

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE
OTHER WORLD REGIONS: THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Terms and concepts to know:

Geopolitics

Jihad

Sharia

Western imperialism

Islamic radicalism

Dutch disease

Consolidated democracy

Sykes-Picot Agreement

Balance of power

Protracted conflict

Extremist veto

Study and discussion questions:

1. What are the geographic, demographic, economic, social, and political similarities and differences within the MENA region?
2. In what ways have the region's natural resources been both a blessing and a curse?
3. How has the troubled history between MENA and the West influenced modern relations between the two?
4. What have been the main obstacles to economic development in the region?
5. What have been the main obstacles to democratic development in the region?
6. According to Kulkani, what is the real reason for America's deployment of AFRICOM? How is this new command possibly creating the instability it purports to combat?
7. MacLeod suggests that Afghanistan's description as a "failed narco state" may be more by design than accident. Examine his thesis and point out strengths and weaknesses in his argument.
8. Examine Bacevich's historical outline of the use of the military in the Middle East. Could things have been different? How so and was the buildup of US military power in this region a strategic mistake? Why or why not?
9. Why does Mor believe center-left parties not do particularly well in Israeli elections? Could there be other factors at play? And does the US's relationship with Israel tend to favor more right-wing governments?

Readings:

Weatherby et.al. – Chapter 8

Video:

Arabs & Terrorism.