

U.S.-IRAN Relations: Conflict/Reconciliation

SIS 519-008

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Course Description

The Revolution of 1979 was a watershed event in the history of U.S.-Iran relations. It transformed Iran from a close ally and regional partner to an adversary labeled a rogue state .

Iran is a strategically important country in the region with large reserve of oil and natural gas. It is an ancient empire , ethno-linguistically diverse with a strong sense of national and cultural identity, historical continuity, a demographically young and educated population , and significant economic and military potentials . But it is suffering from a weak economy , inability to revitalize its resources , mismanagement , corruption ,high inflation , and high unemployment .

The aftermath of disputed presidential election of 2009 is marked with growing violation of human rights , a potential opposition movement , and division among Iranian leadership undermining the credibility of post revolutionary system of governance . The rise of the Revolutionary Guard and the Militia using brutal force against own population , has created a crisis of legitimacy , shifting power away from the clerical establishment toward the military .

New developments in the region as the result of the Arab Spring particularly the unrest in Syria ,Iran's strategic ally, poses challenge to Iran's national security and highlights the risk presented by the new regional situation .

The primary issue for the United States has centered on Iran's possible nuclear weapon program and Iran's attempt to overturn the regional order in the Middle East through revolutionary activity . Despite attempts to sanction , isolate and demonize Iran , the regime has continued to pursue a nuclear policy centered on domestic concerns for security, and ambitions toward regional influence.

Is it possible for Iran to stop its nuclear program ? What is next for U.S. policy and how should it deal with Iran: containment, use of force , or engagement and confidence building ? By assessing diplomatic options, detente and deterrent, we explore the defining forces in Iran today and the future of US-Iran relations to come up with set of policy proposals about how the U.S. should handle the situation in Iran .

Course Objectives : During the course we learn about Iran's politics and society , the history of U.S. –Iran relations , and the nature of the current crisis and analyze different scholarly approaches and viewpoints . We identify and discuss points of controversy and

disagreement over the disputed issues and ideas . Should the U.S. resign itself to a possibility of Iran as a nuclear power , or continue the policy of containment ? What is the best strategy in term of negotiating with Iran ? And what are the implications for U.S. policy in the region ? The course encourages critical thinking and analysis of current issues and debates through class discussions, documentary films , videos , scholarly papers ,and guest lectures .

Topics : We review history of U.S. Iran relations from the end of WWII to present. The readings analyze the Cold War partnership with Iran; the ways that issues of security and access to oil shaped the U.S. policy and its intervention, both overt and covert in Iranian politics; the 1953 coup and its consequences leading to the 1979 revolution and the hostage crisis. We study the Iran-Iraq war, the policy of containment, the conflict over Iran's nuclear program, Iran's regional policies , and geopolitical rivalry between Iran - Israel and its impact on U.S. foreign policy. We discuss the Arab uprising and its impact on the Islamic Republic's crucial ties with Syria , Lebanese Hizbollah , and Palestinian groups . We study transformation of the society under the clergy , demographic shift , Iran's present political crisis , and the impact of the U.S. sanctions on Iran's economy and its implications and Iran's capabilities and potentials as a major regional player.

Learning Outcomes : Students will be exposed to a wide range of alternative views , explore the historical and political foundations of US- Iran relations , and will be able to question and rethink their “understanding” of Iranian history , politics and society. Analyze American strategy in the Middle East and US policy towards Iran . Identify differing Iranian/American framing of the conflict to provides insight into viable alternative policy options most likely to succeed towards reconciliation .

Required Textbooks

- 1- Ali Ansari , *Confronting Iran* , (New York : Basic Books ,2006) . ISBN-10:0-465-00350-8
- 2- - Trita Parsi ,*Treacherous Alliance : The Secret Dealings of Israel , Iran ,and The U.S.* , (Yale University Press 2007) ISBN:978-0-300-12057

Recommended

- 1- Robin Wright(ed.) ,*The Iran Primer* , (Washington DC : USIP Press , 2010) . ISBN 978-1-60127-084-9.

Iran Primer brings together many experts on US-Iran relations and looks at Iran's politics and foreign policy .Visit it at <http://iranprimer.usip.org> for new articles and updates.

