

**POL 465**  
**INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**Spring 2019**

**Instructor:** Justin Curtis

**Office:** Social Science 300 or 301

**Office Hours:** Monday 9-11 (rm. 300), Wednesday 2-3 (rm. 301), and by appointment.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to introduce you to the politics of the Middle East, both domestic and international, and therefore, provides a general overview of some of the main issues of contemporary Middle Eastern politics. We will examine the interplay of numerous factors that help us to better understand and to critically analyze the politics of the Middle East. These factors include the impact of colonialism, nationalism and nation-state formation, regional crises, the Arab-Israeli conflict, political economy, and the influence of superpowers in the region, to name a few.

The Middle East is frequently a misunderstood and tragically oversimplified region. In an effort to foster understanding of the nuances of politics in the region, this class will highlight some of the rich historical context of contemporary Middle Eastern politics. Historical legacies will only be the beginning of the course's content, however. As the class focuses on contemporary political challenges, students will draw on historical, sociological, economic, and political frameworks to not merely describe, but *explain* contemporary Middle Eastern politics.

Personally, I find the study of the Middle East particularly engaging and academically challenging. This region of the world has experienced nearly every phenomenon of interest to political scientists including civil conflict, authoritarianism, democratization, social movements, religious politics, inter-state wars, and the development of the welfare state. This makes the Middle East an especially fertile region of social scientific theory building and testing, but a long history of ghettoizing orientalism (see: Edward Said. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Random House) has fed culturalist assumptions about the region that continue to plague social science research. By exposing students to work from both Middle East specialists and cross-regional discipline specialists, this course will help participants confront these assumptions and expand their understanding of both the discipline of political science and the Middle Eastern region.

As a student myself, I expect this class to be a mutual learning community. I have invested countless hours of study in the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of both political science and the politics of the Middle East, but there are—of course—limits to my expertise. This class is not “introductory,” and with that in mind I expect class sessions to be full of vibrant discussion, rigorous debate, and—in my opinion, most importantly—mutual respect. Students should feel free to ask questions, add insight, and suggest corrections to my lectures and the comments of classmates; indeed, doing so is a fundamental expectation of the course.

Reciprocally, students should expect me, the instructor, to do everything in my power to facilitate their success in the course. I hold regular office hours, do my best to arrive early to class sessions, and can arrange other meetings to discuss course material, assignments, or research papers with students.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this class are 1) to introduce students to international politics in the Middle East, and 2) to provide students with the analytical tools to understand, evaluate and respond to international problems. Therefore, in addition to enhancing knowledge of the Middle East, this class aims at fostering analytical thinking, which will enable students to evaluate critically the arguments and evidence surrounding controversial issues in global politics as well as to communicate arguments effectively. To that end, students will be evaluated on both oral and written analytical assignments.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner:

Map quiz-----	5%
Participation-----	20%
Simulations & Reports-----	20%
Research paper-----	25% (or 15%)
Final Exam (essay)-----	20% (or 10%)
Book Review-----	10% (or 0%)
Presentation-----	0% (or 30%)

Early in the semester students will take a **map quiz**. Students will be expected to locate all countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as well as important geographic formations. Students will also be expected to know the capitals of all of these countries. The map that students will use for this quiz is available on D2L.

Students will be graded on their **participation** in the course in two ways. First, early in the semester, students will be broken into several discussion groups. Students will respond to and discuss weekly discussion topics on the course's D2L site. These posts will be due every Thursday, at midnight. They will then be used in our Friday class sessions to frame our in-class discussions. Second, students are expected to attend every class session and consistently participate in class discussions.

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop> The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See: <https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

Students will participate in three **simulations** throughout the semester. In each, the class will be divided into a number of groups, and each group will play a different entity (state, non-state group, IGO, etc.) in the simulation. Students will work together to play their part accurately

during the simulation. Students will also *individually* submit a *one-page single-spaced* position paper that highlights their group's goals in the simulation. More details on these simulations will be given in class.

Students will write a causal analysis **research paper** in which they will identify a particular political or social phenomenon in the Middle East, explain this phenomenon theoretically, derive observable hypotheses from this theory, and test these hypotheses to attempt to confirm the theory. Throughout the semester students will be expected to meet with the instructor as they plan, draft, and revise these papers. Students will also submit a proposal, bibliography, initial data summary, and draft before the final paper is due. The proposal will identify the phenomenon that the student will explain, and a tentative plan for doing research. The bibliography will include at least five scholarly sources that have attempted to explain the phenomenon, and a number of sources from which the student will collect data. The outline will include a clear thesis, an overview of other scholarly work, and a clearly articulated research design that will be used to support the thesis. The draft will *not* be an outline, but rather a complete paper on which the student can receive feedback from both the instructor and his or her classmates. The grade for the paper will be divided as follows:

