

Area Seminar in Comparative Government and Politics (PS 574): Comparative Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

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Introduction and Objectives

This course provides a survey of contemporary political science research related to the comparative politics of the Middle East, with specific emphasis on the Arab world. In this course, we will discuss and debate some of the most intransigent and controversial problems facing the contemporary Arab world, including democratization, authoritarianism, political Islam, the oil economy, foreign intervention, gender relations, and other topics. For most of these questions, there is no right answer. But, over the course of the semester, I expect you – as aspiring scholars - to develop educated opinions on these questions and defend them with rigor. You will be evaluated based not only upon written work but also upon thoughtful, active class participation.

Each week is oriented towards a different debate theme of Middle East politics. To engage in these debates, students are expected to come prepared to class having read all assigned course materials thoroughly. I will not provide a daily lecture. Rather, I will ask probing questions and moderate discussion among students (i.e. seminar style). I want students to learn to adjudicate between different arguments and decide which ones are most persuasive based on theoretically consistency and methodological rigor.

Most of your graded assignments are **due at the end of the semester (November 20 and December 2)**. Be aware of this deadline as you organize your course schedule, extracurricular activities, and personal life. Also take note: I do not offer extra credit or grant extensions (unless extensions meet university policy related to medical illnesses and family emergencies). You can read those guidelines at the end of this syllabus.

Central learning objectives that the course supports

By the end of this course, students will have:

- a. Gained an understanding of emerging research topics in comparative politics and democratization studies, focusing on their application to the Middle East context.
- b. Developed an understanding of the benefits and limitations of the Area Studies research approach in terms of theory, method, and practice.
- c. Improved their ability to develop and communicate their own educated opinions in these areas, drawing from a stronger foundation of empirical evidence.

Program-level learning objectives that the course supports

By the end of this course, students will have:

- *MA Program: Students will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of comparative politics literature related to the Middle East which will be showcased in a final essay.*
- *PhD Program: Students will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of comparative politics literature related to the Middle East, and produce a polished essay that can be used as a dissertation chapter or stand-alone article.*

Assignments and Grading Criteria

There are **100 grand total points** within this course:

- **Class Participation and Preparedness = 30 points**
- **Research Paper (8,000-10,000 words: *Times New Roman*) = 40 points**
- **Final Mock Comprehensive Exam = 30 points**

Please see information below concerning these assignments:

1) Class Participation (30 points)

Class participation and preparedness are major components of evaluation in this seminar. Each student will be evaluated on the basis of informed participation and contribution to seminar discussion. If student participation flags, I reserve the right to assign reading quizzes or other small assignments (max: 30 points) to ensure completion of course reading.

2) Research Paper (40 points)

On **November 20**, students must submit a research paper related to Middle East politics. The topic can be one related to the course syllabus or outside its scope. The substance of the paper should relate to the *politics* of the Middle East (not cultures, languages, carpets, ect.).

On **September 4**, you must submit to me a **2-page paper proposal**. Please include at least 10 citations from peer-reviewed academic books or articles. Your proposal should:

- State your research question clearly: Under what conditions do...?
- State your proposed answer (thesis)
- Research Design: What cases do you propose to include in your comparison? Why?
- How do you propose to prove your answer/thesis (methods, evidence, qualitative/quantitative)?
- What are the major rival arguments that answer your question (literature review)?
- Ph.D. students: what do you plan *to do* with this paper? Will it become a stand-alone journal article, dissertation chapter, or what?

On **November 6**, you must bring a **rough draft** paper in hard-copy form to class for peer review. **Failure to bring a rough draft** will result in a **one grade-letter deduction** for your final paper grade.

Please use a prominent journal's citation style guide, like *Comparative Politics* or *Comparative Political Studies*). You must cite at least 15 academic sources (i.e. articles and books) in your final research paper. **Failure to cite 15 academic sources** will result in a **one grade-letter deduction** in your final paper grade. On the last day of class, please provide me a hard-copy and electronic-copy of your paper. Late papers will not be accepted.