Selected Websites :

- www.gooya.com (Iranian media)
- www.iranian.com (Iran's news and views)
- www.albawaba.com (Middle East gateway)
- www.merip.org (MERIP)
- <http://payvand.com>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/middleeast> (BBC World Service)
http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/publications/2008/mapping_Irans_online_public

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Readings: The syllabus includes assigned texts as well as additional readings that will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Attendance : You are expected to attend all classes and be well prepared to discuss weekly topics . Regular prepared class participation is ESSENTIAL to your grade.

Assignments

1 - Class Participation : 30 % of your final grade. In addition to being physically present, you are expected to be actively engaged in class discussion, make comments, raise questions, and analyze the issues. You are expected to complete all assigned readings before each class meeting. The class will be conducted as part lecture ,part discussion in which each person assumes responsibility for sustaining discussion and contribute constructively to an environment of mutual learning. Those who are not comfortable talking in class should make an effort to do so .It is crucial that you come to class well prepared having read and thought about the assigned texts and participate in class discussion . Your class participation grade will be based on your preparation and contribution to class discussion and is evaluated by the quality of your comments and questions.

2- Oral Presentation: 20 % of your final grade. One oral presentation in class concerning of the topics of interest listed in the syllabus to provide an analysis of the subject matter and the assigned readings with critical commentary (two or three presenters each time). You are expected to address the following:

- a) the author's thesis and concepts
- b) strengths and weaknesses
- c) relevance to previous readings
- d) questions for class discussion

Each in-class presentation should be 10 minutes, with relevant slides, maps, and the like. The presentations should have a clear focus articulating differing point of views . Be careful to present opposing themes objectively with well-argued position and make sure you do not read from the notes or use the computer as a teleprompter .

3- Mid term exam : 20 % of your final grade .

4- Final Paper : 30% of final grade. You are expected to write a research paper about 10-15 pages, and to undertake an in-depth analysis of a particular issue relevant to the U.S.-Iran relations and regional interests. The assessment of your paper will be based on the quality of your research, analysis of the issue, clarity, creativity, and coherence. The choice of subject for the final paper should be cleared in advance with the instructor no later than **October 26** . Please note: final paper is **due on December 7**. No two students can write on the same topic without prior approval.

Grading :

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B +	87-89%
B	82-86%
B-	78-81%
C+	75-77%
C	71-74%
C-	70-73%
D	67-70%
F	66% and below

Academic Integrity : Students are required to follow rules and regulations of Academic Integrity Code . Please make sure you read it closely and be sure to ask me if you have any questions. The code is available online at :

<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>

Class Sessions

August 31 : Introduction to the Course

- **Syllabus** review.
- **Overview** :The US-Iran in Historical Perspective
- **Country Profile** Iran: BBC
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/country_profiles/790877

September 7 : The Construction of Modern Iran (1905-1953)

- Gheissari& Nasr , *Democracy in Iran :History and the Quest for Liberty* (Oxford University Press,2006), chap.1
- A. Ansari , *Confronting Iran* (Basic Books 2006) ,chap.1
- M.Boroujerdi , “ Triumphs and Travails of Authoritarian Modernization in Iran ”, in S.Cronin (ed.),*The Making of Modern Iran :State and Society under Reza Shah* (Routledge , 2003),pp.146-154.
- H.Chehabi,”Staging the Emperor’s New Cloths : Dress Codes and Nation –Building under Reza Shah ,” *Iranian Studies* , vol.26,nos. 3&4 (Summer/Fall 1993): 209-229.
- Kian-Thiebaut, “ Crafting Iranian Nationalism Intersectionality of Ayrianism ,Westernism and Islamism ,” in Carvalhi & Gemenne (eds.) *Nations and their Histories :Constructions and Representations* (Pelgrave , 2009) .pp189-203 .

September 14 : Iran and the Cold War

- John Campbell , “ The Soviet Union and the United States in the Middle East,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*,Vol. 401 , (May ,1972),pp.126-135
- Richard Cottam , “The United States, Iran and the Cold War,” *Iranian Studies* ,vol.3 ,no 1&2 pp.2-22.
- John Limbert, “The Azerbaijan Crisis of 1945-47”, *Negotiating with Iran*, pp.35-57 .
- Talia Yegorova, “The ‘Iran Crisis’ of 1945-46: A View from the Russian Archives.”

