

Poli Sci 400: Introduction to Middle East Politics
Spring 2020
T-Th 11:00 - 12:15 PM
Comp Sci 1221

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This syllabus may change. Any changes will be distributed via email and posted on Canvas (<https://canvas.wisc.edu/>). This document and the materials of this course, including the lecture slides and testing materials, are for the private use of this class only. Distribution without the written consent of the instructor of record is prohibited.

Course Description, Learning Outcomes, and Requisites:

Almost a decade ago a series of popular mobilizations swept across the Middle East, raising hopes of freer and more democratic governance in a region long stricken by autocracy. The results of those uprisings are decidedly mixed. Tunisia is a modest success story, but even they struggle to consolidate their fragile democracy. Egypt's initial promise collapsed back into fierce autocracy, while hereditary monarchy remains ensconced in the Persian Gulf, Jordan, and Morocco. Civil war and political violence impose significant costs on the region's citizens, especially in Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. Yet there are also stirrings of new protest movements demanding greater accountability, freedoms, and rights.

In this course we consider these developments, the history that informs them, what they mean for the Middle East and its peoples, for the ways the United States engages in the region, and for how we think about social science writ large. We probably will not reach any answers, but I do hope you leave this class with an improved ability to critically assess theoretical arguments and empirical evidence in order to *reach your own conclusions*. Not only are these crucial skills for the study of the Middle East, they will benefit you in whatever future career path you choose.

Note that there are no prerequisites for this course, however you will likely benefit from spending a few minutes everyday following major news from the region, starting at *The New York Times'* regional portal: <https://www.nytimes.com/section/world/middleeast>.

Course Credit:

This is a four credit course. This credit standard is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities. These include regularly scheduled face-to-face course meetings (two 75-minute class periods per week, as well as one additional 50 minute discussion section every week, which will be led by your T.A.). It also presumes reading, writing, completion of on-line exercises, study and review, and other responsibilities as described in this document.

Each week you will be responsible for reading approximately 50 pages of material. I expect you to *read actively*- to make a good faith effort to understand the argument, assess it on its merits, and be ready to articulate your critique of it and ask questions about it on the day of the week it is assigned. It is perfectly fine, and even expected, that you will struggle with the readings. My hope is that, in conjunction with the lectures and discussion sections, we will each be able to understand the importance of each reading and how it fits into the broader theme of this class. *If you find yourself struggling to stay on top of the readings, even after we've discussed them in class, please see me as soon as possible and we can figure out ways to get back up to speed.*

How To Contact Me:

I encourage you to come to my office hours or send me a professional email. If you cannot come during office hours, we can attempt to find an alternative time to meet. However, because I have a large number of students, you should first consider whether or not your question could be more easily addressed by your T.A.

I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the semester, and within 24 hours during the weeks in which we have exams. If I do not respond after this time, please feel free to re-send your email as a reminder.

Technology Policy:

A variety of research suggests deleterious average effects on student learning due to laptop usage in classroom settings. This alone does not seem to me to justify a laptop ban; not only is everyone different, college students are adults and can make their own choices. However, research also shows evidence of a contagion effect: it is not only the laptop user whose performance suffers, but those sitting in proximity to the user *even if they themselves do not use a laptop*. For this reason, I do not allow laptops in my lecture classes. If you have a documented disability, please see me to discuss accommodations.

Course Requirements:

This course has lecture and discussion components. All students are required to:

- Attend (and pay attention during) lecture sessions. I upload all lecture slides to Canvas following the lecture, so you do not need to take verbatim notes (indeed, research indicates that this produces poorer learning outcomes). Instead, try to capture key points and themes.
- Attend (and participate in) your discussion section. In contrast to the lectures, you will be graded in your discussion sections jointly on your attendance *and* your active contribution to the discussion of the week's readings. Refer to the discussion session syllabus for a further explanation of how "participation" will be assessed.

