

INTL 4370

Middle Eastern Political Systems

Tuesdays 2:20pm-3:35pm online via Zoom

*Thursdays 2:20pm-3:35pm online via Zoom with in-person option for a rotating small group at
Caldwell Hall 107*

Lihl Ben Shitrit

TA: Abdullah Kabaoglu

Office: 304 IA Building¹

Office Hours: Fridays 12:30-2:30pm (online via Zoom)

lben@uga.edu

Course Description

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

¹ The IA building is officially known as Candler Hall. “[Allen Candler](#) served Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1883 to 1891 and as Governor from 1898 to 1902. Candler also served in the Confederate Army, and as Governor, successfully lobbied for a Democratic whites-only primary based on the argument that the Democratic Party was not subject to the Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibits states from disenfranchising voters based on race or skin color. In an 1899 editorial, Candler claimed that the “enfranchisement of the Negro was a crime against civilization.” His tenure coincided with the most violent lynchings in Georgia history, and he was noted for his response to the lynching of Sam Hose in 1899, in which he admonished the black victims of the violence as well as the entire black community.” USG has an advisory group on building names, if you have an opinion about whether Allen Candler should or should not continue to enjoy the honor of having the International Affairs Department’s building named after him, you can make recommendations to the advisory group here: https://www.usg.edu/naming_advisory_group

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

- Lust, Ellen. *The Middle East*, 14th Edition, CQ Press (available for purchase at the UGA bookstore and on reserve at the library. Please note that on Amazon you can also rent a copy of the book or purchase an e-book for less than half of the price). You can also use the 13th or 15th editions of this book, just note that the chapter numbers might be different.
- Additional readings will be available on ELC and at the library.
- Students should also regularly read Middle East current affairs articles on:
Al-Monitor: <http://www.al-monitor.com>
Foreign Policy: <http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/middle-east-africa>
Al-Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast>
New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com>
Sada: <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/>

Grading

Grading Scheme

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	00-59

Grade Composition

Quizzes: 10%
Presentation: 15%
Participation: 15%
Midterm: 20%
Final paper: 40%

Assignments

Quizzes

There will be 10 pop quizzes about the readings during the semester.

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 15 minutes and include a brief summary of the piece and an explanation of how it relates to the other readings and topics 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. Please send a copy of your presentation to lben@uga.edu and akabaoglu@uga.edu by 10pm on Wednesday prior to the Thursday on which you will be presenting.

Discussion (participation)

This has two options: 1) Students should come to class (in-person or online) having read all the required readings and prepared to both pose and answer questions and engage in discussion on the subject matter. 2) If you are unable to attend class synchronously (in-person or online), you should post to ELC a one-page response to the readings by 5pm on Monday. The response should highlight what you found most interesting in the readings, and include 3 questions for discussion about the readings.

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

Discussion Sessions

As per UGA's COVID-19 regulations, only a small subset of the class at a time will be able to attend the in-person discussion sessions on Thursdays in class. The rest of the class will join the Thursday discussion sessions online via Zoom. A list of names of students who are eligible to attend each week will be posted on ELC. However, those who attend will have to wear masks throughout the session and will have to bring a laptop in order to connect via Zoom to the rest of the students who would be participating remotely. Please note that YOU ARE **NOT** REQUIRED to attend the discussion sessions in-person in the weeks in which you are eligible to attend. Remember that it is much safer to attend sessions remotely, as you are more likely to contract or transmit COVID-19 in a classroom environment with other students than you are alone in your room engaging with classmates online. I remind you that everyone's safety and convenience will be much better served if you participate in the discussion sessions remotely rather than in-person. You are required to have the readings handy during class sessions (whether in-person or online) as these will be used for class activities.

Attendance

There is no grade for attendance. However, participation makes up 15% of your grade. You can get full marks for participation by either participating in class synchronously and contributing to the discussion or, alternatively, by posting discussion responses on ELC if you cannot attend synchronously.

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>

Coronavirus Information for Students

Face Coverings:

Effective July 15, 2020, the University of Georgia—along with all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions—requires all faculty, staff, students and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use is in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at <https://drc.uga.edu/>.

DawgCheck:

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/>

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed?

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate

continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test?

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162.

UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive?

