

POSC 379: INTRODUCTION TO MIDDLE EAST POLITICS
MW, 4:50-6:05pm,

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Office Hours: MW 2:30-4:15 (Mather House 221)

The Middle East is a region of great diversity. Thus an introduction to its politics is also an introduction to history, society, and peoples. Given the current political environment and the United State’s fraught involvement in the region, it is easy to get overwhelmed by current events. While this course will engage some of those current issues, we will also take a step back to view the region, historically, politically, and culturally. This semester we will focus on the development of states in the region. What has been the fate of Middle Eastern states since the end of WWII. Today, several of the major Middle Eastern states are declining or are locked in violent struggles with their own people. What have been the effects socially, politically, and economically?

Grades and responsibilities

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

Exams (x2)	40%
Literature reviews (x8)	20%
Final Paper	40%

Class Policies to Note:

Computers or portable devices may only be used in class, with instructor permission, to take notes.

Any rescheduling and/or extensions of exams and/or papers that are not completed at the designed time must be discussed **before** the deadline to receive a rescheduling/extension. The professor designates late papers as Fs unless discussed prior to deadline. **Papers will not be accepted as a computer file through email.**

Plagiarism whether from digital or printed sources will not be tolerated. Failure to give credit in footnotes for other’s ideas, failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another source, and/or failure to acknowledge another author’s conclusions will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of university regulations.

Absence from class will be excused for up to 2.5 meetings, after which points will be deducted.

Assigned Texts

For each lecture, there are assigned readings from books and articles. All can be accessed through

our classroom Blackboard site in the documents section.

Themes, Lectures, and Readings

NOTE: Readings from *Middle East Report* (MERIP), can be accessed thru KSL. Just look up the date of the issue and articles can be accessed electronically.

Week 1: Introduction: Setting diversity and context in the Modern Middle East

8/29 Valentine Moghadam, "Population Growth, Urbanization, and Challenges of Unemployment"
David Patel, "Identity and Politics," in *Society and Politics*

8/31 No Class

Week 2: From Islamic Empires to European Imperialism: What happened before is important for what follows and the Middle East is no different. While we cannot do justice to the complex histories of the region and its people, we will discuss the major themes during the periods of the end Ottoman rule to the dominance of European powers until World War Two.

9/5 Labor Day

9/7 James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp, 9-44.

Week 3: End of Empires and the new Century: How do we understand the emergence of states in the Middle East? What have been the challenges in building states and how did rulers respond?

9/12-14 Roger Owen, "The End of Empires"
Simon Bromley, "From Tributary Empires to States System," pp. 46-79; 83-85
James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp, 71-99.
Ian, Lustick, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Power: Political 'Backwardness' in Historical Perspective"

Week 4: States and Regimes: How do nondemocratic regimes in the region maintain power? How are those regimes opposed by its citizens, or conversely how and why do some citizens nevertheless support nondemocratic rule?

9/19-21 Simon Bromley, "Comparative State Formation in the Middle East," pp. 119-135

Mona al-Ghobashy, "Governments and Oppositions," in *Society and Politics*
Tobias Thiel, "The Middle East Despot's 13-Point Guide to Longevity and Prosperity," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2013

Week 5: Political Economies and Corruption: How have states and regimes ordered their domestic economies? What is corruption and what are the political effects?

9/26-28 Pete Moore, "Political Economy" in *Society and Politics*
Reinoud Leenders, "Assessing Corruption," in *Spoils of Truce: Corruption and State-Building in Postwar Lebanon*, pp. 18-57
Ziad Abu Rish, "Garbage Politics," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2015
Hugh Naylor, "In a country where outages are the norm, a Lebanese town now has power 24/7," *Washington Post* 28 August

Week 6: Egypt and Tunisia and the 2011 Revolutions: What explains the popular and sustained mobilizations against authoritarian rule in 2011? What happened to these movements since?

10/3-5 Norma Claire Moruzzi, "Gender and Revolutions: Critique Interrupted," *Middle East Report*, Fall 2003
Michele Penner Angrist, "Understanding the Success of Mass Civic Protest in Tunisia," *Middle East Journal*, Autumn 2013
Mona Al-Ghobashy, "The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2011

Week 7: The Square: An award winning documentary about the Egyptian uprising and counter-revolution in Egypt.

10/10 Ahmad Shokr, "Reflections on Two Revolutions," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2012

10/12 *The Square*

10/14 Essay Exam Due, noon

Week 8: Religion and Politics: To what extent is religion responsible for political and social patterns in a given country?

10/17-19 Jillian Schwedler, "Religion and Politics" in *Society and Politics*
Ben Hubbard, "A Saudi Morals Enforcer Called for a More Liberal Islam. Then the Death Threats Began," *NYT*, July 10, 2016

Week 9: Religion and Politics II

10/24 FALL BREAK

10/26 Faisal Devji, "Against Muslim Unity," *Aeon*

Week 10: Iran: One of the major non-Arab countries of the region, politics in Iran intersects many of our course themes, diversity, political economy, and religion and politics.

10/31-11/2 Arang Keshaavarzian, "Iran" read to page 270
Ervand Abrahamian, "Why the Islamic Republic Has Survived," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2009
Arang Keshaavarzian, "The Iran Deal as Social Contract," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2016
Asef Bayat, "Revolution without movement, movement without revolution: comparing Islamic activism in Iran and Egypt"

Week 11: Israel and Palestine: What accounts for the failed peace process and what does the continuing occupation of Palestine mean for Israelis and Palestinians?

11/7-9 Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors" *New York Review of Books*, August 9, 2001
Oren Yiftachel, "Creeping Apartheid in Israel and Palestine," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2009
Ilana Feldman, "Gaza as Open-Air Prison," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2015
For background: Middle East Report, "Primer on Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict" (www.merip.org)

Week 12: The Gulf States: In the world, absolute monarchies survive mostly in the Gulf region of the Middle East. How do these monarchies survive and what role does oil wealth play?

11/14-16 "Rentierism and Resource Politics," in *Beyond the Arab Spring*
Sean Yom and Gregory Gause, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On"
Rivka Azoulay and Madeleine Wells, "Contesting Welfare State Politics in Kuwait," *Middle East Report*, Fall 2014
Kristen Diwan, "Parliamentary Boycotts in Kuwait and Bahrain Cost the Opposition"

Week 13: The Middle East and China: China is the newest major power to play and increasing role in the region.

- 11/21 Jacqueline Armijo, "DragonMart: The Mega-Souk of Today's Silk Road," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2014
Jessica Winegar, "The Moral Panic Over Chinese in Egypt," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2014.
- 11/23 Short Exam II**

Week 14: The Syrian Civil War and Regional Conflict

- 11/28-30 Bassam Haddad, "Syria's Stalemate: The Limits of Regime Resilience"
Kheder Khaddour and Kevin Mazur, "The Struggle for Syria's Regions," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2013
Mouin Rabbani, "The Un-Islamic State"
Jeannie Sowers, "Water, Energy and Human Insecurity in the Middle East," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2014

Week 15: The Refugee Crisis

- 11/30 Killian Clarke and Gozde Guran, "Mobilizing in Exile: Syrian Associational Life in Turkey and Lebanon," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2016
Sarah Tobin "NGO Governance and Syrian Refugee "Subjects" in Jordan," *Middle East Report*, Spring 2016
Dan Connell, "Eritrean Afars: The Refugees You Never Hear About," *Middle East Report*, Fall 2015
Jose Ciro Martinez, "Bread is Life: The Intersection of Welfare and Emergency Aid in Jordan," *Middle East Report*, Fall 2014
- 12/2 TBA