

Political Science 307F
Topics in Comparative Politics:
Politics of the Middle East
Summer Session II 2014

Instructor: Amir A. Moheet

Class Schedule/Location: Monday to Friday 10:30 am – 11:45 am, BUSAD301

Office: Saunders Hall 621.

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm or by appointment.

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Text: (required) Michele Penner Angrist, ed. *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*, 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013. The book is available for purchase at the UH bookstore.

Supplementary Readings: By assignment. All supplementary readings will be posted on Laulima. Shorter essays will be readily accessible on the web.

Course Description: The Middle East has long been perceived as a region bedeviled by strong authoritarian states and pervasive ethnic and religious violence. What explains the prevalence and persistence of these views? How has the Arab Spring challenged many widespread assumptions regarding the robustness of authoritarian rule and the prominence of political Islam throughout the region? By examining key questions surrounding the study of Middle Eastern politics, this course aims to provide students with a critical perspective of regional politics. We will integrate empirical review of the region with an examination of relevant theoretical and conceptual issues. Topics include the origins and durability of authoritarian regimes, state and regime structure, political Islam and sectarianism, economic underdevelopment, social mobilization and the Arab Spring. This course assumes no prior background knowledge of the region and is thus suitable for students with varying levels of familiarity of Middle East politics.

Course Philosophy: A Chinese proverb says that “teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.” Therefore, this course asks you to be active participants in your own education and to critically engage the wide range of topics we will address by intervening in class discussions as much as possible. The structure of the course has been organized with this in mind. There are no group projects, presentations or weekly writing assignments. Your ability to come to class and participate will demonstrate your commitment to exploring and engaging the content of course.

Readings: Because of the short lifespan of the course, we will be reading quite a bit of literature and moving quickly. This need not deter or dismay you. If you do the readings, show up to class and make an attempt to participate, there is no reason why you shouldn't perform well.

Course Requirements:

1) Attendance (10%): Class attendance is mandatory and will be recorded at the beginning of every class. Given the short duration of the course, there is no substitute for regular attendance. Showing up, as the saying goes, is half the battle (but 10% of your grade). The good news is that

by merely showing up, you will earn 10% of your grade right off the bat. Having said that, you will be excused for two absences throughout the summer term. After that, you will be penalized one-half letter grade for any additional absences. Class lectures will sometimes reiterate the readings, but they will often serve as a compliment to them. Thus, you could potentially miss a great deal by not coming to class since the lectures will often include concepts and themes not addressed in the readings.

2) Participation (15%): Of equal importance is participation. Showing up is not enough. You must be prepared to discuss the readings and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions. Given that this is a summer session course, we will be squeezed for time. This makes it all the more important that you are not only physically present, but mentally present as well! Assigned readings should be completed before class. If you are shy and have difficulty speaking in public, please come see me and we will seek out an alternative way for you to obtain participation credit.

3) Midterm Exam (20%): You will have an in-class midterm exam on **Friday July 25th**.

4) Research Paper (25%): Due in-class Friday August 1st. You will be required to write a 4-5 page research paper on any topic of your choosing that relates to Middle East politics. This need not be a topic that was addressed in class. But the paper must integrate theoretical and conceptual issues addressed in class lectures and assigned readings. Remember, this is not a book review or a descriptive piece; you must critically engage the relevant literature and apply theories and concepts from class to make your own argument. Each paper should include a full bibliography and abide by standard rules of citation. *APA citation*, often referred to as parenthetical or in-text citation, is the easiest and quickest way to document your research. It avoids the tedium of writing footnotes or endnotes and does not break the reader's attention (although you can use endnotes or footnotes for explanatory notes). Here's a tutorial guide to APA citation and formatting: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>

Your paper will be graded based on the following criteria:

- The strength of your argument and the application of relevant theoretical and conceptual issues covered in the class lectures and readings.
- The persuasiveness of your primary thesis, as evidenced by supporting research and the theoretical and empirical logic of your argument.
- Form and style (spelling, grammar and composition).

Accordingly, papers will be downgraded if they:

- Do not have major thesis or argument
- Are purely descriptive
- Demonstrate that you have not done the readings
- Suffer from sloppy/colloquial writing

5) Final Exam (30%): There will be an in-class final exam on **Friday August 8th**. Location TBA.

