Annotated Syllabus
Foundation Studies--Integrative Upper-Division Electives
Geography of the Middle East (GEOG/ENVI 423), Fall 2010

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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.

Course Purpose: This course is designed to meet five sets of objectives: (I) the Learning Objectives of the Foundational Studies Program (FS 1-8, 10), (II) the Learning Objectives of the Integrative Upper-Division Electives (IUDE 1-3), (III) the Skill Applied Learning Requirements (SALR 1-5), (IV) the regional and thematic focus of elective courses in the International Studies Minor (ISM 1-3), and (V) the Learning Objectives of Geography of the Middle East (GME 1-5). These objectives are listed below (see course syllabus, content, and assessment to see how a specific objective is met):

I. Learning Objectives of the Foundational Studies Program—Students will:

1. Locate, critically read, and evaluate information to solve problems;
2. Critically evaluate the ideas of others;
3. Apply knowledge and skills within and across the fundamental ways of knowing (natural sciences, social and behavioral sciences, arts and humanities, mathematics, and history);
4. Demonstrate an appreciation of human expression through literature and fine and performing arts;
5. Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of diverse cultures within and across societies;
7. Demonstrate the skills to place their current and local experience in a global, cultural, and historical context;
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions;
9. Apply principles of physical and emotional health to wellness [not addressed in this course];
10. Express themselves effectively, professionally, and persuasively both orally and in writing.

II. Learning Objectives of the Integrative Upper-Division Electives—Students will:

1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing;
2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue;
3. Analyze and write at an advanced level.

III. Skill Applied Learning Requirements of the Integrative Upper-Division Electives:

1. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop critical thinking skills
2. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop information literacy skills
3. Include a graded writing component, which whenever possible is developmental
4. Must incorporate opportunities for students to critically read and analyze sophisticated, complex text, and to write intensively.
5. Must include assignments that apply information from within and across various "ways of knowing"

IV. Learning Objectives of the International Studies Minor—Students will:

1. Focus on the Middle East as a region
2. Examine selected global themes from the region
3. Take an approved 300/400 level elective course

V. Learning Objectives of Geography of the Middle East—Student will learn the salient environmental and cultural patterns of the Middle East, with emphasis on:

1. Strategic location
2. Significance in world history
3. Islamic culture
4. Water and energy sources
5. Evolving geopolitics and conflicts

4 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
Course goals:

The five sets of objectives listed on the previous page are embedded in the structure and configuration of the course's thematic approach, regional focus, interdisciplinary perspective, and critical thinking method to ensure that by the end of this course the student (1) can 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 (Goal Statement of the Foundational Studies Program). Students will specifically:

1. Use a thematic approach to a particular topic or issue that integrates multiple ways of knowing. This learning objective will be met by focusing on five Middle Eastern topics/themes that integrate interdisciplinary knowledge: (1) Global Geopolitics of the Middle East, (2) Geography of Water and Energy Resources, (3) Geography of Islam's Cultural Unity and Political Diversity, (4) Geography of the Palestine-Israel Conflict and the United States, and (5) Geographies of War, Occupation, Resistance, and Terrorism. This thematic approach will also meet other learning objectives (FS 3; GME 1-4; ISM 1-3).

2. Engage in a project or conduct research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing to address a particular topic or issue: This will be met since the course requires writing assignments involving conducting specific research that makes use of multiple ways of knowing. These assignments will also meet other objectives (FS 1-3, 6-8, 10; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

3. Analyze and write at an advanced level: This will be met as the course requires at least ten writing assignments that involve analysis, synthesis, and advanced writing. This will also meet other learning goals (FS 1-8, 10; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

4. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop critical thinking skills: This skill will be developed since five of the ten writing assignments are defined as "critical thinking essays" designed to identify, articulate, describe, explain, and try to address/solve genuine, pressing, and specific problems of the Middle East today. These essays and other writing assignments are generally focused on controversial or debatable issues. This meets also other goals (FS 1-2, 5, 8; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

5. Explicitly demonstrate how the curriculum will develop Information literacy skills: This skill will be developed by exposing students to a variety of information resources (presentations/discussions/videos/books/journal articles/newspaper articles/taskforce reports) to find and use relevant information, and learn "how to learn," & "how to unlearn" (dispel illusions). This will meet other goals (FS 1-4, 6-7, 10; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

6. Include a graded writing component, which whenever possible is developmental: This objective will be met as the course requires writing assignments that involve peer review assessment and/or feedback from the instructor before the final grade of the writing assignment is issued. This will meet other goals (FS 1-8, 10; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

7. Incorporate opportunities for students to critically read and analyze sophisticated, complex text, and to write intensively and must include assignments that apply information from within and across various "ways of knowing": These will be met since the writing assignments require students to think critically, write at an advanced level, use a synthetic or deductive approach, and (prior to that) engage a variety of complex text/map readings from The Quran (610-632 AD); The Hadith (610-632 AD); The Bible (1300s BC-100? AD); The 9/11 Commission Report (2004); Energy Security for America (2003); Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication (2005); Map of UNRWA’s Area of Operations (2005); Hasbara Handbook: Promoting Israel on Campus (2002); Jerusalem Poems/Songs (1967); The Iraq Study Group Report (2006); Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities During Their Temporary Presence in Iraq (2008); Maps of USCONSUSCENTCOM/USAFRICOM/USEUCOM (2008); President Obama’s Cairo Speech (2009); and Libyan Leader & African Union Chairman Qadhafi’s speech to the Nations General Assembly (2009). This will also meet other course learning objectives (FS 1-8, 10; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

Course Assessment of the Expected Learning and Applied Learning Objectives:

1. Five Short Multiple-choice Exams will provide a “quantitative” or “objective” assessment of student learning from presentations and discussions, readings, and videos. “Quantitative” learning will be assessed through objective exams (multiple choice questions). This will assess the student’s ability to access and evaluate information and ideas using a variety of interdisciplinary approaches and cultural lenses that integrate multiple ways of knowing at the local, regional, and global scale (FS 1-4, 6-7; IUE 1; SALR-2, 4-5; ISM 1-3; GME 1-5).

