

Politics of the Middle East PSC/MES 344 – Maymester 2020

Department of Political Science
Syracuse University
Monday to Friday 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Online & Synchronous
Instructor: Sefa Secen

Contact Information:

Email: ssecen@syr.edu

Course site: blackboard.syr.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:00 – 11:00 am by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of politics of the Middle East and different factors that have shaped the current political landscape of the region. By assessing the key questions and debates in the field of Middle East politics, this course will help students obtain a critical understanding of politics in the region. For the past century, Middle Eastern politics has been marked by coups, revolutions, interstate wars, and sectarian conflicts. We will analyze the role of domestic and international actors and institutions in shaping the past and present political trajectory of the Middle East. We will also look at the key events and developments in various countries in the region. There is no prerequisite for taking this course. This course is also the gateway course for those wishing to obtain a Major or a Minor in Middle Eastern Studies (<https://bit.ly/2vXFtSX>).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After taking this course, students will be able to explain the relationships between political, economic, social, cultural, and historical forces in the Middle East. They will also be able to compare and contrast key features of the existing political institutions and systems in the region. Lastly, they will improve their critical thinking, writing and reading skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grades are comprised of four components:

- Participation 30%
- Discussion leader 10%
- Reading questions 10%
- Research papers 50% (25% each)

Participation (30%)

Students are expected to read all material before each online session and come prepared to actively discuss the readings. The course generally follows a lecture format, but much of the course will be spent discussing the readings and relevant current events.

Students will be graded daily on the following scale:

3 points: Thoughtful engagement with readings and class discussion

2 points: Satisfactory participation and engagement

1 point: Present for online session, but lack of preparation and engagement

0 points: Absent

Reading Questions (10%)

Before each session, students are required to submit two reading questions to the instructor. These questions should engage the readings directly and serve as useful points of discussion during class. These questions should engage the concepts, arguments, and/or evidence presented in the readings. Reading questions are due via e-mail to the instructor by 22:00 PM EST the day before class. Because students' questions will be used to structure class discussion, reading questions will not be accepted after the beginning of class. Questions received after the deadline but before the beginning of class are subject to the late assignment policy.

Questions will be graded on the following scale:

2 points: Clear and substantive engagement with readings. Bringing together themes from different readings.

1 point: Generally relevant questions, but lack of direct engagement with readings

0 points: Failure to submit questions or no obvious engagement with readings

Discussion Leader (10%)

Each student is required to lead discussion for half of one class. The discussion leader will prepare a 15-20-minute presentation. These presentations should not simply summarize the day's readings. Instead, students should introduce the topics by identifying core concepts and debates and providing a framework for thinking about and evaluating the readings. Students should also identify the weaknesses, limitations, and debates present in the readings. The presentation should provide a baseline for discussion and debate during class. PowerPoint is optional.

Research Papers (50%)

Each student will write two research papers during the course. The student will undertake an in-depth examination of an event, dilemma, or controversy concerning Middle Eastern politics and societies. The research papers should demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of the lectures and readings and follow the "Four C" rule: clear, concise, coherent, and creative. The choice of subject for the papers should be first cleared in individual discussions with the instructor.

Papers should be between 1,200-1,500 words in length, produced in Microsoft Word, and written in Times New Roman, 12-point font with 1-inch margins. There is no required citation format;

however, students should clearly source any quotations or references that appear in the papers with consistent citation format (MLA, Chicago, APA, etc.). The first paper is due by Friday, May 15, 5:00 PM EST, and the second one by Friday, May 22, 5:00 PM EST. Late submissions will be penalized 1/2 letter grade for each 24-hour delay.

This class will use Turnitin. Via Blackboard, each student will submit their papers to Turnitin, a service that identifies “matched text.” Using Turnitin, you will be given the opportunity to view your Originality Report and check that all sources you have used are properly acknowledged and cited. Note that all submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers in the future.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Succeeding in this course is in part a function of your own effort. You need to be an active, engaged, and committed learner. Here are some tips:

Do the readings. The lectures are not a substitute for the readings. Papers demand familiarity with material not only covered in the lectures but also in the readings. While reading, focus on the big picture to glean the main arguments in the texts. Think about the logics of the arguments and draw linkages and contrasts among the texts.

Attend online lectures. Likewise, the lectures include material not found in the readings and help you to improve your critical thinking skills.

Ask questions. You should not hesitate to ask questions or raise issues during the lectures. Your comments and questions will enrich the course and, of course, are essential to your participation grade.