Since this course focuses on comparative politics, please ensure that your research paper has a *comparative* angle. This means your paper must analyze at least two countries in the Middle East *or* have a clear diachronic/sub-national comparison within one case (i.e. comparing different time periods, provinces, institutions, ect.).

Here are some (non-exhaustive) examples of appropriate topics for research papers:

- Under what conditions did the Arab revolutions succeed in bringing democratization? Why did the Egyptian Revolution fail, whereas the Tunisian revolution succeeded?
- Under what conditions do tribes affect state-building? How did tribes affect state-building differently in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria?
- Under what conditions do Arab Christians achieve political dominance in Arab states? What explains Arab Christians' strength in Lebanon and their weakness in Egypt?
- Under what conditions do Arab states develop pluralistic, nondemocratic party systems? Why did Morocco under Mohammed VI have a more pluralistic party system than Egypt under Mubarak?
- Under what conditions do Islamist parties secure electoral victory? A sub-national comparison of Morocco's 2002, 2007, and 2011 legislative electoral cycles.
- Under what conditions did Syria's regime marginalize ethnic minorities? A comparison of Kurds, Christians, and Druze in the Pre-Revolution Era.
- Under what conditions did Egypt's non-democratic develop regime have close diplomatic relations with the United States? A Comparison of the 1950s, 1980s, and 2010s.
- Under what conditions do Amazigh (Berber) citizens get integrated into Arab-dominated political systems? Why are Amazigh citizens more politically integrated in Morocco than in Algeria?
- Under what conditions do Arab states develop sophisticated public policy planning for healthcare, environmental protection, mass transportation, or ect.? What explains variation in this public policy planning between Egypt and Jordan?
- Under what conditions is Islam compatible with liberal democracy? What explains the historical success of democracy in Turkey and its failure in Egypt?

I grade papers based not only on their ideas but also on the clarity of their prose (including accuracy in grammar). Your paper should have a clear research question and thesis. Before submitting your paper, please have a friend proof-read it.

2) Mock-Comp Final Essay Exam (30 points)

A written essay exam will be on Tuesday, **December 2** in a university computer lab. This will be a closed-book, closed-note exam under time constraints that will model a comprehensive exam for doctoral students. Expect the exam to last three hours.

Active reading for class is key to success in this exam. If you participate in class actively, and come to class having read all assigned materials, you will likely do well on the final exam. It's a good idea to meet with your class colleagues to study for this exam. Focus on identifying the main strengths and weaknesses of the books and articles listed on the syllabus.

Required Books & Articles

All articles will be made available on blackboard. Please purchase the following books for this course:

- Mounira M. Charrad. *States and Women's Rights: the Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Press, 2001)
- Abdellah Hammoudi. *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Estimated prices on amazon.com for books (used, without shipping):

\$2.90: Charrad
\$9.77: Hammoudi
\$15.07: Brownlee
\$13.71: Stacher
\$19.48: Schwedler
Total: \$60.93

I may make slight adjustments to the reading schedule when I believe doing so will better help students reach the course objectives as described above. That being said, I respect your time and will notify you of any changes no later than one week before the affected class session.

Class schedule and reading assignments

August 21: Disciplinary Sociology of Area Studies

On the area studies & comparative politics debate:

- Gary King, "Why Context Should Not Count," *Political Geography* 15 (1996): 159-64.
- Robert H. Bates, "Letter from the President: Area Studies and the Discipline," *APSA-CP Newsletter* (1996), 1-2.
- Chalmers Johnson, "Preconception vs. Observation, or the Contributions of Rational Choice Theory and Area Studies to Contemporary Political Science," *PS* (1997), 170-174.
- Stephen E. Hanson, "The Contribution of Area Studies," *Qualitative and Multi-method Research Newsletter* (2008): 35-41.
- Valerie Bunce, "Comparative Democratization: Big and Bounded Generalizations." 2000. *Comparative Political Studies*: Intro, 715-727. Skim rest.