2. Five Critical Thinking Essays will assess "qualitative" learning from evaluating a variety of information, ideas, and ways of knowing in order to identify, articulate, describe, explain, and suggest solutions to real and pressing Middle Eastern problems. "Qualitative" learning will be assessed through critical thinking essays designed to address and write about particular topics or issues focused on the Middle East as a strategic region of great importance to the global economy as reflected in its complex geopolitics and intense conflicts (FS 1-2, 8, 10; IUE 2-3; SLAR 1, 3-5; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

3. Five Homework Assignments will assess learning about controversial issues and learning how to "unlearn" and how to ground moral/political judgment and opinion into facts, not the other way around (FS 5, 8; IUE 1-3; SLAR 1-5; ISM 1-2; GME 1-5).

4. Course Exit Assessment (see “Course Exit Assessment for the Integrative Upper-Division Electives category of the Foundational Studies Program” on the last page this annotated syllabus) will assess the five sets of learning objectives and skill applied learning requirements of GEOG 423 (FS 1-8, 10; IUE 1-3; SLAR 1-5; ISM 1-3; GME 1-5).

5. Student Instructional Reports (SIRs) evaluations will also be administered to assess student satisfaction.
Course Assignments and Grading:

First, there will be one exam (consisting of multiple choice questions) about the top 10 to 12 core issues covered in class/online presentations and discussions, textbook and online readings, and in-class/online video showings about each one of the five Middle East Geography topics. Second, the students will be asked to discuss a specific problem/issue (under each topic) and write a (one-page/single-spaced, about 500 words) critical thinking essay that will be discussed and/or peer-reviewed in class or online. The short essay must (1) involve analysis and synthesis, (2) identify and articulate the specific problem/issue, (3) describe the manifestations and expressions of the problem/issue, (4) explain the roots and causes of the problem/issue, and (5) suggest some solutions or resolutions for the problem/issue. Third, the students will be asked to discuss a current or controversial Middle East issue in a homework assignment focused on encouraging them to stick to the facts and to ground their moral/political judgment into facts, not the other way around. Final grades will NOT be "curved" and will be based on performance in the course. They will be based on scores obtained out of a total of 100 points; (1) five exams (60 points, 12 points each), (2) five essays (25 points, 5 points each), and (3) five homework assignments (15 points, 3 points each). Occasionally, the students may have the opportunity to earn extra credit points through extra credit questions in exams or extra credit assignments (designed for all students, NOT on an individual basis) to cover a current issue or an issue not covered in course materials. Grades are assigned according to the following scale: A+ (96% and above), A (93 to 95%), A- (90 to 92%), 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%). Students should check the online grade book regularly and (if need be) see me in my office for questions no later than one week after posting the given grades.

Course Standards and Policies:

Classroom students are expected to attend scheduled class meetings, participate in class discussions, and complete class assignments on time. The student is entitled to ONE absence without grade penalty. Each additional absence (with or without excuse) may incur a grade penalty of 1 point (1% of the final grade). Tardiness (coming late or leaving early) may incur a grade penalty of 1 point. Students are responsible for all announcements made in class or online. All electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, laptops, etc.) must be turned off BEFORE entering the classroom and kept OUT OF SIGHT. While the university has chosen to require laptops of its students, the university also recognizes and respects the right of faculty to conduct their classes as they deem appropriate. In this course, no student laptop may be used in the classroom. This is because of the potential distraction of laptops. Depending on the classroom seat design, you may be asked to keep one empty seat between you and your classmates of the same row. Be courteous and avoid anything (including eating, drinking, sleeping, reading, and conversing during lectures) that can disturb the class learning process or distract you from it. Do not record the class. Failure to comply with course standards and policies is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Make-up exams or late essays or homework assignments will be accepted at my discretion and will normally require a written doctor's excuse, a written notice to appear in court or to serve on jury duty, or a written excuse presented to the instructor and considered valid. Academic dishonesty is the cardinal sin in academia and includes plagiarism, cheating, fraud, using another person's material as one's own, knowingly allowing another person to use one's work as his/her own (see Code of Student Conduct at: http://www1.indstate.edu/gip/docs/code.pdf). Academic dishonesty will subject its author(s) to failure in the course and could lead to further disciplinary action. University policies regarding academic freedom, documented disabilities, expected personal responsibilities, and other matters apply to this course and may be found on the Foundational Studies website at:


Course Readings:


3. Blackboard course documents (including Online short readings, PowerPoint slides, video synopses, study guides, and instructions for assignments) will also be available on Blackboard website at: http://blackboard.indstate.edu

6 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
Annotated Schedule, Content, and Assessment


Topic 1 will introduce students to the region and its global connections. We will examine the nomenclature and delimitation of the region, its distinctive tri-continental junction, its major strategic waterways, its cultural significance (as the birthplace of monotheism and the cradle of civilization), its petroleum and natural gas resources, and its relations with the United States (the region straddles the USCENTCOM, USEUCOM, and USAFRICOM). In addition to the assigned readings, we will have PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and videos.

August 27: Presentation and discussion. The first meeting will (1) introduce students to course syllabus, (2) underline the Mission of the Foundational Studies Program at Indiana State University, (3) identify and stress the learning and applied learning objectives of the Foundational Studies Program and its Integrative Upper-Division Electives (FS 140, 180, 200, 202, 204; IUBB 1-3; SALR 1-3), (4) highlight the five topics/themes of Geography of the Middle East, and (5) discuss the overall course content, assessment, thematic approach, regional focus, interdisciplinary perspective, and critical thinking method (especially when identifying/observing a problem/issue, describing it, explaining it, and trying to solve/address it).

September 1: Presentation and discussion. Global geopolitics of the geographic, historical, cultural, economic, and military significance of the region.

