POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND INTL. RELATIONS OF M.E.

Professor: HAIZAM AMIRAH FERNANDEZ

E-Mail: hamirah@faculty.ie.edu

- Master of Arts in Arab Studies, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University
- Bachelor of Arts in Arab Studies, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
- Senior Analyst, Mediterranean and the Arab World, Real Instituto Elcano

E-mail: hamirah@rielcano.org
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course offers a multidisciplinary approach to the study of the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, focusing on its politics and international relations. It is designed to expose students to debates by academics and policy makers on past experiences, current challenges, and future prospects facing Middle Eastern states and societies in light of the 2011 Arab uprisings against authoritarian rule. The course will begin with the clarification of some ill-defined words and concepts commonly used when referring to the Middle East, the Arab world, and Islam and Muslims. This will be followed by a brief introduction to the region’s historical and cultural background, which will be useful to explain current social dynamics, as well as the evolving concept of authority and gender relations.

The material presented in this course is analytically divided into two sections. The first one introduces students to the sociopolitical realities of the MENA region, paying special attention to state-society relations. The second section examines the roles of Middle Eastern countries in world politics, looking at both regional conflicts and the prospects for political and economic reform.

The course will be led as a seminar, with the majority of time devoted to discussion aimed at understanding current pressing issues in the domestic and international relations of the peoples and states of the Middle East. The first few minutes of each session will be devoted to “The Middle East in the News,” an attempt to contextualize current events in the region and to shine a light on its complex and rich realities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TEXTBOOKS (required purchase)


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Angrist, Michele Penner, Politics & Society in the Contemporary Middle East, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 2010.


Dhillon, Navtej and Tarik Yousef (eds), Generation in Waiting. The Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2009.


———, 100 Myths About the Middle East, Saqi, London, 2005.


Whitaker, Brian, What’s Really Wrong with the Middle East, Saqi, London, 2009.


PROGRAM

SESSION 1

Introduction: Syllabus, Assignments, Defining the Middle East


Angrist, Michele Penner, Politics & Society in the Contemporary Middle East, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 2010, ch. 1, pp. 1-25.

R.A.: Davison
B.C.: Angrist

SESSION 2

The Contemporary Middle East: Uprisings, Neopatriarchy, and Fractures


B.C.: Gelvin
B.C.: Sharabi
R.A.: Brubaker. Rogers and Cooper
W.P.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

SESSION 3

The Middle Eastern State and Authoritarian Rule


R.A.: Roger Owen
B.C.: Ayubi intro
B.C.: Ayubi conclusion
SESSION 4

Arab Human Development: Deficits and the Way Forward


T.N.: Bayat, Asef, ”Transforming the Arab World

SESSION 5

Women and Development

(First short essay due)


T.N.: Educating Women for Development - Adely

SESSION 6

Youth, Employment, Expectations

Dhillon, Navtej and Tarik Yousef (eds), Generation in Waiting. The Unfulfilled Promise of Young People in the Middle East, Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC, 2009, chs. 1 & 10, pp. 11-38 and 240-251.


B.C.: Dhillon, Navtej and Tarik Yousef (eds), Generation in Waiting
T.N.: Dhillon, Navtej and Tarik Yousef (eds), Generation in Waiting II
T.N.: Cole, Juan, The New Arabs
SESSIONS 7 & 8

Religion and Politics: Islam vs. Democracy? Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Perceptions?


B.C.: Owen
R.A.: Huntington
R.A.: Wedeen

SESSION 9

The Middle East in World Politics


B.C.: Hinnebusch
T.N.: Gause

SESSION 10

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Fawcett, Louise (ed), op. cit., chs. 12-13

SESSIONS 11 & 12

The International Relations of the Gulf

(Second short essay due)

Fawcett, Louise (ed), op. cit., chs. 14 & 16


W.P.: Gause, F. Gregory
T.N.: The New Politics of Intervention of Gulf Arab States
SESSION 13

Arab Transitions and Political Islam


Bunt, Gary R., “Mediterranean Islamic Expression and Web 2.0”, in Merlini, Cesare and Olivier Roy (eds), ch. 4, pp. 76-95.


T.N.: Roy
T.N.: Bunt

SESSION 14

Rethinking the Arab Awakening: Drivers of Change and Future Scenarios

(Research design due)


R.A.: Gaub, Florence and Alexandra Laban
T.N.: Kinninmont, Jane

SESSION 15

Final exam

EVALUATION METHOD

Class attendance is required. Students are expected to thoroughly complete the readings before class and to actively participate in discussions. They are asked to submit two short essays or commentaries (500 to 700 words each one, due on April 20 and May 16, respectively). A list of topics will be provided two weeks before each short essay is due.

A 5-page research design is due on May 30. Be aware that constructing a research design is a multi-step process that requires rethinking and revision… and it takes time.

Students should submit their work electronically using the Turnitin Assignment function on IE Campus Online.

The final grade is to be determined on the basis of the following criteria:

Class participation 20%
Short essays 20%
Research design 30%
Final exam 30%