

University of Georgia
INTL 4370: Middle Eastern Politics
Spring 2024

Instructor: Pierre Naoufal

Class time: M-W-F @ 10:20 → 11:10 am

Location: Journalism 412

Class Section: Call# 64538

Office: Candler Hall room 220

Office hours: Wednesdays 11:30 am → 1:30 pm

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Course Description

This course begins by attempting to understand the potential biases one may hold when examining a region of the world whose culture and functioning might differ from that of the observer. The Middle East has for a while now, been a place of turmoil. Why does the Middle East seem so politically fragile to external observers? Why are states in the Middle East either weak or undemocratic? Why is there no such thing as Arab nationalism? What is the future of the Arab Israeli conflict? Will a Middle East with new nuclear actors change the balance of power? We will attempt to answer these questions, among many others. This course sits in between comparative politics (comparing countries to understand internal variables) and international relations (the study of the interaction of countries).

The following is the list of subjects covered in this course: What is the Middle East?; Conceptions and misconceptions about the Middle East; the Sunni/Shia divide; state formation and nationalism; “political Islam”; civil society in the Middle East; Clientelism; America’s foreign policy in the Middle East; Authoritarian institutions in the Middle East; democratic erosion; democratization and the Arab Spring; the Arab-Israeli conflict; Israeli foreign policy; the Iraq war and its aftermath; conflict in the Middle East between three regional powers (Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran); and nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

Course Structure and Requirements

Since this is an upper-level undergraduate course, it will be structured as a seminar, that is a discussion between instructor and students. I will give an introduction on the subject at the beginning of every week, but the majority of time will be dedicated to a discussion based on the week’s readings. Discussion will not only focus on the content of the readings but also on the argument presented by the author, how that argument relates to other assigned readings and whether or not it is convincing. Some readings use advanced statistics. However, I do not expect you to understand most of the statistical models utilized in some of the readings.

Grading outline and due dates:

Discussion questions → (10%) due at 9 pm the day before each class on ELC.

Policy brief → (15%) due on February 2nd @ 5pm.

Final paper outline → (10%) due on Friday March 15th @ 5pm.

Analytical paper → (15%) due on Friday April 26th @ 5pm.

Final exam → (20%) in class on Monday April 29th

Final paper → (30%) due on May 7th @ 7pm.

Discussion questions (10%): You are required to post a question per reading on ELC by 9 pm the day before class. You will be graded on the quality of the questions you post. The goal is to demonstrate that you have read and reflected on the assigned material before we discuss it in class. I will sometimes use these questions to stimulate class discussion.

Policy Brief (15%): You are required to write a policy brief where you choose any political issue related to the Middle East. In your briefs you should: introduce the nature of the problem and give possible solutions. Imagine your brief will be read by the President of the United States. You therefore have to keep it simple and precise and consider that your audience does not necessarily know the details of the subject. You can find a policy brief template on ELC. These should be around 500 words in length.

Analytical paper (15%): You are required to write an analytical paper for this class where you choose 4 works from the syllabus (any authors you would like) and discuss the strength and weaknesses of every work by comparing them with one another. Ask yourselves the following questions: What does one theory hold in advantage over another? How does the theory fare against the empirical record? Are the measurement strategies used by the authors convincing? Even though you can choose any work you would like, choosing works that relate to one another will render this assignment much easier. It is therefore recommended you choose works from a same week. These papers should be around 500 words in length.

Research paper outlines (10%): Use the Edicts of Candler covered in the 8th week of the course to construct an outline for your final paper. Give a 2-3 sentence description for every point of the Edicts of Candler, except for points 13, 14 and 15 (since those cover results of your findings which you are not expected to do).

Final Exam (20%): The final exam will be administered in class through a series of short written answers. The exact format will be discussed in class as the exam date approaches. The final exam is scheduled for April 29th during regular class time.

Research Paper (30%): A research design is due on Friday May 9th at 11pm. We will go over, in class and in detail, what a research design is. The paper's topic must be related to the Middle East. Other than this only requirement, you are free to choose the subject of your liking. Around the middle of the semester, you will be asked to turn in a short outline describing the general direction you intend to take in your design. Two days in week 15 of the semester will be dedicated to in class presentation/workshop. Your research will have to include literature not covered in class, but can

include works covered during the semester. Papers should be about 2500 words long, or ten double-spaced pages.

