

Political Science 307F
Topics in Comparative Politics:
Politics of the Middle East (online)
Summer 2015

Instructor: Amir A. Moheet

Class Schedule/Location: Online

Office: Saunders Hall 621.

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

Email: moheet@hawaii.edu

Texts (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;
- Ilan Pappé. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, 2nd ed. Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2007.

Both books are available for purchase at the UH bookstore. Alternatively, you can purchase or rent them from Amazon or other bookstores.

Supplementary Readings: The majority of the readings for this course will not come from either book. However, 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, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 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 online discussions as much as possible. The structure of an online course is especially well suited (and restricted to) written communication. Your ability to participate in the various online forums and class discussions will demonstrate your commitment to exploring and engaging the content of course.

Readings: Since this is an online course and because of the nature of distance learning, we will be reading and reflecting upon quite a bit of literature. This need not deter or dismay you. If you do the readings, are punctual with the submission of assignments, and make an earnest attempt to participate online, there is no reason why you shouldn't perform well.

Course Requirements:

Important Note - This is a writing intensive course and therefore carries a “W” or “WI” designation. However, this should not discourage you. Given that this is also an online course, written communication is not only the primary means of class interaction, it is the *only* means: writing not only remains central to classroom interaction, it is also a designated university requirement for this course. As such, you must be prepared to fulfill this commitment in two fundamental ways. First, you should be prepared to write and submit your assignments on time. Second, your writing should not merely reflect that have you written the required minimum. It must also demonstrate that you have done the readings and are actively engaged with the course literature as well as your classmates. In short, the quality of your writing is just as important as its quantity.

1) Threaded Discussion Posts (25%): You are required to respond to at least one (1) of the questions I pose which will be based on the readings of the week. You are also required to respond to at least one (1) of your classmates' postings. Thus, **you must have a minimum of at least two (2) discussion posts per week.** Each post should be at least two paragraphs, for a total of four paragraphs for your two posts. This should translate to roughly one page total per week for both of your posts. I will post the questions every Sunday. You will have until the following Sunday to complete your two discussion posts for the week. To keep things from getting too predictable, I may often alter, change or otherwise completely rewrite the questions posed by the book. Therefore, you should not read expecting to answer the questions posed solely from the book. I will respond to each discussion post. If you decide to respond to my comment, you can earn additional credit. Because of finals, your discussion posts for week 10 will be due by Thursday (August 12) instead of the regular Sunday.

As a major component of any online course, the discussion thread is critical for the overall success of the class as well as the success of individual students. In addition to constituting a significant portion of your grade, discussion posts act as a proxy for your “attendance.” Although this is an online class, the discussion thread will not only reflect your commitment to reading and writing about the course literature, but it will also demonstrate your ability to be punctual with the submission of your posts. You must be prepared to discuss the readings and thoughtfully contribute to our online discussions. Assigned readings should be completed in full before you post to the discussion thread. If you fail to complete the readings, your submission posts will reflect as much. At the same time, if you fail to post at all, it will similarly demonstrate that you have not done the readings. Having said all this, you will be excused for missing two discussion posts.

Your discussion posts will be graded based on the following criteria:

- Punctuality and logical coherence of posts.

- The persuasiveness of your argument, partially reflected by supporting theoretical and conceptual evidence found in the readings.
- Form and style (spelling, grammar and composition).

Accordingly, posts will be downgraded if they:

- Suffer from sloppy/colloquial writing
- Do not address the questions and demonstrate that you have not done the readings.
- Are insulting in tone. This is will absolutely not be tolerated under any circumstance.

