

Fall 2021  
GOV 312L, # 38862  
classroom: PMA 6.104  
Tues., Thurs. 11:00am-12:15pm

Professor Jason Brownlee  
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office hours: Wednesdays 11am-2pm  
sign-up [here](#) or [email](#)

### Issues and Policies in American Government

#### AMERICAN INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This is an introductory-level course that fulfills the core curriculum requirement for US Government. GOV312L courses involve the analysis of governmental institutions, political behavior, civic engagement, and their political and philosophical foundations. This particular GOV312L introduces students to significant aspects of the foreign-policy and military relationships between America and major countries of the Middle East. For our purposes the core of the Middle East stretches from Egypt to Iran, but we will also consider a slightly larger geographical span that includes Libya and Afghanistan. Readings and lectures will focus on drawing general lessons, themes, from the history of US involvement in the region.

As the United States' military power expanded in the twentieth century, US leaders focused their attention and resources on the region known as North Africa and the Middle East, or simply the "Middle East" (conventionally defined as the swath of countries from Morocco to Iran). In 1968 Great Britain announced it would fold-up its military presence in the Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, and Asia, and the United States incrementally moved to take its place. In 1980 US President Jimmy Carter made it official policy that the United States would intervene directly in the Persian Gulf when national interests were at stake. The Carter Doctrine has guided US foreign policy in the region ever since.

An earlier president (at the time, Secretary of State) John Quincy Adams, declared in 1821 that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." In that view, American national security was defined internally, through domestic policy, not overseas interventions. In stark contrast, during the past four decades, the idea of US national security has been heavily defined by American actions and interactions overseas in general and in the Middle East, in particular.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

After successfully completing this course students will have demonstrated they can:

- broadly understand political behavior and institutions in the United States.
- develop a grasp for US policies in the Middle East since the 1970s.
- communicate clearly about trends and patterns in US interventions in the Middle East.

#### ABSENCES

Professor Brownlee and the TA are happy to field your questions in person or by email. Attendance is not taken and there is need to contact us if you are missing a class. The only time you need to notify us of an absence is if it impacts submission of an exam or paper. We will

accommodate circumstances that are university-recognized and documented. If you do miss a class, however, you are responsible for getting notes and information from classmates on what was covered. After doing so, you are welcome to approach Professor Brownlee or the TA with outstanding questions. When communicating by email, plan for a 48-hour (or two business day) response time.

*If you do not attend a class for any reason, you are responsible for catching up on the material. That begins with consulting classmates, not with asking the Professor or the TA "So... what did I miss?"*

## TEXTS

There is no textbook or course packet. All readings will be available on Canvas in PDF format.

## GRADES

The final grade will come from three exams (70%) and two short response papers (30%).

### I. EXAMS (25%, 25%, 20% = 70% total)

Each of the first two exams will comprise 25 short-answer items. The third exam will have 20 short-answer items. Exams will draw on *all course materials to date but will focus on the materials since the last exam*. Students are to complete the exams on their own, at their own time, and are permitted to use class notes and texts – but not other sources, including people.

Exam questions will be posted on Canvas at 11:00 am on the following days: September 30, November 4, December 2. Exam answers will be due by Canvas submission at 12:30pm.

### II. SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS (15%, 15% = 30% total)

In two short papers (2-3 double-spaced pages), students will respond to a prompt that asks them to explain US policy based on course materials. The prompt will be provided one week in advance. Paper 1 will be due, via Canvas upload, by 5:00pm, *Tuesday, October 19*. Paper 2 will be due by 5:00pm, *Tuesday, November 23*. Papers will not need bibliographies. However, they should parenthetically cite the source for any direct quotes. For example: The philosophy of the Western powers "stressed liberty [and] individual human rights" (Smith, p. 25).

## FINAL LETTER GRADES

Final letter grades will be determined on the following basis: A = 94-100; A- = 90-93.999; B+ = 87-89.999; B = 84-86.999; B- = 80-83.999; C+ = 77-79.999; C = 74-76.999; C- = 70-73.999; D+ = 67-69.999; D = 64-66.999; D- = 60-63.999; F = 0-60. *To ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage, i.e., a 93.9 is an A-*. The professor and TA will not alter grades calculated at the end of the semester.

## READINGS

Readings are listed in suggested order, below the number and topic of each week. To stay current, read the listed material before the lectures of that week.

1. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS (August 26)
  - A. The syllabus
2. THE US IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE 1970s: DOCTRINES AND POWER PROJECTION (August 31, September 2)
  - A. F. Gregory Gause, British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Oct., 1985), pp. 247-273
  - B. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "US Strategy in the Persian Gulf," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Third Quarter 1987), pp. 23-45.
3. 1980s: REAGAN APPLIES CARTER DOCTRINE (September 7, 9)
  - A. Andrew J. Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*. New York: Random House, 2016, pp. 62-86.
  - B. Ray Takeyh, "The Iran-Iraq War: A Reassessment," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (summer 2010), pp. 365-383.
4. NO REGIME CHANGE: DESERT STORM AND DUAL CONTAINMENT (Sept. 14, 16)
  - A. Murray Waas. "Who Lost Kuwait? How the Bush Administration Bungled its Way to War in the Gulf." *Village Voice* (January 22, 1991): 30-31, 35, 38-39, 96.
  - B. Douglas Little, *America Orientalism*, pp. 239-241, 252-262.
5. AL-QAEDA AND THE TALIBAN IN THE 1990S (Sept. 21, 23)
  - A. John Miller, "Greetings, America. My name is Osama bin Laden. Now that I have your attention..." *Esquire*, February 1999, Vol. 131 Issue 2.
  - B. Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, "America and the Taliban: From Co-operation to War," *Global Dialogue*; Spring 2002.
6. REVIEW (September 28) AND EXAM 1 (September 30)
7. OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (October 5, 7) *NOTE: 3 READINGS*
  - A. Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, pp. ix-xxxv.
  - B. James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2003, pp. 129-148 (Skim).
  - C. Sarah Chayes, "Days of Lies and Roses," *Boston Review*, 2007.
8. IRAQ AFTER THE 9/11 ATTACKS: WHY REGIME CHANGE? (October 12, 14)
  - A. David R. Henderson. *Do We Need to Go to War for Oil?* Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2007.
  - B. Robert Draper, *To Start a War: How the Bush Administration took America into Iraq*, New York: Penguin, 2020, 53-103, (notes 423-430).

