

**University of Colorado at Boulder
International Affairs Program 4500-003
The Superpowers and the Middle East**

Spring 2024 - Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30-11:00 Classroom: University Club 6

Professor Zach Levey

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Office Hours: by appointment (see e-mail address above)

Office Location: International Affairs Program- University Club - Suite A4.

Course Description and Goals

This course spans a period of seven decades, examining the history and contemporary setting of superpower involvement in the Middle East. The first part of our study of U.S. and Soviet engagement in the region during the Cold War examines seven principal episodes, beginning with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and concluding with the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The second part of the course analyzes the policies of the United States and Russia in the Middle East since the end of the Cold War in 1991. We will accord attention, too, to China's growing interest in the region. Thus, the latter half of the term covers topics such as peacemaking in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, the Syrian civil war, the Abraham Accords and the current Israel-Hamas war.

By the end of this course students will be familiar with the motives and interests of the United States, Soviet Union/Russia and China in the Middle East. This class provides participants with both the historical underpinnings of the powers' roles and the tools for understanding the impact that their policies have had upon individual states, relations among them and the region in broad terms. During the semester students will gain research experience by exploring a specific topic and presenting it to the group in a coherent manner.

Requirements

In-class Midterm Exam (covers first seven topics): 15% of final grade.

Class Participation - 5% of grade (includes attendance).

Research and Presentation of Topic in Class – 40% of grade.

Term Paper - 40% of grade.

The instructor will cover the first section of the syllabus in lecture format, thereby preparing students for the midterm exam. Each student will choose a topic that explores the policies of one or more of the powers in the region during the post-Cold War period and present it to the class.

Students will coordinate with the instructor both the topic and bibliography that will serve as the basis for their research, with much latitude for creativity and independence. Work on these presentations will create the foundation and framework for the term papers (fifteen pages). We will devote class time to reviewing the guidelines for these projects.

There is no single textbook for this course. Basic readings appear below each topic. The instructor will assist students in locating bibliography pertaining to the subjects of their presentations.

Topics and Readings

#1. The United States, the Soviet Union, Palestine and Israel: 1945-1949

Gabriel Gorodetzky, "The Soviet Union's role in the creation of the State of Israel," *Journal of Israeli History* 22, 1 (2003): 4-20.

<https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/13531040312331287554>

Joseph Heller, *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1967: Superpower Rivalry* (Manchester University Press, 2016): 21-33. [e-book].

Yaacov Roi, *Soviet Decision-Making in Practice: the USSR and Israel 1947-1954* (London: Routledge, 2018): 68-106, 109-132. Two PDF files on CANVAS.

Steven L. Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), 16-39. PDF file on CANVAS.

Recommended

Jeffrey Herf, *Israel's Moment: International Support for and Opposition to Establishing the Jewish State, 1945-1949* (Cambridge University Press, 2022): 333-348. [e-book].

#2. Israel and the Arab States between East and West: 1948-1956

Uri Bialer, *Between East and West: Israel's Foreign Policy Orientation 1948-1956* (Cambridge University Press, 1990): 133-172, 206-255. [e-book].

Rami Ginat, "Soviet Policy toward the Arab World: 1945-1948," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32, 4 (1996): 321-335. PDF file on CANVAS.

Galia Golan, *Soviet Policies in the Middle East: from World War Two to Gorbachev* (Cambridge University Press, 1990): 29-57. PDF File on CANVAS.

Peter L. Hahn, *Crisis and Crossfire: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2005): 1-18.
PDF file on CANVAS.

Walter Z. Laqueur, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2021): 136-158. [e-book].

#3. The United States, the Soviet Union and the 1967 Six Day War

Peter L. Hahn, "The Cold War and the Six Day War: U.S. Policy towards the Arab-Israeli crisis of June 1967," in Nigel J. Ashton (ed.), *The Cold War in the Middle East: regional conflict and the superpowers, 1967-73* (London: Routledge, 2007): 16-34. PDF File on CANVAS.

Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the Outbreak of the June 1967 Six Day War," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 8, 1 (Winter 2006): 3-19.
PDF file on CANVAS.

William B. Quandt, "Lyndon Johnson and the June 1967 War: What Color Was the Light?" *Middle East Journal* 46, 2 (1992): 198-228. PDF file on CANVAS.

Spiegel, *The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict*: 196-218. PDF files on CANVAS.

Recommended

Yaacov Ro'i, "Soviet Policy toward the Six Day War through the Prism of Moscow's Relations with Egypt and Syria," in Yaacov Ro'i and Boris Morozov (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the June 1967 Six Day War* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008): 1-42. PDF File on CANVAS

Boris Morozov, "The Outbreak of the June 1967 War in Light of Soviet Documentation," in Ro'i and Morozov (eds.), *The Soviet Union and the June 1967 Six Day War*: 43-64. PDF File on CANVAS

Warren Bass, *Support Any Friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance* (Oxford University Press: 2003). E-book.

