

Middle East Politics
POSC240-01
St. John Fisher College—Spring 2019
TTh 3:10-4:30pm, Basil 206

Contact Information

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Course Description. This course surveys the politics of the Middle East by focusing on four broad themes: 1) state capacity and the provision of order, including issues affecting regime legitimacy; 2) society, such as social movements, activists, labor organizations, political parties, protest and social movements, and civil society organizations; 3) regime-type and institutional design, beyond distinctions between democracy and autocracy to include comparative authoritarianism, elections, consociational power-sharing, and decentralization; and 4) political economy of development, e.g., ISI, populism, neoliberalism, rentierism/oil politics, Gulf capital, regional and national wealth inequality, corruption, global financial integration, foreign investment, and labor. The second half of the course is case-specific, and includes discussions on the Israel-Palestine conflict; revolutionary upheaval in 2011 and its aftermath in Yemen, Libya, Syria, Egypt, and Tunisia; the "oil curse" in the Persian Gulf; and the contemporary politics of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.

Course Objectives. This class will, first, teach you to make and evaluate arguments about politics in comparative perspective and, second, introduce you to the methods political scientists use in their research. Upon completion of the course, you should be able to:

- 1) think analytically about intellectual debates about and events in the Middle East, in two broad ways:
 - i. *Cases*: you will learn about Middle East political and social systems.
 - ii. *Methods*: you will learn how to compare these systems.
- 2) think reflectively about the effects that academic findings and your own political footprint have on the Middle East, especially with respect to labeling regime-types and discussing identity.
- 3) apply skills 1 & 2 to the conduct of rigorous independent analysis of questions related to Middle East politics and society.

Required Text. Readings come from book chapters and articles of my choosing, but we supplement these works with additional cases from your only required text. The price below is based on the new book, but of course you can buy used (or an older edition):

Lust, Ellen (ed.). 2017. *The Middle East* (14th ed.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press (ISBN: [978-0393937541](#), \$43.94 on Amazon).

Special Accommodations. If you have a disability, which may require classroom or test accommodations, please see me as soon as possible or meet with Disabilities Services (Kearney 300), which is responsible for coordinating accommodations and services for students with disabilities. Phone: (585) 385-5252 and [website](#).

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Break-down of course grades:

Midterm Exam (2/28)	25%
Response Questions	10%
Research Proposal (due 4/25)	20%
Final Exam (TBD)	25%
Participation	20%

Attendance. Attendance is a requirement if you wish to do well in this course. In-class notes, discussion, and lecture material are the basis for the course's exams.

I give you *two allowed absences*, with no questions asked. These are “life happens” absences, and you will of course be responsible for course material and discussion content for that day. I also give additional *excused absences* for things like illness, religious holidays, family deaths, et cetera. For absences beyond the given *two allowed absences*, you must provide some sort of documentation, excluding in certain circumstances as discussed with me.

Participation. Individual participation is worth 20% of your grade. You are expected to attend classes regularly and participate in discussions. I want you to talk so that you engage with the material and your classmates. It is not any more complicated than that. You are free to ask about current events, readings you did not understand, et cetera. This way we can learn interactively.

Response Questions. You are required to submit three questions prior to each class, based on reading material, via Blackboard under the “Response Questions” tab, for a total of 24 submissions @ 4 points per submission (96 points). For those of you who simply submit all 24, I will add an additional 4 points to your point total (100 points possible).

Midterm Exam. The midterm exam covers all topics discussed in class from our introduction on Tuesday, January 15 (1/15) to the day of the exam on Thursday, February 28 (2/28).

Final Exam. The final exam is cumulative, covering all topics from our introduction on January 15 (1/15) to the day of the exam, which you will take during finals week (date/time: TBD).

Research Proposal. You will complete a 2-page research proposal on a subject of your choosing. A strong proposal requires five essential elements: 1) a *refined* research question; 2) an argument for why the question is of socio-political importance; 3) a brief discussion, derived from outside research, on possible/alternative answers to your question; 4) a statement on how you would conduct the necessary research to answer your question; and 5) a note on possible obstacles/barriers to conducting your question, such as difficulty in locating/accessing sources. We will discuss each of these elements in detail during our class sessions. Proposals are due via the course Blackboard site's Turnitin tool before class on April 25th (4/25). I will deduct one third of a letter grade for each day your proposal is late, unless otherwise discussed with me.

