



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 it showed the world the power of youth movements. Not long after Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution followed and 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—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, and U.S. intervention in the region post-9/11, and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. New developments including the rise of fundamentalists groups such as ISIS will be examined in further detail throughout the course and the break out of conflicts between regional and global powers. The refugee crisis will also be discussed as well with regard to changes public policy. In addition, the rights of women and minorities will be a focal point as well. 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.

This course is organized into 9 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.

### ***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.

### ***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 Middle East 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.

## **UH Manoa Focus Designations**

### ***Contemporary Ethical Issues (E):***

In accordance with the requirements set forth at UH Manoa, *“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. ***Since this course will be taught online at least 8 hours in total per week will be dedicated toward contemporary ethical issues.*** 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. What benefits one group may be at the cost of another, such as oppressive regimes or violent forms of extremism taking regions by storm and affecting politics that extends beyond the regional scope. For example, there are two sides to the rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) which enabled groups of individuals to manifest protests dedicated to the peaceful defense of human rights principles across the Middle East, at the same time extremists are taking advantage of these mediums for malicious purposes. This is a complicated dilemma where depending on the group and region there will be different reactions to these new forms of interaction. The three main themes from this course will be the base from which important contemporary ethical questions are analyzed regarding the role of media as it relates to politics. 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 Communication Technologies (ICTs) and as with the great freedoms they bring, major restrictions also 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. This in turn lead to increased global awareness and the spread of social movements across the Middle East in particular massive manifestations dedicated to defending human rights principles. 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 lead 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 to exist in modern times. This 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 destroy them as well.

### **Oral Communication (O or OC):**

*(Each area that will cover the O designations will be denoted as O1, O2, etc.)*

This course has an Oral Communication (O or OC) focus designation. Specific learning outcomes that will be emphasized in this course are that students be able to not only learn, but also articulate their understanding by defending and critiquing different positions on course materials. ***Since this course is provided online, the approach to teaching will focus more on developing argumentative abilities and presentation skills throughout the semester.*** They will have to dissect, present, and organize evidence to prove the strengths and weaknesses that exist within different arguments present in global politics. **Students will have three main assignments / activities, group PowerPoint presentations, online forum discussions, film and online forum discussions which account for 40% of the overall grade. (Fulfills O1 Designation Requirement.)** Those exercises will address the learning outcomes by having students be able to adapt and articulate themselves in accordance to different criteria. Group presentations will emphasize on the development of research skills in being able to interpret different sources and synthesize the information in a cohesive manner. In the online forum discussions they must maintain their positions and be able to form appropriate rebuttals to the introduction of new information. The film and classroom discussions will help strengthen students' abilities of processing new information within short periods of time to evaluate the evidence being presented and whether or not the different directors achieved their objectives through their respective productions. **Students will be given explicit training regarding oral communications concerns in the main activities throughout this course. These assignments / activities will help create an environment where students not only absorb course material but are**

able to apply it both in the online environment and beyond. **(Fulfills O2 Designation Requirement.)** Feedback will be provided for all students regarding the aforementioned oral communications activities. **(Fulfills the O3 Designation Requirement.)** I will work with students both on an individual and group level **(Fulfills the O4 Designation Requirement.)** It is expected that dynamics between students and the course will be both engaging and informative to develop necessary skills on par with the standards of a 300 level course.

### ***Types of Online Participation Covering E and O Segments:***

There are three main classroom assignments / classroom activities which will help improve the abilities of students to both apply critical thinking, discuss, and create organized presentations while evaluating the different ethical dilemmas discussed throughout the course. An important aspect of global politics is being able to articulate these complex problems in the most concise manner with sufficient evidence and logical conclusions.

**Film analysis and Current Events Posts-** Films with different perspectives will be shown and current events articles will be shared throughout the course at least once per week as they relate to the course. Students will learn to dissect the information as it relates to better understanding the strategies of oral communications used in films to find tone, bias, and intentions behind the propagation of such productions. **(Fulfills O2 Designation Requirement.)** Examples will include discussion of films about politics in the Middle East from different standpoints to develop abilities that can help identify bias. In terms of engagement in ethical discussions where students must identify, analyze and deliberate on issues, at least post is expected weekly on Laulima: around 300 words about points of interest brought up in the readings, films, news segments or online forum discussions. Furthermore peer responses and posts regarding current events are expected as well for students to improve upon their argumentative skills. Potential topics could include the power of peaceful Social Movements and the dangers of extremism as they relate to the rise of ICTs. Other areas to be discussed include evaluating which methods of analysis prove to be advantageous over another depending on context.

**Group PowerPoint Presentations-** Will help students gain a deeper understanding of global politics through discussing certain topics more in-depth. Possible discussion point could include the latest paradigm shifts in the Middle East such as ISIS among others to help put previous events into context. Students will choose the topic which they would like to present and then will be distributed forms for instructor and peer evaluations of each group's performance. Factors such as content, communication and choice of visual aids will be important in determining the overall performance of each presentation. **Students will choose the topic which they would like to present and then will be distributed forms for instructor and peer evaluations of each group's performance (Fulfills O2 Designation Requirement.)**

**Online Forum Discussions-** Around one hour of class per week will be dedicated towards the class being able to choose a topic whether about current events or course material. Students will take on different vantage points and be able to sustain their arguments based on that position as new information becomes a part of the discourse. This will help aid in developing critical thinking and argumentative abilities. **(Fulfills the O2 Designation Requirement.)** Example topics would include discussions about current and longstanding human rights issues and that students present relevant evidence to defend their position. Another area of discussion may be the recent shifts in the usage of ICTs, social movements, extremism, and in history among other potential options.