#4. Early Test of Détente: The 1969-70 Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition

Dima P. Adamsky, "'Zero-Hour for the Bears': Inquiring into the Soviet Decision to Intervene in the Egyptian-Israeli War of Attrition, 1969-70," *Cold War History* 6, 1 (2006): 113-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740500395501>

Yehuda U. Blanga, *The United States, Israel and Egypt: diplomacy in the shadow of attrition, 1969-70* ((London: Routledge, 2020): 82-109. [e-book]; also PDF file "The Sisco-Dobrynin Talks" on CANVAS.

Moshe Gat, "The War of Attrition: the Egyptian-Israeli Front Spirals out of Control," in M. Gat, *In Search of a Peace Settlement: Egypt and Israel between the Wars, 1967-1973* (London: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2012): 51-83. [e-book]; also PDF file on CANVAS.

Galen Jackson, *A Lost Peace: Great Power Politics and the Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1967-1979* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press): 34-71. [e-book].

Recommended

George W. Breslauer, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1967-72: Unalterable Antagonism or Collaborative Competition?" in G.W. Breslauer (ed.), *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 23-60. [e-book].

Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente: the United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1969-1973* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) [e-book].

David A. Korn, *Stalemate: The War Of Attrition and Great Power Diplomacy In the Middle East, 1967-1970* (New York: Routledge, 1992) [e-book].

#5. The Superpowers and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Process 1973-1979

Evgeni M. Primakov, "Soviet Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict," in William B. Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press): 387-409. [e-book].

William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016): 99-171. [e-book].

Yaacov Ro'i, "The Soviet View of the U.S.-Israeli Partnership, in Breslauer (ed.), *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East*: 217-244. [e-book].

Recommended

Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (London: Routledge, 1999): 187-228. [e-book].

Zach Levey, "Anatomy of an Airlift: U.S. Military Assistance to Israel During the 1973 War," *Cold War History* 8, 4 (November 2008): 481-501. PDF File on CANVAS.

#6. War in Lebanon: 1975-1983

William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 245-259. [e-book].

Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon: 1970-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 121-173. PDF Files on CANVAS.

Dennis B. Ross, "Soviet Behavior toward the Lebanon War: 1982-84" in Breslauer (ed.), *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East*: 99-121. [e-book].

Recommended

Zach Levey, "The United States, Israel and the 1976 Red Lines in Lebanon," *The International History Review*: 44, 4 (2022): 772-790.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2021.1976811>

#7. The United States, the Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1989

Ray Takeyh, "The Iran-Iraq War: a Reassessment," in *Middle East Journal* 63, 3 (Summer 2010): 365-383.

<https://research.ebsco.com/c/3czfwv/viewer/pdf/4uwje3t7zz>

Artemy Kalinovsky, "The Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War," in Ashton and Gibson (eds.), *The Iran-Iraq War*: 230-242. PDF File on CANVAS.

Judith S. Yaphe, "Changing American Perspectives on the Iran-Iraq War," in Nigel Ashton and Bryan Gibson, (eds.), *The Iran-Iraq War: New International Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2013): 178-195. [e-book].

James Clay Moltz and Dennis B. Ross, "The Soviet Union and the Iran-Iraq War," in Breslauer (ed.), *Soviet Strategy in the Middle East*: 123-150. PDF File on CANVAS.

#8. Russia, Israel and the Middle East since 1991

Andrej Kreutz, "The Geopolitics of post-Soviet Russia and the Middle East," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 24, 1 (Winter 2002): 49-61. PDF file on CANVAS

Derek Averre, "Russia, the Middle East and the Conflict in Syria," in *Routledge Handbook of Russian Security, 2019*: 399-409. PDF file on CANVAS.

Clément Therme, "Iran and Russia in the Middle East: Toward a Regional Alliance?" *Middle East Journal* 72, 4 (August 2018): 549-562.

PDF file on CANVAS.

Mark N. Katz, "Russia and Israel: an Improbable Friendship," in European Institute for Security Studies (2018): 103-107. PDF file on CANVAS.

Scott B. Lasensky and Vera Michlin-Shapir, "Avoiding Zero-Sum: Israel and Russia in an Evolving Middle East," in *The MENA Region: a Great Power Competition* (Atlantic Council, 2019): 141-157. PDF file on CANVAS.

#9. The United States and Iraq: 1991 and 2003

H.W. Brands, "George Bush and the Gulf War of 1991," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, 1 (March 2004): 113-131. PDF file on CANVAS.

Jeffrey Record, "Why the Bush Administration Invaded Iraq: Making Strategy after 9/11," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 2,2 (Summer 2008): 63-92. PDF file on CANVAS.

Jeremy Pressman, "Power without Influence: The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Failure in the Middle East," *International Security* 33,4 (Spring 2009): 149-179. PDF file on CANVAS.

Avi Shlaim, "Israel and the Gulf Conflict," in A. Danchev and D. Keohane, *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91* (Springer, 1994): 59-79. PDF file on CANVAS.

Joseph Stieb, "Why did the United States Invade Iraq? The Debate at 20 Years," *Texas National Security Review* 6,3 (Summer 2023): 11-28. PDF file on CANVAS.