September 3: Presentation and discussion. Nomenclature and delimitation of the region, strategic waterways [with emphasis on the Suez Canal], birthplace of monotheism, cradle of civilization, water and energy resources, US Unified Command 2008, USCENTCOM, USAFRICOM, and USEUCOM.

Homework 1 (worth 3 points, due 9/10/2009 at 12:30 pm) (SALR 1-3, IUBB 1-3, FS 1-3, 5, 10)

September 7: Monday, Labor Day: University offices closed (no evening classes)

September 8: Video: Letter to America: how Arabs view the United States (45 mn):
Synopsis: "Is America's 'war on terrorism' a defensive reaction to the events of September 11th or a smokescreen for an attempt to secure oil and spread Western culture throughout the Middle East? Syrian-born BBC correspondent Rana Kabbani takes a personal journey through the region to explain Arab anger with the United States and how Muslims in the region have come to view America. Kabbani tours Egypt, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, canvassing opinions of citizens from all levels of society, as well as those of Americans living abroad."

Discussion (SALR 1-3, IUBB 1-3, FS 1-3, 5, 10)

September 10: Video: Modern Marvels: Suez Canal (50 mn):
Synopsis: "Since the ancient pharaohs' time, the Isthmus of Suez has been the gateway to trade between East and West. It's thought that the pharaohs could connect the Red Sea with the Mediterranean using a system of small canals; but the desert sands buried them. Not until mid-19th century did mankind readress the problem. Since its completion in 1869, the Suez Canal has been a vital link in world trade and a point of controversy in geopolitics. Today, more than 20,000 ships transit the canal yearly."

Homework 1 due (SALR 1-3, IUBB 1-3, FS 1-3, 5, 10), Review for Exam 1 and Essay 1

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4 Homework 1:
- Read carefully pages 1, 2, and 3 of The Israeli Factor: Ranking the Presidential Candidates: http://www.haaretz.com/haseg/pages/rognerpage.htm
- Based on this 11-page reading and the critical thinking tips (see course syllabus), write a one-page essay in which you discuss thoughtfully the critical questions that seem to come to mind whenever we discuss U.S.-Middle East relations: (1) "Why do they hate us?" and "why do we hate them?" (2) Do they really hate us simply because they are "Muslims" or "Muslim extremists" or because of our "support for Israel"? (3) Why do U.S. political elites appear so committed to Zionism and the State of Israel and so loud and clear about their commitment?
- Your essay should (1) be persuasive and well written, (2) have four paragraphs, (3) be typed on ONE single-spaced page, (4) have a "Times New Roman" font size of 11, (5) have top/bottom/left/right margins of 1 inch, (6) have your name and Indiana State University as left headers and the course title and academic term as right headers.

7 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
September 15: Exam 1 due (Study Guide for exam 1)  

September 15: Critical Thinking Essay 1 due (Why does the Middle East seem so important?)  

September 17-October 6: Topic 2: Geography of water and energy resources—Read: HELD (Ch. 4-8); ARMSTRONG (Ch. 1-2); and assigned quotes from Energy Security for America http://www.kintera.org/att/cf7b42d75369-d582-4380-8395-D25925B85EAP%7D/EnergySecurityForAmerica.pdf

Topic 2 examines: (1) Environmental patterns (mountain ranges, desert environment, major river systems), (2) Cultural patterns (ethnolinguistic groups, languages, religions, historical geography), (3) Water resources and water conflict, (4) OPEC and oil reserves, production, competitive production cost, politics, geopolitics and prices, (5) U.S. dependence on net petroleum imports in 2008, and (6) the critical question of “Who gets what from the Middle East oil?” In addition to the assigned readings, we will have PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and videos.

Homework 2* (worth 3 points and due on 10/1/09 at 12:30 pm)  

5 Study guide for Exam 1:  
a. Who is believed to be the first to have coined the term “Middle East” and what is in the name “Middle East”?  
b. How & when did the term “Middle East” become widely used to designate wide areas on the handout map of North Africa & Southwest Asia?  
c. Which countries/regions are included in the Middle East as defined in this course?  
d. What are the member countries of the Arab League (League of Arab States)?  
e. Which countries share international borders with: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine-Israel, and Saudi Arabia?  
f. Why do we often refer to the Middle East as the “birthplace of monotheism” and the “cradle of civilization”?  
g. Who first designed the phonetic alphabet?  
h. What are the three monotheistic religions originating in the Middle East?  
i. Which Middle East strategic straits/waterways form the international boundaries between continents?  
j. Among the strategic waterways of the Middle East, which one is the narrowest and which one is manmade?  
k. Which Middle East strategic waterway has its shores mostly dominated by two European nations?  
l. When the Egyptians declared the nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956, what was the reaction of the French, British, Israeli, and the American governments?  
m. “Why do they hate us?” and “why do we hate them?”  
n. Do they really hate us simply because they are “Muslims” or “Muslim extremists” or because of our “support for Israel”?  
o. Why do U.S. political elites appear so committed to Zionism and the State of Israel and so loud and clear about their commitment?  
p. How democratic and how independent are U.S. closest friends and allies in the Middle East (Arab monarchies and Israel)?  
q. Based on the video, what are some of the concrete examples illustrating the strategic significance of the Suez Canal waterway?  

6 Guidelines for Critical Thinking Essay 1:  
Based on the readings, presentations, discussions, and videos of Topic 1 (“Global Geopolitics of the Middle East”), write a one-page/four-paragraph essay entitled “The Global Significance of the Middle East.” In Paragraph One, you observe and articulate in your own words the global significance of the region. In Paragraph Two, you describe the global significance of the region by giving specific examples. In Paragraph Three, you explain the causes/roots of the global significance of the region. In Paragraph Four, you indicate the implications & consequences of the global significance of the region & make a critique (positive or negative) from your own perspective. Follow carefully the format and content guidelines and instructions outlined in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Critical Thinking Essay handout.

