



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®

MĀNOA

Political Science 307F

– Online –

Study of the Middle East Course Syllabus

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Course Description:

This course reviews and analyzes the waves of social movements that took place across the Middle East region in recent years. These revolutions opened the door for a fundamental rethinking of the paradigms used to understand the Middle East. Since the Green Movement in Iran began in 2009, it presented a challenge to the present regime by showing the world the power of youth movements. Not long after Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution, which was followed by the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, protest movements across the Middle East have triggered a renewed interest in the literature of social unrest, social movements, and the role of information technology in shaping new identities and norm diffusion in the region.

This class begins with a brief historical review of the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Safavid dynasty in Iran, 1953 CIA coup in Iran, Arab-Israeli conflict, the anti-colonialist revolt, secular nationalism, and the rise of Islamism in all its populist, revolutionary, conservative, and revivalist forms. We then shift our focus to new modes of thinking about the region—grounded in both political economy and discourse analysis—by devoting considerable attention to examining a wide variety of reasons behind social protests and movements in the region. We adopt both a case study approach by focusing primarily on Iran's Green Movement (since 2009) and the new revolutions in the Arab world since 2011 focusing on Tunisia and Egypt, and a comparative study of revolution in the region. We also take a thematic approach to the causes of social unrest and identity formation in the region.

What these movements have in common is that they all are non-violent, non-ideological, and rooted largely in economic and political grievances. In the context of the Arab awakening, we take a closer look at the way new identities have been constructed and influenced by the demographic youth bulge, electronic and social media, failed neoliberal policies, U.S. intervention in the region post-9/11, and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Finally, we investigate the region's evolving geopolitics and geo-economics in the hope of providing students with analytical insights necessary for a comprehensive understanding of region's politics, society, and culture. I expect to communicate through the Lulima web forums, online quizzes and assignment posts.

This course is organized into 16 broad themes, with each week focusing on one theme.

Teaching Philosophy:

I believe that the classroom is where exchange of ideas takes place and everyone contributes to teaching and learning. My goal is that lessons, theories and methods covered in this course will have real-life applications.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Understand the contemporary forces shaping/influencing the Middle East region, including states, power relations, politics, social media, and the struggles for human rights.
- Comprehend the dynamics of conflicts, continuity and change, uprisings, and lingering tensions in the Middle East region.
- Understand the role of the youth, modern technology (e.g., social media), and democratic uprisings in the MENA region, as well as the role played by regional and external powers.
- Apply the knowledge acquired in this course to explore issues such as social change, uprisings, military intervention, sectarian tensions, peaceful democratic change, technology diffusion, and social media.
- Comprehend difficult moral and strategic choices that leaders of the Middle East region have to make given the geopolitical realities that influence the region.
- Use tools of critical analysis to address, identify, and analyze the sources of social change, modernity, nationalism, Islamism, and uprisings in the Middle East region, while also offering policy recommendations to policymakers in this regard.

Grading Rubric:

Weekly Participation Post (1 to 2 paragraphs):	20% (20 points)
PowerPoint Submission:	15% (15 points)
Online Midterm (Multiple Choice and Short Answer Questions):	20% (20 points)
Essay:	20% (20 points)
Online Final Exam:	25% (25 points)

Extra Credit:

A one-paragraph analysis in response to class films shared on the main webpage. 2 points maximum for each one. You are able to submit up to 3 responses before the semester ends.

UH Mānoa Focus Designations

Contemporary Ethical Issues (E):

In accordance with the requirements set forth at UH Mānoa, “This course has a Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus designation. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, students will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues; responsibly deliberating on ethical issues; and making ethically determined judgments”

A major focus of the different ethical decision-making frameworks that students will learn is to examine ethical questions in the context of power distribution. Through being able to evaluate “who stands to gain the most?” from different policies, institutions and organizations students will be able to better understand the global, environmental, and human rights implications of politics in the Middle

East on a national and international level. What benefits one group may be at the cost of another and newer forms of interaction brought by Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) makes these dynamics even more complex. Critical thinking will be an important part of the classroom discussions, activities and assignments where students will contrast the differences between the conveniences brought on and costs incurred by the once closed politics of the Middle East reaching a different stage in a world with more open communication. The sixteen broad themes from this course will be the base from which three important overarching ethical issues are analyzed regarding both historical developments, modern developments and patterns in politics of the Middle East. Additional details are provided below:

