Political Science 5125-101
Readings and Research in Comparative Politics:
THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST
Fall 2008
Tuesday 6:00 -- 9:00 pm, Old Library Classroom Bldg. 13

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Office hours: Tues. 3-5:00 p.m., Wed. 10:00-11:45 a.m., and by appointment

Course Description

The course examines key issues and scholarly works in the study of modern Middle East politics. We will focus largely on works examining the comparative politics and international relations of the Middle East. But since Middle East Studies -- like all regional studies -- is an inherently inter-disciplinary field, we will be reading not only the work of political scientists, but also historians, religious studies scholars, and others. During the semester, we will be reading and discussing the entire gamut of hot topics, including: the Western impact on the creation of the modern Middle East, the politics of state-building and national identity, Islam and politics, women’s rights, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Islamist and jihadist movements, the crisis of Afghanistan, questions of democracy and authoritarianism, and the international relations and foreign policies of key Middle East states, such as Israel, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria.

Required Books

R. Stephen Humphreys, Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age (University of California Press, 1999).

James L. Gelvin, The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

John L. Esposito, Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam (Oxford University Press, 2002).


Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds. The Foreign Policies of Middle East States (Lynne Rienner Press, 2002).

Marwan Muasher, The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation (Yale University Press, 2008).
Requirements, Grading, and Deadlines

The class operates on a seminar format, meaning that it is entirely discussion-based. You are expected to have read the assigned readings before each class, and come to the session with questions, ideas, and topics to discuss. Grading for the class is based on the following:

25% 10 page research essay on an issue in the domestic politics of a particular Middle Eastern country. Deadline: Thursday, October 9th, by noon.

10% 4 page book review and presentation. Books will be chosen from the list of additional readings. Deadlines vary.

25% 10 page foreign policy analysis of one of the country’s we will not cover in detail in class. Deadline: Thursday, November 20th, by noon.

15% Active and constructive class participation.

25% Final Exam: Tuesday, May 1st, 6:00 – 8:30 pm.

Current Issues and Media Sources

I expect you to keep up with key issues and events in Middle East politics throughout the semester. To do so, you should utilize major news sources with a global focus. Major English-language news sources include the newspapers The New York Times and The Washington Post in the U.S. and in Britain The Independent, The Guardian, and The Times. The most extensive coverage is often found in the BBC online. You should also make use of major Middle East media from within the region itself, to get often more extensive coverage and also to get a sense of local Middle Eastern approaches to the politics and issues of the day. The sources listed below are all in English, and tend to represent very different views. These links are, respectively, from the Persian Gulf Emirate of Qatar, the Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Israel, and the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Al-Jazeera: http://english.aljazeera.net

Jordan Times: http://jordantimes.com

Ha’aretz: http://www.haaretz.com

Tehran Times: http://www.tehrantimes.com
Blogs

There are many blogs in Middle Eastern studies, but I am recommending two in particular. The first is the Abu Aardvark blog of Dr. Marc Lynch (George Washington University) and the second is that of Dr. Juan Cole (University of Michigan):

Abu Aardvark:
http://abuaardvark.typepad.com/

Juan Cole’s “Informed Comment”:
http://www.juancole.com/

ASU policies on students with disabilities

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at http://www.ods.appstate.edu/ or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

Student Conduct

The university's academic integrity policy can be found at the Office of Student Conduct web site: http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/.

Weekly Topics and Assigned Readings

Aug. 26
Introduction: Political Science and Middle East Studies

Sep. 2
State Formation and the Political Development of the Modern Middle East

Readings:

Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire*, chs. 1-5
Sep. 9
Islam and Politics

Readings:

Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire*, chs. 6-10

Additional Readings:

Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya*.
Laurie Brand, *Women, the State, and Political Liberalization*.

Sep. 16
The Israel-Palestine Conflict

Readings:

James Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, pp. 1-143

Additional Readings:

Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System. 1945-54*.

Sep. 23
The Arab-Israeli Conflict and Peace Process

Readings:

Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, pp. 144-273

Additional Readings:

Sep. 30
Militant Islamist Movements, Jihad, and Terrorism

Readings:

John Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*

Additional Readings:

Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan.*

Oct. 7
The Tragedy of Afghanistan

Readings:

Larry Goodson, *Afghanistan’s Endless War*

Additional Readings:

Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West.*
Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror.*

* First Research Essays Due: Thursday, October 9th, by noon *

Oct. 14
Lecture: The Middle East and the 2008 U.S. Election

6:30 pm in room 114 in the new Belk Library

Fall Break: Oct. 16-19th
Oct. 21
The Middle East Regional System and Israeli Foreign Policy

Readings:

Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, chs. 1-4, 6

Additional Readings:

Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*.

Oct. 28
The Foreign Policies of Turkey and Iran

Readings:

Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, chs. 13 & 14

Additional Readings:

Charles Kurzman, *Iran: The Unthinkable Revolution*.
Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape the Future*.

Nov. 4
The Foreign Policies of Egypt and Saudi Arabia

Readings:

Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, chs. 5, 9 & 15

Additional Readings:

Michael Herb, *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution, and Democracy in the Middle East Monarchies*
Eberhard Kienle, *A Grand Delusion: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt*
Nov. 11
The Foreign Policies of Jordan and Syria

Readings:

Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ch. 7

Additional Readings:

Eyal Zisser, *Commanding Syria: Bashar al-Asad and the First Years in Power.*

Nov. 18
Arabs, Israelis, and the Middle East Peace Process

Readings:

Muasher, *The Arab Center*, pp. 1-133

Additional Readings:

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*

* Second Research Essays Due: Thursday, November 20th, by noon *
Nov. 24
No Class Meeting (Middle East Studies Association conference meeting)

Dec. 2
Arabs, Israelis, and the Middle East Peace Process

Readings:

Muasher, The Arab Center, pp. 134-290

Additional Readings:

Marc Lynch, Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today.
Larry Diamond, Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq.

Dec. 9
The Future of Middle East Studies. Political Science, and Politics

Readings:

Joel Beinin, “Middle East Studies After September 11,” Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Presidential Address, 2002;
Lisa Anderson, “Scholarship, Policy, Debate and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why it Matters” MESA Presidential address, 2003;

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16th, 6:00 to 8:00 pm