Recommended

Robert K. Brigham, "The Lessons and Legacies of the War in Iraq," in Beth Bailey and Richard H. Immerman (eds.), *Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New York University Press, 2015): 286-307.

Dov Waxman, "From Jerusalem to Baghdad? Israel and the War in Iraq," *International Studies Perspectives* 10, 1 (February 2009): 1-17. PDF file on CANVAS.

#10. Russia, the United States and the Syrian Civil War: 2011-2021

Tatev M. Antonyan, "Russia and Iran in the Syrian Crisis: Similar Aspirations, Different Approaches," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 11, 3 (2017): 337-348. <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/23739770.2017.1442407>

Robert S. Ford, "The Syrian Civil War," The Middle East Institute, 2019. PDF file on CANVAS.

Brett McGurk, "Hard Truths in Syria: America can't do more with less, and it shouldn't try," *Foreign Affairs* 98, 3 (May/June 2019): 69-84. PDF on CANVAS.
Itamar Rabinovich and Carmit Valensi, *Syria Requiem: the Civil War and its Aftermath* (Princeton University Press, 2021): 157-193. [e-book].

Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger and Edward Geist, (Research Report): "Understanding Russia's Intervention in Syria," (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2019, 32 pages). PDF file on CANVAS.

#11. The United States and Israel's Nuclear Status: 1961-1973

Matteo Gerlini. "Waiting for Dimona: The United States and Israel's Development of Nuclear Capability," *Cold War History* 10 (2), 2010: 143-161.

Giordana Pulcini and Or Rabinowitz, "An Ounce of Prevention—A Pound of Cure? The Reagan Administration's Nonproliferation Policy and the Osirak Raid," *Journal of Cold War Studies* (2021) 23 (2): 4–40.
PDF file on CANVAS.

Zeev Maoz. "The Mixed Blessing of Israel's Nuclear Policy," *International Security* 28, 2 (2003): 44-77.

Galen Jackson, "The United States, the Israeli Nuclear Program, and Nonproliferation, 1961–69," *Security Studies* 28, 2 (2019): 360-393.
PDF file on CANVAS.

Recommended

Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. [e-book- via internet archive].

#12. The United States and the Arab-Israeli Abraham Accords of 2020

Yoel Guzansky and Sarah Feuer, "The Abraham Accords at One Year: Achievements, Challenges, and Recommendations for Israel," The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) 1 November, 2021. PDF file on CANVAS.

Yoel Guzansky and Zachary A. Marshall, "The Abraham Accords: Immediate Significance and Long-Term Implications," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 14, 3 (2020): 379-389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2020.1831861>

Fred A. Lazin, "President Donald Trump's Abraham Accords initiative: Prospects for Israel, the Arab states, and Palestinians," *Politics and Policy* 51 (2023): 476-487. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12533>

Tova Norlen and Tamir Sinai, "The Abraham Accords: Paradigm Shift or Realpolitik?," *Security Insights* (The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany), 64 (October 2020) (15 pages). PDF on CANVAS.

#13. Russia, Turkey and Iran in the post-Cold War Era

Bayram Balci and Nicolas Monceau (eds.), *Turkey, Russia and Iran in the Middle East: Establishing a New Regional Order* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021). [e-book].

Note: all chapters in this book are highly relevant. Read what interests you.

Vicken Cheterian, "Friend and Foe: Russia–Turkey relations before and after the war in Ukraine," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 34, 7 (2023): 1271-1294. <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/09592318.2023.2185443>

Samuel J. Hirst and Onur Isci, "Smokestacks and Pipelines: Russian-Turkish Relations and the Persistence of Economic Development," *Diplomatic History* 44, 5 (November 2020): 834–859. <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhaa046>.

Eric D. Moore, *Russian-Iranian Relations since the end of the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2014): 8-46. [e-book]

Banafsheh Keynoush, "Russia-Iran Relations: Indispensable Neighbors," in Keynoush, *The World Powers and Iran: Before, During and After the Nuclear Deal* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2022): 85-115. PDF file on CANVAS.

#14. China and the Middle East: 1991-2003

Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Niv Horesh (eds.), *China's Presence in the Middle East: the Implications of the One Belt, One Road Initiative* (London: Routledge, 2017). [e-book].

Yoram Evron, "China's diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East: the quest for a great-power role in the Region," *International Relations* 31, 2 (June 2017): 125-144. <https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0047117815619664>

Andrew Scobell and Alireza Nader, *China in the Middle East: the Wary Dragon* (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2016). [e-book].

#15. The United States and the Israel-Hamas Wars: 2008-2024.

Bibliography to be determined.

Statements

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Requirements for Infectious Diseases

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the [further guidance of the Public Health Office](#). For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

Accommodation: Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, Medical Isolation

[Disability Services](#) determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance.

In case of a temporary medical condition or medical isolation for which accommodation is required – inform the instructor.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission of all course instructors involved and aiding academic dishonesty.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Inform this instructor if you wish to miss class in observation of a religious holiday. See [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stress, mental health or substance use concerns that impact upon your academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) Located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277 [24/7].

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus available to students.