7 Homework 2:  
b. Using the menu “Select a Country or Location,” compute the total GDP (in US$ billions) of all 22 Arab League members (note that Palestine is implicitly referred to as “Gaza Strip” and “West Bank”) in 2008. You should use ONLY the “GDP (official exchange rate),” NOT the GDP (purchasing power parity).  
c. Compare and contrast the total GDP of the Arab world (the 22 Arab League members) in 2008 with the GDP of EACH ONE of the following countries: Canada, Spain, Italy, Japan, and the United States in 2008.  
d. Compare and contrast the GDP, population, and area of Israel with the GDP, population, and area of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip).  
e. Compare and contrast the population and area of the Arab world with the population and area of EACH ONE of the following countries: Canada, Spain, Italy, Japan, and the United States in 2008.  
f. Compare and contrast your findings with whatever “image” of “stereotype” you had about the wealth of the Arab world.  
g. Write a one-page essay summarizing your finding and conclusion about this comparative analysis, which should be illustrated by citing figures such as the total GDP, population, and area of the Arab world as well as the GDP, population, and areas of Italy, Spain, Canada, Israel, and the United States.  
h. The one-page essay should single-spaced and should be typed and formatted according to the Guidelines and Instructions for the Critical Thinking Essay handout.

8 GEOG/ENV 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
September 17: Presentation and discussion. Environmental and cultural patterns (mountains/deserts/rivers/ethno-linguistic groups/languages/religions/historical geography)

September 22: Presentation and discussion. Water resources/problems and oil reserves/politics 9/22

September 24: Video: The curse of oil (32 mn): “Presents a global history of the oil industry and the political consequences of the ever expanding consumption of oil. Maintains that a number of conflicts like Nasser’s seizure of the Suez Canal, the Iran-Iraq war and the war in Iraq were ultimately over the control of oil supplies.”

September 29: Video: Life after oil: the new energy alternatives (30 mn) “This program illustrates ways we can solve our dependence on fossil fuels through the use of alternative energy sources including wind power, fuel cells, hydrogen fuel, ethanol, biomass and solar power.”

October 1: Homework 2 due (FS 4-5, LD 4-20, READING 7-8, 10, 11, 12, 14-15, 18-20, 22-24); Review for Exam 2 and Essay 2

October 6: Exam 2 (Study guide for exam 2)8 (FS 4-5, LD 4-20, READING 7-8, 10, 11, 12, 14-15, 18-20, 22-24)

October 6: Essay 2 (Who gets what from Middle East oil?) (FS 4-5, LD 4-20, READING 7-8, 10, 11, 12, 14-15, 18-20, 22-24)


Topic 3 focuses on (1) The Quran, (2) Prophet Muhammad, and (3) The Five Pillars of Islam. Our goal is to understand some aspects of Muslims’ culture, behavior, and politics as far as they can be grounded in Islamic rituals, Islamic scriptures, and Islamic prophet. In addition to the assigned readings, we will have PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and videos.

October 8: Presentation and discussion. Pillars of Islam

8 Study guide for exam 2:
 a. Review the definitions and characteristics of desert environment based on latitude, annual rainfall, evaporation rate, average temperature, and ocean currents.
 b. Review the geographic location, economic importance, and cultural specificity of the three mountain ranges of the Atlas, Taurus, and Zagros.
 c. Identify the three dominant ethnolinguistic groups of the Middle East and their geographic locations, religions, and languages.
 d. Match the four major Muslim Caliphates (Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman) with their capital cities and their periods of reign.
 e. Review the Hussein-McMahon correspondence (1915-1916), the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916), and the text and context of the British Balfour Declaration (1917) promising Palestine as a national home for world Jewry.
 f. What is the significance of the Aswan High Dam for Egypt, and what is the main ecological/agricultural problem created by the Aswan High Dam?
 g. Review the extent of water diversion, economic impact, and political tension caused by Israel’s National Water Carrier since 1964.
 h. Locate the largest seawater desalination plants in the Middle East and try to explain the reasons for their location and the choice of this water policy option.
 i. Locate the source and route of the Great Manmade River and explain the economic rationale of building it instead of building desalination plants.
 j. Review the name, location, proven crude oil reserves, and crude oil production of each one of current OPEC members.
 k. Rank the top U.S. petroleum (foreign) suppliers of crude oil and products in 2008.
 m. Review the making of US energy policy as it relates to US support for Israel.
 n. Review the major factors influencing oil prices worldwide

8 Guidelines for Critical Thinking Essay 2:
Write a critical thinking essay (similar in format and structure to Critical Thinking Essay 1) on the critical question: “who gets what from Middle East oil?” Think about the examples we discussed about how oil revenues are somehow “thinner spread” between (1) Middle East welfare states, (2) Oil taxes in G7 states, (3) Wars and conflicts, (4) Big business contracts, (5) Big oil companies, (6) Petrodollars recycling, (7) Development Funds, (8) Immigrant labor, (9) Inflation, and (10) Corruption. Keep always in mind your finding (in Homework 2) that the combined GDP of the entire Arab world (population: over 350 million) is lower than Italy (population less than 60 million)’s GDP in 2008.
October 13: Presentation and discussion. The Quran
Homework 3* (worth 3 points, due 10/22/2009 at 12:30 pm) (ESSAY 5)

October 15: Presentation and discussion. Life of Prophet Muhammad

October 20: Video: Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet, part 1 (60 mn)
Synopsis: “Tells the story of the seventh century prophet who changed world history in 23 years, and continues to shape the lives of more than 1.2 billion people. Three years in the making, the film takes viewers not only to ancient Middle Eastern sites where Muhammad’s story unfolds, but into the homes, mosques and workplaces of some of America’s estimated seven million Muslims to discover the many ways in which they follow Muhammad’s example.”

October 22: Video: Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet, part 2 (60 mn)
Synopsis: “Tells the story of the seventh century prophet who changed world history in 23 years, and continues to shape the lives of more than 1.2 billion people. Three years in the making, the film takes viewers not only to ancient Middle Eastern sites where Muhammad’s story unfolds, but into the homes, mosques and workplaces of some of America’s estimated seven million Muslims to discover the many ways in which they follow Muhammad’s example.”