2) Written Assignment (30%): You will have a short written assignment every week. I will post a question on Lualima every Sunday and you will have until the following Sunday to submit your written response (same schedule as the threaded discussion posts). You can access the questions in the “*Assignments Tool*” feature of Lualima. You are required to write at least a three paragraph response to a question I pose and upload it via the “*Dropbox*” function of Lualima. **At a minimum, you should be writing at least three-quarters of a page.** While you can earn yourself full credit by writing more, you will definitely not earn full credit for writing less. It is worth repeating: merely writing the required minimum will not suffice for full credit. Your responses should be well crafted and supported by evidence from the readings, class discussions, or other independently derived research. I will provide feedback for each comment. Much like your discussion posts, if you respond to me you can earn yourself extra credit. During finals week, your written assignment for week 10 will be due by Thursday (August 12) instead of the regular Sunday.

3) Quizzes (10%) There will be a quiz every week (with the exception of finals week). They will be based on the assigned readings. They are not designed to be difficult. They *are* designed, however, to make sure that you understand the basic conceptual and theoretical ideas expressed in the readings. The quizzes will consist of 25 multiple-choice questions. I will post the quizzes on Thursday and you have until Friday to upload your response. Please mark your answers, upload the document, and title them as QUIZ #1, QUIZ #2, etc.

4) Final Exam (35%): Thursday August 13. There will be a cumulative written final exam on Thursday August 13. The final will be posted at 10am Hawaiian Standard Time (HST). You will have two hours to submit your final via the “*Dropbox*” feature on Lualima. Alternatively, you can email the final to me at moheet@hawaii.edu. As we approach the end of the course, I will provide a study guide for the final.

***** IMPORTANT NOTE: *** If you have trouble uploading your documents on Lualima please submit all assignments via e-mail to moheet@hawaii.edu. Please write in the subject line the title and number of the assignment such as QUIZ #2, WRITTEN ASSSIGNMENT #3, FINAL EXAM, etc. However, keep in mind that this option is also time sensitive and should be a last resort if you are having difficulty with Lualima. Otherwise, Lualima should be the primary means by which you submit and upload your assignments.**

How To Succeed in this Course

Do the readings. Given that this an online course, there is no substitute for the readings. It will be readily clear which students have covered the readings. The inverse of this also holds true; completing the assigned readings cannot act as a substitute for missing written assignments, quizzes, or discussion posts. Because of the nature of distance learning, the only way for you to demonstrate your commitment to engaging the course material is through active and regular participation in our weekly “meetings.” If you fail to read the course literature in its entirety, you will be unable to participate with your classmates or earn the necessary credit.

Complete Written Assignments and Discussion Posts on Time. It bears repeating: because there are no class lectures or meetings, class assignments and the discussion thread act as a proxy for class attendance and lectures. Posts on the discussion thread should answer the questions posed at the end of each chapter and should be based on a thoughtful articulation of the readings.

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

Ask questions and participate. Although this is an online based course, you should not hesitate to ask questions or raise issues during online discussions. In fact, you are required to post questions and responses to your fellow classmates. Your comments and questions will only enrich the course for all of us.

Be civil. The relative anonymity of an online course can sometimes provoke heated discussion. This is to be expected, particularly in a political science course. What will not be tolerated are personal attacks on the discussion posts of your classmates or otherwise uncivil behavior that is insulting or verges on intellectual and ideological intolerance. Discussion posts should thoughtfully consider the questions and responses of your classmates, including the initial question I pose to launch the discussion thread. Your posts should be based on supporting evidence from the readings. Responses that simply respond with a “good post” or “interesting thought” will not suffice and will be downgraded accordingly.

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 writing 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 use supporting evidence 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/>

Class Schedule

Week 1: June 8-14

Assigned Readings:

Colonialism, Orientalism and the Making of the Modern Middle East

- 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>

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.

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*.

Discussion Thread: posts due June 14

Written Assignment: due June 14

Quiz # 1: posted June 11, due June 12

Week 2: June 15-21

Assigned Readings:

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*.

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.

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.

Discussion Thread: posts due June 21

Written Assignment: due June 21

Quiz # 2: posted June 18, due June 19

Week 3: June 21-28

Assigned Readings:

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*.

