

Sample Syllabus: Politics of the Modern Middle East

Course Themes and Description

In this course we will address the major political developments in the Middle East, from the Ottoman period to the present. The course is divided into two parts: a chronological history and overview of the region, and a selection of thematic topics from the postcolonial era. After providing a background of how Islam spread in and unified the region, we will focus on the major changes that have shaped and reshaped the Middle East over the past two centuries. This includes the Ottoman era, French and British colonial interventions, anti-colonial protest and the rise of nationalism, the development and entrenchment of the modern state, and the Arab/Israeli conflict. We will also cover thematic topics including political Islam, minority rights, elements of authoritarian governance, the role of civil society and its relationship to the state, and popular protest and revolution.

The objective of this course is to give students a more nuanced and complete understanding of the Middle East, its states, and its peoples. In this class you will learn about the role of the state in the Arab world, but also about non-state actors that are involved in affecting change. Importantly, the approach to this class uses a theoretical framework that avoids Orientalist characterizations of the region. You will hear the perspectives of both Western and non-Western scholars, and we will also consult personal narratives, newspaper articles, and documentaries in our exploration of political phenomena. While we will address patterns and developments that are applicable to the region as a whole, each week we will also narrow our focus to a subset of countries that provide unique insights into the theme under discussion.

Course Requirements

You will be required to attend all lectures and to keep up with the reading according to the schedule below. There will be a written midterm and a final (cumulative) exam. Both exams will be closed book and closed notes. Make-up exams will be offered only in the case of a documented medical emergency or a family crisis. I must approve arrangements for a make-up exam in writing (email) before the scheduled exam date.

There will also be in-class assignments: some announced ahead of time such as the Map Quiz in Week 2, and some unannounced. These assignments will be included in your class participation grade. In addition, students are expected to write a 10 page, double-spaced, paper that addresses the question: What factors explain the prevalence of authoritarianism in the Middle East, and what factors explain the push for democratization?

Paper Format

Web tools will be used to check for plagiarism. References should be identified (only for those cited in the paper). A minimum of five references is required; preferably peer-reviewed articles (limit web sources that are not peer reviewed to two references). Please include a bibliography on the last page of the paper.

Please check grammar and spelling before handing in papers. I am happy to read drafts of your research paper if you come to my office hours or make an appointment. Use language understandable to the general public and define specific terms that you use. Papers submitted late will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late.

Grading

Your grade will be based on four components:

1. Weekly attendance, participation during discussion, in-class Map Quiz—20% of course grade
2. Research Paper—20% of course grade
3. Midterm —25% of course grade
4. Final—35% of course grade

Required books & Lecture Schedule

You are required to purchase the following book. It will be available from the campus bookstore or you can choose to order it online. All other reading materials will be provided on the class website.

William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton. 2013. *A History of the Modern Middle East, Fifth Edition*.

Part I: A Chronological History of the Region

Week 1: Introduction

Edward Said. 1978. “The Latest Phase,” Chapter IV of Part 3, “Orientalism Now” in *Orientalism*.

Huda Shaarawi. 1986. “The Bridge of Nationalism” and “Epilogue,” in *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist*, translated by Margot Badran.

Week 2: The spread of Islam and the Ottoman period

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapters 1-3.

Betty S. Anderson. 2016. “Reform and Rebellion: The Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Qajar Iran in the 19th Century,” in *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels and Rogues*.

**In-class map quiz.

Week 3: British and French Protectorates

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapters 7-9.

In-class film clips: *Theeb* (2014) and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

Week 4: Nationalism and Anti-Colonial Protest

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapters 11-12

Lawrence, Adria. 2013. *Imperial Rule and the Politics of Nationalism: Anti-Colonial Protest in the French Empire*, Chapters 2-3.

Week 5: State-building

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapters 14-16.

Feroz Ahmad. 1993. *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Chapter 4.

Week 6: Israel/Palestine

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapter 13 and 17.

Mark Tessler, 2009. *A History of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict*, Chapter 5.

In-class film: *Wedding in Galilee (1987)*

Week 7: Review/midterm**Part II: Thematic topics****Week 8: Authoritarian consolidation**

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapters 18-19.

Lisa Anderson. 1986. *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya*, Chapters 11, 12.

[optional] Joel Benin. 2001. "Populist Nationalism, State-led Development and Workers and Authoritarian Regimes," in *Peasants in the Modern Middle East*.

Ross, Michael. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53: 325-61.

Week 9: Political Islam

Cleveland and Bunton. 2013. Chapter 20.

John Anderson. 2004. "Does God Matter, and If So Whose God? Religion and Democratization," *Democratization* 11(4): 192-217.

Fares al-Braizat. 2002. "Muslims and Democracy: An Empirical Critique of Fukuyama's Culturalist Approach," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 43(3-5): 269-299.

Nathan Brown and Amr Hamzawy. 2010. "Islamists in Arab Parliaments," in *Between Religion and Politics*.

In-class film: *Persepolis (2007)*

Week 10: Minorities

Zaid Eyadat. 2014. "Minorities in the Arab World: Faults, Fault-lines, and Coexistence," in Will Kymlicka and Eva Pfössl (eds), *Multiculturalism and Minority Rights in the Arab World*.

Amir Hassanpour. 1994. "The Kurdish Experience." *Middle East Research and Information Project*.

Carole Dagher. 2000. "Introduction" and "Christian Soul-Searching," in *Bring Down the Walls: Lebanon's Post-War Challenge*.

Week 11: 2011 Revolutions

Marc Lynch (ed.). 2014. *The Arab Uprisings Explained: New Contentious Politics in the Middle East*, select chapters to be assigned.

Charles Tripp. 2013. "Symbolic Forms of Resistance: Art and Power," in *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East*.

Jack Shenker. 2016. "Egypt: Memories of a Revolution," excerpt from *The Egyptians: A Radical Story*.

In-class film: *The Square (2013)*

****Research papers due.**

Week 12: Looking forward and wrap-up

Tariq Modood. (2016) 'Multiculturalism and Moderate Secularism', in J. Shook and P. Zuckerman (eds.) *Oxford Handbook on Secularism*.

Marc Lynch. 2014. "Political Science After Gaza." *The Washington Post's Monkey Cage Blog*.

Peter Harling and Alex Simon. 2015. "The West in the Arab World, between Ennui and Ecstasy," *The Arabist*.

Janine Di Giovanni. 2016. "Frozen Life in Wartime Syria," *The New York Times*.

Bassam Haddad. 2016. "The Debate over Syria has reached a Dead End." *The Nation*.

In-class film: *The Islamic State (2014)*

Week 13: Final exam