Proposal: 5%

Bibliography: 10%

Initial data summary: 10%

Draft: 10%

Draft response: 10%

Final: 55%

Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the UA ThinkTank Writing Lab as they draft their papers. For more information go to <https://thinktank.arizona.edu/writing-center>

There will be a **final exam essay** that will be completed at home. The exam will be distributed on May 1 (the final day of class), and be submitted, in-person, on May 6 (the scheduled day of the final exam). This exam must be completed independently, but you are free to use any materials available to all students as well as your personal class notes to help you write the essay. The essay will be 1500-2500 words in length. The date and time of the final exam or project, along with links to the Final Exam Regulations can be found here:

<https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/courses/final-examination-regulations-and-information>, and the Final Exam Schedule can be found here:

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/schedules/finals.htm>

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Writing Track</i>	<i>Presentation Track</i>
Map Quiz	5%	5%
Participation	20%	20%
Simulations	20%	20%
Research Paper	25%	15%
Final Exam	20%	10%
Book Review	10%	0%
Presentation	0%	30%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%

45% of all students' grades will come from the **map quiz**, **participation**, and **simulations**. The other 55% of students' grades can be calculated in one of two "tracks." The first track is the "writing track." Here, 25% of the students' grade will be the **research paper**, 20% of their grade will be the **final exam essay**, and 10% of their grade will be the **book review**. The **book review** will be a 1500-2500-word review of a book published after 2012 that deals with some aspect of the politics of the Middle East. Students will select the book that they will review by March 15 (the Friday after Spring Break).

The second track is the "presentation track." Students who choose this track will still be expected to complete the **research paper** and the **final exam essay**, but these assignments will only be worth 15% and 10% of their overall grade, respectively. The other 30% of their grade will come from the **presentation**. Students who select the presentation track will prepare a **presentation** in which they will lead class for at least twenty minutes. There is considerable flexibility as to what students can present, so students who choose this track will need to meet with the instructor as they plan their **presentation**. Students will need to find at least one reading that their classmates will read to prepare for their **presentation**, and they will field questions during and after their **presentation**. Students who would like to pursue the presentation track will need to inform the instructor by March 15 (the Friday after Spring Break).

The writing track is designed for students who are confident in their writing ability, but who may be uncomfortable presenting in front of the class. This track is most like a typical 400-level course. The presentation track is designed for students who may be less confident in their writing ability or more confident in their oral presentation skills.

All assignments—other than weekly discussion posts—must be submitted, in hard-copy, at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You are, of course, always welcome to submit assignments early. No late work will be accepted (outside of extraordinary—and documented—circumstances).

### **MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments may be corrected and made-up for full credit until the last day of the class. There is no penalty for revising and resubmitting papers or assignments and no limit to the number of times a student can revise their assignments. However, no assignment can be resubmitted that was not originally submitted on time.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

A missed deadline without necessary documentation is an automatic 0. If you know that you will be missing an exam or an assignment for legitimate reasons, notify me at least one week in advance. If you are not able to contact me in advance, do so as soon as possible. Emails are acceptable.

### **GRADING POLICY**

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm>

*Grade Distribution for this Course:*

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- E: 0-59

Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#I> and <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#W> , respectively.

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

1. No **recording or taking pictures** in class without the instructor's official and written consent. According to Section D (6) (a) of the University's Intellectual Property Policy (which is available at [http://www.ott.arizona.edu/uploads/ip\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ott.arizona.edu/uploads/ip_policy.pdf)), faculty own the intellectual property for their course notes and material. The instructor holds the copyright to his/her lectures and course materials, including student notes or summaries that substantially reflect them. Student notes are for individual use or for shared use on an individual basis. Sharing or sending recordings of any part of a lecture meeting without the express written permission of the instructor, is not permitted. Violations to the instructor's copyright are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions.
2. No **cell phones** or other electronic devices not being used to take notes in class (for example: Apple Watches, tablets, iPads, etc.) are allowed in the class. I expect all students to turn off their

cell phones or at least put them on silent before the class begins. Also, students are **prohibited** from **reading** any material, other than what has been assigned, in class. Students who are caught reading newspapers or checking their e-mail will be asked to leave. If students choose to ignore such comments, disciplinary action will be taken. If this becomes problematic, the instructor reserves the right to forbid laptops in class.

3. Course information will be disseminated through class webpage on D2L and via your e-mail account that is provided through the university. Please be sure to check your e-mail account in order to remain up to date.

