

Gulf Studies Required Courses:

GS 500

Advanced Research Methodology

Credit hours: 3

Required

This course provides advanced knowledge about conducting high quality research. This includes providing a theoretical framework about the latest in research methods in social sciences and humanities. By providing an advanced knowledge for both quantitative and qualitative methods, the course will encourage and train students to develop their own research in accordance with the interdisciplinary demands of the degree. The course will focus on developing research skills in terms of dealing with sources (books, journals, electronic sources).

Prerequisites: None

GS 510

Contemporary History and Politics in the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Required

This course provides comprehensive knowledge about the contemporary history of the Gulf, starting at the end of the First World War, through to the emergence of the Modern State in the Gulf region. The course will focus on how political developments shaped the history of the region. It will focus on the history of Iran under the Pahlavi era, the history under the Islamic Republic, the history of Iraq after the first world war, and the histories of each of the GCC states. The course will look at the dynamic of politics in each country, and at relations within the region. In addition, the role of oil and external players will be an important part of the themes that this course will focus on.

Prerequisites: None

GS 520

State and Society in the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Required

This gateway course to the program provides students with an introduction to the scholarly works concerning society and state and examines their relationship in the Arab Gulf States. While the course includes historical material to provide a deeper context for the study of change and its influences, the focus remains fixed on the contemporary era. The course will cover the following themes: globalization theory, state institutions, rentier state theory, tribalism and post-tribalism, nationalism and citizenship, the shifting gender dynamics, and the identity politics often subsumed in the tradition/modernity dichotomy. Students should expect to prepare a substantial paper based on original research.

Prerequisites: None

GS 530

International Relations of the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Required

This course provides an advanced and comprehensive understanding of the contemporary international relations of the Gulf region since 1971 when Britain ended its protectorate relationship with the smaller states of the lower Gulf. The course begins with key contextual events being analyzed which includes the oil embargo of 1973-74; the Iranian Revolution; the Iran-Iraq War; the emergence and functioning of the GCC; the Gulf War of 1990-91; and the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The nature of the Arab Gulf states foreign policies is also encompassed in addition to the broader contextual issues that shape its development. These include a range of issues such as interstate cultural identity, security challenges, the political economy of the global oil market. Students will also analyze the nature and drivers of U.S. foreign policy towards the Gulf region since 1971 with particular regard to Gulf security. The course concludes by examining emerging security challenges to the immediate and broader Gulf region.

Prerequisites: None

GS 531

Political Economy of the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Required

This course focuses on the study of international political economy by examining its conceptual foundations and empirical applications within the Gulf region. The course first provides a comprehensive approach to the study of political economy by introducing the main theoretical perspectives in the field. The course pays attention to the traditional political economies of the Gulf and the impact of the discovery of oil and the transformation of their economies to rentier states. The impact of the rentier economic system is examined in detail by looking at the economic structure in addition to its effect on political participation and the labour market. Case studies will then be adopted whereby the political economies of Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Qatar and in addition to the other Gulf States are examined. Issues of direct relevance such as the political economy of regional integration in the Gulf will be examined, in addition to the role of Gulf sovereign wealth funds. This will be built on through an examination of how the GCC states are impacting the global economy in terms of oil, gas, finance and trade. The course will conclude with an examination of the challenges of economic reform in the GCC States.

Prerequisites: None

GS 570 Thesis

Credit hours: 6

Required

The thesis is a required piece of work that demonstrates students' own research interests. The length of the thesis will be between 60-70 pages, not counting the endnotes and bibliography. Students can develop their thesis topic based on seminar work and in consultation with the academic advisor or with a faculty member. Students are encouraged to begin formulating ideas for the thesis around the end of the second semester (preferably after completing 18 credit hours of course work). Within the third semester, students should have written a proposal, chosen an advisor, and formed a committee. The committee consists of the advisor and two faculty members who will read and evaluate the thesis. There will be an oral defence scheduled after the submission of the thesis.

Prerequisite: GS 500 Advanced Research Methodology

Gulf Studies Electives

GS 511 Politics of the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Elective

The Gulf states political systems can be understood as having a unique character within the international system. This course seeks to examine the contemporary political structures and drivers of change. Key issues such as the role and nature of civil society, elections, socio-political movements, and the impact of the rentier economy on the politics in the Gulf are examined. Students will be equipped with a theoretical understanding of these core issues, which will be grounded from a historical perspective.

Prerequisite: GS 510 - Contemporary History and Politics in the Gulf

GS 521

City and Society in the Gulf

Credit hours: 3

Elective

In the span of a few decades, the states of the Arabian Peninsula have emerged as some of the most urbanized in the world. This course presents an interdisciplinary approach to the study of city and society in the Gulf States. The course begins with selections from the substantial classic literature concerned with the Middle Eastern City, a literature which provides a starting point from which the development of the Gulf City can be compared and contrasted. From that starting point, students will examine the following: political, economic, and social forces that have driven the rapid growth of the Gulf City; social problems, both of a universal nature and unique to Arabia that accompany that rapid urbanization; the role of master-planning and the State in this urban growth; the architectural literature concerned with supermodernism and the urban form; and the role of migrant populations in establishing a basic spatial discourse for the Gulf City. Students should expect to conduct original research and prepare a substantial term paper for this course.

