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 reevaluation of scholarly 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 the last 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 both shaped, and were shaped by, non-democratic regimes. Alongside 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.
Required Texts


(Textbook is available for purchase at the UGA bookstore and on reserve at the library).

- Additional articles and chapters will be available on ELC.
- Students should also regularly read Middle East current affairs articles on:
  - Foreign Policy: [http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/middle-east-africa](http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/middle-east-africa)
  - Sada: [http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/](http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/)

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scheme</th>
<th>Grade Composition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 93-100</td>
<td>Quizzes: 10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A- 90-92</td>
<td>Presentation: 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ 87-89</td>
<td>Participation: 15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B 83-86</td>
<td>Midterm: 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- 80-82</td>
<td>Final paper: 40%</td>
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<td>C+ 77-79</td>
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<td>C 73-76</td>
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<td>D- 60-62</td>
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**Assignments**

**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 of about 10 minutes, and 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.

**Discussion**

This has two components: 1) 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. 2) Student should post to ELC a one-paragraph response to the readings by 5pm on the day before each class.
Midterm Exam

Midterm exam covering the topics covered in the course so far.

Final Paper

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

Policies

Academic Integrity

Every student must agree to abide by UGA’s academic honesty policy and procedures known as A Culture of Honesty and the University of Georgia Student Honor Code, which work together to define a climate of academic honesty and integrity at the university.

Special Needs

This course is guided by the assumption of dignity and respect for all persons in the classroom. My hope is to support diversity of learners and to provide a non-threatening environment. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of classes), and make sure that you have contacted the Disability Resource Center: http://drc.uga.edu

Laptops and Other Devices in Class

The use of laptops, ipads, phones, and any other electronic devices in class is not permitted. If you require the use of an electronic device due to a disability, speak with me during the first week of classes to receive permission.

Attendance

Missing classes and coming late to class will impact a student’s grade. Missing more than two classes without prior approval by the instructor will result in a 5-point grade reduction for each class missed.
Class Schedule and Readings

*** Please note that this is a tentative schedule and changes will be made during the semester

1. Thur. Jan 4: Introduction to the course

   Historical Background

2. Tues. Jan 9: Imagining the Middle East – Conceptions and Misconceptions I

   Note: no class due to conference. Please watch the following full film instead:
   - “Reel Bad Arabs;” http://freedocumentaries.org/documentary/reel-bad-arabs

3. Thur. Jan 11: Imagining the Middle East – Conceptions and Misconceptions II


4. Tues. Jan 16: Colonialism and State Formation

   - The Middle East, Chapter 1: “The Making of the Modern Middle East.” pp. 1-53
   - Study Map for Mapping Quiz
   - Due: Sign up for class presentations

   Non-Democratic Political Systems

5. Thur. Jan 18: Overview of Institutions and Governance

   - The Middle East, Chapter 4: “Institutions and Governance”


   - The Middle East, Chapter 10: “Egypt”
   - Film: Egypt, We Are Watching You

   Presentation:


Presentation:
- *The Middle East*, Chapter 14: “Jordan”
- *The Middle East*, Chapter 19: “Morocco”

8. Tues. Jan 30: Theocracy I

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 11: “Iran”
- Screening: *Persepolis*

Presentation:
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Iran Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)

9. Thur. Feb 1: Theocracy II

- Guest Lecture: Dr. Sara Kutchesfahani
- [http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/21/iran-deal-s-future-remains-uncertain-pub-63889](http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/21/iran-deal-s-future-remains-uncertain-pub-63889)

10. Tues. Feb 6: Political Islam in Opposition - The Alternative?


Presentation:

11. Thur. Feb 8: Secularism, Islamism and Democracy - The Turkish Case

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 25: “Turkey”
- Bali, Asli. “A Turkish Model for the Arab Spring?” *Middle East Law and Governance* 3 (2011), 24-42
Presentation:


**Authoritarian Durability? Causes, Effects, and Challenges**

**12. Tues. Feb 13: Political Economy I**

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 3: “The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East

**Presentation:**


**Presentation:**

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 15: “Kuwait.”
- *The Middle East*, Chapter 21: “Saudi Arabia”

**14. Tues. Feb 20: Social Transformation and Challenges**

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 2: “Social Change in the Middle East.”

**Presentation:**


**15. Thur. Feb. 22: Gender I**


Presentation:
• Choose an article from al-monitor addressing a gender issue in the Middle East (www.al-monitor.com)

**16. Tues. Feb. 27: Gender II**


• **17. Thur. March 1: Take Home Midterm**

**18. Tues. March 6: The Role of the Military**


Presentation:
• Choose an article from al-monitor addressing a the role of the military in the Middle East (www.al-monitor.com)

**19. Thur. March 8: Religion**


Presentation:

**20. Tues. March 20: Civil Society**

• *The Middle East*, Chapter 6: “Actors, Public Opinion and Participation”

Presentation:


**Presentation:**

**Regional and International Conflict**

22. **Tues. March 27: “Sectarian” Conflict**


**Presentation:**
- *The Middle East*, Chapter: “Lebanon” or “Iraq”

23. **Thur. March 29: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict I**

- The Middle East, Chapter 7: “The Israeli Palestinian Conflict”

**Presentation:**
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Israel Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Palestine Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)

24. **Tues. April 3: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict II**

- Screening: Five Broken Cameras

25. **Thur. April 5: International Politics**

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 8: “International Politics of the Middle East”

**Presentation:**

**The Arab Uprisings and Prospects for Democracy**

**26. Tues. April 10: Explaining the “Arab Spring” and its multiple trajectories**

- *Taking to the Streets*, Introduction: “Reconsidering Activism in the Arab World: Arab Uprisings and Beyond”

Presentation:
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor addressing the post-uprising situation in one of the countries of the “Arab Spring” (www.al-monitor.com)

**27. Thur. April 12: The Road to Tahrir Square I**


Presentation:
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Egypt Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)

**28. Tues. April 17: The Road to Tahrir Square II**

- Screening: The Square
- Due: Submit final paper topics

**29. Thur. April 19: Tunisia**


Presentation:
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Tunisia Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)

**30. Tues. April 24: Civil War in Syria**

- Due: Submit final papers bibliography

Presentation:
- Choose an article from Al-Monitor’s Syria Pulse (www.al-monitor.com)
Further reading: Possible Futures

- *Taking to the Streets*, Postscript: “From Activism to Democracy” pp.322-334

Final papers due May. 3, 5pm