INTL 8315
Comparative Politics of the Middle East
Tuesday 3:30-6:15
Candler 117

Lihi Ben Shitrit
Office: 304 Candler Hall
Office Hours: TBA
Phone: 709-542-6949
lben@uga.edu

This graduate course explores recent scholarship on the politics of the Middle East and North Africa, with the aim of highlighting the mutual engagement of area studies and comparative politics. Most of the literature read will be from the post 2011 Arab uprisings (or Arab Spring) but we will also draw on some of the earlier important comparative politics works (as well as contributions from other disciplines) on the Middle East and North Africa on which current scholarship builds, and which it also critiques. We will cover various topics, addressed through a range of different theoretical and methodological lenses, that have long preoccupied political scientists working on the Middle East. These topics include: the persistence of authoritarianism, democratization, religion and state, civil society and political participation, Islamist movements, sectarianism, gender politics, the politics of oil, and others. Students will also work on independent research projects throughout the semester, and will workshop their work-in-progress in the seminars. Each project will culminate in a research paper, or a literature review and a research proposal/prospectus, to be submitted at the end of the semester.

Seminar participation (20%)
Come to class prepared to offer reflections on the readings, pose and answer discussion questions, and provide feedback to other students on their research projects. The seminar will be largely devoted to discussion of the readings and of students’ work and will rely therefore on students’ contribution.

Presentations (20%)
Twice in the semester, you will be asked to lead a seminar discussion on one of the assigned readings. This will involve a ten-minute introduction and evaluation of one of the readings, and a open discussion of the piece. In the last two weeks of the course, students will also give a formal presentation about their research projects.

Reading Responses (20%)
By Monday at 8pm each week students should post a one-page review and critique of the required readings for the upcoming Thursday class on ELC. In addition to analysis and reflection, the response should propose three discussion questions to be addressed in class.
Final Research Paper/Proposal (40%)
A research paper/proposal, outlining a research question, a brief review of the literature research design, methods employed/to be employed, and preliminary empirical findings. This should be along the lines of a proposal for the Social Science Research Council IDRF program, or to NSF. Alternatively, students can write a more extensive literature review along the lines of World Politics review articles.

Required Texts

- The following books are available at the UGA Bookstore. They are also available new and used from online vendors such as Amazon. In addition, I will make them available on course reserves at the UGA library:

- All articles and most chapters will be available on ELC or available online.
- Students who need additional background on Middle East politics, or are interested in teaching undergraduate Middle East politics courses in the future, can purchase: Lust, Ellen. The Middle East, 14th Edition, CQ Press, at the UGA Bookstore.
- To keep abreast of new publications, follow the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) at http://pomeps.org
- I also highly suggest following current events in the Middle East through such sources as Al-Monitor: http://www.al-monitor.com
  Sada: http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/
  Foreign Policy: http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/middle-east-africa
Schedule and Readings

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

Week 1 (Jan 9): Introduction

- The Square

Week 2 (Jan 16): Studying Middle East Politics


Recommended:


Week 3 (Jan 23): Authoritarian Resilience and Democratization


Recommended:

**Week 4 (Jan 30): Elections**


Recommended:


Week 5 (Feb 6): Civil Society and Social Movements


Recommended:

Week 6 (Feb 13): Religion and the State


Recommended:


Week 7 (Feb 20): Islamists in Opposition and in Power


Recommended:


Week 8 (Feb 27): Rethinking Islamist Politics

- (POMEPS) Adaptation Strategies of Islamist Movements https://pomeps.org/2017/04/03/pomeps-studies-26/

Week 9 (March 6): Gender and the State


Recommended:

- Blaydes, Lisa and Drew Linzer. “The Political Economy of Women’s Support for


**Week 10 (March 20) Gender and Activism**


**Recommended:**


**Week 11 (March 27): Political Economy**

- Shehata, Samer S. *Shop Floor Culture and Politics in Egypt*. Albany: State University of New York, 2009: Chapter 1 (1-17), Chapter 2 (19-56), Chapter 4 (95-126), Chapter 6 (157-182).

Recommended:

- Michael Herb, *The Wages of Oil: Parliaments and Economic Development in Kuwait and the UAE*

**Week 12 (April 3): Sectarian Politics**


Recommended:

- Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*
Week 13 (April 10): The Media

- Salvatore, Armando. “New Media, the “Arab Spring”, and the Metamorphosis of the Public Sphere: Beyond Western Assumptions on Collective Agency and Democratic Politics.” *Constellations* 20 (2013)
- In class: Egypt, We Are Watching You

Recommended:


Week 14 (April 17): Students’ presentations

Week 15 (April 24): Students’ presentations

Final papers due May 1st, 6pm