4. I reserve the right to alter the dates assignments are due. Exceptions are the exams.

5. Late assignments **will not** be accepted (outside of extraordinary—and documented—circumstances).

## **READINGS**

There is one assigned book for the course:

Cleveland, William and Marin Bunton. 2016. *A History of the Modern Middle East (Sixth Edition)*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press. (Referred to as C&B from now onwards)

All other required readings can be found on the course's D2L site. If you have any trouble accessing these materials, please contact the instructor immediately. Students are required to do the readings during the week which they are assigned. They should be completed by the time students do their weekly discussion post (so Thursday nights at the latest).

The readings and the in-class discussions and lectures will complement each other. Neither are the readings sufficient without the lectures, nor are the lectures sufficient without the readings. In some cases, the readings (especially from C&B) will offer broad historical and societal context for the activities in class. In other cases, the lectures will contextualize and link the readings in preparation for simulations, discussions, and—of course—the final exam essay.

Some weeks, students will have an excess of 100 pages of assigned reading. *I highly recommend that students do not read every word of every reading that is assigned.* One of the greatest skills students can develop is to identify the arguments and evidence from academic articles without reading every word of the article. If you have questions about navigating the course's readings, please meet with the instructor.

## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

No matter the course, international students provide perspectives and insights that domestic students may frequently overlook. This is particularly true of this course. The Middle East is understood differently in different parts of the world, and these different perspectives can help us all come to a better understanding of the region (For example, in many Asian countries, the Middle Eastern region is more frequently known as West Asia).

If international students have particular questions about assignments or the course, they should not hesitate to meet with the instructor.

### **SAFE SPACE**

If students prefer a name other than that listed on their student profile, please inform the instructor. Given my professional role at UA—Graduate Student—I would prefer students to address me as Justin, and my preferred personal pronouns are he/him/his. On the first day of class I will distribute index cards upon which students will have the chance to indicate their preferred name and personal pronouns as well as other course-specific material.

### **ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMODATIONS**

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

### **THREATENING BEHAVIOR POLICY**

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

### **NOTIFICATION OF OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL**

This course will contain material of a mature nature, which may include explicit language, violence, and extremist ideologies. Students are not excused from interacting with such materials, but they are encouraged to speak with the instructor to voice concerns and to provide feedback.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism, available at <http://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>.

**UA NONDISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

**SUBJECT TO CHANGE STATEMENT**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE*****Week 1: Defining politics in the Middle East***

<No readings this week>

January 9

January 11

***Week 2: Historical legacies and Colonialism/ World War, Independence and Emerging Conflict***

C&B 5-18, 35-52, 96-123, 124-160, 166-225

January 14

January 16

January 18

***\*Map Quiz***

***Week 3: Conflict, Revolution, and International Influences/ Contemporary challenges: International Influences, Forces for Change, and Regime Resilience***

C&B 184-225, 286-325, 378-400, 226-255

Recommended Film: *Control Room* (available on Hulu, also check YouTube)

January 21 (No class)

January 23

January 25



***\*Paper proposal due***

**Week 4: Arab-Israeli Conflict**

C&B 328-348, 451-497

Adam Entous. 2018. Donald Trump's New World Order. *The New Yorker*.

Khaled Elgindy. 2018. How the peace process killed the two-state solution. *Brookings*.

January 28

January 30

***\*Simulation 1: Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks***

***\*Simulation 1 report due***

February 1

***\*Library research session***

**Week 5: Social Movements and the Arab Uprisings**

Asef Bayat. 2010. A wave for life and liberty: The Green Movement and Iran's incomplete revolution. In *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future* (Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, eds.). New York: Melville House.

Reflections Symposium. 2014. *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 2.

February 4

February 6

February 8

**Week 6: Aftermath of the Arab Uprisings**

C&B 537-555

Max Fisher. 2014. "The Square" is a beautiful documentary but its politics are dangerous. *Washington Post*

*The Arab Thermidor: The Resurgence of the Security State*. Project on Middle East Political Science.

February 11

February 13

February 15

\*Research methodology workshop

**Week 7: Varieties of Authoritarianism**

Lisa Wedeen. 1998. Acting “as if”: Symbolic politics and social control in Syria. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 3: 503-523.

Eva Bellin. 2012. Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics* 44, no. 2: 127-149.

Herb, Michael. 2005. No representation without taxation? Rents, development, and democracy. *Comparative Politics* 37, no. 3: 297-316.

Ross, Michael L. 2001. Does oil hinder democracy? *World Politics* 53, no. 3 (April): 325-361.

Steven Fish. 2002. Islam and authoritarianism. *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (October): 4-37.

Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett. 2004. Islam, Authoritarianism, and Female Empowerment: What are the linkages? *World Politics* 56, no. 4 (July): 582-607.

February 18

February 20

February 22

\**Bibliography due*

**Week 8: Liberal Reform or Authoritarian Entrenchment?**

Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski. 2007. Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 11 (November): 1279-1301.

