



## Department of Political Science

### POLS 3408: Comparative Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

Spring 2017

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**Teaching Assistant:** Mr. Hood S. Ahmed ([hood94@aucegypt.edu](mailto:hood94@aucegypt.edu))  
**Office:** HUSS 2002, Department of Political Science  
**Office Hours:** W 12-2PM, R 1-2PM

#### Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce students generally to the study of comparative politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This course not only covers major concepts and theories in the study of comparative politics, but also offers empirical analyses of the government and politics in a select group of countries. The course covers a wide range of issues, including the formation of the nation-state, democratisation, authoritarianism, political culture, political development, comparative political economy, nationalism, ethnic politics, politics of religion, and political institutions. The course will also discuss some debates in comparative politics that have been important in the policy-making community in recent decades, such as state-building, role of the state in economy, the concept of social capital, and the effort to promote democracy around the world.

As such, several objectives and learning outcomes of the course become clear:

- Knowledge of the major theories and approaches in the discipline of Comparative Politics
- Ability to critically evaluate and apply such theories and approaches
- Knowledge of major substantive themes in Comparative Politics
- Ability to think critically about the relevance of mainstream theories of Comparative Politics and their relevance to experience and interests of actors in the MENA region
- Ability to analyse world politics from a variety of perspectives
- Ability to apply theories to case studies

#### Participation (20%)

Each student is expected to attend all classes. Obviously things come up-- whether sickness, personal issues, or something else. As such, you are allowed, in accordance with Registrar policy, the equivalence of three weeks of absences from our sessions (whether excused or not, I make no distinction). Any student missing more than the equivalent of three weeks (six sessions in a normal semester) ***will automatically fail the course with no exceptions***. After all, I am sure we can agree that missing that much time would call into question what you are able to get out of this required course.

By far the easiest way to guarantee a strong participation assessment is with substantive contribution to class discussion in our weekly meetings; that means quality takes precedence over quantity. However, I understand that in a class of close to 30 people, some students may not feel comfortable speaking in a crowd. I suggest trying to overcome that reticence, but because personalities vary, participation can also be maintained with visits to my office hours and e-mail contact which directly discuss the course readings, topics, concepts and the like. In short: make your contributions count whichever way you feel most comfortable; the point is to engage with the class and its material and to demonstrate clearly that you are doing so.

## Assignments (30%)

There will be *two* assignments announced throughout the session, and each one will count toward the final grade. As such, each will consist of 15% of the final grade.

Presentation/Moderation	15%	Due after selected session
Term Paper	15%	May 4, 2017

## Exams (50%)

There will be two exams, each one counting 25% of the final grade.

Midterm Exam	25%	March 16, 2017
Final Exam	25%	May 24, 2017

There will be no extra credit assignments under any circumstance. The only possible way of improving your final grade beyond the assignments and exams listed is by attending ALL of the lectures; you will receive an additional 1% for not missing any classes.

Finally in terms of assessment, plagiarism is not acceptable in any form, and it will result in immediate failure of the entire course and my submitting the case to both the Department and to the Dean. If you are unsure about citations or what constitutes plagiarism, refer to the AUC policies on academic integrity... and definitely feel free to ask.

And lastly, a note about Office Hours: come to see me. You will do better in this course, and getting into the habit of engaging and talking with your professors on a regular basis will lead you to do better in your academic career. With added individual attention, I can provide you with readings on various topics, clarify things that might not be clear to you, and overall help you to do well.

## Readings for the Course

On the general course page, you will find the general schedule we will follow throughout the term. For the readings themselves, everything is made available electronically via the course website, which requires you to log in with your AUC e-mail credentials:

In addition to the **Required Readings** listed for each week, it is highly recommended to familiarise yourselves with the additional resources (**Further Reading**) under each topic as they can help you to build your foundation in comparative politics of the region.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC
1	Monday, 30 January	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>
	Thursday, 2 February	<b>Defining and Analysing the Middle East</b>
2	Monday, 6 February	<b>The End of Empires</b>
	Thursday, 9 February	Discussion Session
3	Monday, 13 February	<b>Structural Determinants of Middle East Politics</b>
	Thursday, 16 February	Discussion Session
4	Monday, 20 February	<b>Growth of State Power</b>
	Thursday, 23 February	Discussion Session
5	Monday, 27 February	<b>Regional Politics</b>
	Thursday, 2 March	Discussion Session
6	Monday, 6 March	<b>Economic Restructuring</b>
	Thursday, 9 March	Discussion Session
7	Monday, 13 March	Comprehensive Review Session
	Thursday, 16 March	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
8	Monday, 20 March	<b>Parties and Elections</b>
	Thursday, 23 March	Discussion Session
9	Monday, 27 March	<b>Religion and Politics</b>
	Thursday, 30 March	Discussion Session
10	Monday, 3 April	<b>Gender and Civil Society</b>
	Thursday, 6 April	Discussion Session
	April 9-17, 2017	<i>Spring Break</i>
11	Monday, 24 April	<b>Challenges of Globalisation</b>
	Thursday, 27 April	Discussion Session
12	Monday, 1 May	<i>Official Holiday</i>
	Thursday, 4 May	<b>Roundtable: Palestinians &amp; Kurds: Between Exile, Occupation &amp; the State (Papers Due)</b>
13	Monday, 8 May	<b>Contesting Conflict Approaches to the Region</b>
	Thursday, 11 May	Discussion Session
14	Monday, 15 May	<b>Wrapping Up: Considering Critical Area Studies</b>
	Wednesday, 24 May (8:30-10:30)	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>