

Politics and Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia

M.A. (International Relations- West Asian Studies)

Course No: MA- IRWAS -206

Semester : 2

Centre for West Asian Studies

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Course Description

This course mainly divided into two parts, first part will familiarize the student about the various domestic development politics of the Saudi Arabia and the second part will put emphasize on the foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia which includes the Indo-Saudi Relations.

Saudi Arabia is a country where absolute monarchy exists, where the King is both the head of state as well as the head of government, and where the Qur'an is declared to be the constitution of the country, which is governed on the basis of Islamic law (Shari'a).

The pre-eminent objective of Saudi Foreign Policy is to be non-aligned and to maintain its paramount position on the Arabian Peninsula with respect to its security and co-operation. Putting the main focus on co-operation with the oil-exporting Gulf States, the unity of the Arab world, Islamic strength and solidarity, and support for the United Nations (UN) are some features of KSA(Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) foreign policy. In practice, the main concerns in recent years have been relations with the US, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Iraq, the perceived threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the effect of oil pricing, and using its oil wealth to increase the influence of Islam and especially the conservative school of Islam supported by the country's rulers (known as Wahhabism).

Unit I: Domestic Development of the Modern Saudi Arabia

- History of Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud (*Ibn Saud*)
- Saud family and the rise of the Wahhabis
- Creation of Modern Saudi Arabia
- Suppression of the Ikhwan

- Discovery of oil, King Saud
- King Faisal, King Khalid
- Riots and disturbances
- Saudi Peace initiative
- King Fahd, King Abdullah and King Salaman.
- Developments of Judicial System
- Educational Development
- Social and Cultural development
- Women Empowerment Various developments plans etc.

Unit II: Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia during Abdul Aziz (1932-1953)

- The genesis of Saudi Foreign Policy
- The evolution of Foreign Policy of Ibn-Saud
- KSA relations with British, Arab Countries and Gulf Shaikhdoms
- Palestine Problem, creation of Israel
- Oil exploration
- Visit to India.

Unit III: Foreign Policy of Ibn Saud (1953-1964), Faisal (1963-1975) and Khalid (1975-1982).

- Ibn Saud relation with Jamal Abdul Nasser and British.
- King Faisal opposition of UN partition of Palestine as foreign minister
- Withdrawal of Saudi oil from world markets and energy crisis of 1973
- King Khalid labour policy
- Establishment of GCC

Unit IV: Foreign Policy of Fahad (1982-2005), Abdullah (2005-2015) and Salman (2015-2016).

- Fahad Relation with US and UN
- Saudi money for Islamic affairs around world.
- Abdullah Relation with Asian giants like China, India and Japan
- KSA Look East Policy
- Women empowerment
- Relation with Western world especially with US after 9/11 incident
- King Salam Foreign Policy
- Low oil Price
- War with Yemen

Reading List

1. Jacob. Goldberg, (1986) The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: The Formative year, Harvard University Press
2. Cordesman. Anthony H, (2003) Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic, and Energy Dimensions. Published in Cooperation with Centre for Strategic and International relations, Washington DC
3. Partrick. Neil, (Jan 2016), Saudi Arabian Foreign Policy: Conflict and Cooperation in Uncertain Times, I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd
4. Mason. Robert, (2014), Foreign Policy in Iran and Saudi Arabia: Economic and Diplomacy in the Middle East. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. Series: Library of Modern Middle East Studies
5. Quandt. William B, (1981), Saudi Arabia in the 1980's: Foreign Policy, Security and Oil, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C

Method of Instruction:

Lectures and tutorial will be held on a weekly basis. Questions, discussion and debate during classes will be strongly encouraged. Students are expected to keep informed of the current events in the West Asian region.

Method of Assessment:

A mid-term exam would consist of essay questions based upon the topics covered up to that point. It will be of 25 marks and student must answer two questions out of 4 of 12.5 marks each. The final exam conducted according to a schedule at the end of the semester will be of 75 marks. In the final exam, students must answer 5 out of 10 questions.