Ethical Implications of Information and Communication Technologies

Media and communication tools have undergone numerous shifts whether it be the early stages of printed works or the rapid dissemination of documents throughout the world via railroads and Morse code. The industrial revolution made way for a technological revolution and the dawn of social media. All of these different factors produce a variety of interactions with politics, which enable different degrees of freedom from oppressive conditions to censorship. Do these new communication mediums benefit certain groups more than others? Just because more people are able to access the news does not mean that the experience is as interactive in the similar ways as it had been in the past. It would seem that at the same time it is possible to transmit the same types of bias and dogmas across broader ranges and can in fact extend the scope of censorship to a certain extent. This can be evidenced in the increased level of influence of certain media syndicates on an international level; by gaining a strong foothold on the types of information the public is able to access, they in turn can compromise the nature and course of politics. It is a delicate balance which will be studied further throughout the course, begging the question, “who benefits?” As individuals become further empowered through online tools of communication the art and delivery of journalism is becoming a practice of the past making people reconsider the actual benefit behind Internet and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the region and as with the great freedoms they bring, the dangers that exist alongside.

Human Rights Issues

In the past decade perceptions of people's rights in the Middle East have undergone numerous shifts in part due to technological innovations being able to help people escape the wall of state controlled mass media. However many unanswered questions remain such as what will become of the Syrian Civil war, sectarian conflicts, and the invasion of and post invasion conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan which has dragged on for years with considerable debate about how the international community should react.

Transformational Properties of Social Movements that Influence Regional and International Politics

The power of social movements can be used for both peaceful purposes and malicious ones as well. As ICTs began to play a more influential role in people's daily lives this led to changes in recruiting mechanisms leading to some of the largest peaceful protests the world has ever seen and the development of ISIS one of the most disturbing forms of extremism in the region to exist in modern times. These moral quandaries are to be discussed in further detail throughout the course as Social Movements bear the potential to create new and much more functional societies or are capable to cause destruction as well.

Required Texts:

- Mahmood, Monshipouri, (2012). *Democratic Uprisings in the New Middle East: Youth, Technology, Human Rights, and US Foreign Policy* Paradigm Publishers
- Schwedler, J., & Gerner, D. J. (Eds.). (2008). *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Sparke, M. (2013). *Introducing Globalization Ties, Tensions, and Uneven Integration*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Additional Readings Will be Posted on Laulima

Course Overview:

Week 1: Provides an historical overview of the region, focusing on **colonialism**, state formation, and nationalism. We will begin the course by analyzing the conflicts between two dynasties the Safavid empire and Ottoman empire.

Week 2: Understanding how the region is affected by **globalization**.

Week 3: Middle East after the World War II, US presence in the region, and Coup in Iran and the return of the Shah of Iran, and post Khomeini Iran.

Week 4: Examines Arab-Israeli **conflicts**, focusing on wars and their regional and international implications

Week 5: Explores **social change**, transformation, modernity, focusing on secularism, Islamism, and revolution

Week 6: A study of **enclaves and slums**.

Week 7: Tracking the locations and shifts of **diaspora** across the world and discuss the different outcomes.

Week 8: Reviewing the different political factors shaping the Middle East.

Week 9: Examining the current **global climate** of politics in the Middle East

Week 10: The Challenge of human rights in the Middle East and North Africa, dealing with political engagement, civil society organizations, public opinion, **human rights**, feminism, and activism

Week 11: Discussion about the role of **social media, and information and communication technologies (ICTs)**,

Week 12: US-Iran Relations, focusing on the history of the relationship between the two countries, **the 1979 Iranian Revolution**, nuclear standoff, and the power of youth movements starting from 18 Tir

student uprising in 1999 and the **2009 Green Movement**.

Week 13: Delves into the 2011 **Arab uprisings**, focusing on neoliberal policies, economic insecurity, youth bulge, election politics, and post-conflict societies.

Week 14: The rise of **Turkey** and its regional politics as they relate to the Taksim Square (Taksim Gezi Park). Also Turkey's role in mediating conflict in the Middle East crisis will be reviewed. Ethnic conflicts within Turkey will also be analyzed.

Week 15: Concludes with challenges of **political transition** and a critical reflection on the Arab uprisings and beyond. Review of the Final Exam, and Due Dates for Term Papers

Week 16: Looking ahead at the present situations such as the rise of ISIS, continuation of different regional conflicts such as those in Syria and analyze their tragic implications.

Week 17: Final exams **due** for submission.

Course Timeline:

Week 1: History: The Development of the Middle East and Colonialism

Course Overview and Introduction

Introductory Remarks and Posts

Review of Class Syllabus

Introduction to Readings

Definition of the region (Held/Cummings, "The Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East," in Yambert, ed., *The Contemporary Middle East*, pp. 6-23)

Specifics regarding the exams, presentations, and the research paper will be open for discussion.

