

POL4420-01 | ISSUES IN MIDDLE EAST POLITICS**Department of Political Science****Semester: Fall 2019****Course Information****Course Convener: Dr. Iman Hamdy****Class Meeting: Sun&Wed 3:30-4:45pm****Location: C152**

Course Resources: Available on Blackboard. Students are expected to check the Blackboard site of the course on a weekly basis, where any important announcement on class readings, scheduling and assessment will be posted.

Instructor Contact Information**Email: cairopa@aucegypt.edu****Phone: Ext. 1586****Office: 1062HUSS****Office hours: Sun and Wed 1-2pm****Course Description**

This course seeks to present an analytical perspective to contemporary politics in the Middle East with the aim of a better understanding of the region. It seeks to define what the Middle East is, the set of interplaying factors that affect political developments in the region, and the challenges faced by its states. In doing so, the course will seek to address a number of questions related to Middle East politics, the most important of which are: is there something called Middle East “exceptionalism”? Is sectarianism the only cause for intra-and inter-state wars? Is the “Arab-Israeli conflict” a core issue in regional politics?

More specifically, the course will look at following themes:

- The most significant international, regional, and domestic actors in the Middle East
- How ideology influences state policies
- The role of the economy in shaping state-societal relations
- Minorities and sectarianism
- Civil-military relations
- War-torn states
- The Arab-Israeli conflict

By the end of the course, students should have acquired a critical knowledge of Middle East politics and learn the root causes that contribute to the present political scene away from the misconceptions and stereotypes that hinder objective understanding of political realities.

Course Format and Teaching Methods

This is a lecture-type course meeting twice a week each for 75 minutes. However, it will also entail student presentations class discussion.

Course Readings

There is no textbook for the course. Reading material will be based on articles and chapters of books. **They are available on blackboard.** Lectures will complement the text.

Each week students will be required to complete and take notes on the **required texts** assigned. Completion of the required texts is necessary for active participation in the class. These texts will make essay research and writing easier and are essential for this course.

Students must do all of the assigned readings and make sure to bring them to class

Assessment

Oral performance:

- 1) Class participation is vital and should reflect a thorough reading of the class material.
- 2) Each student will be asked to give a **15-minute presentation on two selected readings**. The presentation should **include**: 1) the context of the readings, 2) the main points discussed in the readings, and 3) questions for class discussion.

Written assignments:

- 1) Two take-home essays (approx. 1500-2000 words; 6-8 pages). **The due dates for the essays are Oct. 9, 2019 and Nov. 13, 2019.**
- 2) One term paper (approx. 20-25 pages). **Due date Dec. 11, 2019.**

Late submission of the written assignments will be penalized.
Plagerism will not be tolerated.

Important Notes Regarding Written Assignments

- All written assignments are due [in print/via Turnitin] to the instructor at the beginning of class.
- All written assignments are graded on both form and content. This means that you are graded both on *what* you argue as well as *how* you present your ideas and claims.
- Students are required to include their name, course code, student number, Title Page and Bibliography, including standard formatting written in Times New Roman, 12pt font, and double-spaced.
- Make sure to include correct referencing for any materials used from the readings following the [insert preferred citation style] for citation.
- Do not exceed the assigned word/page count as indicated above.
- Penalties and deductions for any limitations or discrepancies regarding the above for written assignments may be applied at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading:

- Grades will be divided as follows:
- **Class participation** (10%)
- **Presentation** (15%)

- **Take-home essays (40%)**
- **Term paper (35%)**

Grade Scale

A	93+	C+	77-79	F	59 and below
A-	90-92	C	73-76		
B+	87-89	C-	70-72		
B	83-86	D	60-66		
B-	80-82	D+	67-69		

Grade Policy

The instructor reserves the right to refuse any late assignments. If the instructor accepts a late assignment without a justified excuse, a full XX% will be deducted. The grade that you receive at the end of the semester is the sum of grades received for your completed coursework and participation/attendance. This is not negotiable and no additional coursework will be provided to supplant grades. Grades are not altered based on a curve.

