

POSC 242: Middle East Politics

Weitz 133

MW: 12:30 – 1:40PM

F: 1:10 – 2:10PM

Professor Summer Forester

Office: Willis 408

Office Hours:

Mondays 2PM – 4PM

Thursdays 9AM – 11AM

By appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces the politics and political structures of states in the Middle East. We explore the political origins of Middle Eastern states, and investigate how regional politics are shaped by colonialism, religion, the family, and more. We examine the persistence of authoritarianism and its links to other issues like nationalism and militarism. The course covers how recent and current events like the revolutionary movements of the ‘Arab Spring’ affect the states and their societies. We conclude with a consideration of the future of Middle Eastern politics, evaluating lingering concerns and emerging prospects for liberalization and reform.

Course objectives:

1. Cultivate a historically-grounded, intelligent, and critical understanding of the political forces that created (and sustain) the modern Middle East
2. Introduce the major scholarly debates within the field of Middle East politics
3. Describe the interrelationship between international and national phenomena within and across states of the Middle East

Learning outcomes:

1. Understand the origins and effects of political borders, structures, and systems in the Middle East
2. Critically analyze and engage with both mainstream media portrayals of and scholarly arguments about Middle Eastern politics
3. Craft a theoretically sophisticated argument using empirical data

Course components & Grading

The requirements for this course involve both the completion of assignments on your own and your active and informed contributions to our class discussions. Most of your assignments will be submitted electronically via Moodle. It is your responsibility to make sure the file is not corrupted (you can download and view the file after you upload it to Moodle). I will often provide in-text commentary or line edits for your written work. **Please submit your documents in Word (.doc or .docx).** Corrupted files will be treated as though they are late until they are correctly uploaded. Your grade will be based on the following requirements:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 1. Participation | 20 |
| 2. Map quiz | 5 |
| 3. Reading précis (2) | 10 |
| 4. Everyday Orientalism paper | 15 |
| 5. Co-authored background paper | 15 |

Participation

A large portion of your grade is based on your ability and willingness to contribute to our class. What does this require of you? Please prepare for, attend, and participate meaningfully in class weekly. “Meaningful” participation comes in a number of forms: asking questions to clarify course topics, answering questions that I pose in class, drawing connections between course topics and current events, and participating respectfully in class discussions. Everyone’s experience in this course is enhanced by regular attendance and active participation; conversely, everyone’s experience suffers if individuals do not participate. Remember that a sincere question often adds as much (if not more) to our understanding of the course material as an explanation of the week’s readings. You should be prepared to share a comment from your notes and/or a discussion question during every class meeting.

Map quiz

At the end of the first week of the term, you will take an in-class quiz on the location of the states of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Reading Précis

Over the course of the term, you will write two short reading précis (~500 words each). In each précis, you should succinctly summarize the key points of the texts from the day you choose. You should also explain how these texts “hang” together and what they teach us about Middle East politics, broadly. The purpose of this exercise is for you to think critically *across* the readings and the course. Your papers should be formally written and polished. Each précis is worth 5 points (or 5% of your final grade). Your précis is due by 9PM on the day before we meet in class to discuss the readings you have selected. For example, if you write a précis on the readings from January 27, your précis is due by 9PM on January 26. You may only write one précis per day.

Everyday Orientalism

One of the major theoretical concepts we will engage with throughout this course is that of “orientalism.” Although Edward Said first coined the term and developed the theory of orientalism in 1978, we can still find examples of orientalism – in movies, media, magazines, and more – today. Your task is to find one of these examples of orientalism and write an analytical paper (~800-1000 words) explaining 1) why your selected item is orientalist and 2) the political relevance of orientalism vis-à-vis your identified item.

Co-authored Background Paper on a Middle Eastern Country

You and one of your colleagues will co-author a paper (~1200-1500 words) that provides an overview of the political and social structures of a Middle Eastern country. Your section on the political structures should include a discussion of your state’s colonial legacy, an overview of the governmental system and the key power brokers, and state religiosity vis-à-vis political decision-making practices. The section on social structures should describe the robustness of civil society in the country, family relations, and gender relations. You will use the findings from this paper as a springboard for your solo-authored case study (see below).

Case Study Analysis

Scholars contend that, under the system of international anarchy, security issues are not only conditioned by the international structure and the interaction of individual units (i.e., states) within the international system, *but also by* the domestic characteristics of states. In other words, the

international and national are equally important and interrelated for understanding complex security issues. More specifically, scholars have posited that, in the Middle East, there is a domestic corollary to the traditional external security dilemma: efforts to ensure external security can undermine and domestic security and efforts at greater openness and reform.

For your final project, you will conduct a case study analysis (~2000 words) testing the internal security dilemma thesis. You should imagine your piece appearing in a special issue of *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

This project will require you to select particular security event in your country of analysis – e.g., Syria’s response to ISIS, Morocco’s response to the 2003 terrorist attack in Casablanca, the 1990 Iraq invasion of Kuwait, etc. – and analyze some facet of domestic politics related to democratization or reform vis-à-vis this security event. I will provide more detail on this project in a separate document.