Week 2: Globalization and the Middle East

Film:

TBA

Readings:

Read, Baylis, *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*, chapters 7-11, pp. 141-253

Singer, *One world: The ethics of globalization*, chapter 3, pp. 51-106

Hudson, *NGOs' transnational advocacy networks: from 'legitimacy' to 'political responsibility'?*, pp. 331-352

Week 3: The Middle East after WWII

Schwedler, Introduction: pp. 1-8

Schwedler, Religion and Politics in the Middle East, pp. 377-401

Week 4: Arab-Israelis Wars: Regional and International Implications

Manners, Parmenter, and King, *The Middle East: A Geographic Preface*, pp. 9-39.

Week 5: Social Change and Transformation

Iran under President Hassan Rouhani: National Interest vs. Ideology

Monshipouri and Dorraj, "Iran's Foreign Policy: A Shifting Strategic Landscape," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XX, No. 4, Winter 2013, pp. 133-147.

Monshipouri, *Democratic Uprisings in the New Middle East*, chapters 1-3

Week 6: Enclaves, Slums, and Citizenship

Sparke, *Introducing Globalization Ties, Tensions, and Uneven Integration*, chapter 8, pp. 279-337

Week 7: Diasporas

Sparke, *Introducing Globalization Ties, Tensions, and Uneven Integration*, chapter 4, pp. 99-139

Week 8: Politics in the Middle East

Schwedler, Religion and Politics in the Middle East, pp. 377-401

King-Irani, Kinship, Class, and Ethnicity, pp. 315-344

Tetreault, The Political Economy of Middle Eastern Oil, pp. 259-286

Week 9: International and Contemporary Politics

Baylis, The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations, chapters 18-22

Read, Faaij, Jager, and Kok, Global warming and social innovation: the challenge of a climate neutral society, chapter 8

Singer, One world: The ethics of globalization, chapter

Week 10: Political Engagement: Civil Society, Human Rights, and Activism

Pollard, The Role of Women, pp. 345-376

Mahmood Monshipouri, ed., *Human Rights in the Middle East: Frameworks, Goals, and Strategies*, New York: Palgrave macmillan, 2011.

Mahmood Monshipouri, *Terrorism, Security, and Human Rights: Harnessing the Rule of Law*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012.

Recommended Readings:

Monshipouri, Muslims in Global Politics (2009)

Cooke, Middle Eastern Literature, pp. 403-437

Mohsen Milani, "Is US-Iran Détente Possible?" *Current History*, Vol. 112, No. 758, December 2013, pp. 345-348.

Week 11: Changes after the Rise of Internet Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Khagram, Riker and Sikkink, Restructuring world politics: transnational social movements, networks, and norms, chapter 1

Baylis, *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*, chapters 23-28

Film:

TBA

Week 12: US-Iran Relations

Monshipouri, chapter 5: US-Iran Relations: From the Green Movement to the Arab Spring, pp. 101-130.

Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran's Future*, Brooklyn, NY: Melville, 2010.

Recommended Readings:

Monshipouri and Assareh, The Islamic Republic and the 'Green Movement': Coming Full Circle," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Winter 2009, pp. 27-46.

Ray Takeyh, "What Really Happened in Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 4, July/August 2014, pp. 2-12.

Week 13: The Rise of Turkey

Monshipouri, chapter 6: "The Arab Spring: Regional Implications and Beyond," pp. 131-182.

Week 14: Political Transitions

Monshipouri, chapter 4, pp. 69-100

Ahmad Shokr, "Reflections on Two Revolutions," *Middle East Report*, No. 265, Winter 2012, pp. 2-12.

Recommended Readings:

Hicham Bou Nassif, "Wedded to Mubarak: The Second Careers and Financial Rewards of Egypt's Military Elite, 1981-2011," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 4, Autumn 2013, pp. 509-530.

Week 15: Review and Submit PowerPoint Submissions

Baylis, *The globalization of world politics: An introduction to international relations*, chapters 29-30

Singer, *One world: The ethics of globalization*, chapters 4-6

Week 16: The Future of the Middle East

Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York, Public Affairs, 2012).

Saskia van Genugten, "Libya After Gadhafi," *Survival*, Vol. 53, No. 3, June-July 2011, pp. 61-74.

Gary C. Gambill, "Arms for Peace in Syria?," *Middle East Forum*, August 16, 2013, available at <<
<http://www.meforum.org/3584/syria-arms>>>.

Recommended Readings:

Bishara, "Islamists and Democracy: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," pp. 300-306;

Week 17: Online Final Exam Due

No Readings