Homework 3 due (ESSAY 5), Review for Exam 3 and Essay

October 27: Exam 3 (Study guide for exam 3)11 (ESSAY 6), (ESSAY 7), (ESSAY 8)
October 27: Essay 3 (Why do Muslims consider Muhammad a religious & political role model?)12 (ESSAY 9)

10 Homework 3:
  a. Read carefully the Twenty Selected Sets of Verses from The Quran:
     http://faculty.isu.edu/~moulid/mou/enty/gay%20twenty%20set%20of%20verse%20from%20The%20Quran.pdf.
  b. Select ONE verse or ONE set of verses which you find significant, then explain your reasons in no more than one-page essay. The one-page essay should be concise and persuasive, and should (1) be single-spaced, (2) have top/bottom and right/left margins of .5"/1.5", (3) have full justification, (4) have Times New Roman as the base font, (5) have three or four paragraphs, (6) have your name and Indiana State University as left headers and the course title and academic term as right headers, and (7) have a font point size of either 10, 11, or 12.

11 Study guide for exam 3:
  a. Compare and contrast The Opening (Quran 1:1-7) and The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). More specifically, examine carefully the reference to God in The Opening and The Lord’s Prayer.
  e. Review carefully what the Quran says about the Torah, Gospel/Jnepel, and the Quran in Quran 5:44-48
  f. Review carefully the 33 chapters in Islam and why they are the best.
  g. Review carefully the 5 pillars of Islam on which all Muslims agree in general. Think critically about the cultural unity and political diversity of Muslim countries and religious denominations in Islam.
  h. Given your knowledge of both Muslim (lunar) and Gregorian (solar) calendars, you should be able to predict the approximate beginning of Ramadan 1431 AH/2010 AD once you know its beginning in 1430 AH/2009 AD.
  i. Review the top 5 happiest cities in Islam and why they are the happiest.
  j. Review carefully the 60th issue of political allegiances and social relationships between the early Muslims and non-Muslims as well as the role of the broader issue of tolerance and integration in Islam.
  k. Using the online full transcript of the film (Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet), review the three major battles: the Battle of Badr (March 624 AD), the Battle of Uhud (March 625 AD), and the Battle of the Trench and the Siege of Medina (April 627 AD). Also find out the birth date, birth place, burial date, and burial place of Prophet Muhammad, www:
     http://www.pbs.org/muslimscriptures/muhammad_script.pdf
l. Review carefully the following terms of military jihad or permission to fight in Islam: Quran 22:39 and Quran 2:190. Compare and contrast “minor” and “major” jihad according to the film transcript.
  m. Match the four major Muslim States/Caliphates (Rashidun, Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman) with their capital cities and their periods of reign.

12 Guidelines for Critical Thinking Essay 3:
The essay should focus on “Why Do Muslims Consider Prophet Muhammad a Religious and Political Role Model?” (1) you observe and state this fact in your own words, (2) you give examples from course presentations, readings, and videos to illustrate it, (3) you provide a sound

Topic 4 aims at helping students reach a sound understanding of "The Palestine-Israel conflict and the United States" and be able to (1) articulate and state the central problem of the conflict, (2) describe its manifestations and consequences, (3) explain its roots and causes, and (4) identify and discuss a fair and peaceful solution to it. In addition to the assigned readings, we will have PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and videos.

October 29: Presentation and discussion. Historical geography of the Palestine-Israel conflict

November 3: Video: Image and reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (50 out of 105 min)
Homework 4 (worth 3 points, due 11/10/2009 at 12:30 pm) http://www.indstate.edu/SAI/432/rubric.doc

November 5: Presentation and discussion. The United States and the Israel lobby

November 10: Video: The Issue Is Still Palestine (50 min):
Synopsis: "John Pilger travels to Israel and the West Bank of Jordan and Gaza to ask why the Palestinians are still refugees in their own land. In a series of interviews with both Palestinians and Israelis, he explores the issue of Palestine and presents the Palestinians as a nation of people, traumatized, humiliated and yet resilient. He asks for a solution that will bring justice and peace to Palestine."
Homework 4 due http://www.indstate.edu/SAI/432/rubric.doc

November 12: Video: The iron wall to all people of the Holy Land (58 min):
“A documentary look at Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank territories and their history, and at how Israel’s practice of promoting settlements deviates from peace accords and complicates the establishment of a Palestinian state. Includes interviews with prominent Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and political analysts, including Jeff Halper, Akiva Eldar, Hind Khoury, Ghassan Al-Khatib, and others. Also includes interviews with Israeli settlers and soldiers, and Palestinian farmers.”

November 17: Presentation and discussion. Palestinian Right of Return versus Israeli Law of “Return”

November 19: Exam 4 (Study guide for exam 4) http://www.indstate.edu/SAI/432/rubric.doc

Homework 4:
- a. Print and read carefully "the nine little-known statistics" listed under the heading "STATISTICS" at: http://www.ifamericansknew.org/
- b. Print and read carefully the following short descriptions/reviews of the three books listed below:
- c. Write a One-page essay (1) summarizing the significant facts you have learned from the “nine little-known statistics,” (2) explaining why the United States supports the Israelis against the Palestinians, and (3) discussing the consequences for the Palestine-Israel Conflict and its ramifications for the United States. The one-page essay should be concise and persuasive, and should (1) be single-spaced, (2) have top/bottom and right/left margins of .5/1.5", (3) have full justification, (4) have Times New Roman as the base font (5) have three or four paragraphs, (6) have your name and Indiana State University as left headers, and (7) have a font point size of either 10, 11, or 12.

Study guide for exam 4:
- a. Review carefully the table (page 9 of the handout) and map (page 10 of the handout) showing the geographic location, number of Jews living in the Russian-controlled territories of the broad regions between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, the percentage of Jews within Russia’s total population in 1897, and the two Russian-controlled provinces with the largest percentage of Jews. The handout referred to in this study guide is available at: http://faculty.indstate.edu/mouldmey/The%20Palestine-Israel%20Conflict%20and%20the%20United%20States.pdf

11 GEOG/ENVI 432 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
November 19: Essay 4 (What is the Palestine-Israel conflict?)