Current Events (extra credit): There exist many excellent sources for coverage of topical and not so topical events related to the Middle East. To enhance class discussion (and earn yourself

extra credit), you can follow any number of news sites, blogs, ezines and scholarly e-journals that focus on issues dealing with Middle East society and politics. You can earn extra credit by incorporating your analysis of a particular issue during class discussion. Alternatively, for more extra credit you can write a brief (3/4 – 1 page) analytic piece addressing a relevant theme on Middle East politics. Your analysis should integrate at least one of the theories or concepts covered in the class lectures or readings. Although your analytic brief can be from any news source (blog, news site, e-journal, etc.), the following list is a good place to start:

Juan Cole's Informed Comment Blog (arguably the most influential blog on Middle East history and politics):

www.juancole.com

The Middle East Channel at Foreign Policy:

<http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/>

The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP):

<http://www.merip.org>

Al Monitor:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/home.html>

Muftah:

<http://muftah.org>

Jadaliyya:

<http://www.jadaliyya.com>

Al Jazeera's Middle East Page (not an oxymoron, they provide excellent coverage of the whole world!):

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/>

The Middle East Page at the New York Times:

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/middleeast/index.html>

Lobe Log

<http://www.lobelog.com>

Middle Eastern Press (All in English):

Al-Jazeera (Regional), <http://english.aljazeera.net>

Al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt), <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/index.htm>

Jordan Times (Jordan), <http://www.jordantimes.com/>

Daily Star (Lebanon), www.dailystar.com.lb

Now Lebanon (Lebanon), <http://www.nowlebanon.com/Default.aspx>

Iran Daily (Iran), www.iran-daily.com

Tehran Times (Iran) <http://www.tehrantimes.com>
The Turkish Daily News (Turkey), www.turkishdailynews.com
Gulf News (UAE), <http://www.gulfnews.com>
Arab News (Saudi Arabia), www.arabnews.com
Azzaman (The Times) (Iraq), <http://www.azzaman.com/english/>
Middle East Times (Egypt), www.metimes.com
Haaretz (Israel) www.haaretzdaily.com
The Jerusalem Post (Israel), www.jpost.com
Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre (Palestinian Research Institute), www.jmcc.org
+972 Independent reporting and commentary from Israel and Palestine (ezine),
<http://972mag.com/>

How To Succeed in this Course

Do the readings. The lectures are not a substitute for the readings. The inverse of this also holds true; completing the assigned readings cannot act as a substitute for missing class lectures. The final and midterm exams, along with the research paper, will require familiarity with material not covered in the lectures but found in the readings, and vice versa.

Attend class. Again, lectures will include content not found in the readings. It will help you establish critical thinking skills.

Read critically: Focus on the big picture to identify the main arguments in the texts. Think about the coherence and logic of the arguments. Compare and contrast the concepts and theories in the readings.

Ask questions and Participate. Although this is mostly a lecture-based course, you should not hesitate to ask questions or raise issues during lectures. In fact, I encourage you to interrupt as much as possible. Your comments and questions will only enrich the course for all of us.

Come to office hours. I am here to help you and invite you to share your reflections and reactions to the course material and especially for questions regarding course requirements.

Class Schedule

Week 1

July 7: Introduction to the Course. Review of the Syllabus.

Colonialism, Orientalism and the Making of the Modern Middle East

July 8: What is the Middle East and How Do We Study It?

- Roger Owen, “The End of Empires: The Emergence of the Modern Middle Eastern States.” in *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Chapter 1, pp. 5-23.
- Edward Said. *Orientalism* New York: Vintage, 1987, Introduction (pp. 1-28).
- Eric Davis, “10 Conceptual Sins in Analyzing Middle East Politics,” <http://tabsir.net/?p=861>

July 9: The Colonial and Pre-colonial Origins of the Middle East

- Michele Penner Angrist. "The Making of Middle East Politics." Chapter 1 in *Angrist*.
- Douglas Little. "Orientalism American Style." in *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, Chapter One, pp. 9-42.

The Diversity of Authoritarianism in the Middle East

July 10-11 Authoritarianism in the Middle East and North Africa

- Mona El-Ghobashy. "Governments and Oppositions." Chapter 2 in *Angrist*.
- Sheila Carapico. "Civil Society." Chapter 5 in *Angrist*.

Week 2

The Diversity of Authoritarianism in the Middle East (cont'd)

July 14: The Non-Arab Middle East: The Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey

- Arang Keshavarzian. "Iran." Chapter 11 in *Angrist*.
- Marcie J. Patton "Turkey." Chapter 19 in *Angrist*.

July 15: The Non-Arab Middle East: The Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey (cont'd)

- Arang Keshavarzian, "Contestation Without Democracy: Elite Fragmentation in Iran." In Posusney and Angrist, *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance* ed., pp. 63-88.
- Michelle Penner Angrist, "Party Systems and Regime Formation: Turkish Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," In Posusney and Angrist, *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance* ed., pp. 119-141.

July 16-17: Constitutional and non-Constitutional Monarchies in the Middle East

- Michael Herb. "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World." *Middle East Journal* 58, no. 3(Summer 2004): 367-384.
- Sean Yom. "Jordan: Ten More Years of Autocracy." *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 4 (October 2009): 151-166.
- Mohamed Tozy. "Islamists, Technocrats, and the Palace." *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 1 (January 2008): 34-41.

