

**MIDDLE EAST POLITICS  
POSC 379**

**Case Western Reserve University  
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Professor Pete W. Moore

Office phone: 368-5265

e-mail: pete.moore@case.edu

**Office hours:**

**MW 1230-200, or by appointment**

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.

Two texts comprise much of the readings for each class. The texts are available in the bookstore:

Monte Palmer, *The Politics of the Middle East*, (Abbreviated, *Palmer*)

Roger Owen, *State, Power & Politics in the making of the Middle East*. (Abbreviated *Owen*)

Melanie McAlister, *Epic Encounters*

\*Shibly Telhami, *The Stakes*

\*Yusuf al-Qa'id, *War in the Land of Egypt*

\*One grade component is a research essay based on one of these books, therefore purchase *only the one* you choose to review.

## **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 | <b>20%</b> |
| 2. | map quiz             | <b>10%</b> |
| 3. | reading analysis     | <b>10%</b> |
| 4. | paper                | <b>20%</b> |
| 5. | final examination    | <b>40%</b> |

In addition to the mid-term and final, there will be a short in-class quiz and a short analysis of a class reading.

A book review is also assigned. You can choose either the Soueif, al-Qa'id, or Telhami book to write a 5-10 page (double-spaced) review.

**\*\*Plagiarism or violation of the university honor code will result in course failure and referral to the honor council.**

## LECTURES

*All readings aside from the required Palmer and Owen texts are available through the library's on-line reserve system. Some noted readings are available outside the library and the web addresses are given*

**8/30**

### **Introduction**

Palmer, pp.1-7.

Albert Hourani "Prologue," and "A New Power in an Old World."

**9/01**

### **Studying the Middle East: Power, Tribes, and Orientalism**

Palmer, 9-15.

Ibn Kahldun, *The Muqaddimah*, Volume II, p. 3-6

Yahya Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," *MERIP* (July-august 1993).

**9/06**

### **The Islamic Conquests---MAP QUIZ**

Palmer, pp.15-21; and 27-34.

Albert Hourani, "The Ottoman Empire."

**9/08 Labor Day**

**9/13**

### **Colonialism and decolonization**

Owen, pp. 8-26.

Palmer, pp. 34-42

**9/15**

### **The emergence of Middle Eastern states**

Owen, pp.27-44

**9/20**

### **The Lebanese Saga: wonderful cuisine, tragic politics**

Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon, 1970-1985*, pp.17-59.

Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon*, pp.93-101.

**9/22**

### **MOVIE: West Beirut**

**9/27**

**The Revolutionary States I: Egypt**

Palmer, pp.43-89.

Eberhard Kienle, "More Than a Response to Islamism: The Political Deliberalization of Egypt in the 1990s."

**9/29**

**Nationalism**

Owen, pp. 64-81.

Sati Al-Husri, "Muslim Unity or Arab Unity"

**10/04**

**Revolutionary states II: Egypt and Turkey Compared**

Owen, pp.96-100

Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics*, pp. 119-134.

**10/06**

**Revolutionary States III: Iraq**

Palmer, pp. 275-333.

Faleh Jabar, "The Worldly Roots of Religiosity in Post-Saddam Iraq." *Middle East Report*

**10/11**

**Religious monarchies and conservative strategies of state formation**

Owen, pp. 45-59.

Lisa Anderson, "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly*, 106, 1 (1991).

**10/13**

**Economic Development I: colonial legacies and state-led economic development**

Owen, pp.125-143.

**10/18**

**Economic Development II: oil states and the resource curse**

Gregory Gause, *The Oil Monarchies*, chapter 3 can be found online, <http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/icas/gause/chapter3.html>

**10/20\*\*\*MID-TERM EXAM\*\*\***

**10/25 FALL BREAK**

**10/27**

**The Gulf States**

Palmer, 221-274

Toby Jones, "Violence and the Illusion of Reform in Saudi Arabia." *Middle East Report* online, link at: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero111303.html>

**11/01**

**Islam and Politics: Introduction**

Owen, pp. 173-193

Guilain Denoeux, "The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam" *Middle East Policy*

Jillian Schwedler, "Islamic Identity: Myth, Menace, or Mobilizer?" *SAIS Review*.

**11/03**

**Political Islam: Reform, Revolt, or Defeat?**

Fatima Mernissi, "Muslim Women and Fundamentalism" *Middle East Report*

Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Decline of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria and Egypt," *Survival*

Glenn Robinson, "Can Islamists Be Democrats? The Case of Jordan."

**11/08**

**Israel**

Palmer, 103-158

Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*

**11/10**

**The Palestinians**

Migdal and Kimmerling, "The Revolt of 1834 and the Making of Modern Palestine," pp. 3-37; and "the Meaning of Disaster," pp.135-166.

Sara Roy, " Hamas and the Transformation(s) of Political Islam in Palestine."

**11/15**

**The Failed Peace Process**

Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors"

Ron Pundak, "From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?"pp.31-45.

Yezid Sayigh, "Arafat and the Anatomy of a Revolt," pp.47-60.

**11/17**

**Regional and International Politics**

Gregory Gause, "The Middle East," *Encyclopedia of US Foreign Relations*, Volume 3, 1997.

Ian Lustick, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers," *International Organization* 51:4 (Autumn 1997): 653-84.

**11/22**

**The Middle East and American Culture**

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp.1-47

**11/24 Thanksgiving Holiday**

**11/29**

**The Early Encounter**

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp.43-83

**12/01**

**The Middle East and African Americans**

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp.84-124

**12/06**

**Israel, the US, and the Good Fight**

Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp.155-234.

**12/08**

**Final Review**