

POLS 4524
Fall 2016

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Class hours: UW 2:00-3:20
Room: C 135
Office Hours: By Appointment

Starting 2010, A wave of protests toppled many Middle Eastern regimes including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Other countries suffered from internal turmoils that led to internal conflicts and wars such as Syria, Iraq and more recently Turkey. Many researchers attributed different political, economic and social triggers for the unrest and continuing internal wars, in addition to terrorism wearing an islamist garb. We can attribute this prolonged interest to a prolonged discontent and other socio-economic factors that dominated the region since the 1980s.

After independence, Middle Eastern countries embarked on a process of development relying on state-led development strategies. The most noticeable characteristic of these strategies is that they are extremely politicized. Political factors intervene to alter planned investments and/or expenditures. Sometimes the outbreak of violent conflict, either internal or external leads to the interruption of implementation of development targets and the discarding of any efforts to rationalize the economic process.

In this course we will focus on the status of the modern ME states, with a special focus on Egypt, especially after WWII and the Growth of state power to the degree that the political structure came to dominate ME socio-economic system. The ME states are largely authoritarian either under the rule of single party regimes or under family rule.

This domination of the political structure led to an economic structure dominated by the state, i.e., Access to economic resources rest on the access to political power. This led to the dominance of the state sector as the major force for economic growth and development.

However, starting from the 1980's most ME states were reintegrated in the global economic system. Globalization and so-called necessary economic reforms led to the emergence of major problems , including high unemployment and inflation rates; the increase in poverty levels; increasing income inequalities that led eventually to the eruption of intense conflicts within ME states and finally to the eruption of revolutions requiring both democracy and development

Accordingly, this seminar will focus on the following:

1. The Arab Spring and its aftermath;
2. Economic Performance and Social Outcomes
3. Impact of Demographic Change
4. Human Capital: Health and Education
5. The Rise and Fall of State-led Development
6. Structural Adjustment and the Rise of Crony Capitalism
7. Civil Society and Social Movements in the Middle East

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation	10%
Two Assignments	30%
Two Research Papers	60%

Class Policies

1. No one is to enter the classroom after the instructor
2. Cell phones are to be switched off
3. No taping of lectures
4. Plagiarism is heavily penalized. A student caught cheating will earn an F for the Whole course and will be referred to AUC Academic Integrity Committee.
5. 10% of the grade of every written assignment will be based on “Adequacy of English Usage.”

Textbooks:

Main Textbook

Richards, Alan & John Waterbury (et al.): **A Political Economy of the Middle East.** Fourth Edition; Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 2015

Other Readings

Henry, Clement M & Robert Springborg: **Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East**. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001

Owen, Roger: **State, Power and Politics in the Modern Middle East**. Third Edition, New York; Routledge 2004

Farah, Nadia: **Egypt's Political Economy: Power Relations in Development**. Cairo: AUC Press, 2009.