

Middle East Politics
DePaul University

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PSC 255, Sec 201
Winter 2019
Arts and Letters Hall, Rm 406
Tues-Thurs, 9:40–11:10 pm

Course Description:

This course will provide an introduction to the political dynamics that characterize the modern Middle East. We begin by examining the historical trends that have shaped the region. This includes a brief overview of the Colonial era, the early formation of the nation-state, and the rise and fall of Arab Nationalism. We then turn to a series of thematic issues, including the political economy of the region, the rise of Islam as an ideological discourse, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Each of these trends will be reviewed within the context of contemporary history. The course will conclude by examining the geo-political dynamics of the region, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the events surrounding the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, and the current collapse of the regional order.

Course Requirements:

Each student is expected to read the assigned material before class and to be prepared to discuss its contents each week. Class attendance and participation is mandatory, and will comprise 10 percent of your grade. Those missing over 50 percent of the class meetings will fail the course. There will also be a midterm exam (worth 40 percent of your final grade), and a final exam (worth 40 percent).

There is also a short paper assignment. This is to be a reflection on four films, documentaries or campus events related to the course. The paper (5-7 pages, double spaced) should identify these events/films, discuss their primary themes (and how they relate to the class), and offer your comments on them. *For more information on this assignment – including a list of films and documentaries - see the course D2L site under 'Assignments.'* All papers must be submitted via the course D2L website.

Required Reading

The text listed below is available in the college bookstore. Asterisked readings (*) are available on the course Desire2Learn website. Readings listed under “Additional Material” are *not* required.

Book to Purchase: Mehran Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War, Third Edition* (University of California Press, 2013).

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the effort to pass someone else's work off as your own. This includes turning in papers that you did not write, cutting and pasting material from the internet, using source material without proper citation, or turning in a paper that you purchased on-line or from another source. Any paper submitted with plagiarized material will result in a failing grade for the assignment. More than one infraction will lead to your failing the course. For more on the University policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, see the Student Handbook, which is available on the DePaul University Website.

Learning Disabilities – For students with learning disabilities, please contact me at the beginning of the course. The school has a supportive policy on this issue, and I am more than happy to accommodate students with legitimate needs. All conversations along these lines will remain confidential. You should also be in touch with the CSD program office, which is located in the Student Center.

Technology: The operation of cell phones, tablets and laptop computers are prohibited during our class meetings without prior permission from the instructor.

Learning Outcomes – If students apply themselves, they will develop a substantive knowledge of the history, politics and contemporary issues of the Modern Middle East. Students will also improve their reading, writing and critical thinking skills.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction (January 8, 10)

Class 1: Introduction

Class 2: WWI and the Origins of the Modern Middle East

-Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Introduction, Chapter 1 (pp. 7-34) and Chapter 2 (pp. 35-50 only).

Additional Material

- David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*.
- Film: *Lawrence of Arabia*

Week 2: The Colonial Legacy (January 15, 17)

Class 1: The End of Colonial Rule and its Legacy

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 2, pp. 50-90 (emphasis on 68 to 90).
- Albert Hourani, “The Decline of the West in the Middle East – Part I,” *International Affairs*, January, 1953 (focus on pp. 22-23, and pp. 29 – 40).*

Class 2: The Rise of Arab Nationalism

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 3, pp. 90 –107 (emphasis on 90-98).
- Abbas Kelidar, “States Without Foundations: The Political Evolution of State and Society in the Arab East,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, April 1993.*

Additional Material

- Film: *Battle For Algiers* (1965)*
- Film: *Nasser '56* (available from the Library or from Professor Hibbard).
- Documentary: *The Other Side of Suez* (BBC Documentary).*

Week 3: The Arab-Israeli Wars (January 22, 24)

Class 1: 1967 War and the Demise of Arab Nationalism

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 4 (pp. 108 -126 only).
- Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, pp. 48-73.*

Class 2: The 1973 War

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 4 (cont.), pp. 126-138.
- Philip S. Khoury, “Islamic Revivalism and the Crisis of the Secular State in the Arab World,” in Ibrahim, (ed.) *Arab Resources*.*
- Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, Chapter 6 (pp. 123 – 145 only).*

Week 4: The Political Economy of the Middle East (January 29, 31)

Class 1: The Political Economy of the Region

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 10 (focus on pp. 347-363 and 374-386).
- Hazem Bablawi, “The Rentier State in the Arab World,” in *The Arab State*.*

Class 2: Development, Mal-Development and the Origins of Islamist Militancy

-Malcolm Kerr, "Rich and Poor in the Arab World," *Journal of Arab Affairs*, October 1981.*

-Mark Tessler, "The Origins of Popular Support for Islamist Movements: A Political Economy Analysis," in John Entelis, ed., *Islam, Democracy and the State in North* (pp. 94 to 115 only).*

-United Nations Development Program 2002 *Report on Arab Human Development*, Overview and Chapter 2 ONLY.*

Additional Material:

-Film: *Syriana* (2005).

-Frontline Documentary: *House of Saud**

Week 5: The Iranian Revolution (February 5, 7)

Class 1: The Iranian Revolution

-Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 5 (pp. 139 -169).

-Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, Chapter 6 (pp. 146 – 157 only).*

Class 2: Midterm Exam

Additional Material:

-Film: *Persepolis* (2007)

-Film: *Argo* (2012)

Week 6: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (February 12, 14)

Class 1: Historical Context:

-Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 9 (focus on pp. 316-346).