Academic Integrity. You will likely fail the course if I catch you cheating on exams. Plagiarism will result in an automatic F on with no opportunity to redo the assignment. A second violation of plagiarism will result in course failure. Academic dishonesty is intellectual theft, and I treat it as such. You should review the College's academic integrity policy, available [here](#).

Concern for Others. If you have a concern about another classmate in this class or any other setting on SJFC's campus, please communicate this to your professor.

Outside Resources. Aside from visiting me outside of class, St. John Fisher also offers other support services, such as:

Center for Academic Excellence. The [Center](#) provides advice on improving academic performance, tutoring services, disability services, career services, math and writing services, and plenty of online resources. Phone: (585) 385-8147.

Course Schedule and Readings. You are responsible for reading all assignments. Come prepared to discuss them in class. Some readings are available through Blackboard, but most readings are available via links, which you can find in blue in the course outline (below).

Also below, if you click “doc” next to “Further Reading” you will navigate to a Google Doc of additional readings on each course topic. These links will remain active beyond the length of the course, so you can use them for independent research, capstones, and the like. Clicking “Notes” brings you to a Google Doc that raises general and specific questions related to the readings for each topic. Ideally, you will click this link before you read for class, as a reading guide. These will also serve as study guides because I update them after each lecture.

Follow closely in class and watch Blackboard for updates. The syllabus could change.

Course Outline

I. East of Where?

Further Reading (doc)

(Jan. 15-22, notes)

January 15, Introduction

Film: *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*.

January 17, Where is the Middle East?

Lewis, B. (1982). *The Question of Orientalism*. *The New York Review of Books*. June 24.

Said, E., & Grabar, O. (1982). *Orientalism: An Exchange*. *The New York Review of Books*. August 12.

Khalil, O. (2014). *The Crossroads of the World: U.S. and British Foreign Policy Doctrines and the Construct of the Middle East, 1902-2007*. *Diplomatic History*, 38(2), 299-344.

January 22, The Ottoman Legacy

Keyder, C. (1997). *The Ottoman Empire*. In Barkey, K., & Mark Von Hagen, M. (Eds.), *After empire*. New York, N.Y.: Westview Press.

Danforth, N. (2015). *The Middle East That Might Have Been*. *The Atlantic*. February 13.

De Bellaigue, C. (2015). *Stop calling for a Muslim Enlightenment*. *The Guardian*. February 19.

Lust (ch. 1).

II. The State in the Middle East

Further Reading (doc)

(Jan. 24 & 29, notes)

January 24, Defining the Middle East State

Harik, Ilya. (1985). *The Origins of the Arab State System*. *International Spectator*, 20(2), 20-32.

Mitchell, T. (1991). *The limits of the state: Beyond statist approaches and their critics*. *The American Political Science Review* 85(1), 77-96.

January 29, War & State Formation in the Middle East

- Tilly, C. (1985). [War making and state making as organized crime](#). In P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, & T. Skocpol, Eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (pp. 169-191). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Perthes, V. 2000. [Si Vis Stabilitatem, Para Bellum: State Building, National Security, and War Preparation in Syria](#). In S. Heydemann, Ed., *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Lustick, I. S. (1997). [The absence of Middle Eastern great powers: political “backwardness” in historical perspective](#). *International Organization*, 51(4), 653-683.

III. Identity in the Middle East

Further Reading (doc)

(Jan. 31-Feb. 5, notes)

January 31, Political Islam

- Keddie, N. R. (1966). [The Pan-Islamic Appeal: Afghani and Abdülhamid II](#). *Middle Eastern Studies*, 3(1), 46-67.
- Zubaida, S. (2000). [Trajectories of Political Islam: Egypt, Iran and Turkey](#). *Political Quarterly*, 71(1), 60-78.
- Hegghammer, T. (2008). [Islamist Violence and Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia](#). *International Affairs*, 84(4), 701-715.