File Format upload on ELC: Please upload only .doc, .docx or pdf. files on ELC. All other file formats including links to other platforms will not be accepted.

Late assignment policy: In order to be fair to your classmates who worked hard to commit to the set deadlines, late assignments will not be accepted, unless circumstances are extenuating. Being unable to upload the assignment on time because of no internet connection, uploading the wrong file or having simply forgotten about the deadline does not count as an extenuating circumstance.

Letter grades assignment will follow the scale below:

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

Academic Honesty: As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Please review the definition of plagiarism in the Academic Honesty Policy: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Academic Honesty – include this statement: UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.

Students with Disabilities: UGA is committed to the success of all enrolled students and strives to create an environment accessible to everyone. You may request accommodations for a disability through Disability Resource Center (DRC). DRC can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, or by phone at 706-542-8719 or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>. Please register with the DRC before the start of classes.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).

- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Class Schedule and Readings

There are no required book purchases for this course. All readings can be found on ELC, through the UGA library website, or on this syllabus if a link is provided. Please check the syllabus for reading schedule as relying solely on ELC will make you miss some of the links provided on the syllabus (links will direct you to reading and videos).

Course schedule is subject to change. Students will be notified in advance if schedule is altered.

Week 1- The Middle East: Conceptions and misconceptions.

Mon. Jan. 8: Syllabus and course requirements.

Wed. Jan. 10: Keddie, N. R. (1973). Is There a Middle East? *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 4(3), 255-271.

Lewis, B. (1990). The roots of Muslim rage. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 266(3), 47-60.

Fri. Jan. 12: Said, E. W. (2014). The clash of ignorance. In *Geopolitics* (pp. 191-194). Routledge.

Week 2- Misconceptions continued; the Sunni/Shia divide; Colonialism, state formation, Arab nationalism (and its failures).

Mon. Jan. 15: No Class. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Wed. Jan. 17: Clifford, J. (1980). Orientalism.

Helfont, S. (2013). The Geopolitics of the Sunni-Shi'i Divide in the Middle East. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 12.

Fri. Jan. 19: Kramer, M. (1993). Arab nationalism: mistaken identity. *Daedalus*, 122(3), 171-206.

Blaydes, L. (2017). State building in the Middle East. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, 487-504.

Week 3- Is there a problem of “political Islam”?

Mon. Jan. 22: March, F. (2015). Political Islam: Theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18, 103-123.

Schwedler, J. (2011). Can Islamists become moderates? Rethinking the inclusion-moderation hypothesis. *World Politics*, 63(2), 347-376.

Wed. Jan. 24: Masoud, T. (2008). Islamist Parties and Democracy: Are They Democrats? Does It Matter? *Journal of Democracy*, 19(3), 19-24.

Fuller, G. E. (2002). The future of political Islam. *Foreign Affairs*, 48-60.

Fri. Jan. 26: Has political Islam failed:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIVHPfIOljY>

Week 4 – Civil society and trust in the Middle East.

Mon. Jan. 29: Jamal, A. (2007). When is social trust a desirable outcome? Examining levels of trust in the Arab world. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11), 1328-1349.

Wed. Jan. 31: Härdig, A. C. (2015). Beyond the Arab revolts: conceptualizing civil society in the Middle East and North Africa. *Democratization*, 22(6), 1131-1153.

Langohr, V. (2004). Too much civil society, too little politics: Egypt and liberalizing Arab regimes. *Comparative politics*, 181-204.

Fri. Feb. 2: Ciftci, S. (2010). Modernization, Islam, or social capital: what explains attitudes toward democracy in the Muslim world? *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(11), 1442-1470.

**** Policy briefs due on Friday February 2nd at 5 pm on ELC****

Week 5- Clientelism with a special focus on Lebanon.

Mon. Feb. 5: Lust, E. (2009). Competitive clientelism in the Middle East. *J. Democracy*, 20, 122.

Wed. Feb. 7: Corstange, D. (2016). *The price of a vote in the Middle East: Clientelism and communal politics in Lebanon and Yemen*. Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1.

Cammett, M., & Issar, S. (2010). Bricks and mortar clientelism: sectarianism and the logics of welfare allocation in Lebanon. *World Politics*, 62(3), 381-421.

Fri. Feb.9: Corstange, D. (2018). Clientelism in competitive and uncompetitive elections. *Comparative Political Studies*, 51(1), 76-104.

