Case Western Reserve University  
Introduction to Middle East Politics

Professor Pete W. Moore  
pete.moore@case.edu  
Office Hours: MW 1100-1200 and 1300-1400 Mather House 221 or by appointment

The Middle East is a region of great diversity. An introduction to its politics is also an introduction to histories, societies, and peoples. Given the global political environment and the United States’ fraught involvement in the region, it is easy to get overwhelmed by current events. All political life is complex, however, that does not obviate informed analysis and empirical facts.

In the first half of the semester, we will focus on issues of diversity, historical development, political economy, and violent conflict in the region. In the second half, we will focus on the 2011 uprising and the recent historical relationship between the US and the Middle East.

Vigorous debate and criticism are encouraged. Debate expressed in a civil tone is an important way to get a fuller and more truthful picture of something. This is not only a fundamental democratic right and a basic citizenship skill; it is essential to interpreting information and making good policy. Rights not used are easily lost.

Grades
Presentation 20%
Essays (2) 40% (due week 5 and 10)
Final 40% (due December 15)

Presentations will be individually assigned during the semester.

Essays will be assigned and due weeks 5 and 10.

The final will be a case study analysis. You will pick a country or case in the region and research current political, social, and economic dynamics. We will meet individually about these projects. During the final week of class, everyone will present a short synopsis of their papers. Final due date is 15 December.

Classroom and University Policies:
*Laptops and other electronic devices should only be used for notes and reference to readings.  
*At this time, I am not allowing the use of any Artificial Intelligence tools for course assignments, unless otherwise allowed.  
*During the semester, 3 absences will be allowed. Any excess absences will require appropriate documentation.  
*In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability, you may be eligible to request accommodations from Disability Resources. In order to be considered for
accommodations, you must first register with the Disability Resources office.

*Students at Case Western Reserve University are expected to uphold the highest ethical standards of academic conduct. Academic integrity addresses all forms of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, obstruction, and submitting without permission work to one course that was completed for another course. Please review the complete academic integrity policy. Any violation of the policy will be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1:**  
**Introduction to the Middle East and Case Western Reserve University**

8/28-30  

Valentine Moghadam, "Population Growth, Urbanization, and Challenges of Unemployment"


**Week 2:**  
**Minorities in the Middle East: What constitutes identity, origin, and even diversity in the region today is in many ways politically and historically conditioned.**

9/4  
*Labor Day*

9/6  
Laura Robson, “Becoming a Sectarian Minority: Arab Christians in Twentieth Century Palestine,” in *Minorities in the Modern Arab World*


Joel Benin, “Egypt and its Jews: The Specter of an Absent Minority,” in *Minorities in the Modern Arab World*

*Suggested: David Patel, “Identity and Politics”*

Louise Cainkar, "Becoming Arab American," *Middle East Report* 278 (Spring 2016).

Week 3: 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 peoples, we will discuss the major historical and political themes leading up to the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the effects this had on the region’s politics.


Week 4: The Mandate System in Lebanon and Palestine: How did Europe control its territories in the Middle East and what were the political legacies?

9/18-20 Roger Owen, “The End of Empires” in *State, Power, and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 5-19


Akram Khater and Antoine Khater, “Assaf: A Peasant of Mount Lebanon”

Abdullah Schleifer, “Izz al-Din al-Qassam: Preacher and Mujahid”

Week 5: The end of the Mandate System and political independence inaugurated new political challenges. Young states in the Middle East faced competitive regional and international environments in which imperial interventions took on new forms. How did these pressures shape states?


Gregory Gause and Curtis Ryan, “The Impact of International Politics”

Week 6: Political Economies of Oil and Beyond: Socio-economic development in the region is too often reduced to oil. Here we examine oil politics within a context of regional inequality and chronic political conflict.

10/2-4 Timothy Mitchell, “Ten Propositions on Oil,” in *A Critical Political Economy of the Middle East*

Pete Moore, “Political Economy,” in *Politics and Society in the Contemporary*
Week 7: Regimes and Oppositions: How have political leaders sought to maintain their power? How have individuals and societies responded?

10/9-11 Mona al-Ghobashy and Michele Angrist, “Governments and Oppositions” in Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East, Third Edition


Kevan Harris, Jillian Schwedler "What is Activism?" Middle East Report 281 (Winter 2016).


Hisham Bustani, “Faisaly and Wehdat” and “A Bouquet of Subversive Ideas, Dedicated to Censorship,” Barricade: A Journal of AntiFascism and Translation, No1 (Spring 2018)

Week 8: Egypt and the 2011 Uprisings: One of the most consequential recent events was the region wide revolt against authoritarianism 2011. While this was not the first instance of organized protest, the speed and spread of these protests was unprecedented.

10/16-18 The Square

Mona Al-Ghobashy, “The Praxis of the Egyptian Revolution,” Middle East Report, Spring 2011

Week 9: Syria and the 2011 Uprisings (Fall Break)

10/25 Michel Aflaq, “Purifying the National Ideal: Baath Ideology,” in The Middle East and Islamic World Reader, ed. by Marvin Gettleman and Stuart Schaar.


Jan Selby "On Blaming Climate Change for the Syrian Civil War," Middle East Report 296 (Fall 2020).

**Week 10:** The (Gulf) Monarchies: The Middle is one part of the world where we still find absolute monarchies. How do such systems survive in the 21st century?


**Week 11:** The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and the Failed Peace Process: One of the world’s most enduring conflicts has shaped politics in the region and internationally. What happened to the peace process and where are we now?

11/6-8 Avi Shlaim, “The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process,” in *International Relations of the Middle East*

Michael Barnett, Nathan Brown, Shibley Telhami, “Introduction: What is Israel/Palestine?” in *The One State Reality* (Cornell, 2023)

Adam Tooze, “Chartbook 231 Israel's national security neoliberalism at breaking point?”


*Suggested:* Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar, “Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict” *MERIP Primer*

**Week 12:** The US and the Middle East: We close the semester examining the relationship between the US and the societies of the region. We examine policies but also the effects on the region and the effects on American society.


Suzy Hansen, *Notes on a Foreign Country*, Introduction
**Suggested:** Louise Cainkar, "Becoming Arab American," *Middle East Report* 278 (Spring 2016).

Documentary: *The Romey Lynchings*  
https://lebanesestudies.ncsu.edu/projects/romey.php

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13: The Middle East in African American Politics (Thanksgiving)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 14: Terrorism and Forever Wars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 15: Final Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/4-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>