July 18: Single-Party Regimes (Egypt, Syria, Tunisia)

- Nathan J. Brown, Emad El-Din Shahin, and Joshua Stacher. "Egypt." Chapter 10 in *Angrist*.
- Fred H. Lawson. "Syria." Chapter 18 in *Angrist*.
- Francesco Cavatorta and Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle. "The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali." *Mediterranean Politics* vol. 17, no.2 (July 2012): 179-195.

Week 3

July 21: Single Party Regimes (Egypt, Syria, Tunisia) [cont'd]

- Nathan J. Brown, Emad El-Din Shahin, and Joshua Stacher. "Egypt." Chapter 10 in *Angrist*.

- Fred H. Lawson. "Syria." Chapter 18 in *Angrist*.
- Francesco Cavatorta and Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle. "The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali." *Mediterranean Politics* vol. 17, no.2 (July 2012): 179-195.

July 22-23: The Origins of Durable Authoritarianism

- Michael L. Ross. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* (April 2001): 325-361
- Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36: No. 2 (2004), pp. 139-157.
- Larry Diamond, "Why Are There No Arab Democracies?" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21: No. 1 (2010), pp. 93-104.

Islam in the Middle East and North Africa

July 24: What is Political Islam and How Did it Emerge? Does Inclusion Moderate Political Islam?

- Joel Benin and Joe Stork. "On the Modernity, Historical Specificity, and International Context of Political Islam." In Benin and Stork, eds. *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 3-28.
- International Crisis Group (ICG). "Understanding Islamism." Brussels: ICG, 2005. Available online at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/037-understanding-islamism.aspx>
- Quinn Meacham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, A Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey." In *Third World Quarterly* 25(2004): 339-358.
- Dexter Filkins. "Letter from Turkey: The Deep State." In *The New Yorker* (March 12, 2012).

July 25: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Week 4

Sectarianism

July 28: Sectarian Conflict in Lebanon and Iraq

- Fred H. Lawson "Iraq." Chapter 12 in *Angrist*.
- Paul Salem. "Can Lebanon Survive the Syria Crisis?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (December 2012)

July 29: Why Sectarianism?

- Vali Nasr. "When the Shiites Rise." In *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 4(July-Aug. 2006): 58-74
- Toby Dodge. "State Collapse and the Rise of Identity Politics in Iraq." In Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, eds. *The Ethnicity Reader*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2010, pp. 110-124.

The Political Economy of Underdevelopment in the Middle East

July 30-31: Why is the Middle East Economically Underdeveloped?

- Timur Kuran. "Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, no. 3(Summer 2004): 71-90.

- Lisa Anderson. “The State in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Comparative Politics* 20, no. 1(October 1987): 1-18.
- David Waldner. *State Building and Late Development*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999, ch. 1 (pp. 1-18).

The Arab “Spring”

August 1 RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN-CLASS

August 1 and August 4: Why the Arab Spring? And Why Did Everyone Miss It?

- Charles Kurzman, “The Arab Spring Uncoiled.” *Mobilization* 17, no.4 (December 2012):377-390. Only Read pp. 377-386 [on p. 386, just read the first three lines].
- Jeff Goodwin, “Why We Were Surprised (Again) by the Arab Spring.” *Swiss Review of Political Science* 17(4): 452–456.
- Gregory F. Gause. “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability.” In *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2011).

Week 5

The Arab “Spring” (cont’d)

August 5-6: Reassessing Authoritarian Stability in the Middle East

- Eva Bellin. “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring.” *Comparative Politics* 44, no. 2 (January 2012): 127-149
- Omar S. Dahi. “Understanding the Political Economy of the Arab Revolts.” In *MERIP* 41, no. 259 (Summer 2011).
- Amy Austin Holmes. “There Are Weeks When Decades Happen: Structure and Strategy in the Egyptian Revolution.” *Mobilization* (December 2012): 17, no. 4 (December 2012): 391-410

August 7: Revolutions, Rebellions and Uprisings: Counterrevolution and Authoritarian Pushback in the Arab Spring

- Shana Marshall and Joshua Stacher. “Egypt’s Generals and Transnational Capital.” In *Middle East Report* 262(Spring 2012): 12-18.
- Curtis Ryan. “The New Arab Cold War and the Struggle for Syria.” In *Middle East Report* 262(Spring 2012): 28-31.
- Bassam Haddad. “The Syrian Regime’s Business Backbone.” In *Middle East Report* 262(Spring 2012): 26-27.
- Lisa Anderson. “Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democratization in the Middle East.” In *American Review of Political Science* 9(2006): 189-214.

August 8: IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM (location and time TBA)

A Note on Plagiarism: The University of Hawai'i defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining the authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing", which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms.