



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST (POLI 355)

Marwa M. Shalaby

Spring 2019

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday: 1:00-2:30 PM.

Course Description

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has undergone profound transformation over the past decade. The sweeping waves of the Arab uprisings, the rise and demise of Islamist politics, civil wars and refugee crises, and the (re)emergence of radical forces in many parts of the region have brought about new venues as well as challenges to the study of the MENA politics. Thus, this introductory class aims to survey the most pertinent themes to the study of politics and governance in the region and to provide students with a sound understanding of the intertwined factors shaping the political landscape at the present.

The first part of this class will introduce students to the historical, socio-political, and cultural context followed by a special focus on the political economy of the region. We will also study wars and conflicts and their effect on most of the current realities and unrests throughout the region. Since conducting rigorous research on MENA politics is one main objectives of this class, I am keen to introduce you to the challenges associated with conducting fieldwork in the region, especially in conflict-ridden areas. While I realize that we will not be conducting fieldwork in MENA this semester, these tools are valuable assets for students interested to undertake comparative research in atypical places. The second part of the class will focus on the relationship between civil society and democratic governance. We will also examine the link between Islam, culture and democracy in MENA. This class will cover the politics of authoritarianism and the development of electoral institutions, political Islam and the role played by the Islamist parties in the electoral arena. The third and final part of the class will shed light on the Arab uprisings and their aftermath. The class will conclude by a brief discussion on the U.S. foreign policy and the ongoing humanitarian crises in Yemen and Syria as well as student-led analyses on current events in the region.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop a concrete understanding of the history and politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). This course will also provide students with a solid foundation for more advanced courses on the politics of the MENA region.
- Students will be able to apply comparative politics' theories and frameworks toward understanding the current events and the complexities of MENA's politics and governance structures.
- This course will sharpen students' critical and analytical skills by exposing them to different, even contradictory, points of views and contemporary debates relating to MENA politics and ongoing conflicts.
- This course is intended to strengthen students' written skills by introducing them to different forms of writing. By the end of the semester, students will be better equipped to present their ideas and arguments to audience with diverse interests and backgrounds.

Required Texts and Materials

- Lust, Ellen. (2016). 14th Edition. *The Middle East*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Clark, Janine and Francesco Cavatorta. (2018). *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa*. Oxford University Press.
- Cammett, Melanie, Ishac Diwan, Alan Richards and John Waterbury. (2013). 4th Edition. *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. Routledge.
- Shively, W. Phillips. (2017). *The Craft of Political Research*. 9th Edition. Boston: Pearson. (Recommended)
- Gary King, Robert Keohane, & Sidney Verba. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Recommended).

Assignments, Evaluations and Absence Policies

Our class will be a combination of lectures, class discussions and student-led presentations. Students are required to keep up with the assigned reading, to attend our meetings and to participate intelligently in our class discussions. Students' evaluation will be based on three response papers, one class presentation, one book report, and a final paper.

- **Attendance (10% of course grade):** Each student will be granted two unexcused absences during the semester. Missing more than two classes will result in a 2-point grade reduction for each additional absence, unless there is a compelling reason that you would need to communicate directly with me.

