Course Name: Comparative Middle East Politics  
Course Code: POL 372  
Semester: Spring 2017

Scheduling: Tuesdays 3:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Instructor Data:
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Prerequisites: according to the Gonzaga Spokane requirements (check on-line)

Course Description:
This course offers students an overview of contemporary Middle East politics with a comparative perspective and covers the period starting from the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the close of World War I and will emphasize the historical, political and economic roots of contemporary events. We will focus on the processes of state building and struggles for self-determination across the region and look into the domestic, regional, and international factors shaping the foreign policies of the Middle East states. Class discussions will cover the following topics: the emergence of the state system in the modern Middle East; the influence of colonialism and nationalism in its development; the military in state and politics; party systems and the growth of democratic politics leading to the regional turmoil and the Arab Spring of 2011 (covering the Tunisian Egyptian, Yemeni and Libyan revolutions as well as popular revolts in Syria and Bahrain); the politics of religion (the challenge of political Islam); women in the Middle East political life; and the impact of major conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and other regional conflicts.

The Middle East is taken to comprise Iran, Israel, Turkey and the Arab states, but discussions will also cover countries that take part of the “Greater Middle East” such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia. The general approach of the course gives considerable latitude to students to focus on the countries that most interest them.

We will always keep an eye on current political developments in the region and will include these in the course itself to invite participants to actively follow up the news coverage about the Middle East. The course organization will allow the student to concentrate on whichever period of Middle Eastern contemporary history most interests them.

Course Objectives
The aim is for participants to become familiar with the region as a whole, and to better understand selected case studies that present the constitutive elements listed above. We will focus mostly on Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, but participants will also gain some knowledge about less covered areas and countries of the region.

By the end of the course, participants should have a clearer understanding of the origins of the conflicts that constantly undermine the stability of the region and should be able to identify political actors in the region, their various backgrounds and motivations and their relative influence in the political scene. Moreover, the participants should acquire through this course a more nuanced and complete understanding of Middle East, its states, its political cultures and its peoples.
Teaching Method

We will explore and debate on many issues about the politics of the region (or the implications that politics in the region may have on the rest of the world, in particular the USA and Europe). For that matter, students will be required to get acquainted with the BBC World Service website whose coverage of the Middle East should provide a good starting point for this part of the class (available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/default.stm, or http://news.bbc.co.uk. It will be very interesting to also look at the websites of Al-Jazeera (http://english.aljazeera.net/), Egypt Independent (http://www.egyptindependent.com/) and the Haaretz (Israeli Daily newspaper’s English version on line (http://www.haaretz.com/) and Russia Today online (https://www.rt.com/)

Participants are expected to lead class discussions through their individual critical and analytic presentations of reading material. Communication skills, critical thinking and proactive participation in class discussions will be the main criteria of evaluation.

In the second part of the course (after mid-term exam), each participant will be asked to make a short presentation (not more than 5 minutes) about a past event listed at the end of this syllabus, or to choose a current news from the BBC website and introduce the topic to the rest of the class (more on the format of the presentation will be explained during the course itself). On top of assigned readings, the course will also be based on taught lectures, the analysis of a variety of audiovisual documents and open discussion with participants.

Teaching Commitment

• Establish a sense of community in the class room to encourage the exchange of information, knowledge and opinions among students and establish long term networks.
• Encourage students to take the class presentations as opportunities to develop and practice their communication and presentation skills. In fact transferable skills are essential for any type of career young scholars plan to pursue in the future.
• Encourage students to distance themselves from prejudice and bias in their studies of political and social sciences.
• Encourage students to access various and diverse mass media resources with an objective and analytical attitude taking into consideration the diverse visions and interests behind the various editorial lines reporting on news.
• Emphasize the importance of acquiring sufficient academic skills to produce written work (research papers and written essays in exams) that is evaluated according to the following criteria:
  • Well formulated argument
  • Ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
  • Good use of bibliography.
  • Clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling)

Course Requirements:

• Active and regular class attendance;
• REGULAR reading of assigned documents and selected writings (about 50 pages per week);
• Presentation about the assigned readings;
• One short presentation about current or past news development;
• One term paper (not less than 3000 words) about one of the questions suggested for each course in the syllabus below;
• Two in-class exams (essay-type).
Decorum
Cell-phones off; no food and beverages admitted, except for bottled water,

No technical devices are accepted (laptops, IPad, etc.)

