

Political Science 463: Contemporary Middle East Politics

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Introduction and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to the politics, society, and culture 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 students - 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 want students to learn to adjudicate between different arguments and decide which ones are most persuasive based on historical evidence, logical consistency, and normative objectives.

*If you do not want to attend class or do not want to read, **do not** enroll in this course.*

Note: I do not accept late work. I do not offer extra credit. I do not grant extensions (unless extensions meet university policy related to medical illnesses and family emergencies). You can read those policies 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 introduction to the key concepts of comparative politics and democratization studies, focusing on their application in the Middle East.
- b. Improved their ability to develop and communicate their own educated opinions regarding politics of the Middle East,

Program-level learning objectives that the course supports

- *Undergraduate: Students will demonstrate solid, introductory knowledge of politics of the Middle East upon which they can build in future coursework at the MA and PhD levels.*

Assignments and Grading Criteria

There are **100 grand total points** within this course. These assignments include:

- **Closed-book Essay Exam = 20 points**
- **Arabic Literature Book Presentation = 4 points**
- **19 Summary Papers (250 words *max*) = 76 points (4 points per paper)**

Please see information below concerning these assignments:

1) Written Closed-book Essay Exam (20 points)

A written essay exam will be held the last day of class. This will be an in-class, closed-book exam under time constraints.

Participation in class and active reading is key to success in this exam. If you participate actively in class, and come to class having read all assigned materials, you will likely do well on the final written exam. The final written exam will closely match our in-class discussions, and will not be a ‘surprise’. It will revolve around the essential question of this course: Why has the Arab world not transitioned to democracy? What specific factors hinder its democratization?

For the final exam, I expect you to use evidence-based argumentation with in-text citations of the course readings (author name and year). You should memorize these citations, and prepare for the final exam well in advance. Example:

Bernard Lewis claims that Islam’s intrinsic values and principles are undemocratic (Lewis, 2002).

It’s a good idea to meet with your colleagues to study for this exam. Focus on identifying the main themes, strengths, and weaknesses of the articles and books listed on the syllabus.

2) Arabic Book Presentation (4 points)

You must select and read a book of contemporary Arabic literature. With a group of other students to be chosen the first week of class, you must also prepare a 45-minute presentation on the book that explains its key themes, characters, plot, conflict, climax, and resolution (ect.). If you are absent from the group presentation, you will not receive points for this assignment.

3) 19 Summary Papers (SP) (4 points per SP, 250 words *max*)

Nearly every class, you will be required to submit a short paper (175-250 words) in which you summarize the class readings (book or articles). Place a word count at the bottom of the paper. Please identify the author (or authors') main research question, argument, and evidence. Focus on answering the questions listed on the syllabus, utilizing the big three "take-away" ideas from the text.

Please put your name, UTK id, and Summary Paper number in the top left-hand corner of the paper. Example:

John Smith
UTK ID: 11124152
August 2, 2014
Summary Paper #1

Please cite relevant pages in the text to support your summarization and paraphrasing of the author's/authors' work. Don't use quotations. Just paraphrase the ideas and cite. Here's an example with correct citation format:

In her article on the military and the Arab revolutions, Bellin argues that the loyalty of the state's coercive apparatus is important for authoritarian resilience (Bellin 2011, 76).

The purpose of these papers is to ensure that students come to class having completed all assigned reading and prepared to participate. Summary papers are due at the beginning of class. **No late papers are accepted.** Further, **papers will not be accepted after I have completed the process of collecting them at the beginning of class** (i.e. If you are *late* to class, and miss the time period in which papers are collected, you will miss the opportunity to turn in your SP resulting in a zero for this assignment). I reserve the right to change *when* during the class period I choose to collect the papers.

I reserve the right to *randomly verify attendance* based on paper submission during the class period. I may do this 3 or 4 times or more during the semester. If I discover that a paper has been submitted with your name on it, though you are not present in class, I consider this an act of academic dishonesty: You will receive a zero for the summary paper assignment (i.e. - 4 points) and an additional penalty (i.e. - 4 points). If I catch you handing in a paper for another student whom is absent from class, I will dock your overall grade (- 8 points). These violations may be reported to Student Judicial Affairs as incidents of academic dishonesty.