- **Active, informed Participation (10% of course grade):** Students are required to participate actively and intelligently in our class meetings. Students' discussions are an integral part of the class and students should have read the assigned readings for the day and be ready to discuss them before coming to class. Additionally, each student is required to be a discussion leader once during the semester. The discussion leader for a specific day will be responsible for introducing the main themes of the readings, providing us with a list of questions that we should collectively answer during class in addition to demonstrating the points of strengths and/or weaknesses in the arguments presented in that specific day's readings. Discussion leaders' roles will be assigned on the first day of class.
- **Response Papers (30% of course grade):** Students are required to write **three** 3-4 pages (double-spaced, Font 12) response papers based on the readings. These assignments should demonstrate your ability to think analytically and to develop a clear and logical argument, rather than being simply a summary of the readings. The instructor will provide you with further guidelines and instructions on how to formulate and design your papers. These papers are due by the beginning of the classes that you chose to write about.
- **Book Report (15% of Course Grade):** Students are required to read an outside book pertinent to the themes covered in the course, write a two-page (single-spaced, Font 12) report, and present the book to their colleagues. Students are also expected to distribute or email the class their report prior to their oral presentation. Your book report should be more than a summary of the book. Your report should specify the author's implied and/or stated purpose for writing the book, the author's major theoretical contribution(s) to the discipline, profound investigation and evaluation of the research methodology and main conclusions of the assigned book. A list of book suggestions will be provided by the instructor the first day of class.
- **Final paper (35% of course grade):** Students are required to write 8-10 page (double-spaced, Font 12) research paper on the topic of their choice. The final paper should demonstrate your mastery of the key concepts, approaches, and the different research tools introduced in this class. This assignment should also demonstrate your ability to think analytically and to develop a clear and logical argument. It should also be written in a clear, scholarly format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and a properly referenced bibliography (APA/Chicago). The final version of the paper is due on **May 1st**. I will provide you with further guidelines and instructions on how to formulate and design your paper. However, it is very important to start working early on your paper.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at <http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/>. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Disability Resource Center

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Middle East Politics and Governance (1/8; 1/10)

Background, Historical and Social Roots of the Middle East

- Please review this collection of background essays on the Middle East to be discussed during our first two weeks of class. These essays can be accessed online from TeachMiddleEast/University of Chicago.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/27-geography/51-what-is-the-middle-east>.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/26-stereotypes/50-arab-muslim-or-middle-eastern>
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/28-history/3-understanding-middle-eastern-history>.
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/44-arab-identity>
 - <http://www.teachmideast.org/essays/36-people/46-communal-identities-and-ethnic-groups>.
- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. **Chapter 1: pp.1-53.**

- Bill, James. (1996) "The Study of the Middle East Politics, 1946-1996: A Stocktaking" *Middle East Journal*, 50 (4): 501-512. **(Recommended)**.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Chapter 1 (1-27). **(Recommended)**.

Week 2: The Political Economy of the MENA Region (1/15; 1/17)

North Africa and Levant Economies (1/15)

- Cammett, Melanie, Ishac Diwan, Alan Richards and John Waterbury. (2013). *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. **Chapter 2: pp. 35-70.**
- Ross, Michael. (2001). "Does Oil Hinder Democracy." *World Politics* 53 (3): 325-361.
- Jamal, Amaney. (2005). "The Prospects of Democracy and Economic Reform in the Arab World." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(3): 545-547. **(Recommended)**.
- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. Chapter 3. **(Recommended)**.

Rentier Politics and Oil Curse (1/17)

- Cammett, Melanie, Ishac Diwan, Alan Richards and John Waterbury. (2013). *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. **Chapter 9.**
- Beblawi, Hazem. (1987). "The Rentier State in the Arab World," in *The Rentier State*, eds. Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani.
- Gylfason, Thorvaldur. (2001). "Natural Resources, Education, and Economic Development," *European Economic Review* 45: 847-859. **(Recommended)**.
- Alexeev, Michael and Robert Conrad. (2009). "The Elusive Curse of Oil," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 91 (3): 586-98. **(Recommended)**.
- Friedman, Thomas. (2006). "The First Law of Petro-politics" *Foreign Policy* 154: 28-36. **(Recommended)**.

Week 3: Wars and Conflicts (1/22; 1/24)

Nationalist Struggles and State-Building (1/22)

- Cammett, Melanie; Ishac Diwan; Alan Richards and John Waterbury. (2013). *A Political Economy of the Middle East*. **Chapter 10**
- Anderson, Lisa. (2004). "Scholarship, Policy, Debate and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why It Matters." *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 38 (1): 2-15.
- El-Affendi, Abdelwahab. (1991). "Studying My Movement: Social Science without Cynicism." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1): 83-94. **(Recommended)**.
- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. Chapter 9. **(Recommended)**.

Arab-Israeli Conflict (1/24)

- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. **Chapter 7**.
- Pressman, Jeremy. (2003). "The Second Intifada: Background and Causes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Studies* 23 (2): 114-141. **(Recommended)**.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. Ch. 3 (76-85) and (99-114). **(Recommended)**.

