The Middle East is quite popular today. Most of the reasons for that popularity are lamentable. In this course we will go beyond the lament to explore politics in one of the most important and fascinating regions of the world. Political discussion in the Middle East is the life of everyman. Waiting in line, people talk politics. Eating, people talk politics. Even at weddings, people talk politics. Therefore, this course will tackle the controversial issues and dilemmas of the region, but from a sober, analytical vantage. We want to try and answer why questions about the region, not simply what and how.

This is an introductory course. Part of the course will cover the political, social, and economic themes that animate debate in the field of Middle East Studies. A second goal is to gain comparative knowledge about the people of the region, their religions, cultures, and societies. The 22 countries that comprise the modern Middle East are quite diverse, therefore, we will only be able to focus on a few cases and issues. The period of analysis will be since World War Two.

Assigned Texts
For each lecture, there are assigned readings from books and articles. All can be accessed through the library’s e-reserve system.

Two books and an issue of Middle East Report are required.

*Penner Angrist, Michele, Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East (Textbook)
*Middle East Report: The Islamic Revolution at 30 (MERIP)
*Khaled al-Khamissi, Taxi

Grades and responsibilities
Students are responsible for the material covered in the lectures as well as assigned readings.
Grading is comprised of four components:

1. Mid-term examination 20%
2. Book analysis 15%
3. Debate paper 15%
4. Course diary 20%
5. Final examination 30%

**Please turn off mobile phones
**More than two unexcused absences from class will result in failure.
**Laptop may only be used in class for note taking. Please see me for permission
Lectures & Assignments

Week 1
8/24
Introduction

8/26
Diversity and Identity in the Middle East
“Moghadam, “Population Growth, Urbanization, and the Challenges of Unemployment,”
King-Irani, “Kinship, Class, Ethnicity,”

Week 2
8/31
From Islamic Empires to European Rule
Ibn Khaldun, “Government Offices”
Goldschmidt, “The Historical Context,” (focus on period from Ottoman Empire forward, pp.45-53)
Owen, “The End of Empires”

9/2
*Owen, “The Growth of state power in the Arab World,”

Week 3
9/7
Regimes and Opposition; States and Citizens
Textbook: Ghobashy, “Governments and Oppositions”

9/9
*Wedeen, “Seeing Like a Citizen, Acting Like a State Exemplary Events in Unified Yemen”

Week 4
9/14
Political Economy
Textbook: Moore, “Political Economy”

9/16
Textbook: Moore, “Political Economy”
*Moore and Parker, “The War Economy of Iraq”

Week 5
9/21
The External Environment
Textbook: Gause, International Politics and its Domestic Impacts

9/23
*Lustick, “The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Power.”
Week 6
9/28
Religion and Politics
Schwedler, “Religion and Politics”

9/30
Schwedler, “Religion and Politics”
*Josh Stacher, “The Brothers and the Wars,” in Middle East Report: The Islamic Revolution at 30

Week 7
10/5 (Book Analysis Due)
Revolutionary Regimes: Egypt and Iran
Textbook: Brown and Shahin, “Egypt”
Textbook: Keshavarzian, “Iran”

10/7
Textbook: Brown and Shahin, “Egypt”
Textbook: Keshavarzian, “Iran”
*Middle East Report issue, pp. 10-17; 26-33; 44-55

Week 8
10/12
*Bayat, “Revolution without movement, movement without revolution: comparing Islamic activism in Iran and Egypt”

10/14 MID-TERM EXAM

Week 9
10/19 FALL BREAK

10/21
Conservative Regimes and Monarchies
*Anderson, “Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East”
Textbook: Herb, “Kuwait and the UAE”

Week 10
10/26
Varieties of Monarchs
Textbook: Okruhlik, “Saudi Arabia”
*Dodge, “Violence and the illusion of reform in Saudi Arabia”

10/28
Textbook: Ryan, “Jordan”
**Week 11**

11/2

States and societies in peril: Iraq
Textbook: Lawson, “Iraq”

11/4

Iraq-post 2003
Textbook: Lawson, “Iraq”
*Moore, “Making Big Money on Iraq”
Also recommended:
Also see FBI interviews: www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB279/index.htm

**Week 12**

11/9

Israel
Dowty, “Israel”
*Shlaim, “The Debate about 1948”

11/11

Dowty, “Israel”

**Week 13**

11/16

Palestine
Textbook: Brown, “The Palestinian Authority”

11/18

Textbook: Brown, “The Palestinian Authority”
*Peteet, “Beyond Compare”

**Week 14**

11/23

The (failed) peace process
*Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”
*Ron Pundak, “From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?”
*Yezid Sayigh, “Arafat and the Anatomy of a Revolt”

11/25  Thanksgiving Break

**Week 15**

11/30

Toward Solutions?
Mossberg and Grinberg, “Beyond One and Two State Solutions”
Tony Judy, “Israel: The Alternative”
Alan Dershowitz, “Is the one-state solution a barrier to peace?”

12/2  Debate Paper Due