

# Middle Eastern Political Systems: INTL 4370

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11a–12:15p TR  
212 Baldwin Hall  
Office Hours: W 2p-4p

## Course Description:

The “Arab Spring” uprisings that swept the Middle East in 2011 and their contentious aftermath have put into question a great deal of the scholarly and popular literature about the region. For decades, the persistence of non-democratic regimes and authoritarian durability dominated discussions about Middle Eastern political systems. Scholars concerned themselves with explaining why there seemed to have been so little progress toward democratization in the region, while elsewhere in the world - from Eastern Europe to Latin America and Asia—countries made strides on the path to democracy. The outburst of popular demand for democracy that brought thousands of people to the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere in 2011, and led to the toppling of several regimes in some countries, and to violent conflicts in others, requires a re-evaluation of theories about the region.

In this course, we will begin by gaining familiarity with the history of the modern Middle East and with the varieties of non-democratic political systems that have characterized most countries in the region in recent decades. We will then examine the causes and effects of authoritarianism in the Middle East, considering cultural, social, economic, political (domestic, regional, and international) and other factors that have shaped, and were shaped by, nondemocratic regimes. While reviewing the traditional scholarship on the region we will also explore the challenges to these regimes that have over the years laid the foundations for the unfolding of events since 2011. This will allow us to critically evaluate and question longstanding assumptions about authoritarian robustness and the prospects for democracy in the region. Finally, we will turn our attention to current political developments in the Middle East since the start of the uprisings and consider their causes, their divergent trajectories, and the extent to which they open new possibilities for significant political transformation.

**Text(s):** Lust, Ellen. *The Middle East*. 14<sup>th</sup> ed. CQ Press.

## Course Policies:

- **Reading**

- Some of the academic articles we will read are dense. You are not expected to understand all of the technical aspects of these articles, but you are expected to make a good faith effort to identify the argument, evidence, and conclusions presented by the authors.

- **General**

- Computers are only to be used for taking notes. If you browse the internet or social media while in class, I will ask you to put your device away and use pen and paper for notes.
- Please set your phone on **silent**, not vibrate.
- Quizzes and exams are closed book, closed notes.

- **Presentation**

- Each pair of students will choose one article/chapter from those appearing under “presentation” on the syllabus and will present it in class during the relevant week. The presentation should be about 10 minutes and must include a brief summary of the piece and an explanation of how it relates to the other readings and topic for that week. The students presenting will also be responsible for preparing three discussion questions and for leading a short classroom discussion about the article.

- **Final Paper**

- The final assignment will be a research paper on a topic of the student’s choice. Students should select at least 7-10 academic sources to draw upon for their literature review. The paper should be 10-12 double spaced pages. Further instructions about the final assignment will be provided in the second half of the semester.

- **Quizzes**

- There will be 6 unannounced quizzes. I will drop the lowest one (only 5 will be counted). These quizzes will cover material from readings and lecture from the previous week’s lectures, textbook and recitation readings, and current events. They are a way for me to check in and see if you are doing the readings, coming to class, understanding things, and keeping up with the news.
- There will be no make-ups.

- **Participation**

- Students should come to class having read all the required readings and prepared to both pose and answer questions, and engage in discussion on the subject matter.
- Students must post a one-paragraph response on the online learning system by 9pm the day **before** we discuss the reading in class. For example, if an article is assigned on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the response for that article is due by 9pm on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Grade Distribution:**

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Midterm Exam               | 20% |
| Final Paper                | 40% |
| Presentation               | 15% |
| Quizzes                    | 10% |
| Attendance & Participation | 15% |

**Letter Grade Distribution:**

|               |    |               |    |
|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| $\geq 93.00$  | A  | 73.00 - 76.99 | C  |
| 90.00 - 92.99 | A- | 70.00 - 72.99 | C- |
| 87.00 - 89.99 | B+ | 67.00 - 69.99 | D+ |
| 83.00 - 86.99 | B  | 63.00 - 66.99 | D  |
| 80.00 - 82.99 | B- | 60.00 - 62.99 | D- |
| 77.00 - 79.99 | C+ | $\leq 59.99$  | F  |

**Academic Honesty Policy Summary:**

In addition to skills and knowledge, COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY aims to teach students appropriate Ethical and Professional Standards of Conduct. The Academic Honesty Policy exists to inform students and Faculty of their obligations in upholding the highest standards of professional and ethical integrity. All student work is subject to the Academic Honesty Policy. Professional and Academic practice provides guidance about how to properly cite, reference, and attribute the intellectual property of others. Any attempt to deceive a faculty member or to help another student to do so will be considered a violation of this standard.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