You will submit your case study in stages:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Selection of security event | 2 points |
| 2. Identification of empirical data sources | 5 points |
| 3. Outline | 5 points |
| 4. Rough draft + peer review | 8 points |
| 5. Final draft, with review response cover letter | <u>15 points</u> |
| | 35 total points |

The purpose of this assignment is two-fold:

- 1) You will develop and hone your ability to connect abstract theories with empirical data
- 2) You will gain a deep understanding of the politics of (in)security that animate national and international security policy debates

Citation Style:

Please adhere to the APA citation guidelines in your papers and other assignments:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Grading Scale

The course will follow a standard grading scale:

A: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements

A 93 or higher

A - 90-92

B: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements

C+ 77-79

C 74-76

C- 70-72

D: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements

D+ 67-69

- D 63-66
- D- 60-62
- F Below 60

Additional Grading Policies

1. I will not consider grade complaints if more than one week has passed after the assignment has been returned to you.

Before I review your grade, you must first:

- Wait 24 hours.
 - Schedule a time to meet with me to discuss your grade.
 - Submit a formal appeal in writing (email is sufficient—but be clear that it is the appeal in the subject heading) that clearly identifies content in the assignment and the reasons why you think your grade should be changed. These appeals should refer to specific things in the assignment, and not vague reasons like “I worked really hard.”
 - The second grade, higher or lower, will become your grade on the assignment.
2. Murphy’s Law¹ Deadline Extension: Over the course of the semester, you have **one** no-questions-asked opportunity to submit an assignment 24 hours after the deadline has passed. You may only use this grace period once per term. Because I have included this provision, I will not accept late work for full credit, unless official documentation is provided.
 - a. The only acceptable (not penalized) excuses for not completing an assignment on time are family emergencies or illnesses. However, in these cases, I will arrange to give you extra time only if you communicate with me before the assignment is due and you provide documentation of the circumstance.
 - b. If you submit work late after you have used your Murphy’s Law extension, then your grade will be lowered a full letter grade for each 24-hour period it is late. For example, if your assignment is due by 7:00PM on Friday and you submit it sometime between 7:01PM on Friday and 7:00PM on Saturday, the highest score you can earn is an B. Please note that I will not accept any (unexcused) work that is more than 48-hours late.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact disability@carleton.edu or call Jan Foley, Student Accessibility Specialist (x4464) or Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services (x5250) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Academic Integrity

¹ Murphy’s Law: anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.

In writing course papers, students must document all passages, paraphrases and/or ideas that are borrowed from any source, and direct quotations must be placed within quotation marks. Similarly, papers must represent research conducted for the course in which they are assigned and no other; it is not appropriate to submit a paper that has already been or will be submitted to another course. Finally, papers must be the product of students' own work. Papers written by anyone other than the student, including those purchased from commercial research services, are unacceptable.

All work is expected to be your own. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them), and all forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will be strictly handled according to university policy. If you are uncertain, cite your sources! A discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>.

Well-Being

Carleton College urges you to make yourself--your own health and well-being--your priority throughout this ten-week term and your career here. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. If you are having difficulties maintaining your well-being, feel free to contact me and/or pursue other resources, such as [Student Health and Counseling](#) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

An additional word² on wellness and health: Audre Lorde once said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare." Please see your wellness as an act of power and perseverance. The core to your success. Hold each other – and me – accountable. Go for walks. Let your mind wander. Take a deep breath. Drink water. All of your work will wait for you, and your final product will be better when you are in balance.

Weekly Course Outline & Assignment Due Dates

Please note that this is a draft of the reading schedule and some of the readings may change over the course of the term, depending on the interests of the class and on events happening in the world. I will notify you well in advance of any changes.

Part I: Political origins of states & social structures

Week 1: January 6 - 10

Monday: Course introduction

What is the Middle East? What do we mean by the phrase "Middle East politics"?

Wednesday:

Said, Edward. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books. Introduction.

Said, Edward. "Islam Through Western Eyes," *The Nation*, April 26, 1980.

Friday: Why do origins matter?

Required viewing for Friday's class: [World War I through Arab Eyes: The Arabs](#) (episode one)

Roger Owen "The end of empires: the emergence of the modern Middle Eastern states," in *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. Chapter 1

submit your top 3 country choices (through Moodle) by 8PM

² Thank you to Dr. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve at Brown University and Dr. Simon Weffer at Northern Illinois Univ for this addition

Week 2: January 13 - 17

Monday:

Map quiz (in class)

state assignments distributed

Required viewing for Monday's class: [World War I Through Arab Eyes: the New Middle East](#) (episode three)

Fromkin, David. "How the Modern Middle East Map Came to be Drawn." *Smithsonian* (May 1991): 166-170.

