

PSCI 320

Politics of the Middle East

Course description

Troubled by civil war, economic underdevelopment and dictatorship, the Middle East and North Africa is the most undemocratic region in the world. The goal of the course is to provide a basic understanding of the politics of the modern Middle East and North Africa and enhance a critical understanding of the region's main challenges. The first two weeks focus on the history, political regimes and economies as well as the role of international politics in the region. The class ends with exploring reasons for the lack of democracy in the region, the role of Islam, terrorism and war. In addition to readings and lectures, students taking this class are expected to perform independent research on one country of the Middle East and represent the country in online discussions and papers as well as informing themselves about current developments in the region.

Location and times

January, 2nd to 20th, 2017

Class units and assignments are held in MT time

Instructor information

Eva-Maria Maggi, PhD

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Virtual office hours: Mondays 9-11am (by email)

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Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes

- Develop basic knowledge about the politics of the modern Middle East and North Africa
- Gain an increased understanding of a variety of methodological approaches to addressing social science questions
- Nurture critical thinking skills through independent country study research

TOPICS

WEEK 1			
Day	Lecture	Readings	Assignments
Tuesday, 3/1 Introduction	<i>"How to get an A"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Penner Angrist, 2013, The Making of the Middle East 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Introduce yourself in Moddle ✓ Email me three country preferences by 10pm.
Wednesday, 4/1 History	<i>"Nuts and bolts history"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goldschmidt, 2013, The Historical Context <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cammett et al, chapter 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quiz opens 6am (closes Friday 10pm)
Thursday, 5/1 Political Regimes	<i>"Regime types"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 2 <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cammett et al, chapter 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion: Discuss your country's regime. Open 6am-10pm
Friday, 6/1 Quiz prep		<i>Review readings and lecture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Quiz closes at 10pm.
WEEK 2			
Day	Lecture	Readings	Assignments
Monday, 9/1 Political Economy	<i>"The Political Economy of the Middle East"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 4 <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cammett, et al, chapter 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion: Discuss your country's political economy. Open 6am-10pm

Tuesday, 10/1 Politics	<i>"Why politics matter"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Schrodt, Gerner, 2013, Middle Eastern Politics</i> <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cammett, et al, chapter 4</i> 	
Wednesday, 11/1 International Relations	<i>"The US and EU politics in the Middle East"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 3</i> <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cammett, et al, chapter 13</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion: Explain how international relations have affected the politics of your country. <i>Open 6am-10pm</i>
Thursday, 12/1 <i>Research day</i>		Friday, 13/1 Assignment: <i>Country brief due at 10pm</i> <u>Grad students:</u> <i>email me your research question by 10pm</i>	
WEEK 3			
Day	Lecture	Readings	Assignments
Monday, 16/1 Democracy	<i>"The desert of democracy"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 5</i> <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cammett, et al, chapter 11</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion: How democratic is your country? <i>Open 6am-10pm</i>
Tuesday, 17/1 Islam	<i>"Is Islam the solution?"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 6</i> <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cammett, et al,</i> 	

		chapter 12	
Wednesday, 18/1 Gender, War and Terrorism	<i>"The future of the Middle East"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penner Angrist, 2013, chapter 7 <p><u>Additional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cammett, et al, chapter 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online discussion: Discuss the three main obstacles for democracy in your country. <i>Open 6am-10pm</i>
Thursday, 19/1 Writing day		Friday, January 20 <i>Final paper due at 10pm</i>	

Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course is taught entirely online, with daily lectures from the instructor as well as discussions amongst the students. The lectures for this course can be accessed through Moodle, and will be posted at the start of each unit (see course schedule below for details). Every student will be assigned to one MENA country at the beginning of class. Students will contribute relevant facts from their country to the online discussions. A country brief outlines the contemporary politics and society while the final paper focuses on the state of democracy in the assigned country.

Required readings

Books

Penner Angrist, Michele ed, 2013, *Politics and Society of the contemporary Middle East*, Rienner.

For graduate section additional (for others optional):

Cammett, Melani; Diwan, Ishac; Richards, Alan; Waterbury, John 2015, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, 4th edition, Westview Press.

Articles & book chapters

(all made available on Moodle)

Current events

Students are expected to follow day-to-day regional events and analysis throughout the semester. Regional events covered on the Middle East page of the BBC will be assumed to be common knowledge and may appear on exams. Peruse daily:

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/default.stm

We will often discuss stories from The New York Times and al-Jazeera English.