The weekly coverage might change as it depends on the progress of the class. This syllabus can change as often as needed, but I will give you plenty of advance notice and issue an updated syllabus when any changes are made.

| Week   | Content   |
|--------|---|
| Week 0 | Thursday: <b>Course Introduction</b>  |
| Week 1 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Imagining the ME: Concepts and Misperceptions I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Watch “<a href="#">Reel Bad Arabs</a>” before coming to class.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Imagining the ME: Concepts and Misperceptions II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lewis, Bernard. 1990. “<a href="#">The Roots of Muslim Rage.</a>” <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>.</li> <li>– Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. “<a href="#">The Clash of Civilizations?</a>” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>.</li> <li>– Said, Edward. 2001. “<a href="#">The Clash of Ignorance.</a>” <i>The Nation</i>.</li> <li>– “<a href="#">The Tragedy of the Arabs.</a>” <i>The Economist</i> 5 July 2014.</li> <li>– Said, Edward. 1978. “<a href="#">Orientalism.</a>” New York: Vintage. Read Introduction.</li> </ul>   |
| Week 2 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Colonialism and State Formation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lust chapter 1</li> <li>– Sign up for class presentations</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Overview of Non-Democratic Political Institutions and Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lust chapter 4</li> </ul>  |
| Week 3 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Single Party Authoritarianism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Albrecht, Holger. 2005. “How can Opposition Support Authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt.” <i>Democratization</i> 12(3): 378-397.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 10</li> <li>– Watch “<a href="#">Egypt, We Are Watching You</a>” before coming to class.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Monarchy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Lust chapter 14: Jordan</li> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Lust chapter 19: Morocco</li> <li>– Lucas, Russell E. 2004. “Monarchical Authoritarianism: Survival and Political Liberalization in a Middle Eastern Regime Type.” <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 36(1): 103-119.</li> <li>– Herb, Michael. 2004. “Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World.” <i>The Middle East Journal</i> 58(3): 367-384.</li> </ul> |

| Week   | Content  |
|--------|--|
| Week 4 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Theocracy I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from <a href="#">Al-Monitor’s Iran Pulse</a>.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 11: Iran</li> <li>– <i>Persepolis</i> screening.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Theocracy II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Perkovich, George. 2016. “<a href="#">The Iran Deal’s Building Blocks of a better Nuclear Order</a>.” <i>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace</i>.</li> <li>– Levite, Ariel (Eli). 2016. “<a href="#">The Iran Deal’s Future Remains Uncertain</a>.” <i>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace</i>.</li> </ul>  |
| Week 5 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Political Islam in Opposition—the Alternative?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Schwedler, Jillian. 2011. “Can Islamists become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis.” <i>World Politics</i> 63(2): 347-376.</li> <li>– El-Ghobashy, Mona. 2005. “The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers.” <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 37(3). 373-395.</li> <li>– Masoud, Tarek. 2008. “Are they Democrats: Does it Matter?” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 19(3):19-24.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Secularism, Islamism, and Democracy: The Turkish Case</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> POMEPS: <a href="#">Turkey’s Attempted Coup</a>. 2016.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 25: Turkey</li> <li>– Bali, Asli. 2011. “A Turkish Model for the Arab Spring?” <i>Middle East Law and Governance</i> 3: 24-42.</li> <li>– Fishman, Louis. 2016. “<a href="#">Why I’m Leaving my Beloved Istanbul</a>.” <i>Observer</i>.</li> </ul> |
| Week 6 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Political Economy I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Kuran, Timur. 2004. “Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation.” <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 18(3): 71-90.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 3</li> </ul>   |

| Week   | Content   |
|--------|---|
| Week 6 | <p>Thursday: <b>Political Economy II: The Politics of Oil</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Lust chapter 15: Kuwait</li> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Lust chapter 21: Saudi Arabia</li> <li>– Ross, Michael. 2001. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” <i>World Politics</i> 53(3): 325-361.</li> <li>– Herb, Michael. 2005. “No Representation without Taxation? Rents, Development, and Democracy.” <i>Comparative Politics</i> 37(3): 297-316.</li> <li>– Ross, Michael. 2011. “Will Oil Drown the Arab Spring? Democracy and the Resource Curse.” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>.</li> </ul>  |
| Week 7 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Social Transformation and Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Salehi-Isfahani, Djavad, and Navtej Dhillon. 2008. “Stalled Youth Transitions in the Middle East: a Framework for Policy Reform.” <i>Middle East Youth Initiative Working Paper</i>.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 2</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from <a href="#">Al-Monitor</a> addressing a gender issue in the Middle East.</li> <li>– Ross, Michael. 2008. “Oil, Islam, and Women.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 102(1): 107-123.</li> <li>– Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. “Do Muslim Women really need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its others.” <i>American Anthropologist</i> 104(3): 783-790.</li> <li>– Shitrit, Lihi Ben. 2016. “Authenticating Representation: Women’s Quotas and Islamist Parties.” <i>Politics &amp; Gender</i> 12(4): 781-806.</li> </ul> |
| Week 8 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Civil War in Syria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from <a href="#">Al-Monitor’s Syria pulse</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Take Home Midterm Exam</b></p>  |