Attendance Policy and Participation

No attendance mark is assigned in this course. However, the following policies will be strictly adhered to:

- Students are expected to attend the seminars (including rescheduled ones) AND take part regularly in class discussions, showing knowledge of – and engagement with – the essential readings. Students who are physically present in class but are unable or unwilling to contribute to the class discussions or are otherwise distracted (for instance by using their mobile devices during the session), will have marks deducted or be considered as absent at the discretion of the instructor.
- Students who, without a valid justification, arrive to class more than 5 minutes late, leave more than 5 minutes early or leave the teaching room repeatedly during the session will be considered as absent.
- Students unable to attend class for justifiable reasons should contact the instructor ideally before class, and in any case no later than seven days after the missed class. Only serious and documented family or health emergencies and documented participation in formal AUC activities will be accepted as valid justifications. The procedure for correct documentation of such absences is outlined in the university-wide attendance policy.
- Unexcused absence in at least **THREE** sessions (6 classes), and absence with or without valid justification in at least **FIVE** sessions (10 classes), will result in an automatic “F” grade.
- Based on the current university-wide attendance policy, if the five-session limit is reached because of absences caused by serious family and health emergencies or participation in formal AUC activities, the student may petition to drop their course after the formal deadline to drop courses and before the deadline for withdrawal from the university, or may petition to continue the course.
- If an attendance sheet is circulated in class, each student is expected to sign only for him-/herself. Falsifying signatures is considered by AUC as a breach of academic integrity and the students involved in this practice will be immediately referred to the AUC Academic Integrity Committee.

Academic Integrity

Teaching is based on a relation of mutual trust between the teacher and the students. When we research, we use other people's work to help develop our own: this is an essential part of the academic world. However, when you use someone else's work, you must cite it. This lets the reader know which parts of the work are your own, and which parts come from other sources. What that means is that anytime you draw from someone's ideas or use their actual words, you must give the name of the author and the book in proper citation form.

All students are expected to be familiar with the AUC code of practice on academic integrity which is available at:

<http://in.aucegypt.edu/auc-academics/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-students>

Please pay particular attention to the regulations on plagiarism, collaborative work and falsification of signatures. All breaches of the code of practice will be acted upon promptly and firmly, resulting at least in zero marks for the relevant piece of assessment and possibly in further action being taken by the instructor, depending on the severity of the offense.

If in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

Academic Freedom and Intellectual Interaction

In this course you will deal with a number of topics that are often controversial. You are free to offer the class any disagreement you may have with the readings or lecture. You will not be penalised for disagreeing with other students, the readings or the instructor, but your perspective must be based on documentable evidence from the course or other readings. Freedom of speech and ideas is a basic principle of academic life (and of universal human rights) and every student will have a chance to express her/his opinion as long as it is voiced in a respectful manner. However, varied points of view must be expressed in a manner that is sensitive to differences in abilities, ethnicity, religion, gender and lifestyle, and should not be expressed so as to be perceived as a personal attack. In short, respect for others' differences is one of the most important prerequisites for us working together in this course.

Note on Electronic Devices in Class

To enable open and uncensored discussion and protect the privacy of students, there is a zero-tolerance policy on any and all recording/surveillance devices in and around the classroom. Discovery of such devices will result in automatic reprimand and removal from the classroom. This is fundamental to ensure a fruitful discussion. As such, computers are also not required nor recommended unless absolutely necessary.

Students Who Are Differently-Abled

If you believe that you are differently-abled/have a disability that impacts your studies, or you have documentation of such, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor is happy to hear from you even if you do not have a formal proof; however, you may be asked to provide a note from the AUC Disability Services (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>) when your condition requires substantial adjustments (e.g. to the structure of the exams etc.).

COURSE SYLLABUS AND READINGS

Sept.1: Introduction

I. WHAT IS THE MIDDLE EAST?

Sept. 4: What is the Middle East?

Michele Penner Angrist, ed. *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Lynne Rienner, 2013), chap. 1.