Disrupting behavior (doing something else during the course, engaging in private conversations, playing with electronic devices) is not accepted and if repeated it will negatively affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade or may result in removal from the course.

Attendance Policy
Attendance is taken at the beginning of class from the first day of the semester. The student entering class after attendance is taken has to contact the professor at the end and announce his/her presence. However, this does not mean that coming late is accepted. Two late arrivals may be excused, three turn automatically into an absence and will affect the attendance and participation part of the final grade.

Students can miss one week’s work, irrespective of the course formula (three sessions, two sessions, one session). It is their responsibility to make up for the missed work. If they miss a quiz or a report they are not allowed to have it at another time, unless the absence is for certified medical reasons and the professor and Dean agree.

More than one week’s work missed is going to be penalized as follows:

One extra absence:
1. by lowering the attendance and participation grade

Two extra absences
2. by lowering the final grade by a whole letter grade

Three extra absences
3. by grading the whole course F

Assessment Criteria
This course is graded on a 400-point scale that breaks down as follows:

- 100 points for the Mid-Term Examination;
- 100 points for the Final Examination;
- 100 points for the Term Paper;
- 30 points for the news presentation;
- 40 points for the readings presentation
- 30 points for the effective participation.

Deadline and evaluation criteria for the Term Paper:
The term paper should be a minimum of 3000 words incl. footnotes and a short bibliography. You are free to choose the reference system (Harvard quotation system, e.g (Owen 2004: 111-134) or footnotes at the bottom of the page), but make sure that you QUOTE YOUR SOURCES.

Please send your term paper to the instructor via email (fatma.sayed@eui.eu) at the LATEST by Monday March 30th 2015. Make sure that your assignment is in a standard and unlocked electronic version [.doc or .rtf format].

Term papers submitted late will receive a grade penalty as follows: 1 day—1 letter grade (e.g., A- to B-), 2 days—2 letter grades (e.g., A- to C-), more than 2 days—grade of 0 / F on the assignment.
The evaluation is done according to the following criteria:
- well formulated argument (rhetorical strategy)
- ability to approach an issue from various points of view and evaluate them critically
- good use of bibliography. Sources need to be cited and listed at the end in the Bibliography. Class notes can build the frame of your argumentation, but will not be cited as primary sources.
- clarity of expression including quality of style (grammar, spelling).

**Significance for the final grade of attendance and participation**

A: the student has no absence, is punctual and respectful with the professors and the classmates, is always prepared for class (has done the reading and writing assignments); He/she vividly participates in class discussions and contributes with interpretations which prove fine critical sense and creativity, using a grammatically correct, semantically rich and conceptually clear language.

B – the student is respectful and punctual, is prepared for class, participates in discussions, has a good level of understanding the issues under focus and an appropriate use of language.

C – has a adequate but schematic or superficial understanding of the texts and issues under focus, is not always prepared for class, uses a simple language.

The language/art teachers will describe their own definition of grades.

**Grades Significance for written assignments**

**Grade A:** the work is an excellent synthesis of elaborated course in-puts, extensive reading and original ideas; it is well articulated in a balanced argumentation and formulated in a clear, fluent style.

**Grade B:** the work shows a good elaboration of the course inputs, a well-conducted discourse and a good use of bibliography; it has a good level of style.

**Grade C:** the work proves a basic understanding of the research issue, but does not use the bibliography properly/or does not express ideas in a persuasive clear style or lacks in discourse planning, therefore needing improvement.

**Grade D:** The work is acceptable, but weak in terms of formulating and discussing the question under focus and organizing the discourse. It relies on non-academic sources and does not, in general, comply with the requirements, unless in minimal way.

**Grade F:** The work is not acceptable in terms of the basic requirements or has not been submitted in time.

**Grade 0:** the work has not been submitted

**Grade 0 + Main Campus Report:** the work has been plagiarized.

**Grades Conversion**

A= 94-100
A - = 90-93
B+ = 87 – 89
B= 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- =70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 65- 66
F = below 65
Academic Honesty
Academic honesty is essential to education and represents the bond of trust between the university, the instructor and the student.