Grading Criteria:

There are 100 total points available in this class, distributed as follows:

Exam 1:	20% (20 points)
Exam 2:	20% (20 points)
Exam 3:	20% (20 points)
Five Reflection Papers:	20% (20 Points)
Lecture Attendance:	10% (10 Points)
Section Attendance & Participation:	10% (10 points)

The grading scale is as follows, including the overall points as well as the University of Wisconsin's range for letter grades:

Point Range	Letter Grade	GPA
90- 100 points	A (Excellent)	4.0
85- 89.99 points	AB (Intermediate grade)	3.5
80- 84.99 points	B (Good)	3
75- 79.99 points	BC (Intermediate grade)	2.5
70- 74.99 points	C (Fair)	2.0
60- 69.99 points	D (Poor)	1.0
59.99- 0 points	F (Failure)	0.0

Disputes: I and your T.A. occasionally make mistakes or otherwise misinterpret answers. If you believe that your grade is incorrect as a result of an error, please submit a request for a grade change *in writing* to me within 48 hours of receiving the grade. This document should be a stand-alone document such as a .pdf (i.e. not an email). In the appeal, please clearly and concisely explain why the grade is incorrect, based on the merit of the work rather than comparisons to other students or various adverse consequences (i.e. I need a better grade to get into law school). Please note that re-grading may result in an increase *or* a decrease in the initial grade.

Attendance, Absence, and Late Policy: Attendance and active participation in this class contributes to overall learning outcomes, and thus is a component of your grade. Twelve

random times during the semester I will circulate a sign in sheet during class. For each class you are present, i.e. signed in, you'll receive one point. Because all of us are busy, only ten of these sign-ins will count (i.e. you have two free absences). Those of you who are present for more than ten of these classes will accumulate the additional points as extra credit. Absences for religious or university-sponsored activity will be accommodated, but must be cleared in advance.

Attendance at exams is a special category. I take missed exams very seriously, as they provide you an unfair advantage over your colleagues in the form of additional time to study. This is why, *if you miss an exam, you must provide within one week a written, valid excuse, such as a doctor's note*. Unexcused exam absences will result in a 5 point reduction off the top of your make-up exam grade. For example, if you miss an exam without an excuse, and then score perfectly on the make-up exam (20/20), your actual grade on the exam will be 15/20. If you have not communicated with me or your TA within one week from the date of the exam, a make-up exam is no longer an option.

Course Materials:

- There are no materials required for purchase in this class. Readings will be posted on Canvas.

Lecture Schedule:

Week 1 (Jan. 21- 23): Course Introduction

- January 21: Read the syllabus.
- January 23: Blaydes and Chaney, "The Feudal Revolution and Europe's Rise."

Week 2 (Jan. 28- 30): From Caliphate to States

- January 28: Kamrava, pgs. 1-36.
- January 30: Kamrava, pgs. 37-68.

Week 3 (Feb. 4- 6): Becoming "Modern"

- February 4: Tripp, Chapter Six of *Seeking Legitimacy*.
- February 6: Jones, "Seeing Like an Autocrat."

Week 4 (Feb. 11- 13): Independent States

- February 11: Brownlee "Peace before Freedom."
- February 13: Kamrava, pgs. 69-99.

Week 5 (Feb. 18- 20): Identity Politics

- February 18: Patel, "Concealing to Reveal."

- February 20: Brooke, "Sectarianism and Social Conformity."

Week 6 (Feb. 25- 27): State Weakness and Strength

- February 25: Exam One.

- February 27: Anderson, "The State in the Middle East and North Africa."

Week 7 (Mar. 3- 5): Effects of Weak and Strong States

- March 3: Buehler, "Do You Have 'Connections' at the Courthouse?"

- March 5: Belge and Blaydes, "Social Capital and Dispute Resolution in Informal Areas of Cairo and Istanbul."

Week 8 (Mar. 10- 12): The Resource Curse

- March 10: Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?"

- March 12: Harris, Chapter 3 of *A Social Revolution*.

Week 9 (Mar. 17- 19): No Class, Spring Break

- March 17: No class.

- March 19: No class.

Week 10 (Mar. 24- 26): Military Rule

- March 24: Sayigh, Introduction and Chapter One of *Owners of the Republic*.

- March 26: Exam Two.

Week 11 (Mar. 31- Apr. 2): Parties and Elections

- March 31: Bush and Gao, "Small Tribes, Big Gains."

- April 2: Lust, "Missing the Third Wave."

Week 12 (Apr. 7- 9): Islam and Democracy

- April 7: Masoud, Chapter 1 of *Counting Islam*.