September 21 : U.S. and the 1953 Coup in Iran

- Ansari, *Confronting Iran*, chap.2.
- Mark Gasiorowski, “ The 1953 coup d’etat in Iran” *IJMES* ,Vol.19,No., 3 (August 1987):261-28
- Ervand Abrahamian , “The 1953 coup in Iran ,” *Science&Society* ,Vol. 65/issue 2, (Summer 2001): 182-215
- Steve Marsh , “ Continuity and change : Reinterpreting the Politics of the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations toward Iran ,1950-1954,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*,vol.7,no3 (Summer 2005):79-123 .

- James Risen, “Secrets of History :the CIA in Iran- Special Report” New York Times
 - <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/16/world/secrets-history-cia-iran-special-report>
 - **Video:** Kinzer & Abrahamian in Conversation. Democracynow.org.

September 28 : Iran as a Client State and the Road to Revolution

- Ansari, *Confronting Iran*,chap.3 .
- Gasiorowski, *US Foreign Policy and the Shah* (Cornell Univ.Press,1991) , Chaps 6&7 and conclusion pp.166-228.
- Ervand Abrahamian, “The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977,” MERIP no.86 (March-April 1980):3-15 .

Video: David Frost interview with the Shah

October 5 : Turning Point in the U.S. Iran Relations

- Ervand Abrahamian , “Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution”, MERIP, No.87 (1980):21-26.
- John Limbert, “The Embassy Hostage Crisis of 1979-81” , *Negotiating with Iran*, pp.87-119 .
- Ansari , *Confronting Iran* ,chap.4.
- Henry Precht, “ The Iranian Revolution 25 Years Later,” Middle East Journal, vol.58,no.1,(Winter 2004):9-31.
- BBC Documentary , “Iran and the West : from Khomeini to Ahmadinejad” 3 parts
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/documentaries/2009/07/090720_iran_and_the_west_1

October 12 : The United States and the Iran-Iraq War

- Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance : the Secret Dealings of Israel,Iran,and the U.S.* (Yale Univ .Press, 2007) chaps.9-12 , pp.87- 135 .
- Dilip Hiro, “The Iran-Iraq War,” in Amirahmadi& Entessar (,eds.), *Iran and the Arab World* (St Martin Press,1993),pp.42-68 .

- Patrick Cockburn ,*Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for Future of Iraq*,(Scribner 2008) pp.,16-54 .
- J.Calhoun, “Washington Watch: How Bush backed Iraq ”, MERIP, no.176 (May-June 1992):35-37.
- **Video** : Roxanne Varzi : *Plastic Flowers Never Die* .

October 19 : Paradoxes of Politics in the Islamic Republic

- Kazem Alamadari, “The Power Structure of Islamic Republic of Iran: Transition from Populism to Clientelism and Militarization of the Government,” Third World Quarterly, 26, no. 8 (December 2005): 1285-1301.
- H.Chehabi, “ The Impossible Republic : Contradictions of Iran’s Islamic State,” Contention: Debates in Society, Culture ,and Science vol.5,no.3 (Spring 1996):135-154.
- Oliver Roy , “The Crisis of Religious Legitimacy in Iran,” Middle East Journal , vol.53,no.2 (Spring 1999):201-216.
- Mahmood Monshipori &Ali Assareh , “ The Islamic Republic and the ‘Green Movement’: Coming Full Circle ”, Middle East Policy, Vol.16/No.4 (Winter 2009):27-46

October 26 : The Rise of the New Right

- Ray Takeyh, *Guardians of the Revolution*,pp.223-265.
- Wehrey& Green eds., *Assessing Domestic Roles of Iran’s IRGC*, chaps., “ The Rise of Pasdaran: Militarizing Civil Society”, 4&5 .

<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/>

- Ali Ansari, “Iran Under Ahmadinejad: Populism and Its Malcontents,” International Affairs, 84, no. 4 (July 2008), pp. 683-700.
- Karim Sadjadpour, “ Khamenei’s dispensable sword,” Washington Post, (July 14,2011)
- **Mid Term Exam: (Oct. 26)**

November 2 : : Iran, Israel and the United State

- Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, Part Two: (chaps. 13-19).

November 9 U.S. , Iran , and Nuclear Politics

- Shahram Chubin , “The Iranian Nuclear Riddle after June 12”, The Washington Quarterly, Vol.33 (January 2010):163-172.
- Mohsen Milani, “ Tehran’s Take :Understanding Iran’s U.S. Policy, The Foreign Affairs Vol.88.No.4 ,(July-August2009).
- Luers,Pickering&Walsh, “A Solution for the US-Iran Nuclear Standoff”, New York Review of Books,(March 20.2008).