Week 4: Doing Research on the MENA region (1/29; 1/31)

Ethical Considerations and Constraints (1/29)

- Clark, Janine and Francesco Cavatorta. (2018). *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa*. **Introduction**.
- Clark, Janine. (2006). "Field Research Methods in the Middle East." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39 (3): 417- 424.
- POMEPS#8:https://pomeps.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/07/POMEPS_Studies_8_Ethics.pdf p. 7-17.
- Anderson, Lisa. (1999). "Politics in the Middle East: Opportunities and Limits in the Quest for Theory," in Tessler, Mark (ed.), *Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies for Understanding Middle East Politics*: 1-10. **(Recommended)**.

Doing Research in Challenging Settings (1/31)

- Clark, Janine and Francesco Cavatorta. (2018). *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa*. **Chapter 5**.
- POMEPS#8:https://pomeps.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/07/POMEPS_Studies_8_Ethics.pdf p. 17-29.
- Clark, Janine and Francesco Cavatorta. (2018). *Political Science Research in the Middle East and North Africa*. **Chapter 3 & 4 (Recommended)**.

Week 5: Civil Society and Democracy (2/5).

- Langohr, Vickie.(2004). "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics? Egypt and Other Liberalizing Arab Regimes." *Comparative Politics* 36(2):181-204.
- Nonneman, Gerd. (2001) "Rentiers and Autocrats, Monarchs and Democrats, State and Society: the Middle East Between Globalization, Human 'Agency', and Europe." *International Affairs* 77 (1): 141-162.
- Moghadam, Valentine. (2008). "Engendering Citizenship, Feminizing Civil Society." *Women and Politics* 25 (1-2): 63-87.
- Jamal, Amaney. 2001. *Barriers to Democracy*. Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 1&2. (Recommended)**.

- Tétreault, Mary Ann. (1993). "Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights." *Middle East Journal* 47(2): 275–291. **(Recommended)**.

Spring Recess: February 7-9, 2019.

Week 6: Political Culture, Islam and Democracy in MENA (2/12; 2/14)

Is Islam Incompatible with Democracy? (2/12)

- Huntington, Samuel. (1991). *The Clash of Civilizations*. p. 207-218, 254-265.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. (2002). "Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the 'Clash of Civilizations' Thesis." *Comparative Sociology* 1: (3/4): 235.
- Fish, M. Steven. (2002). "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55.1: 4-37.
- Sadowsky, Yahya. (1992). "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds., *Political Islam*, pp. 33-50 (Special issue: Democracy in the Arab World). **(Recommended)**.
- Rowley, Charles, and Nathanael Smith. (2009). "Islam's Democracy Paradox: Muslims Claim to Like Democracy, So Why Do They Have So Little?" *Public Choice* 139: 273–299. **(Recommended)**.

Is Islam Compatible with Democracy? (2/14)

- Zakaria, Fareed. "The Islamic Exception," in *The Future of Freedom*, 119-159.
- Tessler, Mark. (2002). "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries." *Comparative Politics* 34(3): 337-354.
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled (2003). "Islam and the Challenge of Democracy." *Boston Review* 28 (2).
- Al-Hibri, Azizah Y. (1992). "Islamic Constitutionalism and the Concept of Democracy." *Case W. Res. Journal of International Law*. 24: 1-27. **(Recommended)**.

Week 7: Electoral Politics Under Authoritarianism in MENA (2/19; 2/21).

The Politics of Authoritarianism in MENA (2/19)

- Herb, Michael. (2004). "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World." *Middle East Journal* 58 (3): 367–384.
- Baaklini A, Denoeux G, and Springborg R. (1999). *Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. **Chapter 1.**
- Levitsky, S and Way L (2002). "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51–65. **(Recommended)**.

- Brownlee, Jason. (2002) "...And Yet They Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neo-patrimonial Regimes." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 37(3): 35–63. **(Recommended)**.