Academic dishonesty is any action by which a student seeks to claim credit for the intellectual effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic exercise. It includes unauthorized assistance in tests and examinations; intentionally impeding or damaging the academic work of others; submitting another person's work as your own, or providing work for this purpose; submitting work of your own that has been substantially edited and revised by another person, or providing such an editing and revision service for others; submitting material from a source (books, articles, internet sites) without proper citation and bibliographic reference; paraphrasing material from a source without appropriate reference and citation; submitting substantially the same piece of work in more than one course without the explicit consent of all the instructors concerned; assisting other students in any of the above acts. Students who are academically dishonest will receive “0”, zero on the work in question or a failing grade for the course as a whole, depending on the importance of the work to the overall course grade and the judgment of the instructor.

Plagiarism
Academic dishonesty can manifest itself in plagiarism, defined as claiming intellectual property on somebody else's work, in other words as cultural theft. Written assignments will be submitted to the plagiarism detection procedures of TurnItIn.com., activated on Blackboard.

A plagiarized assignment/paper, research project, etc will be graded 0 (zero) and sent to the Main Campus accompanied by a report.

Special Accommodation for students with learning disabilities
Documented learning disabilities or other medically certified problems that need special accommodation for any of the student's expected academic performances will be treated with the due attention.
Required Readings and Bibliography:


For a comparison with other ‘developing countries’, see the very good textbook of:
Introduction, 2nd edition, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (a new edition was

**Web resources:**

As stressed in the course objectives, course participants are invited to become at ease with
interpreting current political developments in the region. There are many ways to do so. One is by
reading the coverage of good international printed press (*The Economist, Le Monde, Financial
Times, the Guardian, The Independent*, etc.).

Another is by a frequent browsing of Internet. For that matter, the website of the **BBC World
Services** is very important:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/default.stm. See also the dossier at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/themes/conflict_and_war/middle_east/default.stm

Other very useful sights to look at are:
www.jerusalempost.com (http://www.jpost.com/)
http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/index.htm

Other good analyses can be found on the web at:

**MERIP** (Middle East Research and Information Project): www.merip.org. This Washington-based
research center publishes the bimonthly Middle East Report (with a selection of articles online),
shorter and quick articles (Report Online at, http://www.merip.org/mero/mero.html) and Op-Eds,
available at http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/newspaper_opeds.html

**MEI** (Middle East Institute): http://www.mideasti.org Based in Washington DC, this research
institute is home of the acclaimed Middle East Journal. You will find useful background information
on the Middle East in general, on Islam, and good interactive maps on countries of the region with
key dates and useful indicators about the level of socio-economic development.

**POGAR** The Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR) launched by the United
Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in early 2000. The website provides resources and
information on governance reform in the Arab states, including general and country-specific essays
on the themes pertaining to each concept, related publications, empirical studies, statistics,
searchable databases and valuable Web links.
www.pogar.org

Finally, have a look at the very interesting and funny website of the Centre for the Study of
Cartoons and Caricature (hosted by the University of Kent at Canterbury). It has a catalogued
database of over 90,000 images accessible at http://library.kent.ac.uk/cartoons/ (you’ll have to
register (for free) at: http://opal.ukc.ac.uk/catalogue/ccc.pl).

A quick search with the entry ‘Middle East’ gives access to more than 700 political cartoons from
the early 1930s until present day.
Course Schedule:
PART ONE: Historical & DIACHRONIC PRESENTATION

Class 1: Tuesday 10 January 2017

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION
What is the Middle East? What are its limits?
A brief history of MENA since the foundation of Islam
The Ottoman Empire up to 1900

THEMES
The populations living in the Middle East
The religions coexisting in the region

Question (for term paper):
1. Does it make sense to speak of the Middle East as a whole or should one qualify her/his statements when generalizing about the politics of the region?

Class 2: Tuesday 17 January 2017

READINGS:
- Cleveland and Bunton (2009: 57-90) “Part two: The Beginnings of the era of transformation” And (119-132) 7-The Response of Islamic Society”

HISTORICAL FOCUS:
The collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1900-1918)
The late colonial period (1920-1950)

THEMES:
Nahdhah, or the rise of Arab Nationalism
Colonial influence and creation of long-lasting imbalances in national systems.