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/mar/20/a-solution-for-the-usiran-nuclear-standoff>

- Ansari, *Confronting Iran* ,chap.7 & Conclusion.
- Takeyh & Lindsay , “After Iran Gets the Bomb : Containment and its Complications,” Foreign Affairs, March/April 2010 .
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/22182/after-iran-gets-the-bomb.html>
- Pierre Goldschmidt, “Preventing the Iranian Nuclear Crisis from Escalating ,” (July 2010)
<http://carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=viewid=41205>
- Brien,Einhorn,Fitzpatrick,Jenkins, “Taking Compliance Seriously”
<http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/28/taking-compliance-seriously-iran-and-next/iran/2t0j>

• November 16 : Iran's Economy and Sanctions

- Robin Wright, "Stuart Levey's War," New York Times Magazine, (October 31, 2008).
- M. Jacobson, "Sanctions Against Iran : a Promising Struggle", The Washington Quarterly ,(Summer 2008):69-88.
- Sadjadpour , " The Battle of Dubai : The United Arab Emirates and the US-Iran Cold War," Carnegie Paper (July 2011).
- Salehi-Isfahani, " Oil Wealth and Economic Growth in Iran" in Gheissari (ed.), *Contemporary Iran : Economy, Society, Politics* (Oxford Unive .Press ,2009)pp. 3-37.
- Laura Secor, "The Rationalist: A dissident economist's attempt to reform the revolution," The New Yorker ,(February 2009).
- **Video :**"Iran's Economic Health and the Impact of Sanctions,"
- <http://carnegieendowment.org/events/fa=eventdetail&id=2874>

November 23 : Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30 : : Iran's Regional Policies

- A. Ehteshami, "Iran's Regional Policies Since the end of the Cold War", in Gheissari(ed) *Contemporary Iran* ,pp324-348.
- Kayhan Barzegar, "Balance of Power in the Persian Gulf: an Iranian View", Middle East Policy, vol.17,no.3 ,(Fall 2010):74-87.
- Dalia Kaye&F. Wehrey, "Arab Spring ,Persian Winter", Foreign Affairs,(July/August 2011)
- M. Milani, " Iran's Persian Gulf Policy in the Post- Saddam Era," Gheissari (ed) *Contemporary Iran* , pp.349-366.
- Roula Khalaf, "Trouble in Syria sets off alarm in Tehran," Financial Times (May 9 2011)
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/b67e689c-7a64-11e0-af64-00144feabdc0.html>
- Kayhan Barzegar, "Iran's Interests, Values , and Arabs Spring", April 2011
<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/>

Video : " Can Non Violent Resistance work in Iran ?"

www.carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/25/can-non-violent-work-in-iran/1fb

December 7 : Facing Future Reconciliation :Strategy for dealing with Iran

- Luers, Pickering & Walsh , “ How to Deal with Iran” , The New York Review of Books,(Feb.12,2009)[www.nybooks.com/ articles/archives/2009/how-to-deal-with-iran/](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/how-to-deal-with-iran/)
- Roger Cohen, “ The Making of an Iran Policy” , New York Times Magazine (August 2,2009).
- John Limbert, “The Lessons : Fourteen Steps to Success” , *Negotiating with Iran*,pp.153-195.
- Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance*, chapter 20: “Facing the Future, Facing Reality.” And Iran’s Negotiation Proposal May 2003 : Appendix A,B,& C .
- Stephen Kinzer ,*RESET:Iran,Turkey,and America’s Future* , pp.1-15 and 195-218.
- Karim Sadjadpour,”The Sources of (Soviet) Iranian Conduct :Fifteen Lessons for Understanding and Dealing with Tehran”, Carnegie Paper (December 2010).
- A.Millani & Diamond, “A Win-Win US Strategy for Dealing with Iran”, *The Washington Quarterly* ,vol.30,no.1 (winter 2006-7).
- Kayhan Barzegar, “ The Prospect of Iran-US Relations in the Iranian New Year” ,(April 2011)
- <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/>
- **Final exam and graduate research Paper Due .**

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of an emergency , American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time ,we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students . These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and / or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence . Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency ,students should refer to the AU Student Portal , the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university – wide information ,as well as contact their faculty and / or respective dean’s office for course and school / college-specific information .