February 5, Nationalism

- Campos, M. U. (2005). [Between ‘Beloved Ottomania’ and ‘The Land of Israel’: The Struggle Over Ottomanism and Zionism Among Palestine’s Sephardi Jews, 1908-13](#). *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37, 461-483.
- Antrim, Zayid. (2012). [Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World](#). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press (introduction).
- Pandey, Gyanendra. (2001). [Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India](#). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (only pp. 1-20).

IV. Regimes: Democracy and Dictatorship

Further Reading (doc)
(Feb. 7-26, notes)

I. Democracy and Dictatorship in the Middle East

February 7, Middle East Democracies

- Hudson, M. C. (1969). [Democracy and Social Mobilization in Lebanese Politics](#). *Comparative Politics*, 1(2), 245-263.
- Marks, M. (2014). [The Tunisian election result isn't simply a victory for secularism over Islamism](#). *The Guardian*. October 29.
- Cherif, Y. (2017). [Tunisia's risky war on corruption](#). *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. July 18.

February 12, Middle East Authoritarianism: Strongmen, Single Parties, and Selectorates

- Nassif, H. B. (2015). [A military besieged: The armed forces, the police, and the party in Bin 'Ali's Tunisia, 1987-2011](#). *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 47(1), 65-87.
- Wedeen, L. (2008). *Peripheral visions: Publics, power, and performance in Yemen*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (only pp. 1-21, 103-146).

February 14, Political change, authoritarian persistence

- Lust, E. (2011). [Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East](#). *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 46(2), 163-190.
- Bellin, E. (2004). [The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective](#). *Comparative Politics*, 36(2), 139-157.
- Albrecht, H. & Schlumberger, O. (2004). ['Waiting for Godot': Regime Change Without Democratization in the Middle East](#). *International Political Science Review*, 25(4), 371-392.

February 19, Democratization

- Angrist, M. P. (2006). *Party building in the modern Middle East*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press (introduction).
- Tessler, M., & Gao E. (2005). [Gauging Arab support for democracy](#). *Journal of Democracy*, 16 (3), 83-97.
- Ghannouchi, R. (2016). [From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy](#). *Foreign Affairs*. September /October.
- Piser, K. (2016). [How Tunisia's Islamists Embraced Democracy](#). *Foreign Policy*. March 31.

II. Institutional Design

February 21, Elections & Legislatures, Federalism, & Partition

- Shehata, S., & Stacher, J. (2006). [The Brotherhood goes to parliament](#). *Middle East Report*, 36 (240), 32.
- Amr, Hady. (2009). [The good, the bad and the ugly in Lebanon's elections](#). *The Brookings Institute*. June 12.
- Perthes, V. (1992). [Syria's parliamentary elections: Remodeling Asad's political base](#). *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 22.
- Kane, S., Hiltermann, J. R., & Alkadiri, R. (2012). [Iraq's Federalism Quandary](#). *The National Interest*. February 28.
- Mishra, P. (2007). [Exit wounds: The legacy of Indian partition](#). *The New Yorker*. August 13.

Midterm Review, Midterm, & Spring Break¹

February 26, February 28, & March 5-7

¹ We will review for the midterm on Tuesday, February 26th, and you will take the exam on Thursday, February 28th. After that, you're on break (March 5 & 7). Relax!

IV. Political Economy and Development

Further Reading (doc)
(March 12-21, *notes*)

March 12, Institutions & Culture: Impediments & Catalysts of Growth

Kuran, T. (2004). [Why the Middle East is economically underdeveloped: Historical mechanisms of institutional stagnation](#). *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18(3), 71-90.
Lust (ch. 3).

March 14, Oil Politics: Rentierism & the Resource Curse

Mitchell, T. (2018). [Petro-capitalism, Part I](#). *The Dig Podcast*. April 10.
Mitchell, T. (2018). [Petro-capitalism, Part II](#). *The Dig Podcast*. April 13.
Hanieh, A. (2011). [Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States](#). New York, N.Y.: Palgrave MacMillan (introduction).

