

Politics of the Arab World Seminar

POL 6/70591-001
Seminar in IR/Comparative
Class Time: TH 215-5pm
Classroom: Satterfield Hall 106

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Politics in the Arab world is often characterized as mired unendingly in conflict and political underdevelopment. Rich natural resources, external interventions, wars, local political upheaval, and sectarian tensions are but some of the region's persisting historical contingents. The region's legacy is compounded by the competing claims of nationalist, secular, and religious movements that struggle against military-backed authoritarian regimes. This course's objective is to introduce some of the central issues of contemporary Arab politics while discussing the region within the larger frameworks of comparative political science theory and literature.

Theoretically, the course will consider various competing ideas about how to conceptualize the region identified as the Arab world. This will include key theories such as orientalism, dependency theory (core-periphery relations), structuralism, constructivism, and modernization. We will pay particular attention to the ideas of hegemony, populist and post-populist authoritarianism, civil society, and the failure of democratization. These topics will cast a wide net around the various leading methodical approaches to the study of the Arab world. You will notice that we are going to be focusing on the Arab States. This will allow us to penetrate deeper into the study of the region's core states and themes. Unfortunately, exploring other pressing issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iranian nuclear politics, or Turkey's attempted ascendancy to the EU would spread us too thinly.

Focusing on the Arab world will concentrate our questions on political development. However, many of these tools are likewise applicable to the study of other regions such as East Asia or Latin America. It is the instructor's expressed wish to focus the seminar on contemplating the practice of solid, multi-disciplinary social science. In the process, the students will be given the opportunity to develop a deeper appreciation of the internal and external factors that contributed to the emergence of the Arab state system as well as how they continue to influence its politics.

This seminar is designed for Ph.D. students in Political Science who are planning to take comprehensive exams, write dissertations, and reflect long afterwards about the significance of the Arab world. This course will be reading and thought-intensive. Each week, students will be expected to prepare approximately 150-200 pages of material for a lively and informed class discussion. Seminars are intended to bring together advanced students for the purposes of generating new knowledge. Our gatherings should thus help all of us – including me, the seminar's convener – learn from our engagement with the readings.

Central themes that we will address are:

- 1) The Emergence of the Middle East State System
- 2) Orientalism
- 3) Identity Politics and its Effects on the Region's Politics
- 4) Ideologies: Nationalism, Secularism, & Islamism
- 5) The Pursuit of Political Reform & Democratization
- 6) Challenging the State
- 7) The Politics of the Gulf and International Economy of Oil
- 8) War & Security in the Middle East
- 9) Economic Reform of the Region's States
- 10) The United States in the Middle East

- 11) Alliances, Cooperation, and Regionalism in the Middle East
- 12) The Character of Social Science and Area Studies

Assessment

- 1) Weekly Participation (50% of grade): This course's success is dependent on the consistent, sustained, and active contributions of the seminar's participants.
 - a. Participants are expected to attend the seminar regularly in addition to reading and discussing the readings on a weekly basis.
 - b. Each week, two students will take responsibility for leading the discussion, which should entail a fair and incisive analytic critique of the assigned material. Students should come prepared with a set of provocative questions that will organize our meeting.
 - c. Each week two or three students will each compose a 2-page synopsis of the readings that 1) lays out the main argument(s), 2) indicates what you found provocative and/or mundane, and (3) poses questions for class discussion. These handouts will be distributed via email to the rest of the class by Tuesday at 5pm. In class on Thursday, students will make informal 5-minute presentations designed to initiate focused and critical discussion of the readings.

- 2) Paper/Exam (50% of grade): You have two options:
 - Option A: Research Paper
 - 1) 3-5 page précis presenting an original research question, theoretical context, and plan for conducting the research is due on Thursday October 16th
 - 2) 20-page paper due by 5pm on Monday December 8.
 - Option B: Mock Comprehensive Exam
 - 1) Students will have 6 hours to complete this 3-question exam. Questions will address major topics covered in the course and will resemble potential comprehensive exam questions in comparative politics/international relations.
 - 2) The exam will take place on Thursday December 11 between 12:45-7pm.

The research essay and exam will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- * Relevance to question;
- * Sound ordering and structuring of material;
- * Quality and clarity of written expression;
- * Effective use of evidence;
- * Demonstration of sound understanding of topic;
- * Identification of major themes and arguments.
- * Critical evaluation and judgment;
- * Range of sources used;
- * Insight and originality.

Books to Purchase: The Kent State University Bookstore has ordered the following books required for this course. You may also seek them through alternative vendors.

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Nazih Ayubi, *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995).

Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in the Age of Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (New York: Cambridge, 2005).

Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Articles:

There will also be supplementary articles to read for this class. The seminar convener has all the extra material (available either as webpages or PDF documents). I will happily email the seminar's participants the articles/links during the seminar's first weeks. If you don't receive them, please contact me and I will ensure that you do.

Seminar & Reading Schedule

Week One (August 28): Seminar introduction, design, discussion of approaching the Arab world, lecture on state formation

Part One: The Intellectual Challenge of Approaching the Middle East

Week Two (September 4): Orientalism

1) Said, *Orientalism*, pgs. 1-110.

