

# Geography of the Middle East

ENVI 423-301 (CR: 50859), Distance Blackboard course, fall 2017 (8/22/17-12/15/17)

Foundational Studies (Integrative and Upper Division Electives, 3 Credit hours)

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**Course Description:** Environmental and cultural patterns of the Middle East, with emphasis on strategic location, significance in world history, Islamic culture, water and energy resources, and evolving geopolitics and conflicts. *Prerequisite: Upper Division Electives require 45 earned credit hours or more at time of registration.*

**Course Purpose and Organization:** *Geography* is an interdisciplinary field of study straddling nature and culture. It integrates a range of academic disciplines and intellectual approaches designed to acquire and create knowledge. *Geography of the Middle East* is focused on training students to interpret selected environmental and cultural Middle East Geography patterns and current issues that impact the region, the United States, and international relations. **First**, the course emphasizes the region's strategic location, significance in world history, Islamic culture, water & energy resources, evolving geopolitics & conflicts, and relations with the United States. **Second**, course topics, learning objectives, assigned materials, and assignments integrate multiple perspectives and ways of learning (e.g., *scientific, historical, artistic, literary, ethical, social behavioral*). **Third**, the course is grounded in a critical thinking approach designed to identify, describe, and explain some of the pressing Middle East problems ranging from the environmental impact of the extraordinary diversion of the Jordan River away from its 20-million-year old natural course to the ever-escalating Palestine-Israel conflict and its ever-expanding spillover wars in which millions of Middle Eastern people were killed or displaced in recent decades. **The Critical Thinking Community** defines critical thinking as "*the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.*" Critical thinking is becoming indispensable in a digital age marked by hacking, leaking, and faking information. Critical thinking often involves reasoning well, questioning accepted notions of truth and authority, recognizing unstated assumptions and values, and using language with accuracy. Without critical thinking, much of our thinking could be "biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced." The thematic-regional focus, interdisciplinary perspective, and critical thinking approach are designed to engage the student and ensure that he/she will be able to (1) analyze problems, (2) think critically and creatively, (3) integrate a variety of approaches to gain knowledge, (4) recognize the ethical, social, and cultural implications of issues, and (5) communicate professionally, persuasively, and effectively. While course material is purposely VAST, DIVERSE, BALANCED, CURRENT, and WELL DOCUMENTED, you should NOT feel "OVERWHELMED" by course material or the number of PowerPoint slides or video clips BECAUSE **the ASSIGNED material for GRADED assignments is very LIMITED and very SPECIFIC** (see, for example, how specific is the study guide for each short exam, and how specific is the assigned material for each short essay and for the critical thinking project/paper). The course fulfills the Foundational Studies (Integrative and Upper Division Electives) course requirements at Indiana State University. The course is organized around the following FIVE geographic topics (each topic should be covered in **3 weeks: Week 1** you review **learning objectives**, read **assignment instructions**, and review **assigned materials; Week 2** you write a **short essay**, and **Week 3** you complete a **short exam**).

**Topic 1: Global Geopolitics of the Middle East.** Topic 1 introduces students to the region and its global connections and geopolitics (*geopolitics is a subfield of geography focused on the dynamics that drives states to form or join international coalitions or alliances or axes with other states to achieve specific common goals*). Topic 1 examines the nomenclature and delimitation of the Middle East region, its distinctive tri-continental junction, its six major strategic waterways, its cultural significance (as the birthplace of monotheism and the cradle of civilization), its petroleum and natural gas resources (with an estimated 53% of the world's proven crude oil reserves in 2016), and its relations with the United States (the region falls within the GEOGRAPHIC 'Area of Responsibility' of three US unified combatant commands: USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, and USAFRICOM). Since the region is engulfed by conflicts and wars, Topic 1 pinpoints the belligerents and examines how those wars and conflicts make international headlines, shape public perceptions and worldviews, and expose the ongoing tensions and confrontations between **TWO loose international coalitions of states or geopolitical axes** (defined in this course as **Axis 1** and **Axis 2**). The current LEADING members of Axis 1 include the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the State of Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The current LEADING members of Axis 2 include Russia, China, Iran,