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is **required** to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

Class Schedule and Readings

* This is a tentative schedule and changes will be made during the semester

**IMPORTANT: following the Thanksgiving Break, all class sessions, including discussion sessions, will be held exclusively online

1.Thur. August 20: Introduction to the course

Historical Background

2.Tue. August 25: Imagining the Middle East – Conceptions and Misconceptions

- Lewis, Bernard. "The roots of Muslim rage." *The Atlantic Monthly* 266.3 (1990): 47-60.
- Huntington, Samuel P. "The clash of civilizations?" *Foreign affairs* (1993): 22-49.
- Said, Edward. "The clash of ignorance." *The Nation* 22.10 (2001): 2001.
- "The tragedy of the Arabs." *Economist*. July 5, 2014.
- Said, Edward. "Orientalism. 1978." *New York: Vintage* 1994 (1979). Introduction

3.Thur. Aug 27: Discussion Session (introductions)

4.Tue. Sep. 1: Colonialism and State Formation

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

5.Thur. Sep. 3: Discussion Session

Non-Democratic Political Systems

6.Tue. Sep. 8: Overview of Institutions and Governance

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 4: "Institutions and Governance"

7.Thur. Sep 10: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Lust, Ellen. "Missing the third wave: Islam, institutions, and democracy in the middle east." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 46.2 (2011): 163-190.

8.Tue. Sep 15: Single/Dominant Party Authoritarianism

- Screening: Egypt We are Watching You
- *The Middle East*, Chapter 10: "Egypt" (pp. 450-461)
- Wedeen, Lisa. *Ambiguities of domination: Politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*. University of Chicago Press, 2015. (chapter 1)

9.Thur. Sep 17: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Albrecht, Holger. "How can opposition support authoritarianism? Lessons from Egypt." *Democratization* 12.3 (2005): 378-397.
- Posusney, Marsha Pripstein. "Multi-party elections in the Arab world: Institutional engineering and oppositional strategies." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36.4 (2002)

10.Tue. Sep 22: Monarchy

- Lucas, Russell E. "Monarchical authoritarianism: survival and political liberalization in a Middle Eastern regime type." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36.01 (2004): 103-119.
- Herb, Michael. "Princes and parliaments in the Arab world." *The Middle East Journal* 58.3 (2004): 367-384.

11.Thur. Sep 24: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Yom, Sean L. and F. Gregory Gause, III. "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On." *Journal of Democracy* 23. 4 (2012): 74-88
- Lust, Ellen. "Competitive clientelism in the Middle East." *Journal of Democracy* 20.3 (2009): 122-135.

12.Tue. Sep 29: Theocracy I

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

13.Thur. Oct. 1: Theocracy II

- Guest Lecture: Dr. Sara Kutchesfahani
- Hoodfar, Homa, and Shadi Sadr. "Islamic politics and women's quest for gender equality in Iran." *Third world quarterly* 31.6 (2010): 885-903.

14.Tue. Oct. 6: Political Islam in Opposition - The Alternative?

- El-Ghobashy, Mona. "The metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim brothers." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37.03 (2005): 373-395.
- Masoud, Tarek. "Are They Democrats: Does It Matter?" *Journal of Democracy* 19.3 (2008): 19-24.

15.Thur. Oct. 8: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Bayat, Asef. "The Making of Post-Islamist Iran." *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 35-65.
- Schwedler, Jillian. "Can Islamists become moderates? Rethinking the inclusion-moderation hypothesis." *World Politics* 63.02 (2011): 347-376.
- Cammett, Melani, and Pauline Jones Luong. "Is there an Islamist political advantage?." *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014): 187-206.

16.Tue. Oct. 13: Take Home Midterm

17.Thur. Oct 15: Discussion Session

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:

- Esen, Berk, and Sebnem Gumuscu. "Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey." *Third World Quarterly* 37.9 (2016): 1581-1606.

Authoritarian Durability? Causes, Effects, and Challenges

18.Tues. Oct 20: Political Economy I & Social Transformation and Challenges

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 3: "The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East"
- *The Middle East*, Chapter 2: "Social Change in the Middle East."

19.Thur. Oct 22: Discussion Session - Political Economy II- The Politics of Oil

- Ross, Michael. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53:3 (2001)

- Herb, Michael. "No Representation without Taxation? Rents, Development, and Democracy." *Comparative Politics* 37:3 (2005)
- Ross, Michael L. "Will Oil Drown the Arab Spring?: Democracy and the Resource Curse." *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 5 (2011): 2-7.

Presentations:

- Mitchell, Timothy. "Carbon democracy." *Economy and Society* 38.3 (2009): 399-432.
- Tsourapas, Gerasimos. "The other side of a neoliberal miracle: economic reform and political de-liberalization in Ben Ali's Tunisia." *Mediterranean Politics* 18.1 (2013): 23-41.
- Jones, Calvert W. "Seeing like an autocrat: Liberal social engineering in an illiberal state." *Perspectives on Politics* 13.1 (2015): 24-41.