Prerequisites: None

GS 523

Human Rights and the Gulf States

Credit hours: 3

Elective

This course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the current discourse on human rights and the role it plays in shaping the relationship between states and citizens. The course begins by examining the religious and philosophical texts that predated the articulation of human rights in the modern era, including texts of both western European and Middle Eastern pedigree. Students then explore the historical articulation and ongoing extrapolation of a set of universal human rights through overarching topical areas of inquiry. This will include one area focused on labour migration and human trafficking in the Gulf States; another on political rights and civil society in the GCC; a third on gender and human rights in Arabia; and a final area of inquiry examining media, freedom of expression, and censorship. Students will also explore the arguments of scholars who counter the individualistic and western notion of human rights by highlighting cultural rights in the increasingly globalized era. Students will conduct original research and prepare a substantial term paper for this course.

Prerequisite: GS 520 - State and Society in the Gulf

GS 524

The Arabian Peninsula Literature and Culture

Credit hours: 3

Elective

This course is primarily a comprehensive introduction to literature and culture of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf countries and will survey key texts, focusing on modern literature and contemporary technology writing. The course will address how authors have rewritten and overturned, through resistance or ambivalence, the classical Arabic tradition. It will examine the different types of opposition, conflict and limits reproduced in the articulation of modernity, demonstrating how cultural politics regulates and/or suppresses the construction of identity and self-expression. Special attention will be given to the rise of the novel in the Arabian Peninsula and will show how modern narratives have been influenced and marked by questions of canon formation, globalization and social change. The readings will include modern novels, short stories, poems, electronic writing and critical texts.

Prerequisites: None

GS 532

Security of the Gulf States

Credit hours: 3

Elective

The study of international security has evolved since the end of the Cold War as the concept of war; the threat to use force and defence is no longer considered exclusively part of the security equation. This course addresses the range of global dangers that threaten the modern state in the Gulf which range from pandemics and environmental degradation to the more traditional security concerns of nuclear proliferation and direct violence, such as terrorism and inter-state armed conflict. This course provides an advanced theoretical approach to the field of security studies and examines multifaceted aspects in addition to applying this to the traditional and non-traditional issues that have emerged on the security policy agenda such as threats of piracy in the Horn of Africa. This course seeks to use various case studies on a global basis to underline the various challenges which exist in the contemporary system and how they are relevant to the Gulf region.

Prerequisite: GS 530 - International Relations of the Gulf

GS 533

Global Energy Geopolitics

Credit hours: 3

Elective

The study of international security has evolved since the end of the Cold War as the concept of war; the threat to use force and defence is no longer considered exclusively part of the security equation. This course addresses the range of global dangers that threaten the modern state in the Gulf which range from pandemics and environmental degradation to the more traditional security concerns of nuclear proliferation and direct violence, such as terrorism and inter-state armed conflict. This course provides an advanced theoretical approach to the field of security studies and examines multifaceted aspects in addition to applying this to the traditional and non-traditional issues that have emerged on the security policy agenda such as threats of piracy in the Horn of Africa. This course seeks to use various case studies on a global basis to underline the various challenges which exist in the contemporary system and how they are relevant to the Gulf region.

Prerequisites: None

GS 540

Environment and Climate Ecology

Credit hours: 3

Elective

This course focuses the impact of climate change on the Arabian Gulf States. The themes include environmental challenges and developments that are newly emergent, such as desertification, biodiversity loss, urbanization, marine and coastal pollution, carbon dioxide pollution, limited water resources, and rising sea levels. Therefore, the course presents themes for inquiry that support an interdisciplinary study from social science dimensions. Study will be within environmental studies and climate ecology, and informed by analysis around energy, security, political economy and development. The course investigates not only the impact but inter-relationship between these sources of environmental change and development. It guides students to consider means for human responsabilization and enables students to conceptualize solutions and various policy recommendations from a grounded and broad study of the various dynamics affecting climate in the Gulf.

Prerequisites: None

GS 550

Media and Information Communication Technology in the GCC

Credit hours: 3

Elective

The information technology revolution is considered one of the major events in the twentieth century. This is due to the fact that media is indeed influencing every society in today's world. It also shapes images and dynamics in those societies. This course will provide a comprehensive background about the history of this media revolution, with particular focus on media and Information Communication Technology in the GCC. The course will look at the emerging impact of media and Information Communication Technology in the GCC, especially with the increasing use of media sources such as TV satellites, Internet, mobile phone, and radios. The social, economic and political impact of the media and Information Communication Technology in the GCC sources will be covered in this course.

Prerequisites: None

GS 560

Special Topics

Credit hours: 3

Elective

The course on special topics in the social sciences and humanities will be offered depending on student interest and faculty specializations. This course offers the opportunity to explore in more depth topics within politics, the economy and society as relate to geographical areas in the Gulf region, Iran or Iraq and/or from a variety of the thematic areas.

Prerequisites: None