and Syria. The current **MAIN adversaries**<sup>1</sup> within the TWO axes are the **United States & Israel** against **Iran & Syria** (because Iran & Syria support Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah in their armed resistance against the Israeli occupation of Palestine). Other leading states (including Russia and China) come and go, and are essentially aligned with one axis or the other for specific national or strategic goals. For example, Russia supports the Syrian government but has normal relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey, which all support the Israeli-inspired US goal to overthrow the Syrian government. US support for overthrowing the pro-Russian government in Ukraine in 2014, the rise of media-inspired Russophobes in the US, and the various attempts to drive a wedge between President Trump and President Putin are all targeting Russian relations with Syria and Iran. By the same token, China has normal relations with Axis 1 countries but US-Chinese relations were affected by China's repeated use of the veto power at the UN Security Council to deflect repeated actions against Syria (even so, US President Donald Trump did not see it inappropriate to inform Chinese President Xi Jinping 'over dinner' that he 'just' launched attack on Syria with 59 tomahawk cruise missiles). Understanding the geopolitics and dynamics of those wars and conflicts will provide critical answers to burning questions such as are American and Russian military interventions serving more their national interests or the national interests of their Middle East allies? Why overthrowing the Syrian government is a common goal shared by ISIS, Al-Qaida, and the United States? Why did the US spend \$6 trillion (according to President Trump) on Middle East wars <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYLUi7Aefo> instead of spending the money to assist some 43 million<sup>2</sup> Americans in poverty and rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure? Why did President Obama build a series of international coalitions of states to overthrow governments in Libya, Syria, & Yemen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSBRk10E5R8> for some undeclared goals which were partly found buried inside the over 30,000 emails & email attachments in the Hillary Clinton Email Archive [https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton\\_Email\\_November\\_Release/C05794498.pdf](https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton_Email_November_Release/C05794498.pdf) leaked by WikiLeaks on the eve of the US 2016 election?

**Topic 2: Geography of water and energy resources.** Topic 2 examines (1) Environmental patterns (mountain ranges, desert environments, major river systems), (2) Cultural patterns (ethno-linguistic groups, languages, religions, historical geography of major Middle East Muslim dynasties and states before the First World War, and the ramifications of three British 'promises' during the First World War: the Hussein-McMahon secret correspondence of 1915-1916, the Sykes-Picot secret agreement of 1916, and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promising Palestine to world Jewry), (3) Water resources and water conflicts, (4) OPEC and its oil and natural gas reserves, production, competitive production cost, geopolitics and prices, (5) U.S. shale oil boom and dependence on petroleum imports, and (6) the critical question of "Who gets what from a litre of pump fuel sold to consumers?" See Course Calendar (below) and Course Topics link on Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus.

**Topic 3: Geography of Islam's Cultural Unity and Political Diversity.** Topic 3 presents a brief introduction to (1) Monotheism, (2) the Quran, (3) Prophet Muhammad, (4) the Five Pillars of Islam, (5) the guiding principle of bringing benefits and warding off harms under Islamic law, (6) the emphasis on human brotherhood and the virtue of good action in Islamic ethics, (7) the origins and ramifications of 'jihad' and 'terrorism' in Afghanistan since 1979 and in Syria since 2011, and (8) how religion per se—as opposed to government use of religion in international politics or geopolitics—is not really the *problem* and therefore may not be expected to solve political problems without violating the separation of church and state as embodied in the United States constitution. See Course Calendar (below) and Course Topics link on Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus.

**Topic 4: Geography of the Palestine-Israel Conflict and the United States.** Topic 4 aims at helping students (1) understand the gravity of the Palestine-Israel conflict, (2) describe the manifestations and consequences of the conflict, (3) explain the roots and causes of the conflict and articulate its central problem, (4) examine how and why the State of Israel has been so successful at embroiling the United States into the conflict since its inception, and (6) identify and discuss solutions to the conflict. See Course Calendar (below) and Course Topics link on Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus.