Schedule online meetings. I am here to help and invite you to schedule online meetings with me to discuss your questions, comments, and suggestions.

Follow relevant issues outside of class. Reading about current and historical events in important journals and newspapers will help you to assess and apply the concepts you have encountered in the course. Try to look at newspapers such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal and/or periodicals such as the Economist, New Yorker, New York Review of Books and Atlantic among others.

COURSE READINGS

Required text:

- Ellen Lust (ed.), *The Middle East* (14th ed.) (CQ Press, 2017) ISBN: 9781506329284

Recommended Texts:

- Fromkin, D. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, New York: H. Holt, 2001
- Lewis B., *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years*, Simon and Schuster Press 1997
- Kamrava M., *The Modern Middle East: A Political History since the First World War*, University of California Press (3rd ed.).
- Bayat A., *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*, Stanford University Press 2013
- Lockman Z., *Field Notes, The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States*, Sandford University Press 2016
- Khalil, O., *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State*, Harvard University Press 2016

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

May 11, Monday: The Making of the Modern Middle East

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapter 1
- Hourani A., *The Ottoman Background of the Modern Middle East* (on Blackboard)
- Edward S., *Orientalism* New York: Vintage, 1987, Chapter 1 (on Blackboard).
- Bernard L., "The Roots of Muslim Rage" (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Max Fisher, 40 Maps that explain the Middle East (on Blackboard)
- Barkey, K., *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in comparative perspective*, Cambridge University Press
- Kamrava, M., Ch. 1-3
- Lustick, 1997, "The absence of Middle Eastern great powers: political "backwardness" in historical perspective." *International Organization* 51, No. 4: 653-683. (on Blackboard)

Recommended films:

- "Islam: Empire of Faith"
- "Lion of the Desert"
- "Lawrence of Arabia"
- "The Battle of Algiers"
- "Promises and Betrayals: Britain and the Struggle for the Holy Land"
- "Reel Bad Arabs – How Hollywood Vilifies Arabs?"
- "The Myth of Clash of Civilizations"

May 12, Tuesday: Social Change in the Middle East

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapter 2
- Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism: Lessons of the Arab Spring,” *Comparative Politics* 44, 2 (2012): 127-149 (on Blackboard).
- Lisa A., "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* 90, May 2011, (on Blackboard)
- Mitchell, 2014, “Israeli Marriages: More Ottoman Than Jews,” Haaretz (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” *American Anthropologist* (September 2002): 783-790 (on Blackboard).

May 13, Wednesday: Political Economy of Development

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapter 3
- Jeannie Sowers, “Water, Energy and Human Insecurity in the Middle East,” *Middle East Report*, no. 271 (on Blackboard).
- Beblawi, Hazem, 1987, "The rentier state in the Arab world." *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 383-398 (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Timur Kuran, “Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, 3 (2004): 71-90 (on Blackboard).
- Michael L. Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53, 3 (2001): 325-361 (on Blackboard).
- Workers and Thieves: Labor Movements and Popular Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, Cambridge University Press, p 61-134.

May 14, Thursday: Institutions, Governance, and Democracy

Required Readings:

- Lust, chapter 4
- Harik I., The Origins of the Arab State System, *Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 20, 2008 (on Blackboard)
- Sean Yom and Gregory Gause III, “Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On,” *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 2 (October 2012): 74-88 (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Kamrava, 2013, States and Their Opponents, (available through Library website) *State-Building in Middle East*

- Blaydes, 2017, State Building in the Middle East. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, 487-504. (on Blackboard)

May 15, Friday: Religion, Society, and Politics [FIRST RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE]

Required Readings:

- Lust, chapter 5
- Andrew F. March, "Political Islam: Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 18 (2015): 103-123 (on Blackboard).
- International Crisis Group (ICG). "Understanding Islamism." Brussels: ICG, 2005 (on Blackboard).
- Masoud et al. 2016, Using the Qur'ān to empower Arab women? Theory and experimental evidence from Egypt. *Comparative Political Studies*. 1555-1598 (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Cammett, M., & Luong, P. J. (2014). "Is there an Islamist political advantage?" *Annual review of political science*, 17, 187-206 (on Blackboard)
- Gole, N. 1997, "Secularism and Islamism in Turkey", *Middle East Journal* (on Blackboard).
- Mark T., "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries," *Comparative Politics* 34, 3 (April 2002): 337-354 (on Blackboard).
- Mottahadeh, R., "The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran," One world, Oxford, 2000

Recommended film:

- "The Infidel"

May 18, Monday: Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation

Required Readings:

- Lust, chapter 6
- Michael Herb. "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World." *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 367-384 (on Blackboard).