Grade Scale

A = 93.00 and above

A- = 90.0-92.0

B+ = 89.0

B = 83.00-88.00

B- = 80.00-82.00

C+ = 79.00

C = 73 – 78.00

C- = 72.00 – 70.00

D+ = 69.00

D = 63.00 – 68.00

D- = 60.00-62.00

F = 59.00 and below

Required Books & Articles

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

- Abdellah Hammoudi. *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

You must choose one from among these four books of Arabic literature to review for section 4 (all of which are available on amazon.com):

- *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih (Sudan)
- *Welcome to Paradise* by Mahi Binebine (Morocco/North Africa).
- *Taxi* by Khaled Alkhamissi (Egypt)
- *A Melody of Tears: Sorrows of Syria* by Anas A Ismael

As books of contemporary Arabic literature, some of their passages contain adult/graphic themes or content. Please ***do not*** read the following pages from the following texts. I think that *Taxi* has the least adult content.

- *A Melody of Tears: Sorrows of Syria* (Pages: 129-135, 227-229, 143-145)
- *Welcome to Paradise* (Pages: 150-158).
- *Taxi* by Khaled Alkhamissi (Pages 69-70)

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

Introduction & Syllabus

Thursday, August 21

- What is the Middle East? Who are the Arabs? What is democratization? Why is the Arab world not democratic?

(Section 1) Islam & Arab Authoritarianism

Class 1 (SP 1 due): Why does Lewis think Islamic values are undemocratic?

- Bernard Lewis. "The Roots of Muslim Rage." *The Atlantic* (1990)
- Bernard Lewis. "Islam: What Went Wrong." *The Atlantic* (2002)

Class 2 (SP 2 due): What about Islam's origins make it undemocratic?

- Richard A. Gabriel. "The Warrior Prophet." *MHQ: Quarterly Journal of Military History* 19 (Summer 2007): 6–15.

Class 3 (SP 3 due): How do Islam's economic institutions inhibit democratization?

- Timur Kuran. 2013. "The Political Consequences of Islam's Economic Legacy," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 39 (4-5): 395-405.

Class 4 (SP 4 due): How does data from Pakistan's Hajj challenge Lewis and Gabriel?

- David Clinginsmith, Asim Ijaz Khwaja, Michael Kremer. 2009. "Estimating the Impact of the Hajj." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

(Section 2) Culture & Arab Authoritarianism

Class 5 (SP 5 due): How do Arab regimes build their cults of personality to support authoritarianism?

- Abdellah Hammoudi. *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
- Lisa Wedeen. "Acting As If: Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1998).

(Section 3) Youth Bulge, Technology, & Arab Spring

Class 6 (SP 6 due): Why/How did social media contribute to Arab democratization?

- Phillip N. Howard and Muzammil M. Hussain. "The Upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The Role of Digital Media." *Journal of Democracy* (July 2011)
- Muzammil M. Hussain and Philip N. Howard, "What Best Explains Successful Protest Cascades? ICTs and the Fuzzy Causes of the Arab Spring," *International Studies Review* (2013): 48-66.

- Barry Wellman, "Egypt: The First Internet Revolt?" *Peace Magazine* (2011), 6-10

Class 7 (SP 7 due): Why/How did social media not contribute to Arab democratization?

- Jon Alterman, "The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *The Washington Quarterly* (2011): 103-116.
- Lisa Anderson. "Demystifying the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 2011).

(Section 4) Arabic Literature Book Presentations

Class 9 (Book Presentation due – Group 1)

- *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih (Sudan)
- *Welcome to Paradise* by Mahi Binebine (Morocco/North Africa)

Class 10 (Book Presentation due – Group 2)

- *Taxi* by Khaled Alkhamissi (Egypt)
- *A Melody of Tears: Sorrows of Syria* by Anas A Ismael

(Section 5) The Military, Loyalty, & Authoritarianism

Class 11 (SP 8 due): How do militaries in the Middle East differ?

- Mehran Kamrava. 2000. "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East." *Political Science Quarterly* No. 1, 115: 67-92.

Class 12 (SP 9 due): How can military loyalty affect Arab democratization?

- 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.

(Section 6) Foreign Policy & Arab Authoritarianism: Western Support

Class 13 (SP 10 due): Why/How do foreign powers inhibit democratization in the Persian Gulf and North Africa?

- 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.
- Jean-Francois Daguzan. 2010. "France, Democratization, and North Africa," *Democratization* No. 9, 1: 135-147.

Class 14 (SP 11 due): Why/How do foreign powers inhibit democratization in Egypt?

- Jason Brownlee, *Democracy Prevention: The Politics of the U.S.-Egyptian Alliance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

(Section 7) Political Economy & Arab Authoritarianism: Oil & Rentier Theory

Class 15 (SP 12 due): How does oil hinder democracy? Explain the Rentier Effect.

- Michael Ross. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53, April 2011: 325-361.

Class 16 (SP 13 due): How does the Rentier Effect support authoritarianism in Qatar and Kuwait?

- 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*.

(Section 8) Institutions & Authoritarianism #1: Political Parties

Class 17 (SP 14 due): How can institutions support authoritarianism in Egypt and Syria?

- Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Palto Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).

Class 18 (SP 15): How does Syria’s Regime maintain its rule through a cross-sectarian coalition?

- Joshua Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria* (Palto Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012).
- Oded Haklai, “A Minority Rule over a Hostile Majority: The Case of Syria,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* (2000). Read introduction, 30-48 only.

(Section 9) Institutions & Authoritarianism #2: The Monarchical Exception

Class 19 (SP 16 due): What is the monarchical exception? Why are monarchies more durable than presidential dictatorships?

- F. Gregory Gause, III. “Kings for All Seasons: How the Middle East’s Monarchies Survived the Arab Spring,” (Doha: Brookings Doha Center 8, 2013).

Class 20 (SP 17 due): What factors may undermine the stability of Arab monarchies?

- Christopher Davidson, “Arab Sunset: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies,” *Foreign Affairs* (October 2013).
- Stephane Lacroix, “Is Saudi Arabia Immune?” *Journal of Democracy* (October 2011).

(Section 10) Islamists, Civil Society, & Authoritarianism

Class 21 (SP 18 due): Why are Islamists a threat to democratization in the Arab world?

- Sheri Berman. 2003. “Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society” *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 1, 2: 257-272.
- Ellen Lust. 2011. “Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* (2011).

Class 22 (SP 19 due): Why are Islamists not a threat to democratization in the Arab world?

- Samer Shehata and Josh Stacher, “The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament,” *Middle East*

Report (May 2006).

- Matt Buehler, “The Threat to ‘Un-Moderate’: Moroccan Islamists and the Arab Spring.” *Middle East Law and Governance* (2013).

(Section 11) Film Screening: *The Closed Doors* by Atef Hetata

Class 23

- Watch movie

Class 24

Finish Movie & Discussion

(Section 12) Mandatory Review Session & Final Exam

Class 25

- Mandatory, in-class review session for final exam.

Class 26

- Final Essay Exam (computer lab, in-class, no notes)
- Bring your UTK ID number

Extra Section (if necessary): Tribes and Authoritarianism: *How does tribalism inhibit democratization in the Arab world?*

- Dale Eickelman, “What is a Tribe?” (read until ideology).
- Mounira Charrad, “Center and Local Patrimonialism,” *Annals of Social and Political Research*, 2011.

Final Classroom rules:

1. No computers in class
2. Arrive to class on time, do not leave early
3. No texting, telephoning, or iphoning in class
4. No eating in class
5. Please behave respectfully to your colleagues
6. Please do not dress in ways that distract learning
7. 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.

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 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.