**Topic 5: Geographies of War, Occupation, Resistance, and Terrorism.** Topic 5 highlights (1) the basic geography of Iraq in the *middle* of the Middle East and the background to the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq (the Palestine-Israel

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<sup>1</sup> Foreign Policy Research Institute, 11/14/2001, <http://www.fpri.org/article/2012/08/next-stop-iraq/>  
The Christian Science Monitor, 8/30/2002, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0830/p08s01-wome.htm>  
US General Wesley Clark, Published 8/13/2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmms5Eoixfs>  
RT, 1/20/2016, <https://www.rt.com/news/329502-isis-iran-threat-israel/>

The Atlantic, April 2016 Issue, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau [Poverty in 2015], <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.html>

Conflict, the American-Soviet Cold War, the American-Vietnam War, the Soviet-Afghan War, the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war of 1991, and the War on Terror since 9/11), (2) the “what” of the Iraq war (human, economic, and moral cost of the war), (3) the “why” of the Iraq war (was it because of 9/11, weapons of mass destruction, democracy, oil, Israel, Gulf states?), and (4) the ramifications of the Iraq war, including the continuation of war on/in Iraq itself, the NATO-led war on/in Libya, the war on/in Syria, the war on/in Yemen, political and sectarian tension in Lebanon and Bahrain, NATO expansion through NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, the failure so far to fully bring Iraq inside Axis 1, and the continuation of US belligerence and sanctions against Iran since 1979 when Iran turned over the Israeli embassy in Tehran to the Palestine Liberation Organization, expelled the Israelis from Iran, and considered Israel an illegitimate state. Topic 5 also engages students to think critically about (1) *what common goals unite geopolitical Axis 1 countries* and (2) *what common goals unite geopolitical Axis 2 countries*. See **Course Calendar (below)** and **Course Topics link on Blackboard for assignments & deadlines, which are part of this syllabus**.

**Course Assignments and Grading:** Course assignments are designed to test your **quantitative** learning (mere acquisition and retention of information) and your **qualitative** thinking (critical thinking that goes beyond the mere acquisition and retention of information towards the analysis, evaluation, and synthesis or integration of information and facts to create new knowledge, to answer important questions, to solve complex problems, and to write thoughtful essays). Assignments are short and *evenly distributed* throughout the term. They include: **five short multiple choice exams** (worth 50 points, 10 points each), **four short essays** (worth 40 points, 10 points each), and **one critical thinking project/paper** (worth 10 points) whose completion involves participation and interaction in a **formative assessment discussion board**. Each short exam consists of 20 multiple choice questions focused on the core issues covered under the specifically assigned materials in the **study guide**. Each homework assignment should consist of a 200-300 word essay that reflect (1) your learning and thinking about current critical Middle East issues and (2) your learning and thinking about how to ground your judgment into verifiable facts. **Help** is available at: Math & Writing Center, <http://libguides.indstate.edu/mathandwriting>. Each homework assignment must be formatted as a Microsoft Word file and uploaded through the available TurnItIn link. Turnitin generates Similarity Reports for the instructor to check the ORIGINALTY of the writing, [https://guides.turnitin.com/01\\_Manuals\\_and\\_Guides/Student\\_Guides/Turnitin\\_Classic\\_for\\_Students/17\\_The\\_Similarity\\_Report](https://guides.turnitin.com/01_Manuals_and_Guides/Student_Guides/Turnitin_Classic_for_Students/17_The_Similarity_Report). Write your name, NOT the instructor’s name, on your homework assignments. Sources for each homework assignment must be based EXCLUSIVELY on the *assigned* materials and must be cited briefly and ONLY between parentheses in the body of the homework assignment [for example: Clinton, slide 100, Topic 1; OR: The Washington Post, March 23, 2002, slide 100 of Topic 1]. This is necessary so that the grader can quickly locate, access, verify, and evaluate the sources while grading the assignment and writing feedback. All assignments MUST be completed & submitted according to the instructions and guidelines and by the specified deadlines. In general there should be no late submission or make-up assignments or exams because of the following GOOD reasons: (1) you have many short assignments (11 assignments, each worth no more than 10 percent of the final grade), (2) the assignments are submitted online with open books, (3) some students can claim to have encountered computer or internet or other technical or non-technical problems or reasons which instructors cannot verify in an accurate and timely manner, (4) make-up assignments or exams may not provide equal opportunity for students, and (5) **you are given the opportunity to earn up to 10% extra credit points** to offset the possible loss of points because of missing assignments due to technical or non-technical problems or reasons or emergencies you may encounter during the semester (each exam will include 1 or more extra credit questions worth 1 extra credit point drawn from the current-issues-in-the-news stories posted as announcements on Blackboard. Another FIVE extra credit points could be earned by participating in 1 discussion board and completing course evaluation). Take care of your time management and Information Technology equipment and skill. **Final grades** are assigned according to the following scale: A+ (100% and above), A (96 to 99%), A- (90 to 95%), B+ (86 to 89%), B (83-85%), B- (80 to 82%), C+ (76 to 79%), C (73 to 75%), C- (70 to 72%), D+ (66 to 69%), D (63 to 65%), D- (60 to 62%), and F (below 60%).

