

**PSCI 3700/8705**  
**Government and Politics of the Middle East**  
**Fall 2015**

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Office Hours: TTh 9:15-11:15 am. F 11am-12pm  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

PSCI 3700 is an overview of the government and politics in the contemporary Middle East, including considerations of state formation, authoritarianism and democratization, state-society relations, religion, culture, gender, and economy. This course satisfies the department's comparative politics requirement. The course starts with a historical analysis outlining the conditions that shape state formation and the consolidation of authoritarian regimes. It then explores a range of topics regarding comparative politics of the region. The topics explored include the political economy of the region, the nature of governments and oppositions, state-society relations, religion-state relations with a special emphasis on Islamic politics, and gender and politics. In doing so, the course also examines the possibilities for political and economic reform. Through careful examination of case studies, the course familiarizes the students with the political, social, cultural and economic diversity of the Middle East region.

This course has the following two objectives.

- First, it aims to give students a more nuanced and complete understanding of the politics, culture, and society in the Middle East.
- Second, it seeks to supply students with the theoretical and empirical evidence necessary to evaluate and make critical, analytical arguments about the Middle East in comparative perspective.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Required Readings:**

Michele Penner Angrist (ed.), *Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013).

Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, Andrew Reynolds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

There will be additional readings and news videos throughout the semester. Additional readings aim to make you link the course concepts with current issues. All the readings will be available online.

Exams will cover the material in the textbook, additional reading assignments, and in-class materials.

**Make-Up Exams and Incompletes**

I will not allow make-ups without an official documented excuse regarding medical or family emergencies. Please keep in mind that late assignments will be downgraded. An incomplete will only be given in exceptional circumstances (a documented circumstance beyond the student's control). Students will only be given an incomplete if they have been doing passing work during the semester.

**Code of Conduct**

All students need to acquaint themselves with what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences thereof. See the general university policies for further information:

<http://www.unomaha.edu/aandsaffairs/leftcolumn/inside/students/policiesandprocedures/aiundergrad.php>. **Laptops and other devices with internet connection are not allowed during the classes.**

Although I acknowledge that laptops provide several benefits for learning, I am convinced, based on my experience, that they distract students from lecture and class discussions.

### **Fairness and Disability Statement**

The instructor of this course is committed to support the learning of all students, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, handicapping condition, or sexual preference. Students should be able to expect that their learning environments are free from any form of prejudice. Disparaging comments aimed stereotypically at any group and any questioning of the seriousness of purpose or academic commitment of students based upon group characteristics may undermine our educational mission. If such behavior occurs in class, students should first talk with the instructor. Identify specific examples of behavior by the instructor or by other students that the student finds offensive or disparaging. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the student is encouraged to consult with the Department Chair and to seek the Chair's assistance in improving the classroom environment.

Students requiring special consideration must contact and work through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in EAB 117 (554-2872). This office then notifies the instructor in writing of the accommodations the student needs in compliance with 504/ADA.

### **Course Website**

I will make use of the features of the Blackboard system, which you can access through UNO webpage. The course syllabus, some of the course readings, lecture notes, and assignments will be available on this website. I may intermittently send course-related e-mails to you via this site. Therefore, you need to make sure that your university email is up and running and that you understand how to use your Blackboard account.

### **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria.

#### **1. Class Attendance (5 %) and Participation (5 %)**

You are expected to attend all the course sessions. More than three unexcused absence will negatively influence your grade. After three absences, each absence will decrease your attendance grade by 0.5 %. You are also expected to productively contribute to classroom discussions. This contribution can be in the form of participating informal and formal debates, posing and responding questions, sharing other resources that can facilitate classroom learning. To facilitate your class participation, I encourage you to think critically, and as part of that, to think the positive aspects of the lectures and readings, and to develop your own analysis of the subject.

We will set aside some time in each class to talk about political developments in the region. Students are required to keep abreast of political developments by reading from quality news outlets such as *The New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)), *The Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), *The Economist* ([www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)), or the BBC ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)). Students will select a country in the region that they will follow particularly closely in both western press outlets and regional outlets through the course of the semester (see below). Please come to class prepared to share something about the week's political developments in your chosen country. Class attendance and participation will worth 10 percent of your final grade.

