Course Outline
EST 470 (#37493); EST 670 (#37505); 3 cr

WATER IN THE MIDDLE EAST: ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

David A. Sonnenfeld

Dept. of Environmental Studies
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Spring 2021, W 9:30 am – 12:20 pm, Online

DESCRIPTION

Overview
Seminar on water issues and initiatives in Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Territories. Participants explore a variety of perspectives on the biophysical, historical, and sociocultural roots of transboundary and other water-related issues in the region, as well as an array of top-down (technological, managerial) and bottom-up (community-based, participatory) approaches to developing solutions. Designed for students interested in environmental and natural resource policy, water resources, international relations, conflict resolution, Middle Eastern studies, and related fields. Each week, students write short commentaries on required readings; the essays serve as starting point for class discussion. Over the course of the semester, students develop and submit a research paper on a related topic. Maximum 20 students.

Procedures
The course is organized as a reading seminar with weekly readings and related short, formal essays. Commentaries/reading notes are due to the instructor and all course participants via the course Blackboard site, by no later than 9:30 am, Tuesday, the day before the class. (Guidelines for these commentaries are available separately.) Students are expected to read all commentaries/reading notes, as well as the required texts, prior to class. Each Wednesday morning, we will begin our discussion of the assigned text(s) with the commentaries.

Platform(s)
- Class meetings, via Zoom
- Readings, assignments, & submissions, via course Blackboard site
Texts

REQUIRED


Additional selections (virtual *Course Reader*), via Blackboard

RECOMMENDED


Requirements

GRADUATE

- Attend all class sessions;
- Read required ‘all’ and ‘graduate’ texts, and everyone’s weekly commentaries;
- Write a series of short (max. 500 words, double-spaced) *commentaries* on each week's required readings;
- Submit a seminar paper (15-20 pp.) related to the course topic.

UNDERGRADUATE

- Attend all class sessions;
- Read required ‘all’ texts and everyone’s weekly commentaries;
- Write a series of short (max. 250 words, double-spaced) *reading notes* summarizing and responding to key points in each week's required readings;
- Submit a research paper (10-12 pp.) related to the course topic.

Grading

GRADUATE

- Weekly commentaries (10), 45%
- Seminar paper, 45%
- Attendance and participation, 10%

UNDERGRADUATE

- Weekly reading notes (10), 45%
- Research paper, 45%
- Attendance and participation, 10%
Communication
Office: Baker Lab 214
Hrs.: M 1:30 – 3:30 pm, Th 3:30 – 5:00 pm, & by appointment; via Google Meet
Tel. 315.464.0084 (voice/ text)
E-mail: <dsonn@esf.edu>, <DASonnenfeld@gmail.com>
Web: http://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld

Bookstore
ESF Virtual Bookstore, available via myESF. For further information see:
http://www.esf.edu/students/books.htm

SEMINAR/ RESEARCH PAPER*

GRADUATE

- At the end of the course graduate students will submit a seminar paper closely related to course topic. This may take a variety of forms including: research paper, draft journal article, review of the literature/ review essay, thesis/ dissertation chapter, research proposal, etc.
- Proposal. By Week 3, submit an abstract describing your proposed seminar paper; typed, double-spaced, 1-2 pp.
- Abstract, Outline & Bibliography. By Week 7, submit a revised abstract, outline, and preliminary bibliography for your paper
- Final Paper. Due by the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course. 15-20 pp. typed, double-spaced, plus cover page and references.

UNDERGRADUATE

- At the end of the course students will submit a final research paper closely related to course topic. This may take a variety of forms including: research paper; formal, evidence-based essay, commentary, or editorial; integrated review of the literature/ review essay; etc.
- Proposal. By Week 3, submit an abstract describing your proposed final research paper; typed, double-spaced, ~1 p.
- Abstract, Outline & Bibliography. By Week 7, submit a revised abstract, outline, and preliminary bibliography for your paper
- Final Paper. Due by the beginning of the regularly scheduled Final Exam period for this course. 10-12 pp., typed, double-spaced, plus cover page and references.