November 24-December 10: Topic 5: Geographies of War, Occupation, Resistance, and Terrorism—Read: HELD (Ch. 13); and quotes from The Iraq Study Group Report


Topic 5 presents a sound understanding of (1) the basic geography of Iraq and the background to the Iraq war (the Palestine-Israel Conflict, the American-Soviet Cold War, the American-Vietnam War, and the Soviet-Afghan War), (2) the “what” of the Iraq war (human/economic/moral cost of the war), (3) the “who” and the “why” of the Iraq war (weapons of mass destruction/al-Qaeda/democracy/oil/Israel/Gulf War), and (4) whether or not the Iraq war has achieved its declared and/or undeclared objectives. In addition to the assigned readings, we will have PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and videos.

b. Find out the top TWO countries which were the original homeland/countries of the majority of the 19 presidents and prime ministers of the State of Israel since its creation in 1948 (see the table entitled “Original names and countries of the new children of Abraham” on page 10 of the handout).

c. Review carefully the geography and demography of the Muslim/Christian Palestinians and Israeli Jews in Palestine-Israel and neighboring Arab states in 2000 (according to the table/map entitled “The Israeli Law of Retreat versus the UN-Backed Palestinian Right of Return” on page 11 of the handout).

d. On the Map of UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East’s Area of Operations at http://www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/images.map.png, review carefully the number of Palestinian refugee camps in each one of the following countries: (1) Palestine-Israel, (2) Jordan, (3) Syria, and (4) Lebanon.

e. Review the total number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA (as of 31 March 2005) in all and each of the following countries: (1) Palestine-Israel, (2) Jordan, (3) Syria, and (4) Lebanon.

f. Rank the four countries (Palestine-Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon) in terms of the highest number of Palestinian refugees (registered with UNRWA) each country hosts.

g. According to former Israeli Mossad case officer Victor Ostrovsky, why would a KGB [the legendary Soviet spy organization] station employ about 100 people, while a comparable Mossad [the legendary Israeli spy organization] station would need only a “skeleton staff” of six or seven people? (See Victor Ostrovsky on Collaboration between the Israeli Mossad and the Jewish Sazim) on page 12 of the handout.

h. Review carefully the authors, titles, central arguments, and cited quotes from the 4 books cited on page 1 of the handout. You should expect 3 or 4 questions on this item.

i. According to University of Chicago Professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard University Professor Stephen Walt, what is the best explanation for the almost unconditional US support for the State of Israel?


k. Review carefully, compare, and contrast the “nine little-known statistics” at: http://www.ifamericansknew.org. Examine specifically the number of Israelis and Palestinians killed (including children) or injured, the number of houses demolished, the number of people currently imprisoned, the number of new settlements built, the number of UN resolutions involved, and US aid to Israel and the Palestinians since September 2000.

l. Review carefully the various statements and proclamations made by United States officials and others (on page 1 of the handout) as they relate to understanding President Bush’s post-911 question “Why do they hate us?”

m. Visit the website of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (the backbone of the Israeli lobby in the United States) at: http://www.confereenceofpresidents.org/content.asp?id=55. Click on Organization number 5 and read “What is AIPAC?” and “AIPAC Achievements.” Find out the annual number of AIPAC legislative and policy initiatives involving Middle East policy or aimed at broadening and deepening the U.S.-Israel bond.

n. Watch carefully and take relevant notes from the in-class video showings and the video clips cited in “talking point” 9 of the handout.

1 Guidelines for Critical Thinking Essay 4:
The title of your essay should be “The Palestine-Israel Conflict and the United States.” Based on the shared information in our presentations/discussions/readings/videos, you should write an essay in which you (1) observe and state the central problem of the conflict, (2) give examples to illustrate its gravity and manifestations, (3) provide a sound explanation of its causes, and (4) suggest a thoughtful and peaceful solution to this problem. The one-page essay should be concise and persuasive, and should (1) be single-spaced, (2) have top and bottom margins of .5", (3) have full justification, (4) have Times New Roman as the base font, (5) have three or four paragraphs, (6) have your name and Indiana State University as left-justified and the course title and academic term as right headers, and (7) have a font point size of either 10, 11, or 12.
November 24: Presentation and discussion. Background: The Cold War, the Jihad against Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s (role of the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan), the 1991 Gulf War, USCENTCOM, Al-Qaeda.

Homework 5* (worth 3 points, due 12/10/2009 at 12:30 pm) (PS 458, IOUDE 503, SASS 1-5)

December 1: Video: The secret files: Washington, Israel and the Gulf (60 min):
Synopsis: "Discusses how secret agreements and documents, since declassified, helped to shape U.S. foreign policy which led to our involvement in the Persian Gulf War of 1991."

December 3: Geography of Iraq (the strategic location of Iraq in the MIDDLE of the Middle East): The basic geographies of Iraq (population, area, languages, religions, ethnic groups, rivers, oil sector, and GDP per capita); name, location, major language, dominant ethnic group, and government type of each country bordering Iraq; Compare and contrast Iraq's population size, ethnic groups, and GDP per capita with those of the United States.

December 8: Video: Highjacking Catastrophe (25 min):
Synopsis: "This film discusses how the events of September 11, 2001 have influenced United States politics, from advancing a pre-existing military agenda to curtailting civil liberties and social programs. Places the Bush administration's justifications for the war in the context of the struggle by neo-conservatives to increase American power globally by means of force. Contends that the administration has deliberately manipulated intelligence, political imagery, and fear to garner support for American military intervention."