Jilian Schwedler and Deborah J. Gerner, eds. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 3rd ed. (Lynne Rienner, 2008), chap. 2

Sept. 8: Middle East Exceptionalism?

Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, 36:2, Jan. 2004.

Ellen Lust-Okar, "Why the Failure of Democratization? Explaining "Middle East Exceptionalism"". Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Processed, 2003 - researchgate.net

M. Shahid Alam. *Israeli Exceptionalism: The Destabilizing Logic of Zionism* (Macmillan, 2009) chap. 1.

II. MAIN ACTORS IN SHAPING MIDDLE EAST POLITICS

Sept. 11: International Players

Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 3rd ed. (Polity Press, 2011) chap. 9

Nikolay Kozhanov, "Russian Policy across the Middle East: Motivations and Methods." Russia and Eurasia Programme, Feb. 2018.

Sept. 15: Arab Players

Gamal Hassan, "A revolution without a revolutionary foreign policy," *Adelphi Series*, 55:453-454, 151-176, Jan. 2016.

Guido Steinberg, "Leading the counter-revolution: Saudi Arabia and the Arab spring." SWP research paper, 7/2014.

Sept. 18: Non-Arab Regional Players

Philipp O. Amour, "Israel the Arab Spring, and the unfolding regional order in the Middle East," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:3, 2017.

Saban Kardas, "Turkey Redrawing the Middle East Map or Building Sandcastles?". Middle East Policy Council, 2010.

David Menashri, "Iran's Regional Policy: Between Radicalism and Pragmatism," *Journal of International Affairs*, 60:2, 2007.

Sept. 22: Domestic Forces

Ellen Lust, ed., *The Middle East*, 13th ed. (Sage 2014), chap. 3.

III. INTERACTING FACTORS

A. IDEOLOGIES

Sept. 25: Arab Nationalism

Beverley Milton-Edwards, chap. 2.

Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton University Press, 2003), chap. 10.

Sept. 29: Zionism

Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Harvard University Press, 1969), chap. 2.

Oct. 2: Political Islam

Mark Tessler, *Islam and Politics in the Middle East: Explaining the Views of Ordinary Citizens* (Indiana University Press, 2015), Introduction.

Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East, 3rd. edition* (I.B.Tauris, 2009), chap. 2

Oct. 9: Jewish Fundamentalism/Messianic Zionism

Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (Pluto Press, 1999), chap. 2.

Lily Weissbrod, "Gush Emunim Ideology—From religious doctrine to political action," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1:3, 1982.

B. POLITICAL ECONOMY

Oct. 13: Political Economy-1

Rolf Shwarz, "The Political economy of state-formation in the Arab Middle east: Rentier states, economic reform, and democratization," *Review of International Political Economy*, 15:4, 2008.
Beverley Milton-Edwards, chap. 3.

Oct. 20: Political Economy-2

Mine Eder, "Retreating State? Political Economy of Welfare Regime Chamne in Turkey," *Middle East Law and Governance*, 2, 2010.

Gerarado del Cerro Sanatamaria, "Megaprojects, Development, and Competitiveness: Building the Infrastructure for Globalization and Neoliberalism," *Athens Journal of Social Sciences*, X:Y, 2019.

Khaled Adham, "Globalization, Neoliberalism, and New Spaces of Capital in Cairo," *Traditional dwellings and Settlements Review*, 17:1, 2005.

C. THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

Oct. 23: Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East

Alan Richards et.al, *The Political Economy of the Middle East*, 3rd. edition () chap. 13.

Derek Lutterbeck, "Arab Uprisings, Armed Forces, and civil-Military Relations," *Armed Forces and Society*, 39:1, 2013.

Oct. 27: The Case of Turkey

Nilufer Narli, "Civil-Military Relations in Turkey," *Turkish Studies*, 1:1, 2007.

Koray Caliskan, "Explaining the end of military tutelary regime and the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey," *Journal of Cultural Economy*, 10:1, 2017.