* For extra credit, in addition to the seminar/ research paper assignment described here, I am open to receiving also a supplemental digital media product based on or complementing that paper.
TOPICAL OUTLINE

I. Introduction
   Week 1 (2/10) – Overview and introduction

II. Roots of Water-related Issues in the Region
   Week 2 (2/17) – Biophysical
   Week 3 (2/24) – Historical
   Week 4 (3/3) – Sociocultural

III. Top-down Solutions (Managerial, Technological)
   Week 5 (3/10) – Israel/ Palestine
   Week 6 (3/17) – Jordan
   Week 7 (3/24) – Regional/ international

IV. Community-based, Participatory, and NGO Approaches
   Week 8 (3/31) – Regional/ transboundary
   Week 9 (4/7) – Israel/ Palestine
   Week 10 (4/14) – Jordan
   Week 11 (4/21) – WELLNESS DAY – no class

V. Conclusion
   Week 12 (4/28) – Future prospects
   Week 13 (5/5) – Student presentations

Finals Week – Seminar/ Research Papers Due
DETAILED SCHEDULE

I. Introduction

**Week 1 (2/10) – Overview and introduction**

The Jordan-Yarmuk River Basin

Course introduction

REQUIRED (ALL):

Soffer, “The Jordan-Yarmuk Basin,” pp. 119-203*

REQUIRED (GRADS):


RECOMMENDED:


ADDITIONAL:


II. Roots of Water-related Issues in the Region

**Week 2 (2/17) – Biophysical**

Biophysical aspects of water in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, and Jordan

REQUIRED (ALL):


- Aliewi, “Water Resources: The Palestinian Perspective”
- Tal, “Water Resources: The Israeli Perspective”


REQUIRED (GRADS):


RECOMMENDED:

Soffer, “The Jordan-Yarmuk Basin” (review)


*** Weekly Reading Note #1 due ***
**Week 3 (2/24) – Historical**

Historical dimensions of water issues in the Jordan-Yarmuk River Basin

**REQUIRED (ALL):**

Tal & Rabbo, Part 2, “Past Water Agreements and their Implementation.” Pp. 41-63 in *Water Wisdom*, including:

- Kerret, “Article 40: An Israeli Perspective”


**REQUIRED (GRADS):**


**RECOMMENDED:**


**ADDITIONAL:**

Dowty, 2015. *Israel/Palestine*

Selby, 2003. *Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East*


Zeitoun, 2012. *Power and Water in the Middle East*

*** Weekly Reading Note #2 due ***

*** Seminar/ Research Paper Abstract/ Proposal Due ***

**Week 4 (3/3) – Sociocultural**

Sociocultural dimensions of water issues in the Jordan-Yarmuk River Basin

**REQUIRED (ALL):**


- Abdeen, “Water culture in Palestine”
- Lipchin, “Water culture in Israel”


III. Top-down Approaches (Managerial, Technological)

Week 5 (3/10) – Israel/ Palestine

Water management in Israel and the Palestinian Territories

REQUIRED (ALL):
Tal & Rabbo, Part 12, “Gaza’s Water Situation.” Pp. 265-279 in Water Wisdom, including:

REQUIRED (GRADS):

RECOMMENDED:
Siegel, 2015. Let There Be Water

ADDITIONAL:
Becker, ed., 2013. Water Policy in Israel
*** Weekly Reading Note #4 due ***

**Week 6 (3/17) – Jordan**

Water management in Jordan

REQUIRED (ALL):

REQUIRED (GRADS):

RECOMMENDED:

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #5 due ***

**Week 7 (3/24) – Regional/ international**

International water management in the Jordan-Yarmuk Basin

REQUIRED (ALL):
REQUIRED (GRADS):

RECOMMENDED:

ADDITIONAL:

*** Weekly Reading Note #6 due ***
*** Seminar Paper (rev.) Abstract, Outline & Bibliography Due ***

IV. Community-based, Participatory, and NGO Approaches

Week 8 (3/31) – Regional/ transboundary
Transboundary community, participatory, and NGO based approaches

Topic discussion leader #1: ________________________________
Topic discussion leader #2: ________________________________
Topic discussion leader #3: ________________________________

REQUIRED (ALL):


REQUIRED (GRADS):
Tal & Abed Rabbo, Part 13, “Citizen Involvement.” Pp. 281-293 in Water Wisdom. Including...


