

## Estonian School of Diplomacy lecture series programme – Geopolitics in the Middle East

Subject name	Geopolitics in the Middle East
Subject name (in Estonian)	Lähis-Ida geopoliitika
Lecturer's name	Karl Toomet (MA), Estonian Defence Forces
Number of academic contact hours	16
Dates	19-22 March 2019
Course Assessment	Group presentations in seminars (40%), individual memo style paper on a given topic (40%), participation in seminars (20%)
Course aims	<p>The aim of the lecture series is to give students an introduction to current geopolitical fault lines in the Middle East (ME). Middle East is currently the most conflict-prone region in the world with 70% of all global battle deaths occurring in the aforementioned region. Students will learn about policies and regional ambitions of major actors in the ME as well as of three (potential) conflicts that have shaped the region in the last 20 years. Practical tasks will be carried out in the seminars using structured analysis tools to understand and predict possible future developments in these conflicts. All in all participation in lectures and seminars should give students a more comprehensive overview and understanding of current geopolitical state of the ME.</p>
Course description	<p>1. Day 1 – Introduction of lecture series; explanation of course curriculum; Introductory lecture on ME geopolitics and conflicts – major players, main issues and conflicts currently happening in the ME. More in depth focus on two of the non-state actors who have shaped ME region the most in the last 20 years – al-Qaeda and Islamic State. In the seminar part students will receive in group task to carry out SWOT analysis of the current state of both of the terrorist groups and present the findings to the class.</p> <p>2. Day 2 – Lecture part of the day will focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Historical overview of the conflict, major issues between the parties, future of the conflict and possible resolutions (one state vs. two state solution). In</p>

the seminar part students will analyze various solutions to the conflict from the perspective of which solution would accomplish most objectives for the opposing sides. Students will use Brainstorming and Pros and Cons/Faults and Fixes Analysis tool.

3. Day 3 – Lecture will focus on the Israeli-Iranian rivalry. Lecture will establish the historic overview of relations between the two, involvement of international actors (mainly US), current state of the relations and the possibility of a future conflict between the two. In the seminar side students will use Future Scenarios tools to establish possible future scenarios how a conflict between Israel and Iran could play out.

4. Day 4 – Lecture will focus on Saudi Arabia and Iran rivalry. Inside look into the development of competition between the two states to become the hegemon of the region. It will discuss two major proxy conflicts – Syrian and Yemeni civil wars – which both are used by the two states to increase one's influence over the region while also undermining the position of the other. In the seminar part students will use What If? analysis technique in order to play out a critical development in the rivalry and how that would impact future relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Student independent work

Students are required to write a max. 1000 word memo style piece in which they will summarize a position of a major player in ME on a specific policy topic. E.g. US policy on Iran or Russian strategic aims in Syria. Topic can be freely chosen by students but has to be approved by the lecturer beforehand. Specific format of how to write the memo will be presented to the students during the introductory part of the first lecture.

Students will receive credit for seminar group works. Active participation in researching, analyzing and presenting the data will be encouraged.

Expected student input at seminars

Students will be expected to prepare for lectures - reading the compulsory reading material. Active engagement in the lecture topics (discussions within the class, answering any emerging questions during the lectures/seminars).

Lecturer	Karl Toomet MA Terrorism, Security and Society
Reading list	<p>Understanding global conflict and cooperation : an introduction to theory and history / Joseph S. Nye, Jr., David A. Welch</p> <p>Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction, Second Edition, Charles Townshend</p> <p>Modern War: A Very Short Introduction, Richard English</p> <p>The Fifty Years War: Israel and the Arabs, Ahron Bregman and Jihan El-Tahri</p> <p>Buring Country: Syrians In Revolution and War, Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami</p> <p>Ghost Wars, Steve Coll</p> <p>The Arab Uprising, Jeremy Bowen</p> <p>Israel's Wars: A History Since 1947, Ahron Bregman</p> <p>Cursed Victory, Ahron Bregman</p> <p><a href="#"><u>"A Palestinian's Daily Commute Through an Israeli Checkpoint"</u></a>, William Booth and Sufian Taha, <i>Washington Post</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"Simulation on The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict"</u></a>, <i>United States Institute of Peace</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"Two States or One: Reappraising the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse"</u></a>, <i>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Rice University's Baker Institute</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"A Simulated War Between US-Iran Has A Grisly End"</u></a>, <i>Brookings Institute</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"The First Saudi-Iranian War Will Be an Even Fight"</u></a>, <i>Foreign Policy</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"What Would a Saudi-Iran War Look Like? Don't look now, but it is already here"</u></a>, <i>Foreign Policy</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"A Virtuous Rivalry Between Iran and Saudi Arabia?"</u></a>, <i>Atlantic Council</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"Israel and Iran's Role in the Middle East"</u></a>, <i>Brookings Institute</i></p> <p><a href="#"><u>"Israel and Iran: A Dangerous Rivalry"</u></a>, <i>RAND Corporation</i></p>