Middle Eastern Revolutions
Political Science 450/Middle Eastern Studies 495
Meeting times: T, TH 9:30-10:45am
793 SWKT

Instructor: Quinn Mecham

Office: 770 SWKT
Office Phone: 801-422-5317
E-mail address: qmecham@byu.edu

Office hours:

Monday-Wednesday 12pm-1pm

Introduction:

This course serves as a senior capstone course in both Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies. The course focuses on the study of revolutionary political moments in the modern history of the Middle East using broader theories of collective action and revolutionary mobilization. During the course students will construct social science explanations for successful and unsuccessful revolutions, using empirical evidence from a number of cases in the Middle East and North Africa. The course involves substantial focus on academic reading and writing and will culminate in a major research paper that addresses a social science puzzle of the student’s interest. Discussion will center on the following core questions:

- What is a revolution?
- How do revolutions unfold over time?
- What are the principal causes of revolutions?
- What do the major revolutions of modern history have in common?
- When do revolutions succeed and when do they fail?
- What are the most influential revolutions in the broader Middle East?
- How did revolutions play a role in the independence of Middle Eastern countries?
- How do revolutionaries and regimes learn from each other and from history?
- How did the “Arab Spring” movements benefit from previous revolutionary acts?
- How can we explain variations in outcome across countries that have experienced large-scale uprisings?

These questions will be addressed by examining multiple theories of revolution and by studying the revolutionary history of Middle Eastern cases in some detail. Case studies will focus on revolutionary moments in Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, Iran, Algeria, Libya, Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain, among others.
**Required texts:**

The following texts are available at the college bookstore and are on reserve at the library.


Additional readings for the course are available under *Electronic Reserves* in Learning Suite.

**Requirements:**

Regular attendance at class, active participation, and the reading of assigned materials is expected. Each student will take part in leading class discussions on the course readings. In addition, a theoretical essay, three formal responses to course readings, and a substantial final research paper are required.

*Grades* will be calculated as follows:

- Revolution theory essay: 15%
- Formal responses to course readings (3 x 10%): 30%
- Course participation and discussion leadership: 15%
- Final paper: 40% (including detailed outline and oral presentation)

*Revolution theory essay*: A theoretical essay that addresses comparative theories of revolutions will be completed during the fourth week of class. This essay is limited to five double-spaced pages. It is due on **Thursday Jan 30** in class.

*Course reading responses*: Each student will write a formal response to **three** of the course readings. The schedule for reading responses will be determined between the student and the course instructor, and the three responses will be distributed throughout
the semester. Responses should be between 3-4 double-spaced pages and rigorously assess the social science claims of one of our course readings. Each response should offer an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading, and offer evidence from the selected reading to support the student’s own arguments. Each reading response will typically be due the day that we complete discussion of that reading in class. A schedule of responses and their individual due dates will be completed for each member of the class within the first three weeks of the semester.

Course participation and discussion leadership: Each member of class is expected to do all of the course reading and to actively participate in the course discussion every week. On at least three occasions (usually tied to a student’s selected reading responses), each student will help facilitate course discussion by designing discussion questions for all course members to address and co-leading the discussion in class.

Final Paper: A final paper (20-25 double-spaced pages) is required. Participants will choose a topic of interest based on course readings and discussion, and in consultation with the instructor. The paper may be a case study of a key country, movement, concept, figure, or strategy in Middle Eastern revolutions, and it should make a social science argument that addresses a challenging theoretical or empirical puzzle. A detailed paper outline and an oral presentation on the paper topic are also required. The final paper is due at SWKT 770 on Wednesday, April 16, 5pm.

Late policy: All late papers will be assessed a three point late fee for each day that they are late. No late papers will be accepted after the end of university exams on April 23.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

T Jan 7—Course Introduction: What is a Revolution?

TH Jan 9—The Great Historical Revolutions
Sanderson, Chapters 1-3
Also review: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War

T Jan 14—The Character of Revolutions
Brinton, Chapters 1-5

TH Jan 16—The Evolution and Outcomes of Revolutions
Brinton, Chapters 6-9, Epilogue

**T Jan 21—Major Theories of Revolutions, part one**

Sanderson, Chapters 4-5


**TH Jan 23—Major Theories of Revolutions, part two**


**T Jan 28—Additional Theoretical Arguments**


Sanderson, Chapters 6-8, Epilogue

**TH Jan 30—The Origins of Revolution in Turkey**

**Revolution Theory Essay due**


T Feb 4—The Revolutionary Turkish State


TH Feb 6—Early Revolts in Palestine

Khalidi, Chapters 1-4

T Feb 11—Revolutionary Arab Nationalism in Egypt

**Paper topics due**

Cook, Chapters 1-3

TH Feb 13—The Beginnings of Insurrection in Colonial Algeria

Horne, Chapters 1-5

T Feb 18 (No class—Monday instruction)

TH Feb 20—Research session at the BYU library

Horne, Chapters 6-12 (read sometime this week)

T Feb 25—Evolution of the Algerian Independence War

**Bibliography Due**
Horne, Chapters 13-19

**TH Feb 27— Outcomes and Legacies of the Algerian Revolution**

Horne, Chapters 20-25

**T Mar 4— Qaddafi’s “Revolution of the Masses” in Libya**

Alison Pargeter. 2012. Chapters 2-4 in *Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi*. Yale, pp. 35-117. (Reserve)


**TH Mar 6—Origins of the Iranian Revolution**

Kurzman, Chapters 1-4

**T Mar 11—Comparative Explanations of the Iranian Revolution**

Kurzman, Chapters 5-8


**TH Mar 13—The Palestinian Intifada and its Aftermath**

Khalidi, Chapters 5-6


**T Mar 18—Egypt vs. Algeria: Authoritarian Consolidation vs. Revolt in the 1990s**

**Paper Outline Due** (3-4 pages)
Cook, Chapters 4-5


TH Mar 20—The Cedar Revolution: Mass Protest in Lebanon


T Mar 25—The Green Revolution in Iran: Sources of Discontent

Hashemi and Postel, Introduction, pp. 3-59, 109-172, 192-227

TH Mar 27—Iranian Repression and the “Failure” of the Green Revolution

Hashemi and Postel, pp. 231-280, 295-314, 328-368, 381-414

T Apr 1—The Beginnings of the Arab Uprisings 2010-2011

**Student Presentations Begin**

Lynch, Chapters 1-4

TH Apr 3—From Arab “Spring” to Arab “Winter” 2011-2012

Lynch, Chapters 5-8 and afterword
T Apr 8—Contemporary Revolutionary Trajectories: Egypt and Tunisia

Cook, Chapter 7


TH Apr 10—Contemporary Revolutionary Trajectories: Libya, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria


Breaking Bahrain. 2012. Project on Middle East Political Science Briefings. March Lynch, ed. (Reserve)

Yemen’s Stalemate. 2012. Project on Middle East Political Science Briefings. March Lynch, ed. (Reserve)


T Apr 15—Conclusion: Legacies of Revolution


Michele Dunne. 2013. “Storms of the Arab Spring.” *Current History*, December. (Reserve)

W Apr 16—Final Papers Due (770 SWKT), 5 pm