RECOMMENDED:


Kranz & Mostert, 2010. "Governance in Transboundary Basins – the Roles of Stakeholders…" Ch.7 in Earle, et al., Transboundary Water Management, pp. 91-106


ADDITIONAL:


WEB RESOURCES:
Arava Institute of Environmental Studies (http://arava.org/)

Eco-Peace/ Friends of the Earth Middle East (http://ecopeaceme.org/)

Environment and Climate in the Middle East (http://mideastenvironment.apps01.yorku.ca/)

*** Weekly Reading Note #7 due ***
**Week 9 (4/7) – Israel/ Palestine**

Community, participatory, and NGO based approaches in Israel & the Palestinian Territories

**Topic discussion leader #1:** ________________________________

**Topic discussion leader #2:** ________________________________

**Topic discussion leader #3:** ________________________________

**REQUIRED (ALL):**


**REQUIRED (GRADS):**


**RECOMMENDED:**


ADDITIONAL:
University of the Negev, Israel. 48 pp.
Bieler, 2016, June. “A Case Study: Economic and Social Feasibility of Decentralized Greywater
Treatment in the West Bank.” 36 pp.
Taha & Al-Sa’ed. 2018. “Application potential of small-scale solar desalination for brackish water in
Siegel, Let There Be Water

*** Weekly Reading Note #8 due ***

Week 10 (4/14) – Jordan
Community, participatory, and NGO based approaches in Jordan

Topic discussion leader #1: ________________________________
Topic discussion leader #2: ________________________________
Topic discussion leader #3: ________________________________

REQUIRED (ALL):
Development 79: 164-176.
Hussein, 2018a. "Tomatoes, Tribes, Bananas, and Businessmen: An Analysis of the Shadow State
Oweis, 2017. “Rainwater harvesting for restoring degraded dry agro-pastoral ecosystems: a
conceptual review of opportunities and constraints in a changing climate,” Environmental
Reviews 25: 135-149.
Crisis of Survival in the Middle East. Mumbai: Strategic Foresight Group
UNHCR, 2014. “Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Jordan Working Group Terms of

REQUIRED (GRADS):
Mustafa & Talozi, 2018. "Tankers, Wells, Pipes and Pumps: Agents and Mediators of Water

RECOMMENDED:
GIZ, 2015. “Promotion of training to improve efficiency in the water and energy sector in Jordan.”
Project evaluation: summary report. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(German Society for International Cooperation. 5 pp.
Water wise Plumbers.” Project evaluation: summary report. Deutsche Gesellschaft für 
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation. 6 pp.

*** Weekly Reading Note #9 due ***

Week 11 (4/21) – WELLNESS DAY – no class
**V. Conclusion**

**Week 12 (4/28) – Future prospects**

Cooperative water management strategies; new challenges

REQUIRED (ALL):


- Twite, "The Role of Third Parties in Helping to Resolve the Conflicts over Water Issues in Israel and Palestine"


- Haddad & Feitelson, "Joint Aquifer Management Institutional Options"


REQUIRED (GRADS):


RECOMMENDED:


ADDITIONAL:


*** Weekly Reading Note #10 due ***

**Week 13 (4/22) – Student presentations**

Finals Week – Seminar/ Research Papers Due
NOTICE

Accommodations

ESF works closely with Syracuse University’s Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in assisting students with learning and physical disabilities. If you think you may need accommodations in this course related to a disability, you may contact the ESF Division of Student Affairs, 110 Bray Hall, tel. 315.470.6660, or email studenthelp@esf.edu, for assistance with the process. You may also contact CDR directly via their website at https://disabilityresources.syr.edu; or call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu for more detailed information. CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ESF’s Division of Student Affairs or CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.