermines the fundamental principles of the University; and Support a respectful environment through our own actions, encourage respectful behavior in others, and speak out against hatred and bias. Additional information can be found at [www.syr.edu/hcd/equal-opportunity.html](http://www.syr.edu/hcd/equal-opportunity.html). If you have any concerns about these matters, write to the Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services at [titleix@syr.edu](mailto:titleix@syr.edu)

## **GRADING CRITERIA:**

Quality and degree of participation in class and listserv discussions	20%
Debate Performance	30%
Final paper or journal of notes	50%

## **REQUIRED TEXTS** (available at SU Bookstore):

Louise Fawcett (ed.), *International Relations of the Middle East*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

All the articles mentioned below are available through Blackboard.

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*“The future is under no obligation to mimic the past.”*

David Hume

## **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Aug. 30: Introduction - The Nature and Structure of the Course**

- Course requirements and expectations, presentation sign-up
- Defining the Middle East geopolitical region & key themes of the seminar
- The question of relevance
- Gabriel Ben-Dor, “Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8, 1 (January 1977): 43-63.
- Lisa Anderson, “Scholarship, Policy, Debate and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why It Matters,” *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 38, 1 (Summer 2004), 1-12.
- Eric Davis, “10 Conceptual Sins in Analyzing Middle East Politics,” *The New Middle East* (January 28, 2009).
- Marc Lynch, “Political Science in Real Time: Engaging the Middle East Policy Public,” *Perspectives on Politics*, 14, 1 (March 2016), 121-131.

### **Sept. 6: IR Theory and the Middle East**

- Fawcett, chapter 1
- Project on Middle East Political Science, *International Relations Theory and a Changing Middle East*, Department of Political Science, Aarhus University (September 2015), 1-79.
- Brent E. Sasley, “Studying Middle Eastern International Relations Through IR Theory,” *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 2, 2 (January 2011), 9-32.
- Halliday, chapter 10

*Recommended:*

- Halliday, 21-40.
- Morten Valbjørn, “Towards a ‘Mesopotamian Turn’: Disciplinarity and the Study of the International Relations of the Middle East,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 14, 1-2 (2004), 47-75.
- Andrea Teti, “Bridging the Gap: IR, Middle East Studies and the Disciplinary Politics of the Area Studies Controversy,” *European Journal of International Relations* 13, 1 (March 2007), 117-145.

**Sept. 13: The Rise and Fall of the Ottoman Empire**

- Fawcett, chapter 2
- Charles Issawi, “Europe, the Middle East and the Shift in Power: Reflections on a Theme by Marshall Hodgson,” *Comparative Studies in Society & History* 22, 4 (October 1980), 487-505.
- Albert Hourani, “The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East,” in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (University of California Press, 1981), 1-18.

**Sept. 20: Nationalism and State-Formation in the Middle East**

- Halliday, chapter 3
- Lisa Anderson, “The State in the Middle East and North Africa,” *Comparative Politics* 20, 1 (1987), 1-18.
- Baghat Korany, “Alien and Besieged Yet Here to Stay: The Contradictions of the Arab Territorial State,” in Ghassan Salame (ed.), *The Foundations of the Arab State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 47-74.
- Iliya Harik, “The Origins of the Arab State System,” in Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State* (London: Routledge, 1990), 1-28.
- Israel Gershoni, “Rethinking the Formation of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East 1920-1945: Old and New Narratives,” in Gershoni & Jankowski (ed.) *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University, 1997), 3-25.

*Recommended:*

- Karen Barkey and Sunita Parikh, “Comparative Perspectives on the State.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991), 523-549.

**Sept. 27: Secular International Relations Theory and the Islamic Middle East**

- Halliday, chapter 7
- Fawcett, chapter 8
- Mark C. Kennedy, “Dilemmas in Middle Eastern Social Sciences: Contours of the Problem of the Relevance of Western Paradigms as Guides to Research, Policy and Practice.” In Earl L. Sullivan and Jacqueline S. Ismael (eds.), *The*

*Contemporary Study of the Arab World* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1991), 65-80.

