

Introduction to Middle Eastern Politics (300 level)

Summer Forester
sforeste@purdue.edu

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the politics and political structures within states of the Middle East. Throughout the semester, we will investigate many of the prevailing questions and themes within Middle East politics such as: Why has authoritarianism prevailed in the region? What role does religion play in Middle East political structures? What should we expect after the so-called Arab Spring? To make sense of these questions and others, the course is divided into four parts. The first section examines the origins of Middle Eastern states and introduces you to critical structures like religion, tribes, and the family. In the second section, we examine why authoritarianism has persisted in the region, and how it is linked to other issues like nationalism, militarism, and rentierism. The third section assesses the degree to which civil society and social movements—including the revolutionary movements of the ‘Arab Spring’—have challenged longstanding regimes and state structures. And in the fourth and final section, we consider the future of Middle Eastern politics by evaluating some of the lingering concerns and the emerging prospects for liberalization and reform.

Course Goals

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the major political structures and questions in Middle Eastern politics. The readings and assignments are organized and designed to help you cultivate your critical curiosity about ‘big questions’ in Middle Eastern politics. You will practice deconstructing scholarly articles to make sense of the authors’ points and perspectives and, subsequently, constructing your own arguments through both written assignments and oral presentations. If you are an active and will participant in this course, then you can expect to hone your analytical reading, writing, and reasoning skills over the course of the semester. Additionally, you should have a clear understanding of the political dynamics in most of the states of the Middle East.

Required Texts

All course materials are available on blackboard or through the library.

Course Requirements

Map Quiz	5
Media Journal	15
Reaction paper	10
Midterm	20

Class Participation	20
Final paper	30 (Submitted in stages)

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

Media Journal: Throughout the course you will be responsible for tracking the media coverage of a MENA state. Each week, you will read and comment on three pieces of media (newspaper/magazine articles; blog posts; videos from news outlets; etc). Think of your comments like a letter to the editor: they should respond to the claims made by the source, they should forward your position, they should be brief, well-reasoned, and analytically sound. I will provide you feedback on your journal entries early in the course so that you can continually improve your responses. You will be responsible for keeping up-to-date with the news in your country and providing an overview of current events for your colleagues from time to time during the course.

Reaction Paper: You will be responsible for writing a short paper that responds to the reading(s) from a particular class. You will identify the research question in the text, the methods used to answer the question, and summarize the key arguments of the text. You will then critically analyze the strength of the argument and the degree to which the author has successfully made his/her claim.

Class Participation: You are expected to come to class prepared. This means that you have not only read, but have also given serious thought to what you have read. Attentive and critical reading is the absolute best way to prepare for class, quizzes, papers, and exams. Of course, in order to participate in class, you have to attend class. You will learn so much if you attend class every day, and I expect you to do so. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered or announcements made that day. This class is driven by student discussion and interaction; thus, attendance is critical. I look forward to getting to know you.

Final Paper: You will submit an 8-10 page analytical paper on an issue in Middle Eastern politics. You will work closely with your colleagues and me to select a topic, organize the structure of your paper, and then edit drafts of your work. You will submit your paper in four stages: first, you will submit your topic and five academic sources that address this topic. Second, you will submit an outline of your paper. Then, you will submit a rough draft of your paper, before submitting your final paper during the last week of class. As part of your final paper grade, you will submit copies of feedback that you provided to members of your writing group, copies of the feedback that your writing group provided you, and a short memo of how you addressed your reviewer comments. I will provide a detailed rubric for each section of this assignment.

Course Policies & Expectations

Seeking assistance: Students should *not hesitate to seek assistance* from me. Assistance is best sought *before* rather than after assignments and exams. If you have concerns about the material or course, please make use of office hours. If you have a particular question that requires a

straightforward response you may email me, but questions about difficult material, assignments, or concerns you have with the course are usually best addressed in person – whether in office hours or during class itself.

Attendance: Daily attendance is taken seriously for this class, and unexcused absences will be reflected in your grade. After your third *unexcused* absence, you will lose 1% from your final overall class grade for each class missed. For an absence to be considered *excused*, it must be related to a University-sponsored activity or a properly documented personal/family emergency or illness. It is your responsibility to provide official documentation.

Should an absence occur (unexpected or expected), students are responsible for obtaining the course materials missed (i.e. notes, activity outlines, etc.) from a classmate. Should additional clarification of course material be needed, students may then contact me.

Please note that unexcused absences, late arrivals, early departures (without prior approval), and any rude or disruptive behavior (texting, sleeping, inappropriate computer usage, etc.) may also reduce your grade.