The Politics of Authoritarianism in MENA Continued (2/21)

- Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar. (2009). "Elections under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12(1): 403–422.
- Posusney, Marsha. (2002). "Multi-Party Elections in the Arab World: Institutional Engineering and Oppositional Strategies." *Studies in Comparative and International Development* 36 (4): 34–62.
- Sassoon, Joseph. 2016. *Anatomy of Authoritarianism in the Arab Republics*. Cambridge University Press. **Chapter 2**.
- Sater, James. (2009). "Parliamentary Elections and Authoritarian Rule in Morocco." *The Middle East Journal* 63(3): 381–400. **(Recommended)**.
- Blaydes, Lisa. (2011) *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Introduction. **(Recommended)**.

Week 8: Political Islam/Religion and Politics (2/26; 2/28)

Religion, State and Politics (2/26)

- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. **Chapter 5**.
- Wright, Robin. (2015). "A Short History on Islamism." [Newsweek](#).
- Sadowski, Yahya. (2006). "Political Islam: Asking the Wrong Questions?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 215–240. **(Recommended)**.
- Schwedler, Jillian. (2011). "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis." *World Politics* 63(2): 347–376. **(Recommended)**.

Islamist Parties and Electoral Contestation (2/28)

- **POMEPS #6**: Rethinking Islamist Politics (February 2014): p. 37-56.
- Shalaby, Marwa. (2016). "The Islamists are Back in Morocco: How did they do it?" [Washington Post](#).
- Pellicer, M and Eva Wegner. (2011) "Left-Islamist Opposition Cooperation in Morocco." *British Journal of Middle East Studies* 38(3): 303–22. **(Recommended)**.
- **POMEPS #26**: Adaptation Strategies of Islamist Movements (April 2017). **(Recommended)**.

Week 9: Gender in the Middle East (3/5; 3/7).

Gender and Society (3/5)

- The World Bank MENA Development Report. (2013). *Gender Equality and Development in the Middle East and North Africa: Women in the Public Sphere : Overview*.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. (2002). "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" *American Anthropologist*, 104 (3): 783-790.
- Mikdashi, Maya. (2012). "How Not to Study Gender in the Middle East." *Jadaliyya*. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4775/how-not-to-study-gender-in-the-middle-east>
- Wadud, Amina. (1999). *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 1. **(Recommended)**.
- Welzel, Christian and Amy Alexander (2010). "Islam and Patriarchy: How Robust is Muslim Support for Patriarchal Values." *International Review of Sociology*, 21(2): 249-276. **(Recommended)**.

Gender and Politics in MENA (3/7)

- Dunne, Michele. (2008). "Women's Political Participation in the Gulf: A Conversation with Activists Fatin Bundagji (Saudi Arabia), Rola Dashti (Kuwait), Munira Fakhro (Bahrain)."
- Abou-Zeid, Gihan. (2006). The Arab region: Women's Access to the Decision-Making Process Across the Arab Nation. In Dahlerup, D. (Ed.), *Women, Quotas and Politics*, New York: Routledge.
- Shalaby, Marwa. "[Women's Political Representation and Authoritarianism in the Arab World](#)." *Project on Middle East Political Science*. March 11, 2016.
- Bush, Sarah Sunn and Eleanor X. Gao. (2017). "Small Tribes, Big Gains: The Strategic Uses of Gender Quotas in the Middle East." *Comparative Politics* 49 (2): 149-167. **(Recommended)**.
- Clark, Janine and Jillian Schwedler. (2003). "Who Opened the Window? Women's Activism in Islamist Parties." *Comparative Politics* 35.3: 293-312. **(Recommended)**.

Spring Break (3/8-3/18)

Week 10: The Arab Uprisings (3/19; 3/21)

Understanding the Arab Uprisings (3/19)

- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. **Chapter 4**, pp. 185-204.
- Jamal, Amaney and Michael Robbins. (2015). "*Social Justice and the Arab Uprisings: Evidence from the Arab Barometer*." Arab Barometer Working Paper No. 1.