Recommended film:

"Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think"

May 19, Tuesday: The Arab & Israeli Conflict

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapter 7
- Ethan Bronner, “Bullets in My In-Box,” *The New York Times* (January 24, 2009) (on Blackboard).
- Max Fisher, “The Two-State Solution: What It Is and Why It Hasn’t Happened,” *New York Times* (December 29, 2016) (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Edward W. Said, “The One-State Solution,” *New York Times Magazine* (January 10, 1999): 36-39 (on Blackboard).

Recommended film:

- “Promises”

Guest Lecturer: Drew Kinney

May 20, Wednesday: International Politics of the Middle East

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapter 8
- Tristram, US Policy in the Middle East 1945-2008, ThoughtCo. (2019) (on Blackboard)
- Gregory Gause III, “Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War,” Brookings Institution (2014) (on Blackboard).

Recommended Readings:

- Nasr, V. (2018). Iran among the Ruins: Tehran's Advantage in a Turbulent Middle East. *Foreign Aff.*, 97, 108.
- Sadjadpour, Karim and Behnam Ben Taleblu. *Iran in the Middle East: leveraging chaos.* 2015.
- Kuru, A. T. (2015). Turkey's Failed Policy toward the Arab Spring: Three Levels of Analysis. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 26(3), 94-116.
- Stein, E. (2017). Ideological Codependency and Regional Order: Iran, Syria, and the Axis of Refusal. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 676-680.
- Salloukh, B. F. (2017). Overlapping Contests and Middle East International Relations: The Return of the Weak Arab State. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 660-663.
- Gause, F. G. (2017). Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the New Middle East Cold War. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50(3), 672-675.
- Jenkins, John. "The Middle East's great game." *New Statesman* 24 Nov. 2017

Recommended film:

- “Ghosts of Abu Ghraib”

May 21, Thursday: Country Profiles (Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia)

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapters 10, 11, 13, 21, 25

Recommended Readings:

- Peter Hessler, “Egypt’s Failed Revolution,” *New Yorker* (2017).
- Charles Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979," *American Sociological Review* (1996): 153-170.
- Shadi Hamid, “How Much Can One Strongman Change a Country?” *Brookings Institution* (June 27, 2017)
- Toby Jones, “Saudi Arabia’s Dangerous Sectarian Game,” *New York Times* (January 5, 2016).

Recommended Film:

- “The Square”

Guest Lecturer: Pedram Maghsoud-Nia

May 22, Friday: Country Profiles (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Persian Gulf States) [SECOND RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE]

Required Readings:

- Lust, Chapters, 12, 16, 18, 20, 23

Recommended Readings:

- “Life after Oil: Economic Alternatives for the Arab Gulf States,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 20, 3 (2009): 1-18.
- Norwegian Refugee Council, “Gaza: The World’s Largest Open-air Prison” (April 2018).
- Mikaelian & Salloukh, 2016, Strong Actor in A Weak State: The Geopolitics of Hezbollah.

Academic Integrity

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in

exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. If I suspect academic dishonesty or plagiarism, I will submit formal reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Also, <http://www.plagiarism.org> is a useful website for tips on citations and other writing resources.

Statement Regarding Disability-Related Accommodation

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented disabilities “Accommodation Authorization Letters,” as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Religious Observances Policy

SU’s religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

Campus Resources

There may be times during the semester that you need assistance, academically or otherwise. There are a wide variety of campus resources that may be able to help. Please consider using help when you need it. If you don’t know what type of help you need, you can ask me or other faculty in PSC.

- Counseling Center: <https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/counseling/>
Writing Center: <https://syr.mywconline.com/>
- Tutoring Services: Center for Learning and Student Success: <https://class.syr.edu>
- Financial Counseling: <http://financialaid.syr.edu/financialliteracy/>
- Career Services https://thecollege.syr.edu/student-success/?_ga=2.101048900.454082058.1534346263-1387513330.1433439063
- Other personal health resources <http://dailyorange.com/2018/08/heres-breakdown-personal-health-resources-available-su-students/>

Harassment

Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If a student has been harassed or assaulted, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling Center (315-443-4715, 200 Walnut Place, Syracuse, New York 13244-5040). Incidents of sexual violence or harassment can be reported non-confidentially to the University's Title IX Officer (Sheila Johnson Willis, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu, 005 Steele Hall). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University's Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and crimes I learn about to help make our campus a safer place for all.