

Arab-Israeli Conflict (AIC) Simulation Mentor Seminar: Education 463/MENAS 463

Winter 2022 Wednesday /Friday 10:30-12 2225 School of Education

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Office Hours: Wed. 1-2 on zoom:

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/5283229483>

or by appointment

Canvas Site: “Arab-Israeli Conflict Mentor Seminar W2022”

Simulation Website: <http://aic.icsmich.org/> (also linked via CANVAS)

Country and Characters Website:

http://aic-background.icsmich.org/index.php/Main_Page (linked via CANVAS)

****I will do my best to follow the schedule in the syllabus, but because the simulation is unpredictable and we need to respond to it, I ask your understanding in advance about “on the fly” changes I’ll sometimes need to make.****

Course Purpose

This course is based on the idea that the most meaningful learning happens when one is actively engaged in a purposeful activity. By participating in AIC as a mentor, I hope that you will learn more about the politics and history of the Middle East, but that you will also have opportunities to think deeply about the nature of diplomacy, about what is important to you as a learner and a teacher, and about what it takes to foster thoughtful discourse.

Commitment

Each year hundreds of students participate in AIC. A significant part of their experience depends on the work of the mentor team. Because your role is so important, it is essential that you make a commitment to fulfilling your responsibilities until the end of the term. By taking this course, you are taking on the job of a teacher, and your work will impact many others.

Your Well-Being

We're living in stressful times, and I want to do everything I can to support you and to ensure that this class is as healthy a place as it can be. If you have any concerns that you want to raise regarding the class, please contact me via email or phone. Please also know that there are resources available to you on campus to support your emotional health, including these listed at the University's Well Being for U-M Students website: <https://wellbeing.studentlife.umich.edu/>

Course Requirements

Your responsibilities include the following:

- 1) **Learn the simulation.** Read the rules, learn how to use the website, and be familiar with the characters and the scenario. There will be several activities and readings in the first few weeks related to this.
- 2) **Check in on-line every day** during the 5 weeks of simulation "play." Yes, you really need to check in to the game EVERY weekday. If you absolutely cannot get online a certain day, you *must* let me know by e-mail or phone and make sure one of your colleagues can cover for you. Exactly what you will do online, and how we will divide up the mentoring work, will be discussed very soon.
- 3) **Attend class.** It is VERY important that you attend class. While you should contact me immediately with urgent concerns, our class meetings are the place to solve problems together and share ideas. If, because of unavoidable circumstances, there is no alternative to your missing a class meeting, please contact me beforehand.
- 4) **Reflect on what you do.** I want to know what was challenging, what was frustrating, what was rewarding, and what you think could be done to make AIC better for the participants as well as the mentors. Take note of these thoughts as you have them and bring them up during class. There will be regular written and in-class assignments that will ask you to engage in specific reflective tasks, drawing upon these observations.

Class Schedule

January 5:

- We'll talk about the simulation, the course, and the playful spirit of learning.
- We'll also talk about the strategic questions paper due on January 12th (*see assignment description under January 12*).

January 7:

- We'll discuss the Birnbaum/Tibon article ("How the Israel-Palestine Peace Deal Died") about the last attempt to negotiate an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement. Please come to class prepared to talk and ask questions about the

- image you're given of Abbas and Netanyahu, and about the challenges of reaching a 2-state solution.
- We'll also talk about the "Everything you need to know about Israel-Palestine" guide (link on the announcements page of our CANVAS site) that you read. Please also come with questions about matters discussed in the Guide and be ready to share some thoughts about why resolving this conflict is so complicated.

Country Reviews

Over the next few meetings, we will be dividing up the task of getting acquainted with the domestic and international politics of the nations represented in our simulation. You'll each be reading about several of those nations, and we'll discuss them all in class. As you do the readings in preparation for these discussions, consider topics like: **How does the nation define its interests with regard to the Middle East? How militarily strong is the country? Whatever its military strength, what other sources of regional influence does the nation have? How are its leaders chosen? How invested is the nation in a "two-state" solution in Israel/Palestine? What are the most important domestic political considerations for this nation?**

January 12:

- Please read the **country profile** and the "**what you should know about playing...**" at the *AIC country and character profiles* site (links on the announcements page of our CANVAS site) about **your ROUND ONE country** (listed below), **plus** the articles about your country under **pages** on CANVAS. We'll talk about what you found out as you read about your country, and considered the questions listed above under **country reviews**.

