

## **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 Laura Secor, "The Man Who Refused to Spy," *The New Yorker*, September 14, 2020.

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

*Suggested:* James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, Third Edition, pp. 1-8

#### **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*

Amahl Bishara, "Covering the Christians of the Holy Land," *Middle East Report* 267 (Summer 2013).

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).

Mark Tessler, "Arab and Muslim Political Attitudes: Stereotypes and Evidence from Survey Research," *International Studies Perspectives*, 2003

- 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.**
- 9/11-13 James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, Third Edition, pp, 13-68.  
(You can skim document sections)
- Betty Anderson, "Social Transformations: Workers and Nationalists in Egypt, Mount Lebanon, and the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," in *A History of the Modern Middle East*, **Focus on pp. 115-129**
- 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
- James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History*, Third Edition, **pp.87-99**
- 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?**
- 9/25-27 Ian Lustick, "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Power: Political 'Backwardness' in Historical Perspective" *International Organization*
- 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

Lisa Weeden, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Chapter 3: Acting 'As If' (67-86)

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

Tobias Thiel, "The Middle East Despot's 13-Point Guide to Longevity and Prosperity," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2013

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.

Erika Solomon, "Syria: A Tale of Three Cities," *Financial Times*, August 3, 2017

Kheder Khaddour and Kevin Mazur, "The Struggle for Syria's Regions," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2013

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

Asli Bali and Aziz Rana, "The US Debt to Syria," *Boston Review*, August 15, 2018

**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 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

10/30-11/1 Sean Yom and Gregory Gause, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On" *Journal of Democracy* 2012

Pete Moore "The Fiscal Politics of Rebellious Jordan," *Middle East Report Online*, June 21, 2018.

Adam Hanieh, "Ambitions of a Global Gulf: The Arab Uprisings, Yemen and the Saudi-Emirati Alliance," *Middle East Report* 289 (Winter 2018)

**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?"

Leila Farsakh "The Question of Palestinian Statehood and the Future of Decolonization," *Middle East Report* 302 (Spring 2022).

*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.**

11/13-15 Melani McAlister, "Introduction: Middle East Interests," in *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000*. (Note: this book is available thru KSL electronically)

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>

**Week 13: The Middle East in African American Politics (Thanksgiving )**

11/20-22 McAlister, "The Middle East in African American Cultural Politics, 1955-1972,"

Andy Clarno "The Thorns that Exist and Resist," *Middle East Report* 282 (Spring 2017).

**Week 14: Terrorism and Forever Wars**

11/27-29 McAlister, "Iran, Islam, and the Terrorist Threat, 1979-1989"

Toby Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East," *The Journal of American History*, (June 2012).

Roger Stern, "United States costs of force projection in the Persian Gulf, 1976-2007" *Energy Policy* (skim, focus on assessments of cost)

Waleed Hazbun, "Reimagining US Engagement with a Turbulent Middle East," *Middle East Report* 294 (Spring 2020).

**Week 15: Final Week**

12/4-6 TBA