- Lynch, Marc. (2011). *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*. Public Affairs. Chapter 1. **(Recommended)**.
- Sadiki, Larbi (Ed.). (2015). *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*. Routledge. Chapter 1. **(Recommended)**.

What Went Wrong? (3/21)

- Whitehead, Laurence . (2015). On the Arab Spring: Reflections on Contexts and Contests of Democratization. In Larbi Sadiki (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*. pp.17-28.
- Masoud, Tarek, Jason Brownlee and Andrew Reynolds. (2013). “Why the Modest Harvest?” **The Washington Post**.
- Gause, Greg. (2011). “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (4): 81-90.
- Yom, Sean. (2016). “How Middle Eastern Monarchies Survived the Arab Spring” **Washington Post**. **(Recommended)**.
- Bellin, Eva. (2012). “ Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring.” *Comparative Politics* 44(2):127-149. **(Recommended)**.

Week 11: International Politics of the Middle East (3/26; 3/28)

- Lust, Ellen. (2016). *The Middle East*. **Chapter 8**.
- Pollack, Kenneth. (2016). “Fight or Flight.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- *The Economist*. (2016). “Trump and the Middle East: He knows Golf, but does he know the Gulf?”

Week 12: Displaced Communities and the Refugee Crisis in MENA (4/2)

- POMEPS #5 (2013): *The Political Science of Syria’s War*. pp.1-34.
- Arar, Rawan, Lisel Hintz and Kelsey Norman. (2016). “The Real Refugee Crisis is in the Middle East, not Europe.” **The Washington Post**.
- POMEPS #5 (2013): *The Political Science of Syria’s War*. pp.34-69. **(Recommended)**.

Challenges to Post-War Construction (4/4)

Guest Speaker (4/4)-Annum Sadana

- Caylan, Eren, Giorgos Christides and Maximilian Popp. (2016). “EU-Turkey Refugee Deal Dying in the Greek Islands.”

- POMEPS #30 (2018): [The Politics of Post-War Construction](#). Introduction; pp14-28; 51-60.
- POMEPS #30 (2018): [The Politics of Post-War Construction](#). **(Recommended)**.

Week 13: Current Events TBD (4/9; 411)

Week 14: Student Presentations (4/16; 4/18)

Instructions, Guidelines & Readings for Short Response Papers

As noted in the syllabus, you are to write three critical responses to the material assigned for that week. These response papers should be no more than **4 pages, double-spaced**.

In your papers, I am really looking for a **critical** response rather than a “weekly summary.” My goal was to get you thinking about the problems in the arguments or holes in the facts and offer constructive ways to remedy them. **Do not *simply* turn in a summary** of what you read. Although you should present a summary and synthesis as a first step and should be included as background, I am primarily grading you on your ability to critically analyze the material in the way a scholar would critique an article. This means bringing together (synthesizing) the discussion in the materials in a coherent and organized fashion as well as thinking beyond the material to an analysis of the text(s) itself. This may be a different way of writing than you are used to, but it will teach you (very quickly) to synthesize an author’s claims and craft your response to those arguments. I think the following questions will get your started:

Tips to get started:

Pick up one or two themes or arguments from the readings and really analyze them.

Evaluate the readings rather than editorializing.

Think about the work in relation to other theories or empirical findings we’ve read.

Think about what “conventional wisdom” holds – does the work contradict this?

Some questions to consider:

Did the authors say all there was to say?

What did they miss?

What should they have included?

Can you suggest counter-factuals?

What are the implications for studying the concept or issue the way they did?

Did they measure their variables correctly or sufficiently?

How might it change if we change the approach or choose different data?

Does what they are talking about jell with the “real world”?

Are the conclusions generalizable?

Ultimately, these short papers should give you a sense of what kinds of questions to ask in general and specifically a theoretical way to begin your final project for this class or your senior, MA or MPA thesis. I don’t necessarily require you to do outside research or offer additional citations. Ideally, you will use the readings to critique *each other* -- the readings are usually diverse enough that they take different approaches to similar theoretical questions (or frequently come up with divergent conclusions), so feel free to play one off of another in a comparative sense.