John Waterbury. 1994. Democracy without democrats? The potential for political liberalization in the Middle East. In *Democracy Without Democrats: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (Ghassan Salamah, ed.). New York: I. B. Tauris.

Anoushiravan Ehteshami. 1999. Is the Middle East democratizing? *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 2: 199-217.

Ellen Lust. 2006. Elections under authoritarianism: Preliminary lessons from Jordan. *Democratization* 13, no. 3: 456-471.

February 25

February 27

March 1

<Spring Break>

**Week 9: Democratization in the Middle East?**

Raymond Hinnebusch. 2006. "Authoritarian Persistence, Democratization Theory and the Middle East: An Overview and Critique." *Democratization* 13(3): 373-395.

Daniel Brumberg. 2014. Theories of transition. In *The Arab Uprisings Explained: New Contentious Politics in the Middle East*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Stephan, Alfred. 2012. Tunisia and the "twin tolerations." *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2: 89-103.

Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2013. Tracking the Arab Spring: Why the modest harvest? *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4: 29-44.

Nathan J. Brown. Egypt's Failed Transition. 2013. *Journal of Democracy* 24, no. 4: 45-58.

Jason Brownlee. March 23, 2016. Why Turkey's authoritarian descent shakes up democratic theory. *Washington Post Monkey Cage*.

March 11

March 13

March 15

***\*Book review selection due***

***\*Deadline to choose presentation track for the course***

**Week 10: Civil Conflict**

Barbara Walter. 2017. The new new civil wars. *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 469-486.

James Fearon. 2013. Syria's civil war. *The Political Science of Syria's War*. Project on Middle East Political Science.

Mirjam E. Sørli, Nils Peter Gleditsch, Håvard Strand. 2005. Why is there so much conflict in the Middle East? *Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 1: 141-165.

Council on Foreign Relations. 2017. Who's who in Syria's civil war.

March 18

March 20

March 22

**\*Simulation 2: Syrian Peace Negotiations**

**\*Simulation 2 report due**

**Week 11: Political Islam**

Murat Somer. 2017. Conquering versus democratizing the state: political Islamists and fourth wave democratization in Turkey and Tunisia. *Democratization* 24, no. 6: 1025-1043.

Asef Bayat. 1998. Revolution without movement, movement without revolution: Comparing Islamic activism in Iran and Egypt. *Comparative Study of Society and History* 40, no.1:136-169.

Quintan Wiktorowicz. 2006. Anatomy of the Salafi movement. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29: 207-239.

March 25

March 27

March 29

**Week 12: Turkey: Kemalism to Erdoganism**

C&B 166-176, 263-271, 499-512

Quinn Mecham. 2004. From the ashes of Virtue, a promise of light: The transformation of political Islam in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 2: 339-358.

Galib Bashirov and Caroline Lancaster. 2018. End of moderation: the radicalization of AKP in Turkey. *Democratization* 25, no. 7: 1210-1230.

April 1

April 3

**\*Initial data paper due**

April 5 (No class)

**Week 13: Iran: Revolution, war, and anti-Americanism**

C&B 176-181, 273-283, 355-375, 499-512

Gareth Porter. 2014. When the Ayatollah said no to nukes. *Foreign Policy*.

Abbas Milani. 2015. Iran's paradoxical regime. *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 2: 52-60.

Said Amir Arjomand. 1986. Iran's Islamic revolution in comparative perspective. *World Politics* 38, no. 3: 383-414.

April 8

April 10

April 12

**\*Simulation 3: JCPOA (re)negotiation**

**\*Simulation 3 report due**

**Week 14: Civil Society and Human Rights**

Gurges Tezcur et al. 2012. Support for democracy in Iran. *PRQ* 65, no. 2: 235-247.

Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler. 2008. Attitudes in the Arab world. *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 1: 97-110.

Mark Tessler. 1997. The Origins of Popular Support for Islamist Movements: A Political Economy Analysis. In *Islam, Democracy, and the State in North Africa* (John Entelis, ed.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press

April 15

**\*Paper draft due to instructor and working group**

April 17

April 19

**\*Research paper working groups**

**\*Draft responses due**

**Week 15: Great Power influence, and the future of the Middle East (and presentations)**

Timothy Mitchell. 2002. McJihad: Islam in the U.S. global order. *Social Text* 20, no. 4: 1-18.

Katerina Dalacoura. 2005. US democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East since 11 September 2001. *International Affairs* 81, no. 5: 963-979.

April 22

April 24

April 26

**Week 16: Everyday politics and class conclusions (and presentations)**

Dale Eickelman. 1998. Inside the Islamic reformation. *Wilson Quarterly* 22, no. 1: 80-89.

April 29

May 1

***\*Final Paper due***

***\*Book Review due***

**Week 17: Finals week**

May 6

***\*Final exam essay due***