Oct. 30: The Case of Israel

Rebecca L. Schiff, "Civil-Military Relations Reconsidered: Israel as an 'Uncivil' State," *Security Studies*, 1:4, 1992.

Yoram Peri, "Intractable Conflict and the Media," *Israel Studies*, 12:1, 2007.

D. MINORITIES**Nov. 3: General Overview of Minorities in the Middle East**

P R Kumaraswamy, "Problems of Studying Minorities in the Middle East," *Alternatives*, 2:2, 2003.

Ceren Belge and Ekrem Karakoc, "Minorities in the Middle East: Ethnicity, Religion, and Support for Authoritarianism," *Political Research Quarterly*, 68:2, 2015.

Paul Silverstein, "Amazigh Activism and the Moroccan State," *The Middle East Report*, 233, 2004.

Nov. 6: The Kurds

Hamit Bozarslan, "When the Present Sends Back to the Past: Reading the Kurdish Issue in the 2010," *Middle East Critique*, 27:1, 2018.

Aylin Unver Noi, "The Arab Spring, Its effects on the Kurds, and the Approaches of Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq on the Kurdish Issue," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 16:2, 2012.

Gunes Murat Tezcur and Peyman Asadzade, "Ethnic nationalism versus religious loyalty: The case of Kurds in Iran," *Nations and Nationalism*, 25:2, 2019.

Nov. 13: The 1948 Palestinian Citizens in Israel

Nadim N. Rouhana & Areej Sabbagh Houry, "Settler-colonial citizenship: conceptualizing the relationship between Israel and its Palestinian citizens," *Settler Colonial Studies*, 5:3, 2014.

Uri Ram, "Tensions in the 'Jewish Democracy': The Constitutional Challenge of the Palestinian Citizens in Israel," *Constellations*, 16:3, 2019.

E. SECTARIAN POLITICS**Nov. 17: Sectarianism in the Middle East**

Fanar Haddad, "'Sectarianism' and Its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East," *The Middle East Journal*, 7:13, summer 2017.

Bassel F. Salloukh, "The Arab Uprisings and the Geopolitics of the Middle East," *The International Spectator*, 48:2, 2013.

Nov. 20: The Case of Lebanon

Mansoor Moaddel, Jean Kors, and Johan Garde, "Sectarianism and Counter-sectarianism in Lebanon." Population Studies Center Research Report 12-757, May 2012.

Melani Cammett, "Sectarianism and the Ambiguities of Welfare in Lebanon," *Current Anthropology*, 56:supplement 11, Oct. 2015.

IV. CHALLENGES

A. Divided States

Nov. 24: Iraq

Kenneth Katzman and Carla Humud, "Iraq: Politics and Governance." Congressional Research Service, March 2016.

Johannes Jude, "Contesting Borders? The formation of Iraqi Kurdistan's de facto state," *International Affairs*, 93:4, 2017.

Nov. 27: Sudan

Alison J. Ayers, "Sudan's uncivil war: the global-historical constitution of political violence," *Review of African Political Economy*, 37:124, 2010.

Khalid Mustafa Medani, "Strife and Secession in Sudan," *Journal of Democracy*, 22:3, July 2011.

B. War Zones

Dec. 1: Yemen

Noel Brehony, "Yemen and the Huthis: Genesis of the 2015 Crisis," *Asian affairs*, 46:2, 2015.

Maria-Louise Clausen, "Understanding the Crisis in Yemen: Evaluating Competing Narratives," *The International Spectator*, 50:3, 2015.

Dec. 4: Syria

Benedetta Berti and Jonathan Paris, "Beyond Sectarianism: Geopolitics, Fragmentation, and the Syrian Civil War," *Strategic Assessment*, 16:4, 2014.

Brian Michael Jenkins, "The Dynamics of Syria's Civil War." Rand Corporation, 2014.

C. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Dec. 8: The Question of Palestine

Ellen Lust, *The Middle East*, chap. 7

Dec. 11: Summing Up

Note: If needed, there might be minor changes in the syllabus and/or readings. Students will be informed of these changes beforehand.