

Course Description:

This course offers students an overview of politics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and also teaches some basic tools about comparing and contrasting the politics of rather diverse countries which nevertheless have some things in common. As such, we will compare and trace particular forms of rule, socioeconomic policies, and modes of political expression, exclusion, cooperation and conflict. In particular we will examine: state and regime formation and types, development programs, and revolutionary as well as reformist attempts by citizens to challenge the authoritarian status quo and socioeconomic inequalities. The course will also deal with a number of core dynamics that have been prominent in the region in the past few decades such as attempts to create more representative systems, role of religion and tensions associated with religious revival and activism, impact of changing demography and gender roles, and political challenges posed by addiction of some economies to oil exports and dependence of others on external support.