#### **2. Exams (25 % each, 50 % total)**

There will be a midterm and a final exam based on the assigned readings and material covered in the class lectures. Each exam is worth 30 percent of your final grade. Suggestions for exam preparation will be given prior to the tests. The exam dates are **October 8**, and **December 15**. Each exam will worth 25 % of your final grade.

### **3. Critical Review Paper (10 %)**

In this paper, you are required to write a critical review on book of your choice that is published in 2014 or 2015, preferably in 2015. The book should be about the Middle East. Please confirm your selections with me in advance. This review will be different from typical book reviews. You will come up with a question, and answer it in reviewing the book. Further details about the assignment will be provided later. Your paper will be 3-page-long (double spaced), and you should use citations and quotations properly. The critical review paper is due on **November 10**. This paper will worth 10 percent of your final grade.

### **4. Research Paper (30 %)**

The relevancy of this course will become most apparent if you keep up with current events and relate those events to the political science concepts and theories that we cover in our classes. For this reason, you will follow the international and local news coverage of a country in the Middle East throughout the semester. Your final paper will explore a politically contentious issue in your chosen country and provide recommendations to policymakers. This assignment has four components:

*a. News Reports (5 %):* You are encouraged to select your country among Middle Eastern states that receive extensive press coverage such as Turkey, Iran, Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. You are required to make your country selection in the first two weeks of the semester. After making your country selection, familiarize yourself with the local news sources from your country and begin tracking local, European, and American press coverage. Therefore, starting from the third week of the semester, you will be required to read a local, European and American newspaper article on your country every week. The following local news sources in English are available online: *Daily Star* (Lebanon), *Iran Daily* (Iran), *al-Abram Weekly* (Egypt), *Middle East Times* (Egypt), *Today's Zaman* (Turkey), *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia), *Haaretz* (Israel), *Al-Jazeera* (entire region), *Gulf News* (UAE), and *Azzaman* (Iraq). For European press, you may consult websites of *BBC*, *Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Economist*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*. For American Press, the best sources are *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. You will report the articles that you read about your own country in the end of the semester.

To make sure that you read the news throughout the semester regularly, two news reports will be required. Each news report should include the source, date, title, and 2-3 sentence summary of the news that you will read. A template for the news reports will be posted on the course website in advance. The news reports are due at the beginning of class on **October 15**, and **December 10**. Unless you have a legitimate excuse, you will lose 10 percent of your grade for this assignment for each day your assignment is late. In the event of a problem, please contact me as soon as you know. Each news report weighs 2.5 percent of your final grade.

*b. Research Paper Memo (2.5 %):* By the fourth week of the semester, you are required to identify an important issue that receives extensive press coverage in your chosen country. Issues relevant to all states include political reforms, economic reforms, elections, women's rights, and the domestic impact of regional political issues. If you have trouble identifying a good topic/theme to follow, please consult with me as early as possible so that I may assist you. You should bring a one-page memo that includes your chosen country, the description of the issue that you select in a paragraph, and the news sources that you tracked. The memo is due at the beginning of the class on **September 10**. The memo will worth 2.5 percent of your final grade.

*c. Outline and Bibliography (5 %):* After identifying your topic, you are expected to find relevant sources for your research and an outline for your research paper. The outline and bibliography is due at the beginning of the class on **October 1**. The outline and bibliography will worth 5 percent of your final grade.

*d. Final Paper (15 %):* Your final policy paper should: 1) provide the historical and political context for the issue you are tracking; 2) examine how your issue developed over the course of the semester; 3) suggest recommendations for policymakers (1 page max). The policy paper will be 6-8 page-long (double spaced), and you should use citations and quotations properly. Unless you have a legitimate excuse, you will lose 10 percent of your grade for this assignment for each day your assignment is late. In the event of a problem, please contact me as soon as you know. The policy paper will be due at the beginning of class on **November 24** and will worth 15 percent of your final grade.