Round One Countries: *Jordan (Group 1)* *Saudi Arabia (Group 2)*
Egypt (Group 3) *Russia (Group 4)*

- **Strategic Question Essay:** Working solo, please write an essay **of at least 750 words (due on Canvas by midnight tonight)** responding to the question below that corresponds to the country you were assigned to research. Please be careful to both *make assertions and support them*:

(Group One) ** *Jordan is considered to be an important "moderate" Arab nation (in the eyes of Israel and the West, to be sure). Why are they considered to be "moderate," and how does the presence of a huge Palestinian population in Jordan affect its political actions/outlook?*

(Group Two) ** *Many say that Saudi Arabia's primary regional interest lies in protecting "stability." The Saudis surely define stability in broad and varied terms. Talk about the different*

kinds of stability that the Saudis seek to protect, and how they try to do so.

(Group Three) **Since the military took control of Egypt's government in 2013, relations have warmed somewhat between Israel and Egypt, and Egypt has shown growing interest in mediating between Israel and Palestine (especially Hamas). What has Egypt done in this connection, and what does Egypt have to gain from taking on this kind of leadership role?

(Group Four) **Russia's involvement in Middle Eastern geopolitics continues to grow, most notably with its involvement in Syria, but also extending to its relations with Palestine and Israel. Talk about Russia's policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and about the nature of the connections between Russia and both Israel and Palestine.

January 14:

- We'll continue our **country review** discussions today, discussing the **round two** countries and organizations (listed below) that you're to have read about for today. Please read the **country profile** and the ***What You Should Know about playing...*** on the *AIC country and character profiles* site for the country or political organization that you are assigned, as well as the readings for your country on CANVAS, and be ready to talk about the questions listed above in the **COUNTRY REVIEWS** section.

Round Two Countries: *Lebanon March 14 Coalition (Group 1) Lebanon Hezbollah Coalition (Group 2) Iran (Group 3) France (Group 4)*

- We'll also talk about the strategic goals assignment that ***you'll hand in on Tuesday, January 18th*** (which we'll talk about in class on Wednesday the 19th).

January 19:

- **Please bring to class** the sample strategic goals statement for the **round two** country that you studied for today. *Do your utmost to both consider and reflect back to the diplomats the strengths you see in terms of the ideas, composition, clarity, and evidence of thought shown in the goals statement you reviewed.* Please discuss where the statement needs to be clarified or sharpened, and remember to use the powerful tool of posing questions...if something is unclear or under-developed, how would you frame your request for clarification? Honor any concerns you have about the document but seek language that conveys a sense of respect for the efforts of the student diplomats, and that you feel is encouraging **even** if you are asking for revisions (which you **must** not be shy about doing). Finally, think about what is **MOST** important for them to work on...you

likely won't be able to polish the entire document, so what are the priorities?

- Please review pages 3-6 in the **Mentor Handbook** about **Strategic Goals** before class so you can come with questions.

January 21:

- Please read the **country profile** and the “**what you should know about playing...**” sections on our website about the following **Round Three** countries/organizations, along with the readings for that country on CANVAS. Once again, please be ready to talk about your country/organization regarding the questions listed above under **COUNTRY REVIEWS**.

Round Three Countries: *European Union (Group 1) Turkey (Group 2) Iraq (Group 3) Syria (Group 4)*

- Complete your own Strategic Goals Statement for the **round three** country that you're researching for today (a **blank strategic goals template is posted under FILES**). This assignment is to be handed in on CANVAS by **Tuesday, January 25th**.

The Simulation

The AIC website opens on February 7th, as the country teams research and start posting their strategic goals statements. The actual simulation begins on Monday, February 14th. There will be several simulation-related assignments that will be discussed in class, as will the specific nature of your mentoring work. For the moment, know that your work related to the simulation is the central part of your overall coursework, and **I expect that you will be online every day** starting February 14th, and during the 9 weeks of the actual simulation (except for winter break).

January 26:

- We'll review the Strategic Goals Statements you wrote about your round three countries/organizations.
- With the opening of the AIC website this week, we'll take a tour of the site and go over the logistics of site navigation, and we'll look in detail at the business of responding to strategic goals statements.

Most of you will serve as National Security Advisors (NSAs) to several country teams. I expect that over the next two weeks you will read the country profiles for the teams that you've been assigned.

January 28:

- We'll talk about the book we'll be reading, “The Lemon Tree,” by Sandy Tolan.

- We'll review the **scenario** today, so please read it (available on CANVAS) before class and come to class with questions.
- We'll also talk today about Press Releases, and I'll give you an assignment that will be due **in class** on **February 4th**. Please read pages 7-9 in the **Mentor Handbook** about **Press Releases**.

“The Lemon Tree”

Over the next few weeks, we will be reading and discussing the book **“The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East,”** by Sandy Tolan (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2006). During the class sessions designated below, we will discuss that week's readings generally, and you'll have a specific assignment for class detailed below related to those readings.

February 2:

- **Lemon Tree, Chapters 1-4:** Choose a passage from the week's reading that really caught your attention... a new insight, an illuminating perspective, an instructive bit of history. Be prepared to share and discuss the passage you've selected, and to tell your colleagues about your reaction to the passage, what it made you think about, what questions it raised, etc.

February 4:

- We'll talk about Weekly Reports (please read page 10 of the **mentor handbook**)
- We'll talk discuss the political scene in Israel (Read the articles in the Israel MODULE on CANVAS).
- We'll *also discuss the Press Release assignment that was distributed in class on Jan. 28th, and that is due **in class** today.*

Mentor Team Meetings

We will have several concurrent simulations running, and you will be a member of a mentoring team that will facilitate one of these simulations. We'll speak in class about the specifics, but my expectation is the NSAs will come to *each class meeting* prepared to briefly discuss the content of any recent **press releases** that they've approved, or that have been submitted by their teams, and that everyone (especially the Game Mentor and the originating team's NSA) will have reviewed any submitted **action forms**.

February 9:

- **Lemon Tree, Chapters 5-7:** Once again, choose a passage from the week's reading that really caught your attention... a new insight, an illuminating perspective, an instructive bit of history. Be prepared to share and discuss the passage you've selected, and to tell your colleagues about your reaction to the passage, what it made you think about, what questions it raised, etc.

February 11:

- We'll talk today about **Action Forms** (please read pages 11-13 of the **mentor handbook**) and **Updates** (please read pages 14-16 of the **mentor handbook**)
- Please check before class to see if your students have posted work for your review.
- We'll talk more about responding to strategic goals statements.
- We'll also talk about the **Close Look at your mentoring** paper, **which is due on February 18th**.

Close Look at Your Mentoring

I will ask each of you to choose and share with me recent examples of your mentoring interactions so that I can offer you some feedback, support and guidance. I'll tell you more in class, but the basic idea here is that you'll include a piece of student work and your response to it, and explain your rationale for responding as you did. This is an opportunity to both focus on the details of your work and to reflect on your process, and on the mentoring choices you make. This paper is due by **February 18th**.

February 16:

- **Lemon Tree, Chapters 8-10:** Be prepared to speak in class about a *specific connection* you've seen between something that you read about in Lemon Tree and your work as a mentor. You might talk about something you've read about that you think would be important for your students to know, consider, or understand, and speculate a bit about how you might support such understanding through your work. We'll also talk specifically about Dalia and Bashir as people, so think about the personal qualities that you've noticed in each of them.

February 18:

- We'll talk about the political scene in Palestine (Please read the articles in the Palestine MODULE on CANVAS).
- Team Meetings/Review of your mentoring work.

February 23:

- In addition to our team Meetings, we're tentatively planning to video conference today with one of our teacher/partners.
- Team Meetings/Review of your mentoring work.

February 25:

- **Lemon Tree, Chapters 11-14:** We'll discuss the concluding chapters, with a special focus on the question (below) that you responded to in the essay you'll turn in on Sunday.

Due February 27th, an essay of at least 750 words in response to the question: Do *you* see “The Lemon Tree” as being ultimately a hopeful book? In your essay articulating and supporting **your opinion**, please support your response by discussing *specific* references from the book. In this paper, I will be looking for you to take a stand and to support that stand with evidence from the book as well as from your own point-of-view and experiences, and through your own process of making meaning. In evaluating your work, I will also look for a thoughtful engagement with the text, and for a clear and well-considered interpretation of the ideas therein.

March 9:

- Plan TBA

March 11:

- Our reading for today (“**Learning from Looking**” by Steve Seidel) is about observation and about *looking carefully at student work*. I hope to add complication to some central questions growing out of your mentoring. What does it mean, for example, to cultivate the *disposition* of observing the work of our students in a patient and non-judgmental way? How do we reconcile that stance with our sense of what it means to be a mentor, and of our responsibilities to our students, and to the simulation itself? We’ll discuss this piece, its meaning and, of course, its potential relevance to your mentoring work.
- We’ll also talk about the “Yes! Moments” paper **that is due by Tuesday, March 15th on CANVAS**.

March 16:

- We’ll talk today about the **You Choose the Reading** assignment and the schedule.

You Choose the Reading

I’d like for each of you to select an article pertaining to the Arab-Israeli Conflict and you’ll then facilitate a discussion among your peers about it. I’m not looking here for scholarly articles, just pieces that talk about current events or that offer interesting angles--editorials are acceptable.

Please select your reading by **Sunday, March 20th**, and post a link to your article on canvas with a discussion question to help guide the reading of your colleagues. We’ll start our discussions on **March 25th**—I’ll post a schedule.

You’re welcome to choose a reading published in any reputable news source, including the BBC, Deutsche Welle (DW), Times of India, The Independent, France 24, or any major American newspaper or website.

Here are some additional reputable sources to check out:

Al-Monitor: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/home.html> (Links to an external site.)

Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/> (Links to an external site.)

Times of Israel: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/> (Links to an external site.)

Arab News: <https://www.arabnews.com/> (Links to an external site.)

Ha'Aretz: <https://www.haaretz.com/> (Links to an external site.)

Daily Star: <http://www.dailystar.com> (Links to an external site.)

Middle East Monitor: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/> (Links to an external site.)

Tehran Times: <https://www.tehrantimes.com/>

March 18:

- Review Simulation Activity

The rest of the term schedule in brief (Schedule subject to change)

Date	Class Topics	Assignments Due
3-23	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings.	Continue daily on-line work
3-25	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings. You Choose the Reading Discussion #1	Continue daily on-line work
3-30	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings. You Choose the Reading Discussion #2	Continue daily on-line work.
4-1	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings. You Choose the Reading Discussion #3	Continue daily on-line work.
4-6	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings. You Choose the Reading Discussion #4	Continue daily on-line work.
4-8	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings	Continue daily on-line work.
4-13	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings Reflection on AIC, Part One	Continue daily on-line work.
4-15	Review of Simulation activity; Team meetings Reflection on AIC, Part Two Simulation ends today at 5 pm.	Concluding Mentor Updates/NSA farewell messages must be posted on the AIC website by Tuesday, April 19th at midnight. Final Reflection paper due on Friday, April 22

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Quality and consistency of mentoring work (25%) Written assignments (20%)

Final reflection (35%) Seminar participation & attendance (20%)

You must do your mentoring work on time, consistently, and without prodding, and if you are unavoidably unable to do your work at a certain time, you must give the rest of your group as much notice as possible and arrange for another mentor to cover for you. Owing to the nature of the simulation, it's rarely possible to make up missed work in the necessary time frame. Doing an excellent job some of the time can't make up for not consistently keeping up with your responsibilities.

About COVID

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person as well as your grade may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis (if available) or to disenroll from the class. We also encourage you to review the [Statement of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#), which includes a COVID-related Statement Addendum.

Recording Class Sessions

Course lectures may be audio/video recorded and made available to other students in this course only. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact Jeff (stanz@umich.edu) the first week of class to discuss alternative arrangements.

Your Well-Being

We're living in stressful times, and we both want to do everything we can to support you and to ensure that our class is as healthy a place as it can be. If you have any concerns you want to raise regarding the class, please be invited to contact us. Please also know that there are resources available to you on campus to support your emotional health, including these listed at the University's [Well Being for U-M Students](#) website.

