Governments and Politics of the Middle East

The victories and the setbacks of the various popular uprisings commonly known as the "Arab Spring" in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen (with the Syrian revolution still ongoing, increasingly violent and nearing the brink of an international and regional intervention), the aftermath of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the long-sought ostensible attempt to bring democracy to the Middle East, the Arab and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, and fears of chemical nuclear proliferation are just some of the current conflicts and issues that characterize Middle East politics. How do we think about these and other developments? What is the current nature of governments in the region? This course is a comparative study of governments in the Middle East, with special emphasis on the relationship between domestic and international conflicts in countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and Iran. Using different theoretical approaches, this course looks at governmental structures, particularly in relation to issues of war and peace. Instruction places the current Middle East state system in the context of historical, political, and ideological forces that led to its formation after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

This course will be organized as follows: weeks 1 through 3 will consist of lectures and PowerPoint presentations serving as a general introduction to the politics of the region. The current and historical background for understanding Middle East politics is elaborated in a series of online Middle East Timeline spanning from the birth of Prophet Muhammad to the present, and readings to be included a Mideast Politics Reader to be available for sale at production cost, and the first chapter in the required text book, The Modern Middle East, by Mehran Kamrava. Topics to which you will be introduced would include geography, demography, economy, conflict, and religion. The remaining part of the course will present an in-depth examination of both the historical context in which the modern Middle East emerged and the various critical issues facing the region today, such as the state system, political and military conflicts, economic development, dictatorships, the prospect of democratization and the "Arab Spring," broadly defined as the many political uprisings against long decades of corrupt and authoritarian regimes.

STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE: Each class meeting will be divided between lectures and discussions on contemporary issues in Middle East politics. Lectures will be accompanied by PowerPoint presentations. In-class discussions will be based on handouts of articles on Middle East politics and conflicts from leading publications to be assigned in advance and posted online or handed in during class session. There will be three in-class examinations, including the final, as well as two take-home written assignments (three pages each). The first in-class exam is objective (multiple choice & true and false), worth
20 points; the second is objective and subjective (short essays and definitions), worth 30 points; the third, a final, is both objective and subjective, worth 40 points.

The guidelines of the first and second take-home written assignments will be distributed in class after the first exam. Each assignment is worth 5 points. This brings your total up to 100 points. The grading system for this class is as follows: the grade of A begins at 88; B at 78; C at 68; and D at 58. The course also provides you with the opportunity to earn an additional 8 points over the 100. This opportunity is in the form of 4 unannounced quizzes (each is worth 2 points; they are multiple choice & true and false) which can be given at anytime during the class and will cover the materials discussed up to and including the day of the quiz. Since these quizzes are not part of the basic course assignments, there will be no makeup or substitute assignments if they are missed. Finals will be given on scheduled dates--no early or late finals will be given due to travel plans or any other reason. (Attendance is a must in this class. Absences exceeding four meetings will result in your being dropped from the class; starting with the second meeting, arriving 10 minutes late to class will equal half-attendance; coming 20 minutes late or more will equal an absence. When you are late to class, you will not be able to take an extra credit quiz should there be a quiz during that meeting, meaning you will lose 2 points.) In-class exams require a SCANTRON form #882 and a No. 2 pencil. It is advised that you keep enough stock of scantron forms for the four extra pop quizzes which will be given without notice. DROPPING THE CLASS STILL REMAINS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

Student Class Self-Drop Deadlines

March 2, 2014 -- Last Day to Withdraw to Receive an Enrollment Fee Refund
March 2, 2014 -- Last Day to Withdraw to Avoid a "W" Grade on the Transcript
MAY 18, 2014 -- Last Day to Withdraw for a Guaranteed "W" Grade on the Transcript

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


Background Readings:
Fred Halliday, The Middle East in International Relations (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
Malcolm Kerr, The Arab Cold War (London: Oxford University Press, 1971)
Roy Anderson et al. Politics and Change in the Middle East (New York: Prentice Hall, 2001
WEEK ONE

Defining the Middle East
The Literature on Studying the Middle East

Historical, political, cultural and geographical background Part I
Lebanon
Syria
Israel
Palestine
Jordan
Iraq

Readings for Lebanon:
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14647308
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35833.htm

Readings for Syria:
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703856
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3580.htm

Readings for Israel and the Palestinian Territories:
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14628835
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3581.htm
http://www.state.gov/p/nea/ci/pt/

Readings for Jordan
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14631981
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3464.htm

Readings for Iraq
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14542954
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6804.htm