On Middle East politics:

- James Bill, "The Study of Middle East Politics, 1946-1996: A Stocktaking," *The Middle East Journal* (1996): 502-512
- Timothy Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in David Szanton (ed.) *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (2002): 1-24.

August 28: Islam & Authoritarianism

- Richard A. Gabriel. "The Warrior Prophet." *MHQ: Quarterly Journal of Military History* 19 (Summer 2007): 6-15.
- Bernard Lewis. "The Roots of Muslim Rage." *The Atlantic* (1990)
- Bernard Lewis. "Islam: What Went Wrong." *The Atlantic* (2002)
- Timur Kuran. 2013. "The Political Consequences of Islam's Economic Legacy," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39 (4-5): 395-405.
- Clinginsmith, et. al. "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj: Religion and Tolerance in Islam's Global Gathering," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (2009): 1133-1167.

September 4: Tribes, State-Building, & Authoritarianism - Bring a **Paper Proposal** to Class

- Dale. F. Eickelman, "What is a Tribe?" in *The Middle East and Central Asia: Anthropological Approach* (Uppers Saddle, New Jersey: Pierson Hall, 2002), 115-135 (stop at 'Ideologies').
- Mounira M. Charrad. *States and Women's Rights: the Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Press, 2001)
- Sean L. Yom, "Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan: The Case of the HIRAK Movement," *Middle East Journal* 68.2 (2014): 229-247.

September 11: Culture, Custom, & Authoritarianism

- Abdellah Hammoudi. *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Michael C. Hudson. "The Political Culture Approach to the Arab Democratization: The Case for Bringing it Back In, Carefully," in Brynen, Rex, Korany, and Noble eds. *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, vol. I.

September 18: Political Economy, Oil, & Authoritarianism

- Michael Ross. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53 (April 2001): 325-361.
- Giacomo Luciani, "Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East," in Louise Fawcett *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2009): 80-102.
- Mehran Kamrava. "Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar," *Middle East Journal* 63 (2009): 401-420.
- Sean L. Yom. 2011. "Oil, Coalitions, and Regime Durability: The Origins and Persistence of Popular Rentierism in Kuwait." *Studies in Comparative International Development*.

September 25: Youth Bulge, Technology, & Authoritarianism

- Phillip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain. "The Upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The Role of Digital Media." *Journal of Democracy* (July 2011)
- Phillip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain. "What best Explains Successful Protest Cascades? ICTs and Fuzzy Causes of the Arab Spring." *International Studies Review* (2013).
- Jon B. Alterman. "The Revolution will not be Tweeted," *Washington Quarterly* (2011).
- Lisa Anderson. "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2011).
- Kurt Weyland, "The Arab Spring: Why the Surprising Similarities with the Revolutionary Wave of 1848?," *Perspectives on Politics* (2012): 917-934.
- Class Visit/Guest Lecture by **Dr. Samer Shehata**, Department of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma.

October 2: The Military, Loyalty, & Authoritarianism

- Mehran Kamrava. 2000. "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East." *Political Science Quarterly* No. 1, 115: 67-92.
- Zoltan Barany. 2011. "Comparing the Arab Revolts: The Role of the Military." *Journal of Democracy*
- Hicham Bou Nassif. 2013. "Wedded to Mubarak: The Second Career and Financial Rewards of Egypt's Military Elite from 1981 Till 2011," *The Middle East Journal*, 67, No. 4: 510-530.
- Hicham Bou Nassif. 2013. Tunisia article (unpublished manuscript)
- Holger Albrecht. 2013. "The Myth of Coup-Proofing: Risk and Instances of Military Coups d'état in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950-2013." *Armed Forces & Society* (2014): 1-29.

October 9: Foreign Powers, National Security, & Authoritarianism

- Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Jean-Francois Daguzan. 2010. "France, Democratization, and North Africa," *Democratization* No. 9, 1: 135-147.
- Mohammed Ayoob. "American Policy Toward the Persian Gulf: Strategies, Effectiveness, and Consequences," in *International Politics of the Persian Gulf* (ed. Mehran Kamrava) (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011: 120-143.