Grade Scale

A	4.0	95 - 100
A-	3.7	90 - 94
B+	3.3	86 - 89
B	3.0	82 - 85
B-	2.7	78 - 81
C+	2.3	74 - 77
C	2.0	70 - 73
C-	1.7	67 - 69
D	1.0	60 - 66
F	0.0	0 - 59

This infographic is meant to succinctly represent the components of the simulation for the student diplomats...we'll talk more about this.

Navigating the Arab-Israeli Conflict Simulation



AIC Rules



The Arab-Israeli Conflict Simulation (AIC) is a political and diplomatic character-playing exercise. Here are several major ways for you to proceed in the simulation.



Strategic Goals

At the beginning of the game, each team needs to submit a strategic goals statement to their NSA for approval. These goals should outline what your team wants to achieve during the simulation.



Communicates-What are they ?

Communicates are tools for private communication. Each leader can send private communication to members of other teams. But not every country is on your communication matrix.



Communicates-How they work

There are two methods to communicate with an individual who is not on your matrix: A team member who is in contact with that individual can serve as the messenger, or a participant on another team can serve as an intermediary.

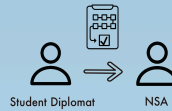


NSA



Game Mentor

Strategic Goals, Press Releases, and Action Forms all need to be submitted to the NSA (or, in the case of the action form, to the Game Mentor) for approval before they get posted in the game.



Student Diplomat

NSA

Weekly reports need to be submitted to NSAs. The primary purpose of the Weekly Report is to outline for the NSA what the team has been doing, how their actions align with their goals, and what they plan to do in the coming weeks.



Student Diplomat

NSA

Please allow two weekdays for NSAs to respond to your press releases, action forms, weekly reports or any other messages.



Updates

When press releases or action forms are approved, they become part of the reality of the simulation through being announced by the Game Mentor as updates on the main page of the site.



Press Release

Press releases are a team's public voice in the international community. They can be used to make proposals to other countries, state a country's position on matters of public import, and to persuade other nations for support.



Action Forms

Submitting action forms is a mean to make things happen. They need approval from the Game Mentor before becoming part of the reality of the simulation.



It is absolutely against the rules of the simulation to speak—write a message or press release—in someone else's name. It is the responsibility of each member of each country team to maintain the individual integrity of all roles.



Once the game starts, events that happen in real life do not automatically occur in the simulation.

Advice for Student Diplomats



1. Be active. Align any action and decisions made in the game with your strategic goals.

How ?

Check for updates by at least signing in twice a week.

Why ?

It is vitally important that you get your opinions out there, and that you push back on any ideas or opinions that may be counter to your nation's interests.



How ?

Who is what you're saying meant to impress or persuade? How are you "spinning" your statements so as to put yourself and their allies in the best light, and those who oppose you in the worst ?

Why ?

If you know the audience and purpose you are writing for, the statements you make will help you make a good impression on the public, and give you an edge over your opponents.



3. Have communication with different countries.

How ?

Use the communicates function. Don't forget the rules, but try to make connections with countries who are not on your side.

Why ?

Get their help with achieving your goals since you cannot proceed in the game without help from other teams.



4. Be aware of time management; the game ends faster than you expect.

How ?

Bear in mind the strategic goals you wrote at the beginning of the game. Try to track how much progress you've made towards achieving these goals.

Why ?

Managing time well can help you get more goals achieved.



5. Regularly read and reply to communicates, press releases and updates.

How ?

Check for updates by signing in at least twice a week.

Why ?

You won't miss any important messages from other teams or from your NSA. Being on track in the game helps things proceed more smoothly.



6. Keep thinking about how your goals could serve the interests of other nations.

How ?

Understand relationships among different countries by researching and reading background information. Know who shares similar or contradictory goals with you.

Why ?

Having support from other nations helps you get your goals accomplished more easily.



7. Stay in character all the time.

How ?

Read the background information so you know what beliefs your character holds and who your allies are.

Why ?

When you stay in character, you know how to respond to updates and messages in the game. Also, you can more effectively interact with other teams, and you know who shares similar views.



8. Write like a journalist and leader.

How ?

Proofread your writing and your communicates. Think carefully about word choice and check for typos and grammatical errors.

Why ?

Gain respect, make a good impression on the public, and avoid misunderstandings.