**Course Standards:** Students are responsible for announcements on Blackboard or via email. **They must be wary of plagiarism.** ‘In the academic community the high value of honesty mandates a corresponding intolerance of dishonesty’, which includes cheating, plagiarism, falsification, forgery, obstruction, multiple submission, facilitating academic dishonesty, misconduct in research and creative endeavors, misuse of academic resources, misuse of intellectual property, and violation of ethical and professional standards (See the Code Of Student Conduct at: <https://www.indstate.edu/code-of-student-conduct/academic-policies/defining-misconduct>). Homework assignments must be uploaded (by the deadline) through the TurnItIn link, which can help detect plagiarism (no other forms of submission will be accepted). Academic dishonesty will subject its author(s) to 0 points on the given assignment or failure in the course, and could also lead to further disciplinary action.

**University policies:** University policies regarding *academic freedom, documented disabilities, expected personal responsibilities, student disclosures of sexual misconduct, it's on blue online education program*, and other matters apply to this course and are available at the following links. Students with disabilities should register with Student Support Services in Normal Hall, first floor, in the Center for Student Success (Te. 812-237-2700), <https://www.indstate.edu/services/student-success/cfss/student-support-services/disability-student-services> . <https://www.indstate.edu/student-conduct/code-of-student-conduct/standards>, <https://www.indstate.edu/administration/ogc/policy-index>, <http://faculty.indstate.edu/melyassini/recommended%20syllabus%20statement.pdf>

**Communication policies:** Positive tone, civility, sensitivity, and professionalism are always expected when communicating with fellow students and the instructor, whether the communication is by electronic means or by telephone or face-to-face: "Students are expected to be a positive contributor to/member of the community, represent Indiana State University as a positive place of learning and constructive dialog, and to fully participate in their own learning and positive social experiences. As you will notice, 'positive' is a key factor in the responsibilities of all students," ISU Handbook, Rights & Responsibilities, <https://www.indstate.edu/student-conduct/code-of-student-conduct/rights-responsibilities>. In general students should (1) receive instructor responses to emails within 24 to 48 hours, (2) receive exam scores immediately after submitting an exam, and (3) receive feedback on writing assignments within two weeks (or an explanation for assignments requiring more than two weeks for grading).

**No textbook is required for this course!**

**Recommended Readings:** (1) Colbert Held & John Cummings, *Middle East Patterns: Places, Peoples, and Politics*, 6th Edition (ISBN: 9780813348773, Westview Press, 2013); (2) Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: a prophet for our time* (ISBN: 9780060598976, HarperCollins, 2006); (3) John Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U. S. Foreign Policy* (ISBN: 9780374177720, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007); (4) Eric Walberg, *Postmodern Imperialism: Geopolitics and the Great Games* (ISBN: 9780983353935, Clarity Press, 2011), and (5) Tim Anderson, *The Dirty War On Syria—Washington, Regime Change and Resistance* (ISBN: 978-0-9737147-8-4), Global Research, 2016. We encourage you to obtain these recommended books (available at ISU Bookstore) and read as much as you can at your own pace even though **you do NOT need these books for the GRADED assignments** since the relevant matters have been incorporated into the PowerPoint slides or other assigned materials.

**Blackboard Course Documents:** Course announcements, course syllabus, course contact, and course topics 1-5 (*learning objectives, homework assignment instructions and due dates, exam instructions and due dates, study guides for exams, PowerPoint slides, videos, readings*) are available on Blackboard at: <http://blackboard.indstate.edu>. **You MUST check your Blackboard course site & email regularly** for announcements, assignment instructions and deadlines, and other details NOT included in this part of the syllabus. For Help click on Blackboard Tech Support or visit Indiana State Online Student and Academic Support Services, <http://www.indstate.edu/online/resources.pdf>

**Course Calendar (details about assignments and deadlines are posted on Blackboard, ONE topic at a time):**

**Topic 1: Global Geopolitics of the Middle East**

Week 1 (8/22-24): Review learning objectives, read assignment instructions, and review assigned materials

Week 2 (8/29-31): Review assigned materials and **submit Homework 1 by 8/31/17 at 10 pm**

Week 3 (9/5-7): Review study guide and **complete Exam 1 between 9/6/17 at 10 pm and 9/7/17 at 10 pm**

**Topic 2: Geography of water and energy resources**

Week 4 (9/12-14): Review learning objectives, read assignment instructions, & review assigned materials; **3-week attendance reporting**

Week 5 (9/19-21): Review assigned materials and **submit Homework 2 by 9/21/17 at 10 pm**

Week 6 (9/26-28): Review study guide & **complete Exam 2 between 9/27/17 at 10 pm & 9/28/17 at 10 pm; interim grading**

**Topic 3: Geography of Islam's Cultural Unity and Political Diversity**

Week 7 (10/3-5): Review learning objectives, read assignment instructions, and review assigned materials

Week 8 (10/10-12): Review assigned materials and **submit Homework 3 by 10/12/17 at 10 pm**

Week 9 (10/17-19): Review study guide and **complete Exam 3 between 10/18/17 at 10 pm and 10/19/17 at 10 pm**

**Topic 4: Geography of the Palestine-Israel Conflict & the United States**

Week 10 (10/24-26): Review learning objectives, read assignment instructions, and review assigned materials

Week 11 (10/31-11/2): Review assigned materials and **submit Homework 4 by 11/2/17 at 10 pm**

Week 12 (11/7-9): Review study guide and **complete Exam 4 between 11/8/17 and 11/9/17 at 10 pm**

**Topic 5: Geographies of War, Occupation, Resistance, & Terrorism**

Week 13 (11/14-16): Review learning objectives, read assignment instructions, and review assigned materials

*Thanksgiving Break (11/21-23): No classes*

Week 14 (11/28-30): Review assigned materials and **participate in the formative assessment discussion board by 11/30/17 at 10 pm**

Week 15 (12/5-7): Write and **submit the critical thinking paper by 12/7/17 at 10:00 PM**

Week 16 (12/12-14): Review study guide and **complete Exam 5 between 12/13/17 at 10 pm and 12/14/17 at 10 pm**