October 16: No class, Fall Break

October 23: Institutions & Authoritarianism #1: Divide-and-Rule

- Daniel Brumberg, "The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy," *Journal of Democracy* (2002): 56-68.
- William Zartman, "Opposition as Support of the State," in Dawisha, Adeed and William Zartman in *Beyond Coercion: the Durability of the Arab State* (1988): 61-87.
- Ellen Lust-Okar, *Structuring Conflict in the Arab World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), only 1-37, 52-84 (focus on differences in types of Structures of Contestation)
- Ellen Lust-Okar and Amaney Jamal, "Rulers and Rules: Reassessing the Influence of Regime Type on Electoral Law Formation," *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (2002): 337-366.

October 30: Institutions & Authoritarianism #2: Political Parties

- Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- Jason Brownlee and Joshua Stacher. 2011. "Change of Leader, Continuity of System: Nascent Liberalization in Post-Mubarak Egypt," *APSA-Comparative Democratization Newsletter* (May 2011): 1-9.

November 6: Institutions & Authoritarianism #3: The Monarchical Exception

Rough Draft Due: Bring to Class for Workshop

- F. Gregory Gause, III. “Kings for All Seasons: How the Middle East’s Monarchies Survived the Arab Spring,” (Doha: Brookings Doha Center 8, 2013).
- Christopher Davidson, “Arab Sunset: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies,” *Foreign Affairs* (October 2013).
- Victor Menaldo, “The Middle East and North Africa’s Resilient Monarchs,” *Journal of Politics* 74.3 (2011).

November 13: Islamists, Civil Society, & Authoritarianism

- Sheri Berman. 2003. “Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society” *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 1, 2: 257-272.
- Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation: Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- Matt Buehler, “The Threat to ‘Un-Moderate’: Moroccan Islamists and the Arab Spring,” *Middle East Law and Governance* (2013).

November 20: Summation & Exam Review Session: Final Paper Due.

November 27: No Class, Thanksgiving.

Tuesday, December 2 (time TBD): Mock Comprehensive Exam in Computer Lab (closed-book).

Final Classroom rules:

1. No computers in class
2. No texting, telephoning, or iphoning in class
3. No eating in class
4. Please behave respectfully to your colleagues
5. Please do not dress in ways that distract learning
6. We will discuss controversial topics. Please be understanding of others’ opinions.

The Fine Print

This section contains specific information about course and university policies. Much of the text is not my own, but is adapted from related University of Tennessee publications. My door is open should you want to discuss these policies in greater detail. More information about most of these topics can be found in the UT *Hilltopics*.

Student Disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately at the beginning of the semester. My hope is that we will establish some reasonable accommodations well before any exams or major assignments are due. Please also consider contacting the Office of Disability Services (2227 Dunford Hall) to learn more about the resources they offer (865-974-6087)

Class Conduct

Students have a right to a professional and harassment-free environment that facilitates learning and discourse. Please be respectful of others and report any issues to me privately. If you ever feel threatened, endangered, or harassed in class, please consider contacting Student Judicial Affairs (409 Student Services Building). They can be reached at 865-974-3171.

Religious Observances

If you contact me early in the semester, I will be happy to work with you to accommodate your observation of religious holidays. I should be notified at least two weeks in advance of such holidays - and much earlier should a graded assignment, exam, due date, or group project fall near this date.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All students are expected to abide by the University Honor Statement. The statement and examples of violations can be found in in *Hilltopics*. These violations are serious offenses, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the University. Per university policy, instructors are **required** to report all offenses to the Department Head, Dean, and Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The instructor has full authority to suspend a student from his/her class, to assign an "F" in an exercise or examination, or to assign an "F" in the course.

Communication of Announcements

Announcements will be sent via email to students' official UTK email addresses and/or posted on Blackboard. You are responsible for checking your email and Blackboard regularly during the semester.