December 10: Video: Iraqi Exodus: The Iraq War and the Middle East's Refugee Crisis (57 min) [To be watched online and outside the classroom]:
Synopsis: "This Wide Angle report travels to the front lines of the staggering refugee crisis that continues to unfold in the Middle East as Iraqis flee their war-torn hometowns to live either as exiles in neighboring countries or displaced within Iraq's borders. The situation in Syria and Jordan, where refugees cope with their new surroundings amidst government pressure and rising resentment from the local population, are spotlighted. In addition, Aaron Brown speaks with regional leaders about how the catastrophe is impacting the Middle East—and these millions of homeless Iraqis whose hope of return grows dimmer with each passing year." Available online at: http://video.pbs.org/video/1163078349/search/Iraqi%20Exodus/tag/Iraqi%20Exodus

December 15: [Final] Exam 5 (Study guide for exam 5)17 (PS 458, IOUDE 503, SASS 1-5)

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16 Homework 5:

a. The 9/11 Commission mandate was to investigate "facts and circumstances relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001." The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) was based on (1) reviews of "more than 2.5 million pages of documents," (2) interviews of "more than 1,200 individuals in ten countries," and (3) nineteen days of hearings and public testimony from 160 witnesses.


c. Watch also the 38-second video clip in which Lee Herbert Hamilton (vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Democratic Co-chair of the Iraq Study Group, Director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, member of the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council, and a 34-year member of US Congress) stumbles and refuses to answer a question about US support for Israel as the real motive of KSM (Khalid Sheik Mohammed), the principal architect of the 9/11 attacks: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gAlx9wB3E&emode=related&search

d. After reading these six pages you should note that the Report acknowledges that "Islamic terrorism" is fed by political grievances, especially against the U.S. support of Israel.

e. Using "word search" find out how this specific grievance was or was not addressed seriously in the many specific recommendations appearing on pages 367-438 of The 9/11 Commission Report. Discuss your findings in a one-page essay. The one-page essay should be concise and persuasive, and should (1) be single-spaced, (2) have top/bottom and right/left margins of .5/1.5", (3) have full justification, (4) have Times New Roman as the base font, (5) have three or four paragraphs, (6) have your name and Indiana State University as left headers and the course title and academic term as right headers, and (7) have a font point size of either 10, 11, or 12.

17 Study guide for exam 5:

a. Review the strategic location of Iraq in the middle of the Middle East by learning the name and location of each country bordering Iraq. Learn also the ethnic/linguistic/religious links between Iraq and its neighbors. Compare and contrast the sizes of US and Iraqi populations and economies.

b. What are the estimates of Iraqi deaths as a result of over 12 years (1990-2003) of sanctions and the Iraq war (2003-present)?

c. What are the estimates of US casualties (dead and wounded, as of March 2009) in the Iraq war?

d. What are the United Nations estimates of the total number of Iraqis displaced or uprooted who became refugees inside and outside Iraq (as of October 2007) because of the Iraq war?

e. Learn the various estimates of US current and expected financial costs of the Iraq war.

f. Which "catastrophic and catalyzing event" was used by the neoconservatives as an excuse to have the US launch the Iraq war?

g. Who are the neoconservatives (or neocons) and what do they want? Learn the brief biographies of the 12 key figures of the neocons.

13 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
December 15: Essay 5 (Why did the United States government launch the Iraq war?)

December 7-11: Study Week
December 14-18: Monday-Friday: Final Examinations

Guidelines and Instructions for Critical Thinking Essay 1:

Based on the readings, discussions, and in-class video showings of Topic 1 ("Global Geopolitics of the Middle East"), write a one-page/four-paragraph essay entitled "The Global Significance of the Middle East." In Paragraph One, you observe and articulate in your own words the global significance of the region. In Paragraph Two, you describe the global significance of the region by giving specific examples. In Paragraph Three, you explain the causes/roots of the global significance of the region. In Paragraph Four, you indicate the implications & consequences of the global significance of the region & make a critique (positive or negative) from your own perspective. Follow carefully the format and content guidelines and instructions outlined below:

The one-page essay is worth 5 points (5 percent of your final grade). It is designed to (1) stimulate your own independent thinking and (2) encourage your own critical thinking and synthesis. It should also help you reflect upon and critically evaluate your own cultural background and worldview through the study of "other" cultures, regions, and issues. The essay should be persuasive and well written. It should consist of one typed and single-spaced page. It should have around 500 words and four paragraphs. It should be carefully formatted in accordance with the following detailed instructions, which will ultimately help you learn basic and useful word processing skills from Microsoft Word (if you don't know them).

You need a USB (Universal Serial Bus) or a floppy diskette on which you save your formatted essay as you work on it. Each page should have top/bottom margins of 1 1/4" and right/left margins of 1.5"/1.5" as well as full justification. It should be single-spaced and should have Times New Roman as the base font and should be printed on a Laser Jet printer (not Desk Jet or other printers). If you do not have your own Laser Jet printer, you should use one of those found at some of the 24-hour OIT computer labs listed at http://www.indstate.edu/oit/labs. The page should have your name and Indiana State University as left headers and the course title and academic term as right headers. The point size of the headers should be 11. The title should be centered and should have bold appearance and a point size of 14. The rest of the text should have a point size of 12. There should be one space between paragraphs and no indentation. For your reference citations, use The Chicago Manual of Style Online at: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

h. What was the single explicit request in the letters of the neconservative think tank, The New American Century, to Presidents Bill Clinton in 1998 and George W. Bush in 2001?

i. When was the Iraq Liberation Act signed into law and by whom?

j. When and how did the Israelis bomb the Iraqi nuclear plant near Baghdad?

k. Review carefully the following statements in light of the link between the Iraq war and the security of Israel:
   • "A free Iraq will help secure Israel" --- U.S. President George W. Bush, September 2004 (NPR, 9/30/2004)
   • "If you believe that the State of Israel will be more secure if the United States fails in Iraq, you and I have a disagreement." --- Republican presidential candidate John McCain (FTP, 1/30/2007)
   • "I'm going to get it right for those soldiers in Iraq because it's important to Israel." --- U.S. Senator John Kerry, September 2004 (NPR, 9/30/2004)

l. "Removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq" is an "important Israeli strategic objective in its own right." --- A strategic report prepared by JASPS for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 1996.