WEEK TWO
Historical, political, cultural and geographical background Part II

Kuwait
Saudi Arabia
Yemen
Readings for Kuwait
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14644252
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35876.htm

Readings for Saudi Arabia
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14702705
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3584.htm

Readings for Yemen
BBC Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704951
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35836.htm

Readings for Egypt
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13313370
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm

Readings for Sudan
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094995
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm

Readings for Algeria
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14118852
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/8005.htm

Readings for Libya
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13754897
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5425.htm
Readings
"Diversity of the Middle East: Ethnicity, Communal Identity, and Authority" (From Mideast Politics Reader)

WEEK THREE
Historical, political, cultural and geographical background Part III

United Arab Emirates
Qatar
Oman
Morocco
Tunisia
Iran
Turkey

Readings for UAE
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14703998
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5444.htm

Readings for Qatar
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14702226
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5437.htm

Readings for Oman
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35834.htm
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35834.htm

Readings for Morocco
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14121438
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5431.htm

Readings for Tunisia
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107241
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5439.htm

Readings for Iran
BBC Country Profiles
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14541327
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm

Readings for Turkey
BBC Country Profiles
State Department Profiles
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3432.htm

"Introduction to the Geography and Historical Background of the Middle East" (Mideast Politics Reader)

WEEK FOUR

The Rise and Role of Islam

Readings about Islam

"The Life of the Prophet, the Spread of Islam" (Mideast Politics Reader)

"The Shi'i Muslims and their Historical Development" (From Mideast Politics Reader)

Medieval Expansion of Islam (From Mideast Politics Reader)

Ancient Middle East Timeline
http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/neareast.html
Early Islam
http://acc.teachmideast.org/timeline.php?module_id=3&category_id=1
A time-line of the Arabs, the Turks and the Persians
http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/arabic.html
Islamic Dynasties until the ascendency of the Ottomans
The Ottoman Empire
WEEK FIVE

Modern Middle East

Readings
"Colonial and Post Colonial Periods. The Rise of Colonial Interests" (From Mideast Politics Reader)

"Revivalism and Reform Movements within Islam." (From Mideast Politics Reader)

“From Islam to the Great War,” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 1

Modern Middle East Timeline

http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/middleea.html
http://acc.teachmideast.org/timeline.php?module_id=3&category_id=4
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/timeline/text/time2.html
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/timeline/text/time5.html

WEEK SIX

FIRST EXAMINATION

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN STATE SYSTEM—THE COLONIAL STATE

Readings
“From Territories to Independent States,” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 2.

WEEK SEVEN

NATIONALISMS—ARAB NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

Readings
“The Age of Nationalism” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 3.
http://homepage.smc.edu/chalala_elie/documents/ArabNationalism.pdf
WEEK EIGHT

THE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

Readings
“The Arab-Israeli Wars” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 4.

WEEK NINE

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Readings
“The Iranian Revolution” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 5

WEEK TEN

THE GULF WARS

Readings
“The Gulf Wars and Beyond,” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 6
http://homepage.smc.edu/chalala%5Felie/documents/IranIraqWarMay2508.pdf
"Iraq’s Invasion of Kuwait Exposes Political And Social Contradictions in The Arab World," by Elie Chalala.
http://homepage.smc.edu/chalala_elie/documents/ArabReaction.pdf

WEEK ELEVEN

SECOND EXAMINATION

STATE AND OPPOSITION

Readings
“States and Their Opponents” from The Modern Middle East, Chp. 7
http://homepage.smc.edu/chalala%5Felie/reading/Arab%20Dictatorships%20May%2025%2008.pdf
--“In Algeria’s Killing Fields: A Hidden Governmental Role,” in Essays on Arab Culture and Politics by Elie Chalala
WEEK TWELVE

Repression and Revolution

Readings
"Repression and Rebellion" from *The Modern Middle East*, Chp. 8.

WEEK THIRTEEN

PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS

Readings
“The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” from *The Modern Middle East*, Chp. 9

WEEK FOURTEEN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM

Readings
“The Challenge of Economic Development,” from *The Modern Middle East*, Chp. 10

WEEK FIFTEEN

NEW CHALLENGES FACING THE MIDDLE EAST

Readings
“The Challenges Facing the Middle East” from *The Modern Middle East*, Chp. 11.

WEEK SIXTEEN

FINAL EXAMINATION

*Final Exam is scheduled for June 10, 2014 (12-30 pm, HSS 155)*

More readings will be posted on the homepage of this class later in the course.