- Ewan Stein, "Beyond Arabism vs. Sovereignty: Relocating Ideas in the International Relations of the Middle East", *Review of International Studies* (October 2012), 881-905.
- Timothy Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the US Global Order," *Social Text* 73, 4 (Winter 2002), 1-18.
- Oded Haklai, "Authoritarianism and Islamic Movements in the Middle East: Research and Theory-Building in the Twenty-first Century," *International Studies Review* 11, 1 (2009), 27-45.

#### **Oct. 4: International Political Economy of the Middle East**

- Halliday, chapter 9
- Fawcett, chapter 5
- Various Authors, "Roundtable: A Discussion on the State of Middle Eastern/ Islamic Economic History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 527-548.
- Roger Owen, "*Imperialism, Globalization and Internationalism: Some Reflections on Their Twin Impacts on the Arab Middle East in the Beginnings of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*," Occasional Paper, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 2004, 1-15.
- Timur Kuran, "Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, 3 (2004): 71-90.

#### **Oct. 11: Identity, Alliances, Enmities and Regionalism in the Middle East**

- Halliday, chapter 6
- Fawcett, chapters 7 & 9
- Leonard Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System," *World Politics* 10, 3 (April 1958), 408-429.
- F. Gregory Gause III, "Systemic Approaches to Middle East International Relations," *International Studies Review* 1, 1 (Spring 1999), 11-31.
- F. Gregory Gause, III, and Ian S. Lustick. "America and the Regional Powers in a Transforming Middle East," *Middle East Policy* 19, 2 (June 2012): 1-9.
- Ian Lustick, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political 'Backwardness' in Comparative Perspective," *International Organization* 51, 4 (autumn 2003), 653-83.
- Andre Bank and Morten Valbjorn, "The New Arab Cold War: Rediscovering the Arab Dimension of Middle East Regional Politics," *Review of International Studies*, 38, 1 (2012), 1-22.

#### **Oct. 18: The (Post) Cold War Significance of the Middle East**

- Halliday, chapters 4 & 5
- Fawcett, chapters 3 & 4
- F. Gregory Gause III, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* no. 11 (July 2014), 1-27.

#### **Oct. 25: The Arab-Israeli Conflict**

- Fawcett, chapter 12 and 13

- Kermit Roosevelt, “The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics,” *Middle East Journal* 2, 1 (January 1948), 1-16.  
[https://archive.org/stream/PartitionOfPalestineALessonInPressurePolitices/PartPale\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/PartitionOfPalestineALessonInPressurePolitices/PartPale_djvu.txt)
- Walid Kazziha, “The Impact of Palestine on Arab Politics,” in Giacomo Luciani and Ghassan Salame (eds.), *The Politics of Arab Integration* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 213-231.
- Rashid Khalidi, “The United States and Palestine,” in *Resurrecting Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 118-150.
- John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, “The Israeli Lobby and US Foreign Policy,” *Working paper* (2006), 1-82.
- Michael Massing, “The Storm over the Israel Lobby,” *New York Review of Books*, 53, 10 (June 8, 2006).

*Debate Questions:*

- 1) Has the pro-Israeli lobby successfully stifled Western debate about Israel's actions?
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N294FMDok98>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzXS3tmZrcU>
- 2) Are bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations a viable way to reach a two-state solution?
- 3) Should the U.S. increase pressure on Israel to forge a “Land for Peace” agreement with the Palestinians?
  - <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/12/article55323455>
  - <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/12/article55324083>
  - <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jul/22/eu-hezbollah-israel>
  - <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/03/article55296270>
  - <http://www.aawsat.net/2013/03/article55296267>

### **Nov. 1: Iraq War and Its Consequences**

- Larry Diamond, “What Went Wrong in Iraq?” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2004).
- Per Oskar Klevnas, “Sanctions and the ‘Moral Case’ for War,” *Middle East Report* (March 4, 2003).
- Raymond Hinnebusch, “The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 16, 3 (Fall 2007), 209–228.
- Peter Sluglett, “Imperial Myopia: Some Lessons from Two Invasions of Iraq,” *Middle East Journal* 62, 4 (autumn 2008), 593-609.
- New York University’s Center for Global Affairs, “Iraq: Post-2010,” 1-26.