*e. Presentation (2.5 %):* All the students will present their policy papers in the final two weeks of the semester in class. You will be provided a grade rubric before the presentations. The presentation of your work will worth 2.5 percent of your final grade.

**Graduate Student Research Paper:** Instead of a policy paper, graduate students will be required to review the related literature in their chosen topic and write a 20 page (double spaced) research paper. The literature review should describe the breadth and depth of current scholarly research on the topic, and explain the relationship of studies to each other (conflicting theoretical frameworks from seminal to the most recent, methodological differences, etc.).

*A Summary of Grading Requirements*

| <u>Course Requirement</u> | <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Due Date</u>  |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Attendance                | 5 %               |                  |
| Participation             | 5 %               |                  |
| Policy Paper Memo         | 2.5 %             | September 21     |
| Outline and Bibliography  | 5 %               | October 1        |
| Midterm Exam              | 25 %              | October 8        |
| News Report I             | 2.5 %             | October 15       |
| Critical Review           | 10 %              | November 10      |
| Policy Paper              | 15 %              | November 24      |
| Presentation              | 2.5 %             | December 1, 3, 8 |
| News Report II            | 2.5 %             | December 10      |
| Final Exam                | 25 %              | December 15      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>100 %</b>      |                  |

The entire course is worth 100 points:

|    |               |    |              |
|----|---------------|----|--------------|
| A+ | 98-100 points | C  | 72-76 points |
| A  | 93-97 points  | C- | 69-71 points |
| A- | 90-92 points  | D+ | 66-68 points |
| B+ | 87-89 points  | D  | 63-65 points |
| B  | 83-86 points  | D- | 60-62 points |
| B- | 80-82 points  | F  | 0-59 points  |
| C+ | 77-79 points  |    |              |

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

*August 25: Introduction*

No Reading

*August 27: Defining the Middle East*

Angrist, Chapter 1, "The Making of the Modern Middle East Politics," pp. 1-29

## **Part I: History of the Middle East**

### *September 1: Formation of the State System*

Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 3

### *September 3: The Possibility of Political Change in the Middle East (NO CLASS)*

Video: "Frontline: The Revolution in Cairo" (broadcasted at PBS on 2/22/2011) available at <http://video.pbs.org/video/1810338755>

### *September 8: The Cold War Years*

Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 4

### *September 10: The Middle East after the Cold War*

Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 5

## **Policy Paper Memo Due**

## **Part II: Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Middle East**

### *September 15: Political Regimes*

Angrist, Chapter 2, "Governments and Oppositions," pp. 33-51

### *September 17: Persistence of Authoritarianism*

Larry Diamond, "Why are There No Arab Democracies?," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 21 No 1 (January 2010), pp. 93-112.

### *September 22: The Rise and Fall of Democracy in Turkey*

Ramazan Kilinc, "Critical Junctures as Catalysts in Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Turkey," *Political Science Quarterly*, Volume 129 No 2 (Summer 2014), pp. 293-318.

Merve Tahiroglu and Gabriel Mitchell, "Sultan of Turkey: Erdogan's Shameless Power Play," *National Interest*, April 8, 2015.

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 19, "Turkey," pp. 473-502

### *September 24: Military and Democracy in Algeria*

Frederick Volpi, "Algeria's Pseudo-Democratic Politics: Lessons for Democratization in the Middle East," *Democratization*, Volume 13 No 3, (June 2006), pp. 442-455.

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 9, "Algeria," pp. 189-215

## **Middle East Forum: Current Issues in the Middle East**

### *September 29: Democracy and Its Problems in Israel*

Sammy Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies*, Volume 2 No 2 (Fall 1997), pp. 198-241.

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 13, "Israel," pp. 307-334

### *October 1: Authoritarianism and Democratic Struggles in Egypt*

John Calvert, "Between Idealism and Political Pragmatism: What Does the Ascendency of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Mean for the Future," University of Denver, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Occasional Paper Series 1 (2013).

Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood." *Foreign Affairs* (March-April 2007), pp. 107-121.  
*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 10, "Egypt," pp. 217-250

### **Outline and Bibliography Due**

#### *October 6: Prospects of Democracy in Iran*

Hamid Ahmadi, "Iran and the Arab Spring: Why Haven't Iranians Followed Arabs in Waging Revolution," *Asian Politics and Policy*, Volume 5 No 3 (July 2013), pp. 407-420.

Dariush Zahedi, "Prospects for Democratization in Iran: Policy Implications," *Insight Turkey*, Volume 12 No 2 (2010), pp. 223-240.

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 11, "Iran," pp. 251-284

### **October 8: MIDTERM EXAM**

#### *October 13: The Arab Spring I: Background*

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, "Introduction: The Third Arab Spring," pp. 1-17.

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 1, "Theorizing Arab Spring," pp. 18-39.

#### *October 15: The Arab Spring II: Lineages of Repression*

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 2, "The Lineages of Repression," pp. 40-63.

### **News Report 1 Due**

#### *October 20: FALL BREAK*

#### *October 22: The Arab Spring III: Breakdowns and Crackdowns*

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 3, "Breakdowns and Crackdowns," pp. 64-97.

### **Middle East Forum: Current Issues in the Middle East**

#### *October 27: The Arab Spring IV: Post-Breakdown Trajectories*

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 4, "Post-Breakdown Trajectories," pp. 98-168.

#### *October 29: The Arab Spring V: Limits and Legacies*

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 5, "Why Breakdowns Did Not Always Produce Transitions," pp. 169-210.

Brownlee, Masoud and Reynolds, Chapter 6, "Limits and Legacies of the Arab Spring," pp. 211-228.

### **Part III: Political Economy of the Middle East**

#### *November 3: An Overview of Political Economy*

Angrist, Chapter 4, "Political Economy," pp. 75-97

#### *November 5: Political Economy of Oil in the Middle East*

Eva Bellin, "The Politics of Profit in Tunisia: Utility of the Rentier Paradigm?" *World Development* Volume 22 No 3, (1994), pp. 427-436.

Gawdat Bahgat, "Managing Dependence: American-Saudi Relations." *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Volume 23 No 1, (2001), pp. 1-11.

## **Part IV: State-Society Relations in the Middle East**

### *November 10: Civil Society in the Middle East*

Angrist, Chapter 5, "Civil Society," pp. 99-119

Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan," *Comparative Politics*, Volume 33 No 1 (October 2000), pp. 43-61

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 14, "Jordan," pp. 335-358

### **Critical Review Due**

### *November 12: Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Saudi Arabia in Compared to Iran*

Angrist, Chapter 6, "Religion and Politics," pp. 121-143

Mohammed Ayoub, "Self Proclaimed Islamic States," in *The Many Faces of Political Islam* (University of Michigan Press), pp. 42-63 (will be provided by the instructor later)

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 17, "Saudi Arabia," pp. 417-444

### *November 17: Women and Politics in the Middle East*

Angrist, Chapter 8, "Gender and Politics," pp. 167-186

Robin Wright, "The Pink Hijab," *The Wilson Quarterly*, (Summer 2011), pp. 47-51

Lila Abu-Lughod. "Dialects of Women's Empowerment." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 41 (2009), pp. 83-103.

### *November 19: The Clash of of Identities I*

Angrist, Chapter 7, "Identity and Politics," pp. 145-165

Vali Nasr, "When the Shiites Rise," *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 85 No 4 (July-August 2006), pp. 58-74

*Recommended:* Angrist, Chapter 12, "Iraq," pp. 285-306

### **Middle East Forum: Current Issues in the Middle East**

### *November 24: The Clash of of Identities II*

Asad Ghanem, "Democratizing Ethnic States: The Democratization Process in Divided Societies –

Rogan Updegraff, "Turkey under the AKP: The Kurdish Question," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 23 No 1 (January 2012), pp. 119-128.

Stanley Weiss, "Turkey and the Kurds Need an Antwerp Agreement," *Huffington Post*, August 10, 2015

### **Final Paper Due**

### *December 1, 3, 8: Student Presentations*

### *December 10: Conclusions*

No Reading

### **News Report 2 Due**

### **December 15: FINAL EXAM (12:00-2:00 pm)**