Wright, Robin. "How the Curse of Sykes Picot Still Haunts the Middle East," *The New Yorker*, April 30, 2016.

Wednesday:

Nasr, Vali (1999). "European Colonialism and the Emergence of Modern Muslim States," in *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. by John L. Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Voll, John O. (2013). "Political Islam and the State" from *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*.

Friday: Arab Nationalism

Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Read chapters 24 and 25, "The Climax of Arabism" and "Arab Unity and Disunity."

Week 3: January 20 – 24

Monday:

[Primer on Israeli – Palestinian conflict](#)

In class: Data mining with librarian, Sean Leahy. Be prepared to begin investigating your security event for your case study.

Everyday Orientalism paper due by 9PM

Wednesday: Palestine & Israel

Peteet, J. (2017). *Space and mobility in Palestine*. Indiana University Press. Chapter 1.

Evening screening: The Wanted 18

Friday:

"The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" in *The Middle East*, ed. Ellen Lust: CQ Press, 2011. Pages 238-313.

PART II: Modern states, structures, and (in)security

Week 4: January 27 - 31

Monday:

Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: A Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, 36 (2): 139-157

Ryan, C. R. (2009). "Security Dilemmas in Arab Politics," from *Inter-Arab alliances: Regime security and Jordanian foreign policy*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Supplementary:

Project on Middle East Politics. 2015. [Rethinking Nation and Nationalism](#).

Wednesday:

Goddard, H. (2002). Islam and democracy. *The Political Quarterly*, 73(1), 3-9.

Hashemi, Nader (2013) "Islam and Democracy," from *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*.

Mernissi, F. (2002). "Fear of the Foreign West," from *Islam And Democracy: Fear Of The Modern World With New Introduction*. Basic books.

Friday:

Mitchell, T. (2009). Carbon democracy. *Economy and Society*, 38(3), 399-432.

Ross, M. L. (2011, September-October). Will oil drown the Arab Spring? Democracy and the resource curse. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(5).

Supplementary:

Tétreault, Mary Ann. "The political economy of middle eastern oil." *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East* (2008): 255-279.

Co-authored paper due by 9PM

Selection of security issue for case study due by 9PM

Week 5: February 3 - 7

Monday: Authoritarianism & Militaries

Kamrava, Mehran. 2000. "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly*, 115 (1): 67-92.

Nael Shama, "[Egypt's Power Game: Why Cairo is Boosting its Military Power](#)" *Jadaliyya*

Wednesday: Authoritarianism & Patriarchy

Moghadam, V. M. (2004). Patriarchy in transition: Women and the changing family in the Middle East. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 35(2), 137-162.

Friday:

Abu-Lughod, L. (2002). Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others. *American anthropologist*, 104(3), 783-790.

Ababneh, S. (2009). Islamic Political Activism as a Means of Women's Empowerment? The Case of the Female Islamic Action Front Activists. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 9(1), 1-24.

Data descriptions – identify primary data for case study due by 9PM

Part III: Challenging (?) the State

Week 6: February 10 - 14

Monday: MID-TERM BREAK

Wednesday:

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2000. "Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan." *Comparative Politics*, 33 (1): pp. 43–61

Bayat, Asef "A Street Named Revolution" from *Life as Politics*

Friday: Intro Arab Uprisings

Outline due by 9PM

Lynch, Marc. 2012. *The Arab Uprisings: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*. New York: Perseus Books. Introduction & Chapter 1

Pearlman, W. (2013). Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings. *Perspectives on Politics*, 11(2), 387-409.

Week 7: February 17 - 21

Monday:

Egypt & the Arab Uprisings. Readings TBD

Wednesday:

Syria & the Arab Uprisings. Readings TBD

Friday:

Pearlman, Wendy. (2017). *We Crossed a Bridge and it Trembled: Voices from Syria*. HarperCollins. See Moodle for excerpts

Week 8: February 24 - 28

Monday:

Readings TBD

Wednesday:

Gause, Gregory F. "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability" in *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2011).

Khalidi, Rashid. "Preliminary Historical Observations on the Arab Revolutions of 2011," *Jadaliyya*

Supplementary:

Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics*, 44 (2): 127-149.

Friday:

Rough draft due

Lynch, M., & Ryan, C. R. (2017). Introduction. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 643-646.

Valbjørn, M. (2017). Strategies for reviving the international Relations/Middle east nexus after the Arab uprisings. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 647-651.

Bilgin, P. (2017). Inquiring into others' conceptions of the international and security. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 652-655.

Hazbun, W. (2017). The politics of insecurity in the Arab world: A view from Beirut. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 656-659.

Part IV: Symposium on Security Dilemmas in the Middle East

Week 9: March 2 - 6

Monday:

Presentations

Wednesday:

Presentations

Peer reviews due by 9PM

Friday:

Presentations

Week 10: March 9 - 13

Monday: Presentations

Wednesday:

Readings TBD

Final papers & author cover letter due by 9PM

Friday: Reading Day