Cell phones: Please silence your cell phones and keep them out of sight during class.

Laptops: Laptops will not be permitted in this course unless you gain special permission from the professor. This is a discussion-centered course and so students should be focused on speaking as much as writing. A pen and paper should suffice for taking notes. **PROTIP:** studies have demonstrated the advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. Students who take notes by hand do better on exams than students who take notes on a computer (even when the internet is disabled).

Syllabus changes: This syllabus is subject to change with sufficient notice to students.

Disability: Students with disabilities must be registered with the Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs.

Use of Blackboard: This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. Blackboard will be used to distribute course readings, materials, and to communicate and collaborate online. Students also will turn in assignments through Blackboard. You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are not an excuse for late or unfinished assignments.

Use of email: Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your @purdue.edu email for university and course-related information and announcements.

Policy on academic honesty: Purdue University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Academic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor.

In this class, students are encouraged to work with other students if it helps them master course material, but exams and assignments must represent an individual's own, original contributions.

By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them.

Academic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of academic work or a career. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information, please see:

<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>.

Assessment: In this course, final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

93-100% = A 87-89% = B+ 77-79% = C+ 67-69% = D+

90-92% = A- 83-86% = B 73-76% = C 63-66% = D

80-82% = B- 70/72% = C- 60-62% = D 59% and below = F

At the end of the semester, a course average of 89.5 will be rounded up to a 90, a 79.5 up to an 80, a 69.5 up to a 70, and a 59.5 up to a 60. *Do not expect rounding to go beyond this point.*

Thus a course average of 88.8 is a B+, a 79.2 is a C+, a 68.9 is a D+, and so on. Note: The instructor reserves the right to raise a student's grade to reflect extraordinary improvement and effort if earned.

From time to time, I will update the online gradebook as a courtesy to students. Grades will be posted online only after papers and exams have been turned back in class.

University Wide Emergency Procedures: In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting your professor via email (sforeste@purdue.edu).

Course Schedule & Readings

1. Course Introduction

Part I: Origins of the State & Social Structures

2. Orientalism

- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
 - Introduction and chapter 1

3. Colonial Legacies, Part I

- Gasper, Michael. 2011. "The Making of the Modern Middle East." In Ellen Lust (Ed.) *The Middle East*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
 - Pages 1-25

4. Colonial Legacies, Part II

- Wright, Robin. "How the Curse of Sykes Picot Still Haunts the Middle East," *The New Yorker*, April 30, 2016.
- Hariri, Jacob Gerner. 2015. "A Contribution to the Understanding of Middle Eastern and Muslim Exceptionalism," *The Journal of Politics*, 77 (2): 477-490.

5. Religion

- John O. Voll. 2013. "Political Islam and The State," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, eds. John Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, Bernard, 1996. "Islam and Liberal Democracy: A Historical Overview," *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (2): 52-63.

6. Tribes & Sectarianism

- Peteet, J. 2008. "Pensée 1: Imagining the 'New Middle East,'" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40(4), 550-552.
- Makdisi, U. 2008. "Pensée 4: Moving Beyond Orientalist Fantasy, Sectarian Polemic, and Nationalist Denial," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 40(4), 559-560.
- Charrad, Mounira, 2011. "Central and Local Patrimonialism: State-Building in Kin-Based Societies," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 636: 49-68.

7. Gender and Family Structures

- Joseph, Suad. 1994. "Gender and Family in the Arab World," *Middle East Report/MERIP*.
- Moghadam, Valentine. 2004. "Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 35(2), 137-162.

Part II: The State & Persistent Institutions

8. Authoritarianism, Part I

- Lucas, Russell. 2004. "Monarchical Authoritarianism: Survival and Political Liberalization in a Middle Eastern Regime Type." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 36 (1): 103- 119.
- Tlemcani, Rachid. "Electoral Authoritarianism" *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Op-ed, (May 29, 2007): 1-3.

9. Authoritarianism, Part II

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

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

10. Nationalism

- Tessler, Mark. 2009. "Arab History and the Origins of Nationalism in the Arab World." In *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 69-122. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
 - Recommended: Project on Middle East Politics. 2015. *Rethinking Nation and Nationalism*.