2) Lisa Anderson, "Scholarship, Policy, Debate, and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why It Matters," Middle East Studies Association Bulletin, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Summer 2004): <http://w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/Bulletin/Pres%20Addresses/Anderson.htm>

Week Three (September 11): Orientalism continued

1) Said, pgs. 201-352.

2) Sadik Al-Azm, "Orientalism & Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin* (1981): 5-26.

3) Tim Mitchell, "The Middle East in Past and Future Social Science," UCIAS Edited Volume 3, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines* (2003): 1-32.

Part Two: Comparative Politics of the Middle East

Week Four (September 18): The Middle East State Debate, The Arab State, Political Culture, Economic Development, Socialism, Populist Authoritarianism, Nationalism

- 1) Ayubi, pgs. 1-37 & 135-223.
- 2) Israel Gershoni, "Rethinking the Formation of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East 1920-1945: Old and New Narratives," in Gershoni & Jankowski (ed.) *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University, 1997): pgs. 3-25.
- 3) Fouad Ajami, "The End of Arab Nationalism," *The New Republic* 23 (August 12, 1991).

Week Five (September 25): The Monarchies and Rentier States

- 1) Ayubi, pgs. 224-255.
- 2) Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," in *The Arab State*, ed. Giacomo Luciano (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): pgs. 85-98.
- 3) Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53 (April 2001): pgs. 325-361.
- 4) Giacomo Luciani, "Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East," in Fawcett ed. *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): pgs. 79-102.
- 5) Robert Vitalis "Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf," *Diplomatic History*, 26, 2 (Spring 2002), pp. 185-213.

Week Six (October 2): Civil-Military Relations, Bureaucratic Growth & Economic Liberalization

- 1) Ayubi, pgs. 256-396.
- 2) James Quinlivan, "Coups-Proofing: Its Practice & Consequences in the Middle East," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Autumn 1999): pgs. 131-165
- 3) Steven Cook, "The Unspoken Power: Civil-Military Relations and the Prospects for Reform," *Brookings Paper*, (September 2004): pgs. 7-32.
- 4) Samer Shehata, "In the Basha's House: The Organizational Culture of Egyptian Public-Sector Enterprise," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003): 103-132.

Week Seven (October 9): Managed Democratization

- 1) Ayubi, pgs. 396-459.
- 2) Robert Vitalis, "The Democratization Industry of the New Interventionism," *Middle East Report* (MERIP) March-June 1994.
- 3) Lisa Anderson, "Arab Democracy: Dismal Prospects," *World Policy Journal*, 2001
<http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/anderson.html>
- 4) George W. Bush, "Remarks By the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," Washington, DC.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-3.html>
- 5) F. Gregory Gause, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2005) <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050901faessay84506/f-gregory-gause-iii/can-democracy-stop-terrorism.html>

Week Eight (October 16): Islamism: All Politics is Local

- 1) Sami Zubaida, *Islam, The People, & the State* chapter 2, pgs. 38-63.
- 2) Sami Zubaida, "Is Iran an Islamic State?" in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.) *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* pgs. 103-119.
- 3) Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005) 373-395.
- 4) Samer Shehata & Joshua Stacher, "The Brotherhood Goes to Parliament," *Middle East Report* (MERIP), Fall 2006: Available at
http://www.merip.org/mer/mer240/shehata_stacher.html
- 5) Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones," Carnegie Paper Number 67, March 2006. Available at:
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP67.Brown.FINAL.pdf>

Week Nine (October 23): From Regional to Global: The Jihadists and Islamism

Gerges, pgs. 1-276.

Week Ten (October 30): Comparative Politics Cases: The Middle East & Beyond

Brownlee, pgs. 1-222.

Part Three: Acting like Political Scientists, Seeing like Social Scientists

Week Eleven (November 6): Social Science & the Region

Mitchell, pgs. 1-120.

Week Twelve (November 13): Peasant Studies and a Culture of Violence

1) Mitchell, pgs. 123-205.

2) Lisa Wedeen, "Seeing like a Citizen, Acting like a State, Exemplary Events from Unified Yemen," *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* (2003): pgs. 680-713.

Week Thirteen (November 20): Neoliberal Economics & Development

1) Mitchell, pgs. 209-303.

2) Christopher Parker & Pete Moore, "The War Economy of Iraq," Middle East Report (MERIP) Summer 2007: Available at http://www.merip.org/mer/mer243/parker_moore.html

3) Timothy Mitchell, "McJihad: Islam in the US Global Order," *Social Text* Vol. 73: No 4 (Winter 2002): pgs. 1-18.

Week Fourteen (November 27): Thanksgiving - No seminar meeting

Week Fifteen (December 4): Closing Perspectives

1) Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Viability of Authoritarian Rule in the Middle East: A Review and Critique of Theory," *Mafhoum* (8 January 2004): Available at <http://www.mafhoum.com/press6/176P51hinnebusch.htm>

2) Steven Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World," Brookings Paper, October 2007. Available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/10arabworld.aspx>

3) Fouad Ajami, "The Autumn of the Autocrats," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2005) <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050501faessay84304/fouad-ajami/the-autumn-of-the-autocrats.html>

4) Alfred Steppan and Robertson, "An Arab more than Muslim Electoral Gap," *Journal of Democracy*, 14:1 (July 2003).

5) Steven Fish, "Islam and Authoritarianism," *World Politics* 55 (October 2002), pgs. 4-37.