*Debate Questions:*

- 1) Was the Iraq War justified?
- 2) Should Kurdistan become independent?
  - [Ten Years On: The Iraq War Was Justified](#)
  - [Ten Years On: The Iraq War Was Not Justified](#)
  - [Now is Not the Time for an Independent Kurdistan](#)
  - [Now is the Time for an Independent Kurdistan](#)

### **Nov. 8: Arab Revolutions and the West**

- Fawcett, chapter 11
- President Obama’s Cairo Speech  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-)



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- *New York Times*, “Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart,” (August 11, 2016) [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/11/magazine/isis-middle-east-arab-spring-fractured-lands.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/11/magazine/isis-middle-east-arab-spring-fractured-lands.html?_r=0)
- Lisa Anderson, "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* (May 2011), 2-7.
- Seth G. Jones, “The Mirage of the Arab Spring: Deal with the Region You Have, Not the Region You Want’, *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2013), 55-63.
- *The Economist* on the Arab World (July 5, 2014 and May 14, 2016)

#### *Debate Questions:*

- 1) Should the West have kept out of the Arab world's revolutions?
- 2) Have the Arab uprisings changed the geopolitical realignments in the Middle East?

### **Nov. 15: The Iranian Nuclear Controversy**

- Kenneth Waltz, “Why Iran Should Get the Bomb,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/Aug. 2012).
- Colin H. Kahl & Kenneth Waltz, “Would a Nuclear Iran Make the Middle East More Secure?” *Foreign Affairs* (2012), 157-162.
- Clive Thompson, “Can Game Theory Predict When Iran Will Get the Bomb?” *New York Times* (August 16, 2009).
- Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Todd Fine, “Iranian Nuclear Miasma,” *Syracuse Law Review* 57 (3), 2007, 619-35.
- Suzanne Maloney and Ray Takeyh, “Pathway to Coexistence: A New U.S. Policy Toward Iran” In *Restoring the Balance* (Council on Foreign Relations 2008), 59-91.

#### *Debate Questions:*

- 1) Is the world safer if Iran's nuclear facilities were bombed?
- 2) Does nuclear weapons proliferation by Iran increase stability in the Middle East?
- 3) Is the Iran nuclear deal a game changer for US-Israeli relations?
  - [Debate: Iran nuclear deal a game changer for US-Israeli relations](#) vs. [Iran nuclear deal not a game changer for US-Israeli relations](#)
  - [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/27/kroenigs\\_case\\_for\\_war\\_with\\_iran](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/27/kroenigs_case_for_war_with_iran)
  - [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/21/the\\_worst\\_case\\_for\\_war\\_with\\_iran](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/12/21/the_worst_case_for_war_with_iran)

### **Nov. 22: Thanksgiving break (no class)**

### **Nov. 29: The United States in the Middle East**

- Fawcett, chapter 16
- Max Fisher, “How Saudi Arabia Captured Washington,” Vox Media <http://www.vox.com/2016/3/21/11275354/saudi-arabia-gulf-washington>
- John Waterbury, “Hate Your Policies, Love Your Institutions.” *Foreign Affairs* 82, 1 (January/February 2003), 58-68.
- Meghana Nayak and Christopher Malone, “American Orientalism and American Exceptionalism: A Critical Rethinking of US Hegemony,” *International Studies Review* 11, 2 (June 2009), 253-76.

#### *Debating:*

- John J. Mearsheimer, “America Unhinged,” *National Interest* (Jan. 2, 2014).

### **Dec. 6: The Syrian Civil War** (Term papers are due)

- “Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics,” *International Crisis Group*, Policy Briefing no. 31 (24 November 2011), 1-11.
- Curtis Ryan, “The New Arab Cold War and the Struggle for Syria,” *Middle East Report*, no. 262 (Spring 2012).
- Mohsen Milani, “Why Tehran Won’t Abandon Assad(ism),” *Washington Quarterly* 36, 4 (2013), 79–93.
- Elizabeth Dickinson, “Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria’s Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home,” *Saban Center*, Brookings Institution, Analysis Paper no. 16 (December 2013), 1-27.

*Debate Questions:*

- 1) Should the world be intervening militarily in Syria?
- 2) Because of the Syrian conflict, there is a marked rise in Sunni-Shiite sectarian sentiments in the Levant and the rest of the region. Can this sectarianism be contained?
  - [The West has abandoned the Syrian opposition after trying to support it](#)
  - [The West never stood with the Syrian opposition](#)