Aims and Objectives
This course aims to introduce students to various topics in Middle East politics through the lens of general theories of Comparative Politics. The objective here is to critically apply Comparative Political theories, concepts and methods to the Middle East area studies. The main thematic denominator of the class is to ask questions pertaining to the changes and continuities in Middle Eastern Politics prior to and after the advent of the Arab uprisings of 2010/2011. The major themes that will be discussed throughout the course duration are the origins of the state, civil society, political change, regime resilience and breakdown, state collapse and fragility, civil society, electoral politics, Islamist movements, political economy and the role of the military in politics.

Course Outcomes:
Upon completion of the course students will be able to:
- have a deeper understanding of the complexities of Middle Eastern politics.
- think critically and objectively about the contemporary politics of the region.
- link comparative political theories to empirical findings in the region.
- develop well-structured arguments through the extended essays and final paper.
- write literature reviews for their MA theses in addition to thinking and developing their research questions and hypotheses.

Course Guidelines:
1. Classes and Mode of Delivery
- The course is fully offered synchronously online via Zoom.
- Classes are expected to be heavily interactive.
• Students will be able to share their screens for their presentations.
• Students are encouraged to schedule Zoom meetings (acting as Office Hours) with me if they need clarifications on course material or the project.

2. Course Participation & Preparation.
• Class participation carries a high weight in the course grade and students will have to earn these grades. Positive participation grades are earned through active contribution to class discussion and not simply by attending class.
• Students are expected to read all materials before class, to be able to contribute positively to class discussions. This will enhance class participation grades.
• Each student is expected to lead class discussions once during the semester.

Readings
All readings will be posted on blackboard

Requirements and Grades

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Critical Essays</td>
<td>15% each</td>
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<td>1 Final Paper</td>
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<td>1 In-Class presentation (leading class discussions)</td>
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Important Dates:

Critical Essay 1: September 23
Critical Essay 2: October 14
Critical Essay 3: November 4
Critical Essay 4: November 25
Final Paper Topic and Abstract Due: November 11
Final Paper: December 15, 3:00 p.m.

Critical essays

Students are required to write four short critical essays based on the readings of one class session each. The paper should be almost 2000 words. Additional sources should be used to develop on the ideas and claims that are made in the paper. Late submission of critical essays will result in one grade deduction.
Class Presentation
Each Student should prepare to lead a class discussion. The discussion will be based on any week’s readings. Class discussions should be based on research themes, questions and hypotheses that are related to the topic. Topics and discussions should relate to theories of comparative politics with an emphasis on Middle East politics. **Failure to present class presentations will result in an F for the in class presentation grade, if not communicated with me at least two days prior to the presentation date.**

Final Paper
Students present their paper topic in class to their colleagues. The presentation should include, an abstract, a theoretical framework, methodology and an outline of the topic. Based on the class’ input, students should start their research. The final paper is due on the final examination date. This should be between 20-25 pages long (5000 to 6000 words), covering any topic of interest. The papers should be submitted through turn it in. **Late submissions of papers result in one grade deduction.**

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity commits to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. These values enable academic communities to develop their ideas into action. Academic integrity violations include but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, multiple submissions. For more information on academic integrity policies at AUC please visit the following website: [https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/academic-integrity](https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/academic-integrity)

Any academic integrity violation will result in an F.

Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations for students with disabilities are available for all qualifying students. All types of accommodations in this class follow AUC’s regulations. For more information on academic accommodations for students please visit the following: [https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/about_Policies/Reformatted%20disability%20policy.pdf](https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/about_Policies/Reformatted%20disability%20policy.pdf)

**GRADES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE**

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Course Outline

Week 1: September 9

Introduction to the course


Week 2: September 16

Debating the State in the MENA


Week 3: September 23

Critical Essay 1 Due

State-Society Relations


**Week 4: September 30**

*AuthoritarianDurability?*


**Week 5: October 7**

*RegimeBreakdown and Transition?*


**Week 6: October 14**

*CriticalEssay 2 Due*

*The Role of the Military in Politics*


Week 7: October 21

Political Participation


Week 8: October 28

Civil Wars and Conflicts


Week 9: November 4

Critical Essay 3 Due

Fragmenting and Changing State Power after the Arab Uprisings


Christopher Davidson, *After the Sheikhs* (London: Hurst, 2013), chapters 4-5.

**Week 10: November 11**

**Paper Topic and Abstract Due**

*International and Regional Politics in the Region*


**Week 11: November 18**

*International Aid: Democracy Promotion or Supporting the Status Quo?*


Week 12: November 25

Critical Essay 4 Due

Political Economy


Week 13 December 2

Islamist Movements


Week 14 December 9

Gender Politics


Victoria Tahmasebi-Birgani, “Green Women of Iran: The Role of the Women’s Movement During and After Iran’s Presidential election of 2009 *Constellations* 17, no. 1 (2010), pp. 78-86

**Final Paper Due December 14**