## **Grading Rubric:**

Online Participation:

**All online forum posts are due by Sunday at midnight every week.**

Film Analysis and Current Events Posts: 10% (10 points)  
(Minimum one post and response on Laulima per week regarding films or current event article per week)

Group PowerPoint Presentation: 20% (20 points)

(Groups are to be chosen at random and project instructions will be announced on Laulima)  
**(Fulfills the O1 Designation Requirement with the participation and oral communications activities being 40% of the total grade)**

Online Forum Discussions: 10% (10 points)  
(Minimum one post and response on Laulima per week regarding reading material)

## **Assignments and Exams:**

Online Midterm (Multiple Choice and Short Answer Questions): 20% (20 points)

Essay: 15% (15 points)

Online Final Exam: 25% (25 points)

## **Required Textbooks:**

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.

Stoessinger, J. (2010). *Why nations go to war*. Cengage Learning.

## **Further Readings:**

Cesare Merlini and Olivier Roy, eds., *Arab Society in Revolt: The West's Mediterranean Challenge*, Washington, D.C. 2012.

Rex Brynen, Peter W. Moore, Bassel F. Salloukh, and Marie-Joelle Zahar, *Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism and Democratization in the Arab World*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012.

Larbi Sadiki, Heiko Wimmen, and Layla Al-Zubaidi, *Democratic Transition in the Middle East: Unmaking Power*, New York: Routledge, 2013.

Karl Yambert, ed., *The Contemporary Middle East: A Westview Reader*, 3rd Ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013).

Ellen Lust, ed., *The Middle East*, 13th Ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press, 2014)

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

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

Kenneth M. Pollack, et. al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2011.

Jeannie Sowers and Chris Toensing, eds., *The Journey to Tahrir: Revolution, Protest, and Social Change in Egypt*, NY: Verso Books, 2012

Mahmood Monshipouri, *Muslims in Global Politics: Identities, Interests, and Human Rights*,

Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

### **Course Outline:**

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

**Week 4:** Explores **social change**, transformation, modernity, focusing on secularism, Islamism, and revolution. Furthermore the more recent impact of extremism in Iraq and Syria will be analyzed to better understand the massive influx of immigrants to Europe from the Middle East.

**Week 5:** This week we will cover information regarding the Green Movement in Iran (2009), April 6 Movement in Egypt (2011) and the Taksim Gezi Park movement in Turkey (2013) and their regional and global implications. Also Turkey's role in mediating conflict in the Middle East crisis will be reviewed. Ethnic conflicts within Turkey will also be analyzed.

**Week 6:** Delves into the 2011 Arab uprisings, focusing on neoliberal policies, economic insecurity, youth bulge, **social media, and information and communication technologies (ICTs)**, election politics, and post-conflict societies.

**Week 7:** US-Iran Relations, focusing on the history of the relationship between the two countries, **the secular democracy era of 1953 and 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 8:** 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. Put into context the case of ISIS and how it came to power in Iraq and Syria, threatening the region and the world. Their scope of impact will be analyzed and discussed.

**Week 9:** Concludes with challenges of **political transition** and a critical reflection on the Arab uprisings, continue the discussion about ISIS, and beyond. Review of the Final Exam, and Due Dates for Term Papers. Looking ahead at the present situations, continuation of different regional conflicts such as those in Syria, Iraq, and analyze their tragic implications.

**Week 10:** Final exams due.

### **Weekly Readings:**

Part I- General Overview and Key Concepts (Weeks 1-4):

#### **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

### 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: The Middle East after WWII**

### Readings:

Schwedler, Introduction: pp. 1-8

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

## **Week 3: Arab-Israelis Wars: Regional and International Implications**

### Readings:

Stoessinger, Why Nations Go to War, chapter 1, pp. 3-28

Stoessinger, Why Nations Go to War, chapter 2, pp. 31-54

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

Stoessinger, Why Nations go to War, chapter 7, pp. 216-254

## **Week 4: Social Change, Transformation and Immigration to Europe**

Iran under President Hassan Rouhani: National Interest vs. Ideology

### Readings:

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

## Part II- Analysis of Political Change (Weeks 5-7):

## **Week 5: Social Movements in Iran, Egypt and Turkey**

### **\*\*\*Midterms Due\*\*\***

### Readings:

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

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

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.

## **Week 6: Political Engagement: Civil Society, Human Rights, and Activism**

### Film:

*TBA*

### Readings:

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 7: US-Iran Relations**

### **Readings:**

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

### **Recommended Readings:**

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

## Part III- Synthesis (Weeks 8-10):

## **Week 8: The Future of Political Transitions in the Middle East and the threat of ISIS**

### **\*\*\*PowerPoint Presentations Due\*\*\***

### **Readings:**

Monshipouri, chapter 4, pp. 69-100

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

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:**

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.

Bishara, "Islamists and Democracy: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," pp. 300-306; Perry, "Talking to Terrorists: Hamas and Hezbollah," pp. 307-318.

## **Week 9: Regional Conflicts in the Middle East, Syria, Iraq & Analysis of ISIS continued...**

### **Film:**

*TBA*

### **Readings:**

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 10: Final Exams Due**

### **Readings:**

No Readings