Questions:
2. Is the emergence of nationalisms in the Middle East of a particular kind or can they be set on an equal analytical footing with, say, European nationalisms?
3. How have French and British colonial policies contributed to undermine the legitimacy of modern Middle Eastern states over the long run? Illustrate your answer with possibly more than one country.
Class 3: Tuesday 24 January 2017

READINGS:

HISTORICAL FOCUS:
Creation of Israel and Birth of the Palestinian Question

THEMES:
- Political and religious Zionism(s)
- From Arab nationalism(s) to Pan-Arabism
- Struggle for hegemony amongst Arab States

Questions:
4. Explain how and why Great Britain, which was at first a supporter of the creation a Jewish state in the western shores of the Mediterranean Sea, became gradually an opponent to Israel and explain why the USA became subsequently the new protector of Israel.
5. Explain why Arab political leaders became disillusioned with western powers. How can this fact in turn explain the rise of pan-Arabism as the leading ideology for Arab states from the 1950s onwards?

Example of presentation of a historical news development:
26 January 1952: British killed in Cairo Riots
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/26/newsid_2506000/2506301.stm

Class 4: Tuesday 31 January 2017

READINGS:
- Owen (2004: 23-38) ‘2 - The growth of state power in the Arab world’

HISTORICAL FOCUS:
The long-lasting impacts of the Cold War in the Middle East

THEMES:
The growth of State power:
- State apparatus to control
- Politics in authoritarian states

Questions:
6. Illustrate (with reference to at least two countries) how the context of the Cold War did not contribute to the creation of a democratic order in the Middle East.
7. The Middle East used to be the sphere of influence of European powers. How was the situation evolved up to the 1970s? Do European still have some influence in the region?

Example of presentation of a historical news development:
1 February 1979: Exiled Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid_2521000/2521003.stm

Class 5: Tuesday 7 February 2017

READINGS:
- Owen (2004: 90-109) ‘6 - The remaking of the Middle Eastern political environment between the two Gulf Wars’
- Halliday (2005: 130-164) ‘5 - After the Cold War: the maturing of the Greater West Asian Crisis’

THEMES:
The end of the Cold War and profound changes in the Middle East.
Understanding the ‘Greater West Asian Crisis’ in contemporary terms.

Questions:
8. Why has the question of democracy and democratization become so important in the agenda of the Middle East since 1990?
9. Why does Fred Halliday speak of ‘Greater West Asian Crisis’ (2005)?

Class 6: Tuesday 14 February 2017

READINGS:

THEMES:
Understanding national, regional and international conflicts in the Middle East.

Questions:
10. How have wars and conflicts served and been instrumental(ized) to reinforce fierce and ruthless regimes in the region?
11. Can we understand regional conflicts and civil wars in the Middle East without making reference to historical factors?

EXAM Class 7: Tuesday 21 February 2017
Mid-Term EXAM
PART TWO: COMPARATIVE PART

Class 8: Tuesday 7 March 2017

READINGS:

THEMES:
Military regimes and military coups.
Modernization and ideologies of progress

Questions:
12. Is military leadership still an important contributor to power strength in the region?
13. Explain why socialism has gradually replaced Arab nationalism for most of Arab countries. Has socialism succeeded in promoting social equality?

Class 9: Tuesday 14 March 2017

READINGS:
- Luciani, Giacomo (2009: 81-102) ‘4 - Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East' in International Relations of the Middle East edited by Louise Fawcett.

THEMES:
The Political Economy of the Middle East
Rise of state bureaucracy and the rentier State

Questions:
14. Why can it be said that oil has been a curse for the Middle East?
15. Considering the scarce venues for political participation in the Middle East, is it enough to absorb large segments of the population in the administrative apparatus of the State like in Egypt? Reflect on the shortcomings of bureaucratic solution.
Class 10: Tuesday 21 March 2017

READINGS:
- Owen (2012: 172-191) ‘10 - The Sudden Fall’ from the RISE and FALL of Arab Presidents for Life.

THEMES:
Political parties and one-party systems.
Democracy or only qualified democracies?

Questions:
16. Why the system of political parties makes it difficult for most of the Middle Eastern countries to reach a democratic condition?
17. Do non-state actors really have the possibilities to enhance the quality of democratic life in the region? Illustrate with two contrasting cases.

Class 11: Tuesday 28 March 2017

READINGS:

THEMES
Religious revivalisms - Understanding political Islam - Variety of Islamisms
The clash of ideologies - New challenges to the state
Variety of Islamisms - The clash of ideologies
New challenges to the state

Questions:
18. Explain the historical roots and phases of political Islam in Egypt.
19. Is Islamism (or political Islam) really hostile to the modern (western) State or is it an ally for its quest for power?
20. Can the resurgence of political Islam as a driving ideology be understood only as a reaction to the international context, or should one also look at domestic factors to understand this political phenomenon?
21. Reflect on the positive and negative impacts of Arabic satellite TV channels on the prospect for more democracy in the region.
22. Are transnational movements such a novelty to Middle Eastern politics?
Class 12: Tuesday 3 April 2017

READINGS:
- Cleveland and Bunton (2009: 557-576) “25 - America’s Troubled Moment in the Middle East”

THEMES:
Which prospects for peace and democracy in the Middle East?
The road ahead
The Middle East and the rest of the world

Final Exam Class 13: Tuesday 10 April 2017
**Historical Moments**

Each of these historical moments (taken out of the BBC website ‘On This Day’) took place many years or decades ago. Each of the participants will select one of these moments (or alternatively present a news item taken from the BBC Middle East website) and present it in a historical, regional and analytical context. Examples of presentation will be given during the first five weeks of the course by the instructor. Distribution will be done when class composition is definitive (after drop out day).

10 January 1996

1996: King of Jordan in historic Tel Aviv visit

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/10/newsid_4514000/4514536.stm

16 January 1979

1979: Shah of Iran flees into exile

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/16/newsid_2530000/2530475.stm

21 January 1981

1981: Tehran frees US hostages after 444 days

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/21/newsid_2506000/2506807.stm

2 February 1987

1987: Peace envoy imprisoned in Beirut

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/2/newsid_2524000/2524703.stm

3 February 1978

1978: Sadat in US for Mid East talks

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/3/newsid_2525000/2525341.stm

13 February 1991

1991: US bombers strike civilians in Baghdad

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/13/newsid_2541000/2541107.stm

14 February 1989

1989: Ayatollah sentences author to death

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/14/newsid_2541000/2541149.stm

19 February 1978

1978: Egyptian forces die in Cyprus gunfight

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/19/newsid_2565000/2565701.stm
22 February 1991
1991: Bush threatens Iraq with land war
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/22/newsid_2518000/2518911.stm

23 Feb. 1972
1972: Hostages freed by Lufthansa hijackers

29 Feb. 1956
1956: Hopes for Mid East peace mission

1 March 1973
1973: Palestinian gunmen hold diplomats in Sudan
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/1/newsid_4209000/4209239.stm

18 March 1974
1974: Violent border clashes at Golan Heights
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/18/newsid_2524000/2524915.stm

17 March
1978: Civilians flee southern Lebanon
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/17/newsid_2525000/2525067.stm

26 March 1979
1979: Israel and Egypt shake hands on peace deal
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/26/newsid_2806000/2806245.stm

25 April 1980
1980: Tehran hostage rescue mission fails

22 May 2000
2000: Hezbollah makes gains in Lebanon
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/22/newsid_2504000/2504681.stm

30 May 1967
1967: Egypt and Jordan unite against Israel
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/30/newsid_2493000/2493177.stm
13 June 1978

1978: Israeli troops leave southern Lebanon
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/june/13/newsid_2512000/2512241.stm

30 October 1990

1991: Bush opens historic Mid East peace conference
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/30/newsid_2465000/2465725.stm

19 August 2003

UN envoy dies in Baghdad Bombing
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/19/newsid_3504000/3504255.stm

28 October 1994

Israel and Jordan make peace
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/26/newsid_3764000/3764162.stm

17 September 1970

Civil War Breaks out in Jordan
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/17/newsid_4575000/4575159.stm

1 February 1979

Exiled Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/1/newsid_2521000/2521003.stm

6 October 1981

Egypt’s President Sadat assassinated
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/6/newsid_2515000/2515841.stm

17 September 1982

Refugees massacred in Beirut camps
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/17/newsid_2519000/2519637.stm

7 October 1985

Gunmen hijack Italian cruise liner
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/7/newsid_2518000/2518697.stm

22 July 1987

Cartoonist shot in London street
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/22/newsid_2516000/2516089.stm

14 October 1994

Israelis and Arafat share peace prize
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/14/newsid_3694000/3694744.stm