m. "The U.S. war in Iraq was conceived by a small group of 25 or 30 neconservatives, almost all of them Jewish, almost all of them intellectuals." --- Israeli newspaper Haaretz, 4/5/2003.

n. "From Israel's perspective, the longstanding strategic threat of a massive military attack from the east led by Iraq through Jordan no longer exists because of the war" --- Jewish Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham H. Foxman, 8/2006 (ADL, 8/12/2006).

o. Review carefully Articles 4(1), 12(3), 21(1), 24(1), 26(1b), and 27 (all clauses) of the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On The Withdrawal Of United States Forces From Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities During Their Temporary Presence in Iraq as they relate to the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq, the issue of immunity for US military and civilian elements in Iraq, and deterrence of internal or external security threats to Iraq.

p. Learn about the number of claims received by the United Nations Compensation Commission and the amount sought in terms of compensation for death, injury, loss of or damage to property, commercial claims and claims for environmental damage resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait (2/2/1990 - 2/28/1991).

Guidelines for Critical Thinking Essay 5:
The title of the one-page/four-paragraph essay should be "Genesis and Prospect of the U.S.-Led War In Iraq." Paragraph 1 should emphasize and highlight the strategic/geographic, demographic, and economic position/location of Iraq and the gravity of this war. Paragraph 2 should give specific examples and statistics to illustrate the human/financial/moral cost of the war to the United States and Iraq. Paragraph 3 should explain the causes/roots of the war and identify the major political forces that pushed for the war. Paragraph 4 should determine whether or not the war has achieved its declared and/or undeclared objectives. Follow carefully the format and content specified in the Guidelines and Instructions for the Critical Thinking Essay handed out with the course syllabus.

14 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal
The format of the one-page essay should look like the format of the distributed hard copy of this page. The standardized format is designed to help you focus more on the content (rather than the format) of the essay in the peer-review/grading session.

The grade of the essay will be based on (a) drawing meaningful conclusions from what you have learned under a given topic, (b) turning the essay by the specified deadline, (c) following all the instructions concerning the format and printing, (d) demonstrating your ability to think critically, reason clearly, and communicate effectively through writing, and (e) obtaining several peer reviews and evaluations during the peer-review session of September 15, 2009 (when the essay is due at 12:30 pm).

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 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.

Mission of the Foundational Studies Program at Indiana State University

"Indiana State University is committed to providing students with a high quality education that will develop their intellectual abilities while providing them with the skills and knowledge base they will need to successfully navigate the complexities of the twenty-first century. A robust General Education curriculum is the cornerstone of this goal. While your major prepares you to meet specific professional goals, the General Education curriculum prepares you to be an effective communicator, critical thinker, and an informed decision maker; abilities that are important in your role as a professional, consumer, and citizen. The Foundational Studies curriculum also exposes you to a diverse range of subjects that will help you to develop an appreciation of the fine and performing arts, enrich your life, and cultivate an awareness of historical and contemporary social, economic, and political realities." [Emphasis added]

Foundational Studies courses
- A gymnasium of the mind
- Knowledge beyond one’s specialty
- Writing and thinking across disciplines
- Working in collaboration with others
- Thinking critically & reasoning logically
- Developing some computer skills
- Sensitivity to other cultures & problems

Geography of the Middle East
- Naming and defining the Middle East region
- Observing environmental and cultural patterns
- Identifying a number of critical problems/issues
- Describing manifestations/expressions of those problems/issues
- Explaining roots/causes of those problems/issues
- Searching for solutions/resolutions of those problems/issues

Critical thinking tips
- Thinking about thinking
- Thinking sometimes outside the box
- Learning to unlearn
- Resisting appeal to prejudice
- Synthesis versus analysis
- Academia versus the media
- Facts versus audiences
- Reality versus image
- The ‘what?’ versus the ‘who?’

Don’t believe everything you think!

In a book entitled Don’t believe everything you think: the 6 basic mistakes we make in thinking (2006), Professor Thomas Kida identifies "the six-pack of problems" that leads many of us unconsciously to accept false ideas: (1) We prefer stories to statistics; (2) We seek to confirm, not to question, our ideas; (3) We rarely appreciate the role of chance and coincidence in shaping events; (4) We sometimes misperceive the world around us; (5) We tend to oversimplify our thinking; and (6) Our memories are often inaccurate.
Course Exit Assessment for the Integrative Upper-Division Electives category of the Foundational Studies Program

1. This course helped me to think critically. [SALR 1; SALR 2-5; IUDE 1-3; FS 1-2, 5, 8, 10]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

2. This course helped me integrate multiple approaches to gain knowledge. [IUDE 1; FS 3; SALR 5]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

3. This course helped me evaluate information to solve problems. [FS 1-2; IUDE 2; SALR 5]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

4. This course helped me apply knowledge and skills across disciplines. [FS 3; IUDE 1-2; SALR 5]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

5. This course helped me improve my writing. [IUDE 3; SALR 3; FS 1-3, 10]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

6. This course helped me read and analyze complex text/content. [SALR 4; FS 1-8, 10]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

7. This course helped me learn more about Middle East current issues. [GME 1-5; ISM 2]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

8. This course helped me learn more about Middle East environment and culture. [GME 1-5; ISM 1-2]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

9. This course helped me understand the strategic location of the Middle East. [GME 1; ISM 1-2]
   Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

10. This course helped me learn more about Islam, the Quran, and Prophet Muhammad. [GME 3; ISM 1-2]
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

11. This course helped me comprehend the big picture of who gets what from Middle East oil. [GME 4; ISM 2]
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

12. This course helped me understand the complex geopolitics and conflicts in the Middle East. [GME 5; ISM 1-2]
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

13. This course helped understand U.S. involvement in the Palestine-Israel conflict. [GME 5; ISM 2]
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

14. This course helped me understand the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of 9/11 and the Iraq and Afghan wars. [GME 5; ISM 2]
    Strongly Agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

17 GEOG/ENVI 423 Foundational Studies Course Proposal