## Guidelines for the critical thinking project/paper:

1. The critical thinking project/paper (about 2 to 3 single-spaced pages or 1200 to 1500 words) together with the formative assessment discussion board are worth 10 points (2 points for the formative assessment discussion board and 8 points for the essay, that is 10 percent of the final grade) and should be based exclusively on the assigned material of Topic 5, especially the PowerPoint slides which are more extensive and more current.
2. The paper should be focused on a thoughtful discussion and explanation of (a) *what common goals **unite** geopolitical Axis 1 countries*, (b) *what common goals **unite** geopolitical Axis 2 countries*, and (c) *what common goals **divide** the current four MAIN adversaries within the TWO geopolitical axes*.
3. You should begin your review of the assigned materials by **skimming carefully** through the following specific PowerPoint slides to identify specific examples illustrating the **specific parties** at war **in Palestine-Israel** (slides 221-223, 284-287, 294, 319, 332, 334-337, 157-161, 323), **in Iraq** (slides 2-5, 7-30, 41-42, 79-90), **in Libya** (slides 140-144, 149-151, 162-173, 332-333), **in Syria** (slides 176-191, 250-252, 275-280, 329-332, 334-338, 357-358, 362-364), and **in Yemen** (slides 289-293, 299, 306, 328).
4. Your discussion and explanation should give examples that reflect your ability to **integrate multiple perspectives/ways of learning** through scientific and historical perspectives (such as learning from objective facts and figures as in PowerPoint slides 3, 12, 52-54, 145, 193, 219), learning through artistic and literary perspectives (such as learning from imagined representations of facts as in PowerPoint slides 2, 26-29, 94, 113, 166, 177, 188-190, 267, 278, 280) and learning through ethical and behavioral perspectives (such as learning from irrational or emotional or moving social behaviors or situations as in PowerPoint slides 61-64, 157-161, 169, 193, 199, 276-277, 279, 301).
5. To demonstrate some course-related '**experiential learning**' ('out-of-class-learning experience'), your paper should include a brief comparison of the Axis1-versus-Axis2 geopolitical explanation of major current issues in the news with other cultural, religious, sectarian, psychological, or other persuasive explanations you have personally encountered and documented either through your own 'social media' electronic communications with others worldwide or through your own face-to-face interaction with any identifiable/verifiable ISU or Terre Haute community group or individual.
6. The paper must be formatted as a **Microsoft Word** file according to syllabus and blackboard guidelines and must be uploaded through the **TurnItIn link**.
7. The **paper is important** and must be completed and submitted by the deadline to avoid 0 points, in addition to a grade penalty of 5 points.
8. The paper should reflect independent and **ORIGINAL** writing and critical thinking and should be persuasive and well written.
9. The paper should be formatted carefully in accordance with the following **detailed guidelines and instructions**. It should consist of 1200 to 1500 words (about 2 to 3 single-spaced pages). There should be no cover page and no instructor's name on the paper. The paper should have four paragraphs per full page. There should be one space between paragraphs and no paragraph indentation. Each page should have *top/bottom* and *right/left margins* of 0.9" and the text should be fully justified (aligned evenly along the left and right margins). It should have *Times New Roman* as the only *base font*. Each page should have your full name and Indiana State University on two lines aligned with the margins and entered properly as *left headers*, and the course title and academic term or semester on two lines aligned with the margins and entered properly as *right headers*. The *point size* of the headers should be 10, the title of the paper should be *centered* and should have *bold appearance* and a font point size of 16, the rest of the text should have a font point size of 12 (except the footnotes whose font size should be 9). The standardized format is designed to improve your writing presentation skills and to help the grader focus solely on the content of the paper and not be distracted or influenced by the diversity of the format (since it should be the same format in all papers).
10. For your references, you should use ONLY footnotes (**without** bibliography) entered at the bottom of each page according to the Notes [**without** bibliography] system of *The Chicago Manual of Style Online* at: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Please keep in mind that the instructor is NOT the author of the vast assigned material (books, book chapters, journal articles, articles in newspapers and popular magazines, websites, PowerPoint slides, videos/video synopses, current issues in the news stories...) cited in the PowerPoint slides or elsewhere in Topic 5. If the source is a link in the PowerPoint slide, you need to access the source itself and provide a full reference according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. **For example**,
  - a. Hillary Clinton, "Hillary Clinton: We created Al-Qaeda," *YouTube video clip*, Uploaded on December 27, 2011, accessed December 31, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqn0bm4E9yw>, PowerPoint slide 100, Topic 1.
  - b. Benjamin Netanyahu, "America is a thing you can move very easily", Naomi Zeveloff, "What Do Israelis Think About Americans? Start With Disdain," *The Jewish Daily Forward*, 3/8/2015, accessed 7 August 2017,

<http://forward.com/articles/216074/what-do-israelis-think-about-americans-start-with/>, PowerPoint slide 2, Topic 1.