| Week    | Content  |
|---------|--|
| Week 9  | <p>Tuesday: <b>The Role of the Military</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from <a href="#">Al-Monitor</a> addressing the role of the military in the Middle East.</li> <li>– Rubin, Barry. 2001. “The Military in Contemporary Middle East Politics.” <i>Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal</i> 5(1): 47-63.</li> <li>– Barany, Zoltan. 2011. “The Role of the Military.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 22(4): 24-35.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Religion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Tessler, Mark. 2010. “Religion, Religiosity and the place of Islam in Political Life: Insights from the Arab Barometer Surveys.” <i>Middle East Law and Governance</i> 2(2): 221-252.</li> <li>– Fish, Steven. “Islam and Authoritarianism.” <i>World Politics</i> 55(1): 4-37.</li> <li>– Lust, Ellen. 2011. “Missing the Third Wave: Islam, Institutions, and Democracy in the Middle East.” <i>Studies in Comparative International Development</i> 46(2): 163-190.</li> </ul> |
| Week 10 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Civil Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Langhor, Vicky. 2004. “Too much Civil Society, too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes.” <i>Comparative Politics</i> pp. 181-204.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 6</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Elections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Posusney, Marsha Pripstein. “Multi-party Elections in the Arab World: Institutional Engineering and oppositional Strategies.” <i>Studies in Comparative International Development</i> 36(4): 34-62.</li> <li>– Lust, Ellen. 2009. “Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East.” <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 20(3): 122-135.</li> </ul>  |
| Week 11 | <p>Tuesday: <b>“Sectarian” Conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Lust chapter: Lebanon OR Iraq</li> <li>– Hashemi, Nader, and Danny Postel. 2017. <i>Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East</i>. Oxford University Press. (Selections online.)</li> </ul>  |

| Week    | Content   |
|---------|---|
| Week 11 | <p>Thursday: <b>The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s <a href="#">Israel</a> pulse.</li> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s <a href="#">Palestine</a> pulse.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 7</li> </ul>  |
| Week 12 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Israeli-Palestinian Conflict II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Screening: <i>Five Broken Cameras</i></li> <li>– Birnbaum, Ben, and Amir Tibon. 2014. “<a href="#">How the Israel-Palestine Peace Deal Died.</a>” <i>New Republic</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>International Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Jamal, Amaney A. 2012. <i>Of Empires and Citizens: Pro-American Democracy or no Democracy at all?</i> Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.</li> <li>– Lust chapter 8</li> <li>– Anderson, Lisa. 1995. “Peace and Democracy in the Middle East: the Constraints of Soft Budgets.” <i>Journal of International Affairs</i> pp. 25-44.</li> </ul>   |
| Week 13 | <p>Tuesday: <b>Explaining the Arab Spring and its Multiple Trajectories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from <a href="#">Al-Monitor</a> addressing the post-uprising situation in one of the countries of the Arab Spring.</li> <li>– “Reconsidering Activism in the Arab World: Arab Uprisings and Beyond.” in Khatib, Lina, and Ellen Lust. 2014. <i>Taking to the Streets: the Transformation of Arab Activism</i>. Johns Hopkins University Press.</li> <li>– Gause III, F. Gregory. 2011. “<a href="#">Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring.</a>” <i>Foreign Affairs</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>The Road to Tahrir Square I</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s <a href="#">Egypt</a> pulse.</li> <li>– <i>Taking to the Streets</i> chapter 2</li> </ul> |
| Week 14 | <p>Tuesday: <b>The Road to Tahrir Square II</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Due:</b> Submit final paper topics</li> <li>– Screening: <i>The Square</i></li> </ul> <p>Thursday: <b>Tunisia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Presentation:</b> Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s <a href="#">Tunisia</a> pulse.</li> <li>– <i>Taking to the Streets</i> chapter 1</li> </ul>   |