

PSPA 237 FINAL EXAM
Tuesday 17 January 2006
Fall 2005-2006
Prof. Yezid Sayigh

Answer one of the questions below. Each question has been designed to require you to draw on two or more chapters from the readings, so you should make a conscious effort to do so. The questions are also designed for you to develop your ideas quite freely, so long as you support them carefully with evidence from the readings. Read the questions carefully and make sure you understand what is being asked before you start to prepare your answer!

NOTE 1: This is an open-book exam and so you may use your reading materials and notes, but you may not talk to each other. Avoid simply copying text from the book; if you do use text you must clearly identify it as a quotation, to avoid plagiarism.

NOTE 2: You are advised to take some time to plan your essay and identify your main argument, before starting to write. Also, note that a good essay will develop a clear argument, providing appropriate evidence from the readings, but will also consider counter-arguments and respond to them as necessary.

NOTE 3: You have at least two hours for this exam, and up to two-and-a-half hours. I expect you to submit an essay of approximately 1,000 words. You may exceed this length, but a good essay with proper development of its argument and appropriate evidence will not be much shorter.

QUESTION 1. Now that you have completed the readings and classes for this course, is it useful or meaningful to study the Middle East as a single region or system of states, or should it be treated analytically as several regions (or sub-regions)? In other words, does past experience show that the Middle East is marked more by similarities in patterns of its international politics and in shared values and interests between states, or by differences? Draw on any of the issues discussed in the readings to support your answer, and provide concrete examples taken from these readings.

QUESTION 2. On reviewing the readings, especially the chapters by Stein, Smith, and Shlaim, do you feel that the record of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Middle East peace process in various historic periods shows that there were genuine opportunities for a peaceful resolution that were missed? In either case (whether you think there were such opportunities or not) what was more important in determining the outcome in positive or negative ways: the behaviour of local actors or of external ones? Draw on the chapters to provide evidence.

QUESTION 3. In general, Middle East states have a poor record in terms of avoiding conflict, achieving regional economic cooperation and collective security, utilizing the advantages of relations with the major international actors, and so on. Given this record, and given the historical experience of outside powers from playing an effective role in restructuring relations between Middle East states and reorienting their foreign policies, at the start of the 21st century?

QUESTION 4. What has been more important in reshaping relations between states and international politics in the Middle East since the end of the Cold War: external forces and processes (such as various US administrations, economic globalization, the transition from European Community to European Union, etc), or local forces and processes driven from within the region?

QUESTION 5. Has the Middle East entered a fundamentally new era in its patterns of relations between states and of its international politics since the end of the Cold War, or is the region experiencing essentially the same old patterns but in somewhat different form? Justify your answer by referring to specific issues or structures that reveal significant change or continuity.