- c. Joe Stephens and David B. Ottaway, "From U.S., the ABC's of Jihad," *The Washington Post*, March 23, 2002, accessed December 26, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/03/23/from-us-the-abcs-of-jihad/d079075a-3ed3-4030-9a96-0d48f6355e54/>, PowerPoint slide 100, Topic 1.
- d. "The best way to help Israel deal with Iran's growing nuclear capability is to help the people of Syria overthrow the regime of Bashar Assad", *Hillary Clinton Email Archive*, UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. F-2014-20439 Doc No. C05794498 Date: 11/30/2015, accessed December 31, 2016, [https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton\\_Email\\_November\\_Release/C05794498.pdf](https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/Clinton_Email_November_Release/C05794498.pdf), PowerPoint slide 113, Topic 1.

### [Course] Universal Intellectual Standards:

"Universal intellectual standards are standards which must be applied to thinking whenever one is interested in checking the quality of reasoning about a problem, issue, or situation. To think critically entails having command of these standards. To help students learn them, teachers should pose questions which probe student thinking, questions which hold students accountable for their thinking, questions which, through consistent use by the teacher in the classroom, become internalized by students as questions they need to ask themselves. The ultimate goal, then, is for these questions to become infused in the thinking of students, forming part of their inner voice, which then guides them to better and better reasoning. While there are a number of universal standards, the following are the most significant:

**Clarity:** Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give me an illustration? Could you give me an example? Clarity is the gateway standard. If a statement is unclear, we cannot determine whether it is accurate or relevant. In fact, we cannot tell anything about it because we don't yet know what it is saying. For example, the question, "What can be done about the education system in America?" is unclear. In order to address the question adequately, we would need to have a clearer understanding of what the person asking the question is considering the "problem" to be. A clearer question might be "What can educators do to ensure that students learn the skills and abilities which help them function successfully on the job and in their daily decision-making?"

**Accuracy:** Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true? A statement can be clear but not accurate, as in "Most dogs are over 300 pounds in weight."

**Precision:** Could you give more details? Could you be more specific? A statement can be both clear and accurate, but not precise, as in "Jack is overweight." (We don't know how overweight Jack is, one pound or 500 pounds.)

**Relevance:** How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue? A statement can be clear, accurate, and precise, but not relevant to the question at issue. For example, students often think that the amount of effort they put into a course should be used in raising their grade in a course. Often, however, the "effort" does not measure the quality of student learning, and when this is so, effort is irrelevant to their appropriate grade.

**Depth:** How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question? Is that dealing with the most significant factors? A statement can be clear, accurate, precise, and relevant, but superficial (that is, lack depth). For example, the statement "Just say No" which is often used to discourage children and teens from using drugs, is clear, accurate, precise, and relevant. Nevertheless, it lacks depth because it treats an extremely complex issue, the pervasive problem of drug use among young people, superficially. It fails to deal with the complexities of the issue.

**Breadth:** Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint? What would this look like from the point of view of...? A line of reasoning may be clear accurate, precise, relevant, and deep, but lack breadth (as in an argument from either the conservative or liberal standpoint which gets deeply into an issue, but only recognizes the insights of one side of the question.)

**Logic:** Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? But before you implied this and now you are saying that; how can both be true? When we think, we bring a variety of thoughts together into some order. When the combination of thoughts are [sic] mutually supporting and make sense in combination, the thinking is "logical." When the combination is not mutually supporting, is contradictory in some sense, or does not "make sense," the combination is not logical.

**Fairness:** Do I have a vested interest in this issue? Am I sympathetically representing the viewpoints of others? Human think is often biased in the direction of the thinker - in what are the perceived interests of the thinker. Humans do not naturally consider the rights and needs of others on the same plane with their own rights and needs. We therefore must actively work to make sure we are applying the intellectual standard of fairness to our thinking. Since we naturally see ourselves as fair even when we are unfair, this can be very difficult. A commitment to fairmindedness is a starting place." Source: R. Paul and L. Elder, Foundation For Critical Thinking, June 1996, <http://www.criticalthinking.org/articles/universal-intellectual-standards.cfm>