11. Oil and Rentierism, Part I

- Owen, Roger. 1992. *State, Power, and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, New York: Routledge. Chapters 1 and 2
 - Recommended: Tetreault, Mary Ann. "The Political Economy of Middle Eastern Oil." Chapter available on blackboard

12. Oil and Rentierism, Part II

- Ross, Michael. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy," *World Politics*, 53 (2): 325-361
 - Recommended: Debate: Oil, Islam, and Women, from *Politics and Gender*, 2009, 5 (4)
 - Tripp, Aili. "Debate: Does Oil Wealth Hurt Women?" pp. 545-546
 - Charrad, Mounira. "Kinship, Islam, or Oil: Culprits of Gender Inequality?" pp. 546-553.
 - Norris, Pippa. "Petroleum Patriarchy? A Response to Ross" pp. 553-560.
 - Kang, Alice. "Studying Oil, Islam, and Women as if Political Institutions Mattered," pp. 560-568.
 - Caraway, Teri. "Comparative Political Economy, Gender, and Labor Markets," pp. 568-575.
 - Ross, Michael. "Does Oil Wealth Hurt Women? A Reply to Caraway, Charrad, Kang, and Norris," pp. 575-582.

13. Securitization and Militarism

- Kamrava, Mehran. 2000. "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly*, 115 (1): 67-92.
- Pearlman, Wendy. 2017. *We Crossed a Bridge and it Trembled: Voices from Syria*. New York: Harper Collins.
 - Pages 143-173

Part III: Challenging the State (?)

14. Civil Society

- Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2000. "Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan." *Comparative Politics*, 33 (1): pp. 43–61
- Jamal, Amaney. 2007. *Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1

15. The 'Arab Spring,' Part I

- Al-Jazeera. "Seeds of Revolution." The Arab Awakening documentary series, April 2011. (In class)
- Lynch, Marc. 2012. *The Arab Uprisings: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*. New York: Perseus Books. Chapter 1
- Khalidi, Rashid. "Preliminary Historical Observations on the Arab Revolutions of 2011," *Jadaliyya*

16. Regimes Respond

- Brownlee, Masoud, and Reynolds. 2015. *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 4 and 5.
 - Recommended: Droz-Vincent, Phillipe. 2013. "The military amidst uprisings and transitions in the Arab world" Ch. 8 in Fawaz Gerges, *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*.

17. Guest Lecture: Syrian activists working in Jordan (via Skype)

- In preparation, read: Haddad, Bassam. 2012. "As Syria Free-Falls...A Return to the Basics" (Parts 1 and 2). *Jadaliyya*

18. Post-Arab Spring and Political Ramifications

- Brownlee, Masoud, Reynolds. 2015. *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6
- Khanani, Ahmed. "What I talk about when I talk about Islamists," memo prepared for Conference on Islamist Politics in the Shadow of the Islamic State
 - Recommended video: Project on Middle East Political Science conference, "Women in the Middle East Political Sphere After the Uprisings" (<https://vimeo.com/160134128>)

Part IV: The Future: Lingering Concerns and Emerging Prospects for Reform

19. Arab-Israeli Conflict

- Beinun, Joel and Lisa Hajjar. 2014. "Palestine, Israel, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: a Primer," *Middle East Report*

20. Occupation and Nonviolent Resistance

- Documentary: "The Wanted 18" (in class)

21. Neoliberalism

- Schwedler, Jillian and Lamis Andoni. 1996. "Bread Riots in Jordan," *Middle East Report*, 26 (<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer201/bread-riots-jordan>)
- Hanieh, Adam. 2015. "Shifting Priorities or Business as Usual? Continuity and Change in the post-2011 IMF and World Bank Engagement with Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42 (1): 119-134

22. Fundamentalism

- Roy, Olivier. 2017. *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1 and 3.

23. Democracy

- Stepan, A. and Linz, J.J., 2013. "Democratization Theory and the Arab Spring," *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2): 15-30.
- Howard, Marc and Meir Walters. 2015. "Mass Mobilization and the Democracy Bias," *Middle East Policy*, 22 (2): 145-155

24. The Politics of Gender & Sexuality

- Amar, Paul. 2011. "Middle East Masculinity Studies: Discourses of 'Men in Crisis,'" *Industries of Gender in Revolution*, 7 (3): 36-70.
- El Feki, Shereen. 2014. *Sex and the Citadel: Intimate Life in a Changing Arab World*. New York: Anchor Books. Chapter 1 (recommended chapter 7)
 - Recommended: Bayat, Asef. 2010. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. Chapter 5

25. Pop Culture and Politics

- Kraidy, Marwan. 2017. *The Naked Blogger of Cairo: Creative Insurgency in the Arab World*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 1, 5, and 6

26. Course Conclusion and Reflecting on the Study of the Middle East

- Schwedler, Jillian. "Why Academics Can't Beyond Moderates and Radicals," February 12, 2015. *The Washington Post*