



War and Peace in the Middle East (5.33 credits)

This class examines the international relations of the Middle East through a historical and theoretical lens. What are the contemporary legacies of colonial involvement in the Middle East? How did the Cold War shape the modern Middle East? How has U.S. unipolarity affected contemporary Middle Eastern politics? What explains the United States' current policies toward the Middle East: is it security? Is it to secure natural resources such as oil? Is it the influence of domestic groups? Is it ideology and culture? These are some of the questions that this course will analyze and discuss.

This course will mainly focus on a few big players in the region – Iran, Egypt and Israel. In doing so, the course will examine the historic and current clash – or not – of interests, cultures and ideologies taking place between the great powers of international politics (such as Great Britain, Russia and the Soviet Union historically, and the United States) and the Middle East. The class will begin by looking at the colonial history of the region, and end by looking at the Arab Spring, the development of the so-called Islamic State (IS) and the Iran nuclear deal. The course will incorporate topics such as “orientalism,” the Cold War, the importance of oil, the “war on terror”, the Arab-Israeli peace process and the significance of national identities in understanding the politics of the region.

Course coordinator: *Dr. Hilde Eliassen Restad, Associate Professor, Bjørknes University College*

Lecturers: *Dr. Hilde Restad and various professionals from the research community in Oslo.*