

Special Topics offered in Fall 2018

POLS 4030-01

Dr. Kassem

Seminar: Media Depictions of Contemporary Egyptian Politics

This course offers an in-depth analysis of the nature and dynamics of modern Egyptian politics. In order to familiarize students with post-1952 Egypt, assessments of Egyptian politics will be made through movie depictions of each regime. Once the trends and general imprints of each era are established, this course will then focus on the major issues and themes confronting and shaping as a republic and eventually leading to Egypt's post 2011 political arena. Such themes will include but are not limited to the following: The fall of Mubarak regime, the rise of the second republic, and the subsequent parliamentary and presidential elections. This second part of this course will analyze the patterns civil participation, the role of the military, as well as the role of Muslim Brotherhood and their fall from power after the 30th of June.

POLS 5140-01

Dr. Molavi

Topic: "Contemporary Israel/Palestine"

This course provides a rigorous introduction to the study of Zionism, Palestine and the Israeli state system. While designed with due attention to canonical works, the course emphasizes the dynamic evolution of scholarly inquiry regarding these topics and is oriented towards emerging as well as established areas of debate. Course content includes literature associated with the interconnected fields of Palestine studies, Israel studies, Jewish political studies, settler-colonial studies and Middle East studies. Particular attention is devoted to examining the interplay between local and international social and political forces. Where appropriate, the student is encouraged to collapse barriers between fields and themes in order to effect a synthesis that can facilitate greater understanding of contemporary Israel/Palestine.

POLS 5130-02

Dr. Sunday

Topic: “Revisiting the Urban: Space, Power and Politics”

For much of our history, social science in general (and anthropological archaeologists in particular) has been predominantly concerned with studying how societies change over time. Since the “spatial turn” of the last decades of the 20th-century, however, space has become one of the key foci of scholarship in politics and many corollary social sciences, leading to the production of a diverse, expansive, and ambitious literature on the subject. This seminar charts a course through that literature, focusing in particular on the political production of space – from the scale of bodies, to cities, states, and international systems.

Each week begins with a foundational assumption or concept related to urban space, before exploring how ethnographic and critical geographical research can push the boundaries of that assumption/concept and reveal emergent political possibilities and ways of rethinking the city. The course takes a global approach, interrogating the limitations of Northern, metropolitan theory and the often unacknowledged contributions of studies from and on the global South. In treating ‘the urban’ in the broadest of terms, the aim of the course is for students to come away with a critical ‘toolkit’ for understanding intersections of space, power, and difference, and some of the methodological openings and risks of current research in the human sciences.

The course is divided into two core units, focusing on conceptual foundations firstly before venturing into more empirical study of urban space. We will engage with a series of key readings on the ontology and epistemology of space, place and landscape and consider questions that are central to their study – namely, what are these things, and how should we make sense of them? More specifically, how is it that space is produced, experienced, and politicised? After establishing our conceptual foundations and surveying a range of different approaches, we will move on to examine the politics of space at different scales and read works that employ quite different lenses to make sense of spatial dilemmas in their respective areas of study.

POLS 5130-01
Dr. Delatolla

Topic: “The Politics of Modernity, Gender, and Sexuality and the Middle East”

Increased attention in International Relations is being paid to histories and politics of modernity, gender, and sexuality in the Global South and, more specifically, the Middle East. The aim of this course is to explore these discussions and to question the adequacy of international relations theory in framing discussions and research on modernity, gender, and sexuality. Students taking this course are encouraged to make interventions on international theory informed by Middle East history and politics. Specifically, students will engage in discussions on how critical international relations theory is not always translatable, how the combination of socio-political customs and interactions with the international continues to shape contemporary politics of the Middle East, especially politics of modernity, gender, and sexuality, and how these politics are being challenged by different actors in a variety of ways.