March 19, Saudi Arabia

The Economist. (2017). [A shake-up in Riyadh: The tasks facing the new Saudi crown prince](#). *The Economist*. June 22.
The Economist. (2017). [Understanding Saudi Arabia's new crown prince](#). *The Economist*. June 22.
Wright, R. (2017). [Saudi Arabia's Game of Thrones](#). *The New Yorker*. June 22.
Haykel, B. (2017). [Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?](#) *Project Syndicate*. January 20.
Perper, R. (2018). [Saudi Arabia is giving many of its citizens \\$3000 for free](#). *Business Insider*. January 8.
Batrawy, A. (2018). [King of Saudi Arabia Overhauls Cabinet Posts After Fallout From Khashoggi's Killing](#). *TIME*. December 27.
Yuhas, A. (2018). [Video on Turkish TV Is Said to Show Khashoggi's Remains Being Moved](#). *The New York Times*. December 31.
BBC. (2019). [Netflix removes Hasan Minhaj comedy episode after Saudi demand](#). *BBC*. January 2.

March 21, International Political Economy

Mitchell, T. (1999). *No Factories, no Problems: The Logic of Neo-Liberalism in Egypt*. *Review of African Political Economy*, 26 (82), 455.

V. The Israel-Palestine Conflict

Further Reading (doc)
(Mar. 26-Apr. 2, notes)

March 26, Israel & Palestine in the Nineteenth Century

Makdisi, U. (2000). *Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. Berkeley: University of California Press (introduction).
Herzl, T. (1896/1946). *The Jewish State*. Jewish Virtual Library.

March 28, Israel & Palestine in the early Twentieth Century

Dowty, A., & Epstein, Y. (2001). 'A Question That Outweighs All Others': Yitzhak Epstein and Zionist Recognition of the Arab Issue. *Israel Studies* 6 (1), 34-54.
Davis, Rochelle. (2011). *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press (only pp. xvii-26).

April 2, Oslo & After

- Rabbani, M. (2001). [Rocks and Rockets: Oslo's Inevitable Conclusion](#). *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30(3), 68-81.
- Roy, S. (2012). [Reconceptualizing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Key Paradigm Shifts](#). *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 41(3), 71-91.

VI. The 2011 uprisings

Further Reading ([doc](#))

(April 4 & 9, [notes](#))

April 4, The "Arab" uprisings

- Shavit, A. (2013) [Occupy Rothschild, 2011](#). In *My Promised Land*. New York, N.Y.: Spiegel & Grau.
- Kuran, T. (1991). [Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989](#). *World Politics*, 44 (1), 7-48.
- Anderson, L. (2011). [Demystifying the Arab spring: parsing the differences between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya](#). *Foreign Affairs*, 2-7.

Responses to protests (4/9) & Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya (4/11) will be on 4/16:

April 9, Responses to Protests

Bellin, E. (2012). [Reconsidering the robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring](#). *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), 127-149.

VII. Case Studies

*Additional cases ([Gulf](#), [Levant](#))
Further Reading ([doc](#))
([Apr. 11-25](#), [notes](#))*

April 11, Egypt, Tunisia, & Libya

Frontline. (2013). [Egypt in Crisis](#). *Public Broadcasting Service*. September 17 (we will watch in class).

Syria and Iraq (4/16) will be covered on 4/23:

April 16, Syria & Iraq

Polk, W. R. (2013). [Understanding Syria: From Pre-Civil War to Post-Assad](#). *The Atlantic*. December 10.

Filkins, D. (2014). [What We Left Behind](#). *The New Yorker*. April 28.

Lust (ch. 12).

Both Turkey & Iran will be covered on 4/25:

April 23, Turkey: From Kemalism to Erdoğanism

Anderson, P. (2008). [Kemalism](#). *London Review of Books*, 30 (17), 3-12.

Cagaptay, S., & Aktas, O.R. (2017). [How Erdoganism Is Killing Turkish Democracy: The End of Political Opposition](#). *Foreign Affairs*. July 7.

April 25, Post-Revolutionary Iranian Politics²

Maloney, S. (2015). [Iran's Political Economy Since the Revolution](#). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press (introduction & conclusion).

Final Exam³

April (4/30)

² Your research proposals are due today, April 25th (4/25), before the start of class via Blackboard's Turnitin tool.

³ You will turn in a take-home final on April 30 (4/30) via the course's Turnitin feature under the "final" tab.