Optional extra reading:

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

20.Tues. Oct 27: Gender

- Ross, Michael L. "Oil, Islam, and women." *American Political Science Review* 102.01 (2008): 107-123.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." *American anthropologist* 104.3 (2002): 783-790.
- Ben Shitrit, Lihi. "Women, freedom, and agency in religious political movements: Reflections from women activists in Shas and the Islamic movement in Israel." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 9.3 (2013): 81-107.

21.Thur. Oct 29: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Contrasting Women's Rights in the Maghreb and the Middle East Constitutions." In *Double-Edged Politics on Women's Rights in the MENA Region*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020. 205-227.
- Badran, Margot. "Between secular and Islamic feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and beyond." *Journal of Middle East women's studies* 1.1 (2005): 6-28.

22. Tues. Nov. 3: Civil Society (election day)

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 6: "Actors, Public Opinion and Participation"
- Jamal, Amaney A. *Barriers to democracy: The other side of social capital in Palestine and the Arab world*. Princeton University Press, 2009. (selections)

23.Thur. Nov 5: Discussion Session

Presentations:

- Langhor, Vicky. "Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics: Egypt and Liberalizing Arab Regimes." *Comparative Politics* (June 2004)
- Tessler, Mark. "Religion, religiosity and the place of Islam in political life: insights from the Arab barometer surveys." *Middle East Law and Governance* 2.2 (2010): 221-252.

Regional and International Politics

24.Tues. Nov 10: Democracy Promotion

- Bush, Sarah Sunn. *The taming of democracy assistance*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. (Chapter 7)
- Salime, Zakia. "Securing the Market, Pacifying Civil Society, Empowering Women: The Middle East Partnership Initiative." *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 25. No. 4. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010.

Presentations:

- Jamal, Amaney A. *Of Empires and Citizens: Pro-American Democracy Or No Democracy at All?* Princeton University Press, 2012. Chapter 1

25.Thur. Nov 12: Sectarian Conflict

- Hashemi, Nader, and Danny Postel. *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East*. Oxford University Press, 2017 (selections).

Presentations:

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 8: "International Politics of the Middle East"
- Nasr, Vali. *The Shia revival: How conflicts within Islam will shape the future*. WW Norton & Company, 2007. Introduction and Chapter 9: "The Battle for the Middle East"
- Makdisi, Ussama. "The mythology of the sectarian Middle East." (2017).

Optional extra reading:

- *The Middle East*, Chapters: "Lebanon" and "Iraq"

26.Tue. Nov 17: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict I

- *The Middle East*, Chapter 7: "The Israeli Palestinian Conflict"

27.Thur. Nov 19: Israeli-Palestinian Conflict II

- Tapper, Aaron Hahn, and Mira Sucharov, eds. *Social Justice and Israel/Palestine: foundational and contemporary debates*. University of Toronto Press, 2019. (chapter 1: Narratives)
- Guest Lecture: Breaking the Silence

The Arab Uprisings and Prospects for Democracy

28. Tue. Dec 1: Explaining the “Arab Spring” and its multiple trajectories

- Gause III, F. Gregory. "Why Middle East Studies missed the Arab spring: The myth of authoritarian stability." *Foreign Affairs*. 90 (2011):
- Angrist, Michele Penner. "Understanding the success of mass civic protest in Tunisia." *The Middle East Journal* 67.4 (2013): 547-564.
- Film recommendation: The Square (available on Netflix)

29. Thur. Dec. 3: Civil War in Syria

- <https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war>
- “America’s Abandonment of Syria.” *The New Yorker*, April 2020.

Presentation:

- Janmyr, Maja, and Lama Mourad. "Modes of ordering: labelling, classification and categorization in Lebanon’s refugee response." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 31.4 (2018): 544-565.

(Optional) Extra readings: Possible Futures

- Brownlee, Jason, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. "Why the Modest Harvest?" *Journal of Democracy* 24.4 (2013): 29-44.
- Stepan, Alfred, and Juan J. Linz. "Democratization Theory and the" Arab Spring". *Journal of Democracy* 24.2 (2013): 15-30.
- Masoud, Tarek. "Why Tunisia?" *Journal of Democracy* 29.4 (2018): 166-175.
- POMEPS: From Mobilization to Counter-Revolution (pp. 3-7, 18-19, 25-37, 63-69):
http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/POMEPS_Studies_20_Mobilization_Web-REV.pdf
- <https://pomeps.org/arab-uprisings-bibliography-books>
- <https://pomeps.org/arab-uprisings-bibliography-articles>

Final papers due on ELC December 17, 2020 by midnight