-Amos Elon, "War Without End" *The New York Review of Books*, July 2004.*

Class 2: The Israel Lobby

-John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby," *London Review of Books*, March 2006.*

-Michael Massing, "The Storm Over the Israeli Lobby," *New York Review of Books*, June 8, 2006.*

-Shlomo Ben Ami, "The Complex Truth," and Zbignew Brezinski, "A Dangerous Exemption," both in *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2006*

-Noam Chomsky on The Israeli Lobby.*

Additional Material:

-*The Gatekeepers* (2013)

-*Five Broken Cameras* (2011)

-*Paradise Now* (2005)

Week 7: Inter-State Politics and American Foreign Policy (February 19, 21)

Class 1: The First Gulf War and the Maintenance of Regional Order

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 6, pp. 170-194 (focus on pp. 182-194).
- Ian Lustick, “The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: ‘Political Backwardness’ in Historical Perspective,” *International Organization* 51, 4, Autumn 1997, pp. 653-63 and 670-675 only.*

Class 2: 9/11 and the War on Terror

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 6 (cont.), pp. 194-209.
- President George Bush, National Cathedral Speech, September 14, 2001.*
- President George Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress, Sept 20, 2001.*
- Osama Bin Laden, “Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders,” World Islamic Front Statement, issued February 23, 1998, and “2002 Letter to America” (both on D2L).*
- Mary Anne Weaver, “Blowback,” *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1996.*

Additional Material:

- BBC Documentary: *The Power of Nightmares*, parts 1-3.* (counts as 2 documentaries)
- Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (Penguin Press, 2004)

Week 8: Regional Challenges (February 26, 28)

Class 1: The War in Iraq

- Fouad Ajami, “Iraq and the Arab’s Future,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2003*
- President Bush, “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat,” Cincinnati, Ohio, October 7, 2002.*
- Raymond Hinnebusch, “The U.S. Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications,” *Critique*, January 2010 (read p. 209 and pp. 219-226 only).*
- Peter Galbraith, “The Mess,” *The New York Review of Books*, March 9, 2006.
- President Bush, Address to the Nation, December 18, 2005.*

Class 2: Iran and the Rise of the Shi'a.

- Vali Nasr, “When the Shiites Rise,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006.
- Jessica Mathews, “Nuclear Diplomacy: From Iran to North Korea,” *The New York Review of Books*, August 17, 2017.*
- Karim Sadjapour, “How America Could Stumble into War with Iran,” *The Atlantic*, February 9, 2017.*
- Naysan Rafati, “Regional Risks of Rising US-Iran Rivalry,” International Crisis Group, November 1, 2018.*

Additional Material:

- Frontline Documentary: *Bush’s War* (counts as two documentaries)*

Week 9: The Arab Spring (March 5, 7)

Class 1: Arab Spring, Part I – The 2011 Uprisings

- Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, Chapter 8, pp. 265 – 268 and 290-298 only.
- James Gelvin, *The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Chapter 1.*

-Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring,” *Comparative Politics* (Jan 2012).*

Class 2: Arab Spring Part II – Counter Revolution and State Collapse

-Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “This is Not a Revolution,” *The New York Review of Books*, November 8, 2012.*

-Ezra Klein, *The Syrian Civil War Explained*,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKb9GVU8bHE>

-Max Fisher, The Rise of ISIS, VOX Video –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzmO6RWy1v8>

-Quynhanh Do, *The Evolution of ISIS*, New York Times Video, February 18, 2015.*

Additional Material:

-*Al-Midan (The Square)*. Available on Netflix.

-*1/2 Revolution* (rentable on Amazon).

-Podcast: Rukmini Callimachi, *Caliphate – The New York Times*, September 2018.*

Week 10: Collapse of the Regional Order (March 12, 14)

Class 1: The Collapse of the Regional Order

-“The Geopolitical Landscape,” in Cammack, Dunne, Hamzawy, Lynch et. Al., *Arab Fractures: Citizens, States and Social Contracts* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), pp. 63-95.*

-Mark Lynch, “The New Arab Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2018.*

-Colin Clark and Ariane Tabatabai, “Is Major Realignment Taking Place in the Middle East?” *Foreign Affairs*, October 31, 2018.*

-Vox, The Middle East’s Cold War Explained.*

<https://www.vox.com/videos/2017/7/17/15983638/iran-middle-east-saudi-war-explained>

Class 2: The Kashoggi Killing and US Policy

-Jack Thompson, “Trump’s Middle East Policy,” *CSS Analyses*, October 2018.*

-Middle East Institute, *2018 Year in Review*.*

-Hugh Eakin, “The Khashoggi Killing,” *New York Review of Books*, Oct 18, 2018.*

-Daniel Benjamin, “Not His Father’s Saudi Arabia,” *Foreign Affairs*, Oct 18, 2018.*

-Declan Walsh and Tyler Hicks, “Tragedy of Saudi Arabia’s War” and “Frontline of Saudi Arabia’s Invisible War,” *New York Times*, October 2018.*

Additional Material:

-Frontline Documentary: *Bitter Rivals: Iran and Saudi Arabia* (2-parts – each counts as 1 documentary for paper assignment).

Last Day of classes March 15

Final Exam: Thursday, March 21, 8:30 am – 10:45 pm.

Papers are due on March 24, 2019, at 5:00 pm.