- April 9: Tessler, "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East" (T.A. Bates will provide this lecture).

Week 13 (Apr. 14- 16): Violent Activism

- Apr. 14: Zelin, "Meeting Tunisia's Ansar al-Sharia." Also watch the film "Brotherhood" by Meryam Joobeur on vimeo.com.
- Apr. 16: No class; I will be traveling.

Week 14 (Apr. 21- 23): Getting to Democracy

- Apr. 21: Kalyvas, "Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies."
- Apr. 23: Grewal, "From Islamists to Muslim Democrats."

Week 15 (Apr. 28- 30): Wrap Up and Exam 3

- Apr. 28: TBD.
- Apr. 30: Exam Three.

Assignments

Three Exams (20 points each)

Each third of the course will conclude with an exam. The format for each will be the same. The exams are not cumulative (i.e. each will only cover the readings following the exam immediately prior).

Reflection Papers (20 total points)

At five points during the semester you will write short (approximately 150 word) reflections on a particular day's reading. The choice for *which* reading you write about is up to you, however for the assignment to count it must be posted to the course discussion page on Canvas by 5pm the day before the class the reading will be discussed. For these reflection papers to be worthwhile, they must present your own reactions to the readings. For this reason, and because you have the freedom to choose which readings most interest you, *late submissions will not be accepted.*

Each reflection should consist of two rough parts. The first should be your reaction to the argument of the reading. The second should be your reaction to how well (or poorly) the reading helps us understand contemporary politics in the Middle East, i.e. the types of things we read about in the newspaper. These reflections will cumulatively be responsible for 20 points (4 points each), and will be graded on how well you fulfill both of these objectives. Please keep in mind that clear, economical writing is an integral part of how you will be graded on these two objectives.

Lecture Attendance (10 points)

See above for information about how lecture attendance will be calculated.

Section Attendance and Participation (10 points)

Refer to the section syllabus for specific information how these points will be allotted.

Classroom Policies

- **General**

- I believe that respect and solidarity are core components of academic inquiry. I will make every effort to ensure that our classroom fosters those ideals, and I expect you to do the same.
- Once class begins, please turn off or set to airplane mode all phones and stow tablets and laptops.
- Videotaping or recording of class lectures and discussions is absolutely not permitted. If you have a documented accommodation that requires such recording, please let me know and we can identify possible solutions.

- **Attendance, Participation, and Absences**

- Attendance in both the lecture and the discussion section is an important component of this class. Historically, I note a strong correlation between how often a student attends class and how well that student performs. You might be an outlier to this general pattern, but you probably won't.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials from classmates. Please do not ask me "did I miss anything important?" Everything we discuss in class is important; otherwise I'd just be wasting your (and my, and the TA's) time.

- **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

- Students are bound by the University of Wisconsin's Student Code of Conduct, which I encourage you to review here:
<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>.
Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand,

disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. I am happy to discuss issues of proper citation or other matters of academic integrity with any students who have questions. Academic honor is a cornerstone of a respected scholarly community like the University of Wisconsin, and I expect us all to do our parts to uphold it in this class.

- To understand more about plagiarism and proper attribution of sources, please consult the Writing Center, at: <https://writing.wisc.edu/>.

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

- The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students with disabilities should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to arrange assistance for the semester. I am more than happy to accommodate needs, but it is your responsibility to complete this process officially and in a timely manner, within three weeks of course inception (or upon the recognition of a disability).

- **Diversity and Inclusion**

- Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. For more information, please visit: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>.

Title IX/Clery Act Notification

- Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking) and sex discrimination violate university policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain on-campus confidential support from UHS Survivor Services <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/survivor/>, or 608-265-5600, option 3, or the Rape Crisis Center <https://thercc.org/> 608-251-7273. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Title IX Coordinator at 608-890-3788 or UWPD 608-264-2677.

Disclosure of sexual misconduct or sex discrimination to university faculty may not be confidential depending on that specific instructor's reporting responsibilities. Faculty deemed as "Responsible Employees" must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the university's Title IX Coordinator. For more information on how the university works to protect confidentiality, please visit the Title IX Protecting Confidentiality page: <https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/student-information/#protecting-confidentiality>.

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