

HISTORY 145D
War and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1878-Present

SYLLABUS

Spring 2010
Prof. Humphreys

TOPIC: *Afghanistan since 1973 and the Rise of the Taliban*

This course always focuses on a topic of acute contemporary concern (“ripped from the headlines”) and tries to place it in a broad historical context. That is, any current “crisis” is part of a long, painfully complex historical process, and it must be understood as a moment—a very transient moment—within that ongoing and ever-changing process.

So it is with Hamid Karzai’s, George W Bush’s, and Barack Obama’s Afghanistan. For our purposes, the crisis begins with the overthrow of the established monarchy some thirty-seven years ago, the Communist coup d’état in 1978, the Soviet occupation, the collapse of effective governance after the Soviet withdrawal, the first Taliban regime, 9/11 and the U.S./NATO “intervention,” and the reemergence of the Taliban since 2002. Possibly the one big thing you need to know about Afghanistan is that it has been a country at war (entirely within its own boundaries) for thirty years. Think about what that means for any society, however prosperous and well-integrated it might have been at the outset. Afghanistan, of course, was neither prosperous nor well-integrated.

In this course, we will take a policy-oriented approach: what options were realistically available to the various actors (too many to count), why did they choose the options they did, might something else have worked better for them? The class will be based heavily on discussion rather than lectures—very little Power Point this time around—so you absolutely need to **KEEP UP WITH THE READING and ATTEND CLASS.**

Written Assignments:

To encourage you, I will ask for four 3-page papers, due roughly every two weeks, based on policy-oriented problems derived from the assigned readings. The problems will be distributed about a week or ten days before each due date. These are not independent research papers; you need only do the assigned readings and exercise good common sense to do them successfully.

In addition to the four papers, there will be a final exam. Depending on the scheduled date for our final, it may be a take-home. I’ll give you the topic right now: “What are the prospects for an effective national government in Afghanistan in the next five years, and is there anything the US *can* or *should* do to help establish such a government?” Don’t worry; no one in DC has figured this one out either.

Grading:

Provisionally, each item (4 papers, 1 exam) will count as 20% of your grade. However, I will retain some flexibility in order to recognize substantial improvement and effective classroom participation.

Two points:

(1) I trust that everyone knows and understands the usual rules of academic integrity. In this course, that means that each paper represents your own thinking and your own prose. Quotations, paraphrases, and borrowed ideas must be referenced to the source from which you took them. You are free to talk with one another BEFORE you start writing, and I strongly encourage that; you should try out your ideas with one another. But once you start writing, it is you alone against the cosmos.

(2) I care *greatly* about grammar, correct punctuation, and idiom (i.e., the right phrase in the right place). This is a matter of common courtesy to your reader—in the context of this course, me. It is a lot easier to understand and evaluate your ideas if your reader does not have to reconstruct your prose in order to figure out what you are trying to say. Ideas do not exist independently from language. Ideas exist only in and through the words that express them. Muddy words = muddy ideas. And one last aphorism: good writing makes complex ideas clear, bad writing makes simple ideas obscure.

Books to purchase:

In the later weeks of the course, we will be making substantial use of the Internet. Two useful if obvious sites are “Google News” and [csis.org](http://www.csis.org) (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC). These are open access. There are some others which charge a fee, but the UCSB Library subscribes to many of these. I’ll give you a short list of useful sites as we proceed in the course, and you are free to go hunting on your own. Remember always that the Internet is full of garbage as well as serious information; be doubly critical in using it.

As for paper and ink, the following books are available at the UCen Bookstore:

- Rory Stewart, *The Places in Between* (Harvest, 2006)
- Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan* (2nd ed., Yale, 2002)
- Robert Crews and Amin Tarzi, eds. *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (Harvard, 2008)
- Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop* (Columbia, 2008)

Schedule of Classes

1. Mon., March 29: Introduction to the course

2. Wed., March 31: An overview of contemporary Afghanistan

READINGS: *CIA Country Report: Afghanistan* (download from cia.gov)

3. Mon., April 5: Trekking across “post-war” Afghanistan

READINGS, sessions 3-4: Stewart, *Places in Between* (all)

4. Wed., April 7: Still trekking...

5. Mon., April 12: Afghanistan on the eve of crisis

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. 1-80

6. Wed., April 14: Tipping over the edge

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. 81-121

7. Mon., April 19: The Soviet intervention; the Cold War context

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. 122-175

PAPER 1 due

8. Wed., April 21: The rise of the Mujahidin

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. 179-246

9. Mon., April 26: Soviet withdrawal and the collapse of ordered government

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. 247-280

10. Wed., April 28: The Taliban in the context of modern Afghanistan

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 1-58 (Crews & Tarzi, “Introduction”)

11. Mon., May 3: Roots of the Taliban

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 155-181 (Shahrani, “Taliban in Historical Perspective”), pp. 90-117 (Nojumi, “Rise and Fall”)

PAPER 2 due

12. Wed., May 5: The first Taliban regime, 1996-2001

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 118-154 (Cole, “Taliban, Women, Private Sphere”)

13. Mon., May 10: The Taliban and Islamic revolutionary movements

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 212-237 (Canfield, “Fraternity, Power, Time”)

14. Wed., May 12: The US intervention and the establishment of the Karzai government

READINGS: Rubin, *Fragmentation*, pp. xi-xxxv (“Preface to 2nd edition”)

PAPER 3 due

15. Mon., May 17: Putting Afghanistan on the back burner

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 274-310 (Tarzi, “Neo-Taliban”)
Giustozzi, *Kalashnikov*, pp. 11-32

16. Wed., May 19: The Neo-Taliban emerge

READINGS: Giustozzi, *Kalashnikov*, pp. 33-95

17. Mon., May 24: Strategy of the neo-Taliban

READINGS: Giustozzi, *Kalashnikov*, pp. 97-145

18. Wed., May 26: Counter-insurgency: taking the Taliban seriously

READINGS: Giustozzi, *Kalashnikov*, pp. 161-227

PAPER 4 due

19. Mon., May 31: The Pakistan nexus

READINGS: *to be assigned*

20. Wed., June 2: Now what?

READINGS: Crews and Tarzi, *Taliban*, pp. 311-358 (Sarwari and Crews, “Afghanistan and the Pax Americana”)
Giustozzi, *Kalashnikov*, pp. 229-241

FINAL EXAMINATION (*TAKE-HOME, UNLESS you absolutely insist on Friday, noon to 3*)