## 9. THE IRAQ WAR (2003-2011): NEW REGIME AND CIVIL WAR (October 19, 21)

Paper 1 due by 5:00pm on Tuesday, October 19.
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- A. Peter Sluglett, "Blunder Books: Iraq after Saddam Hussein," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60 No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 361-368.
- B. Dexter Filkins, "What We Left Behind," *The New Yorker*, April 21, 2014.

## 10. AFGHANISTAN CONTINUED (fourth of four weeks on high-cost interventions) (October 26, 28)

- A. James Mann, *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside the White House to Redefine American Power*. New York: Penguin, 2012, pp. 117-141 (notes 358-359).
- B. Mark Landler, "The Afghan War and the Evolution of Obama," *New York Times*, January 1, 2017.

## 11. REVIEW 2 (November 2) AND EXAM 2 (November 4)

## 12. TURNING POINT (November 9, 11)

- A. David Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama's Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*. New York: Penguin, 2012, Chapter 4
- B. Sanger, *Confront and Conceal*, Chapter 10.

13. OVER THE HORIZON (November 16, 18) *NOTE: 4 READINGS*

- A. Seth G. Jones, "Another Example of Obama's Light-Footprint Strategy," *RAND Blog*, September 17, 2014.
- B. Samuel Oakford and Peter Salisbury, "Yemen: The Graveyard of the Obama Doctrine: The human costs of facilitating Saudi Arabia's proxy war," *The Atlantic*, September 23, 2016.
- C. Bradford Ian Stapleton, "The Problem with the Light Footprint: Shifting Tactics in Lieu of Strategy," *CATO Institute Policy Analysis*, June 7, 2016, Number 792.
- D. Douglas L. Kriner and Francis X. Shen, "Battlefield Casualties and Ballot-Box Defeat: Did the Bush-Obama Wars Cost Clinton the White House?" *PS* April 2020, pp. 248-252.

## 14. OPTIONAL VIDEO (November 23) AND HOLIDAY (November 25)

Paper 1 due by 5:00pm on Tuesday, November 23.
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## 15. REVIEW (NOVEMBER 30) AND EXAM 3 (DECEMBER 2)

## ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

**COMMUNICATION**

I am happy to field your questions, in person or by email, on substantive matters. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and information from classmates on what was covered. After doing so, you are welcome to approach me with outstanding questions. When communicating by email, plan for a 48-hour (or two business day) response time.

## Grade calculation

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the below rubric. A = 94-100; A- = 90-93.999; B+ = 87-89.999; B = 84-86.999; B- = 80-83.999; C+ = 77-79.999; C = 74-76.999; C- = 70-73.999; D+ = 67-69.999; D = 64-66.999; D- = 60-63.999; F = 0-59.999. The professor will not alter grades calculated at the end of the semester.

#### Attendance and Workload

Students are expected to come ready and on time for all class sessions. In the classroom students are expected to comport themselves in a professional manner. By enrolling and remaining in this course students indicate they have understood the importance of carefully completing the weekly readings and being ready for in-class discussion led by Professor Brownlee. *NB: If you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for catching up on the material. That begins with consulting classmates, NOT with asking the Professor "So... what did I miss?"*

#### Religious holidays or official extracurricular activities

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day. If you miss a test due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence.

Students missing class for an official extracurricular activity must provide documentation at least fourteen days prior.

#### Academic accommodations

The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY. All accommodations must be coordinated through the Office of the Dean of Students. Students needing accommodations should communicate this need to me before the third class meeting.

#### Cell Phones and other External Communications

During class, attention should be on course materials and no other external communication should occur (with the exception of Zoom for online sessions).

#### Syllabus Changes

The syllabus is subject to change by the professor. Any alteration in the course schedule will be announced in class and posted to Canvas.

Time management is a valuable skill in college and life. This course is expected to make up one component in a full student schedule of classes, extracurricular activities, work, and other commitments. When needed, Professor Brownlee is glad to meet with students to discuss ways of organizing their schedule to carve out and protect the time needed for this class, e.g., thinking about when and where they study most effectively; then setting aside blocks of time that are reserved for homework for this class. Whatever a student's particular approach to managing time, any students seeking assistance are encouraged to approach Professor Brownlee in the first two weeks of class.

This course is expected to make up one component in a full student schedule of classes, extracurricular activities, work, and other commitments. The assignments and workload are designed to require approximately 5-7 hours, in addition to the time spent attending lectures. (If you do not have that kind of time to devote to this GOV 365, I would encourage you to select another class or choose another semester to take this class.)

Strictness is fairness. Most students are busy; all students merit equal treatment. Professor Brownlee will be strict about applying the announced policies uniformly.

The syllabus specifies the workload, deadlines, and grading rubric for the course. If any changes occur, they will be announced in class. In short, everyone knows the expectations for the class. Further, by taking the course, students are indicating that they will honestly strive to submit their best work punctually. Most students are busy. At the same time, all students merit equal treatment. Therefore, Professor Brownlee will be strict about applying the announced policies uniformly.