- <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/middleeast/index.html>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/>

Students also should follow the Middle East Channel of the Foreign Policy website:

- <http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/>
- Juan Cole's Informed Comment Blog (arguably the most influential blog on Middle East history and politics):
www.juancole.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/>

Drop Policy, Grading Options, and Incompletes

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at:

<https://www.umt.edu/registrar/PDF/gradematrix.pdf>

The 15th day of the semester is the last day to drop the class or change the grading option without my signature on an override form. If you wish to drop or change the grading option after that,

you must provide documentation of an emergency or other serious situation in which you are directly involved that has made it impossible for you to complete the course. For UM's policy on incompletes, see http://archive.umt.edu/catalog/14_15/academics/academic-policy-procedure.php

The plus/minus grading system will be used. Grades may be curved, but the following distribution is the lowest I will use (*i.e.*, if you earn 93% of all possible points you are assured of an A in the course):

93-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	0-59	

A breakdown of final grade calculations is as follows:

Participation/Online discussion = 40%

Quiz = 15%

Country brief = 20%

Final paper = 25%

- *Participation*

Your participation grade depends on the degree to which you engage in "thoughtful conversation" on the online discussion forum. "Thoughtful conversation" involves posting one original response to the discussion question of the week (between 200 and 300 words), as well as responding to at least one of your peers' original posts (minimum 100 words). You are also expected to respond to questions posed by your peers in response to your original post. **The discussion should focus on the readings and lecture(s) of each week.** All contributions to the discussion forum are expected to be courteous and collegial in tone and content. Posts must be completed by 10pm.

For the Graduate 500-level:

You are expected to respond to two posts and refer in your discussions to all required and recommended readings as well as the lectures.

- *Quiz*

The first unit ends with a multiple choice quiz covering the readings and lectures of week 1 as well as current events. The quiz is set on a timer (60 minutes) and you should have finished all the readings before opening the quiz. You have one attempt to finish the quiz. Do not walk away and do not close the quiz because you won't be able to reopen it. **The quiz will be open from Wednesday, January 4 at 6am to Sunday, January 9 at 10pm.**

For the Graduate 500-level:

You will have to take the 500-level quiz version that covers all required and additional readings as well as current events.

- *Country brief*

Your country brief focuses on your assigned country. Each brief should outline 1) the regime type of your country; 2) political economy; 3) politics and 4) impact of international relations as discussed in class. The country brief has to be between 500 and 650 words of length (double spaced) based on a minimum of 4 academic sources and **needs to be submitted in the Moodle dropbox by Friday, January 13 at 10pm**. Please cite properly and note that Wikipedia is not a legitimate academic source.

Available countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey

Please email your top three country preference to the instructor by **Monday, January 3 at 10pm**. Countries will be assigned shortly after.

For PSCI 400:

Political Science majors may use this course to complete PSCI 400 (the upper-division writing requirement in the major). Your country brief needs to be 3-5pages long. You will receive feedback shortly after submission and are expected to rewrite and resubmit **this paper in the Moodle dropbox by Friday, January 20 at 10pm. Your grade for PSCI 400 will consist of the country brief (50%) and the resubmission (50%)**.

- *Final paper*

The final paper expands upon the topics of Week 3. The paper should not be longer than 1800 words and be based on a min. of 10 **academic** references. Please cite properly and note that Wikipedia is not a legitimate academic source. The paper should be structured considering the following questions:

1. How is democracy understood in your country?
2. What are the three major challenges of democracy in your country?
3. How would you promote/not promote democracy in your country?

<p>Your final paper is due in the Moodle dropbox on January 20 at 10pm.</p>
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For the Graduate 500-level:

You are expected to write an 8 page research paper referring to 15 academic sources. Formulate and discuss the research question within the topic of week 3 "Democracy in the Middle East" with me by January 13th.

Assignment/Testing/Schedule/ Due Dates

- ✓ Quiz is available on Moodle from **Wednesday, January 4 at 6am to Friday, January 6 10pm.**
- ✓ 5 online discussions run from 6am through 10pm (see course schedule for dates)
- ✓ Country brief is due in the Moodle dropbox on **Friday, January 13, 10pm**
- ✓ Final paper is due on **January 20 at 10pm.**

Late Work Policy

As a rule, work will not be accepted beyond the terms described in this syllabus, except in case of documented emergency or illness. You may petition the professor in writing for an exception if you feel you have a compelling reason for turning work in late.

Attendance policy

The UM's policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at:

<https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/attendance.php> &
<https://www.umt.edu/registrar/students/dropadd.php>

"Classroom" Behavior

To foster a positive learning environment, students must conduct themselves respectfully in online discussions. Any comments that are derogatory or threatening will not be tolerated, and appropriate action will be taken through University channels.

The University of Montana's Student Code of Conduct prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one's self. See:

https://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php

Accessibility and Accommodations

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to email me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Student Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UM Code of Conduct as described: https://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at:
<http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/docs/plagarism.pdf>

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Student Code of Conduct and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use Moodle or UM email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

Confidentiality of Student Records

<http://www.umt.edu/business-services/Students/Student%20Accounts/Student%20Confidentiality.php>

Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.