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.

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- Mohamed Tozy. “Islamists, Technocrats, and the Palace.” *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 1 (January 2008): 34-41.

Discussion Thread: posts due June 28

Written Assignment: due June 28

Quiz # 3: posted June 25, due June 26

Week 4: June 29-July 5

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.

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.

Discussion Thread: posts due July 5

Written Assignment: due July 5

Quiz # 4: posted July 2, due July 3

Week 5: July 6-12

Assigned Readings:

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 Mecham, "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).

Discussion Thread: posts due July 12

Written Assignment: due July 12

Quiz # 5: posted July 9, due July 10

Week 6: July 13-19

Assigned Readings:

The Palestinian and Israeli Conflict

- Ilan Pappé. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Preface, Ch. 1-2, 9-12.

- Nathan J. Brown. "Palestine." Chapter 16 in *Angrist*.
- Alan Dowty. "Israel." Chapter 13 in *Angrist*.
- Ian Lustick. "Israel's Migration Balance: Demography, Politics and Ideology." *Israel Studies Review* 26, no 1 (Summer 2011).

Sectarianism: 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)

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.

Discussion Thread: posts due July 19

Written Assignment: due July 19

Quiz # 6: posted July 16, due July 17

Week 7: July 20-26

Assigned Readings:

The Political Economy of Underdevelopment: Why is the Middle East Economically Underdeveloped?

- P.W. Moore. "Political Economy." Chapter 5 in *Angrist*.
- 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).
- Anoushiravan Ehteshami. "Reform from Above: The Politics of Participation in the Oil Monarchies." *Royal Institute of International Affairs* 79, no. 1 (January 2003): 53-75.
- Hootan Shambayati. "The Rentier State, Interest Groups, and the Paradox of Autonomy: State and Business in Turkey and Iran." *Comparative Politics* 26, no. 3 (April 1994): 307-33.

Discussion Thread: posts due July 26

Written Assignment: due July 26

Quiz # 7: posted July 23, due July 24

Week 8: July 27-August 2

Assigned Readings:

The Arab Spring: 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).

The Arab Spring and Iranian Revolution: Comparing and Contrasting

- Abbas Ammanat. “The Spring of Hope and the Winter of Despair.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 147-149.
- Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet. “Freedom Springs Eternal. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 156-158.
- Nikki. R. Keddie. “Arab and Iranian Revolts 1979-2011: Influences or Simialr Causes?” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 150-152.
- Arang Keshavarzian. “Beyond 1979 and 2011: When Comparisons Distract.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 159-161.
- Charles Kurzman. “The Arab Spring: Ideals of the Iranian Green Movement, Methods of the Iranian Revolution.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 162-165.
- Negin Nabavi. “The Arab Spring as Seen Through the Prism of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 153-155.

Discussion Thread: posts due August 2

Written Assignment: due August 2

Quiz # 8: posted July 30, due July 31

Week 9: August 3-9

After the Arab Spring: Reassessing Authoritarian Stability and Vulnerability in the Middle East

Assigned Readings:

- Wendy Pearlman “Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings.” *American Political Science Association* 11, no. 2 (June 2013): 387-409.
- 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
- Steve Hess. “From the Arab Spring to the Chinese Winter: The Institutional Sources of Authoritarian Vulnerability and Resilience in Egypt, Tunisia, and China.” *International Political Science Review* 34, vo. 3 (February 2013): 254-272.
- Sharon Erickson Nepstad. “Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria.” *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (May 2013): 337-349.

Discussion Thread: posts due August 9

Written Assignment: due August 9

Quiz # 9: posted August 6, due August 7

Week 10: August 10-14 **Final Exam Week**

Assigned Readings:

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.

Discussion Thread: posts due August 12

Written Assignment: due August 12

The final will be posted at 10am HST on Thursday August 13. You will have two hours to submit the final.

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.