



Political Science 357-001 Spring 2009

Middle East Political Systems

MWF: 12:00-1:50 am Room B099 JFSB

Course Instructor: Dr. Amr Al-Azm 783 SWKT

Office Hours: 11:00-12:00 MWF or by appointment.

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Course Textbooks:

- James A. Bill and Robert Springborg., Politics of the Middle East. Harper Collins, Fifth edition.
- A subscription to the New York Times, hard copy recommended or *TimesSelect* as an option.
- Congressional Quarterly, The Middle East, 11th edition, Washington D.C.:
- Other readings are posted on Blackboard.

Course Syllabus:

The Middle East is probably the most polarized and polarizing area of the world today. Following September 11, 2001 world politics has focused on the Middle East

with good reason. U.S. involvement in Iraq is contentious and dangerous. The Iranian regime displays unprecedented levels of belligerence. The conflict between Israel and Palestine commands world headlines. This class is designed to give students the tools to analyze these situations capably.

Political Systems of the Middle East uses comparative political theory and current scholarly writings to examine the forces and counter-forces at work in the troubled Middle East and North Africa. We will examine the problems that beset governments, the genesis and evolution of opposition groups including Islamist groups, and selected economic and social forces that have a strong impact upon the working of governments. The class is designed to help the student gain a basic knowledge of Middle Eastern politics and the social pressures that underlie political forces, to study several countries in depth and to gain an understanding of the culturally-based and traditional political structures and forces that operate in these governmental systems. In particular we will concentrate on problems of legitimacy, leadership, democratization and religion. We will devote a good part of the class to the study of the conflicts of political legitimacy and Islamic activism. The class is also designed to emphasize critical reading and writing skills and development of analytical and logical writing abilities. The course is demanding and successful students will devote time and energy to mastering data, theory, and skills.

The teaching method will combine formal lecturing with discussion of selected texts and assigned readings plus careful attention to the questions and issues raised by participating students. The overall approach will be historical, comparative and explanatory. The class will be provided with a syllabus for the course, lists of required and recommended readings.

Reading Assignments:

It is advisable that you read the assignments before coming to class, as this will provide you with the wider picture and place the class lecture and ensuing discussion in context. **Required readings are listed in the lecture schedule. Additional reading requirements are posted regularly on Blackboard.**

Course structure and Assessment:

The course is designed to run over 8 weeks from April 30– June 15. The course will be assessed through **1 final exam** worth **50%**, and **5** writing assignment worth **50%**.

Writing Assignments.

Every week you will be assigned a one-page (typed single-spaced) writing assignment. The writing assignments will model the type of summaries, reports, and analysis expected in a professional setting, so work to make them top-notch. Not submitting papers proves fatal to your grade. Please read the guidelines posted on Blackboard.

Caveat Emptor! A special warning on Wikipedia

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page). This resource is in a constant state of flux. Articles are written by anyone who wants to write about the subject, but they can be altered by anyone else. Even a student in this class could add an article, and then find it changed sometime later. If someone does not have the knowledge/savvy to create his/her own web site, that person can just add an article to Wikipedia. So, if you look at this resource, be doubly sure you double-check the data you retrieve *Caveat emptor* (Buyer Beware I will dock you if you get it wrong).

For Further Information See Student Responsibilities (Separate Sheet)

The TA for the class is: Maren Reynolds email: marenirene@gmail.com

Honour Code Standards

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honour Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact **be** your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. See <http://www.byu.edu/honorcode> for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honour Code standards. Please call the Honour Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honour Code Office (4440).

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

SPRING TERM 2009 LECTURE SCHEDULE:

May

Week 1: Introduction: Setting the Stage

Readings:

Fri : 1

Week 2: Ideologies and Aspirations

Readings: Bill and Springborg chapter 1, 2 and 6, CQ chapter 1, Esposito on Blackboard.

Mon: 4

Wed: 6

Fri : 8

Week 3: Colonialism and the Impact of the West

Readings: Blackboard; Roger Owen and Smith. Also watch: *Lawrence of Arabia* (available at HBLL and Orem City libraries or video stores)

Mon: 11

Wed: 13

Fri : 15

Week 4: Nuclear Proliferation and Terrorism/ Middle East Oil and Politics

Readings: Bill and Springborg chapter 9, CQ Chapter 14, Blackboard

Mon: 18

Wed: 20

Fri: 22

February

Week 5: Arab Israeli Conflict

Readings: Bill and Springborg chapter 7, CQ chapter 2, Blackboard, **Watch Occupation 101**

Mon: 25 **No Class**

Wed: 27

Fri : 29

June

Week 6: Syria/Lebanon

Readings: CQ respective Country Profiles, Blackboard

Mon: 1

Wed: 3

Fri : 5

Week 7: The Iraqi Debacle/Turkey and the Arab World

Readings: Iraq: Blackboard, CQ Country Profile, Kenneth M. Pollack, "Spies, Lies, and Weapons: What went wrong." Atlantic Monthly (Jan/Feb 2004)

<http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2004/01/pollack.htm>

Turkey: CQ country profiles, Blackboard, Bill and Springborg 134-142

Mon: 8

Wed: 10

Fri : 12

Week 8: Conclusions and Reflections

Readings:

Mon: 15

Notes: Additional articles and readings may be posted on Blackboard, so watch for announcements.