Week 6- America's Middle East policy, past and present.

Mon. Feb. 12: Makdisi, U. (2002). "Anti-Americanism" in the Arab world: An interpretation of a brief history. *The Journal of American History*, 89(2), 538-557.

Wed. Feb.14: Karlin, M., & Wittes, T. C. (2019). America's Middle East Purgatory. *Foreign Affairs*, 98(1), 88-100.

America's abandonment of Syria (New Yorker)
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/04/27/americas-abandonment-of-syria>

Fri. Feb. 16: Chomsky, N. (1991). After the Cold War: US foreign policy in the Middle East. *Cultural Critique*, (19), 15-31.

Week 7- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the failed Oslo accord; Zionism and democracy.

Mon. Feb. 19: Mock, S., Obeidi, A., & Zeleznikow, J. (2014). A brief outline of the Israel–Palestinian conflict. *Group Decision and Negotiation*, 23, 1245-1262.

Parkinson, Sarah. (2023). The Ghosts of Lebanon: To see what lies ahead in Gaza, look back to Israel's 1982 invasion. *Foreign Affairs*.

Wed. Feb. 21: Pundak, R. (2001). From Oslo to Taba: what went wrong? *Survival*, 43(3), 31-45.

Roy, S. (2002). Why peace failed: An Oslo autopsy. *Current History*, 101(651), 8-16.

Fri. Feb. 23: Is Zionism compatible with democracy:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nffaa1p3k_I

Week 8- Israeli foreign policy; and how to write a research design.

Mon. Feb. 26: Telhami, S. (1990). Israeli foreign policy: A static strategy in a changing world. *Middle East Journal*, 44(3), 399-416.

Wed. Feb. 28: Edicts of Candler

re-read: Jamal, A. (2007). When is social trust a desirable outcome? Examining levels of trust in the Arab world. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11), 1328-1349.

Fri. Mar. 1: Edicts of Candler (continued)

Week 9- No class. Spring Break.

Week 10- Conflict in the Middle East; Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia: Three regional powers in tension.

Mon. Mar. 11: Sørli, M. E., Gleditsch, N. P., & Strand, H. (2005). Why is there so much conflict in the Middle East? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(1), 141-165.

Wed. Mar. 13: Menashri, D. (2006). Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict. *Israel Affairs*, 12(1), 107-122.

Roomi, F. (2023). The Iran-Israel Conflict: An Ultra-Ideological Explanation. *Middle East Policy*.

Fri. Mar. 15: Mirza, M. N., Abbas, H., & Qaisrani, I. H. (2021). Structural sources of Saudi–Iran rivalry and competition for the sphere of influence. *Sage Open*, 11(3).

****Final paper outline due on Friday March 15th at 5 pm****

Week 11- Democratization in the Middle East and the resource curse.

Mon. Mar. 18: Hinnebusch, R. (2016). Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. *Twenty Years of Studying Democratization*, 76-98.

Wed. Mar. 20: Ross, M. L. (2001). Does oil hinder democracy? *World politics*, 53(3), 325-361.

Fri. Mar. 22: Ross, M. L. (2011). Will oil drown the Arab Spring: Democracy and the resource curse. *Foreign Aff.*, 90, 2.

Week 12- Democratization and the Arab Spring.

Mon. Mar. 25: Angrist, M. P. (2013). Understanding the success of mass civic protest in Tunisia. *The Middle East Journal*, 67(4), 547-564.

Nasr, Vali. (2010). *Forces of fortune: The rise of the new Muslim middle class and what it will mean for our world*. Simon and Schuster. Ch7: “The Prophets of Change”.

Wed. Mar. 27: Lust, E. (2011). Missing the third wave: Islam, institutions, and democracy in the Middle East. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 46, 163-190.

Fri. Mar. 29: Gause III, F. G. (2011). Why Middle East studies missed the Arab Spring: The myth of authoritarian stability. *Foreign affairs*, 81-90.

Stepan, A., & Linz, J. J. (2013). Democratization theory and the "Arab spring". *J. Democracy*, 24, 15.

Week 13- Authoritarian control.

Mon. Apr. 1: Lucas, R. E. (2004). Monarchical authoritarianism: Survival and political liberalization in a Middle Eastern regime type. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36(1), 103-119.

Wed. Apr. 3: Wedeen, L. (1998). Acting "as if": symbolic politics and social control in Syria. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40(3), 503-523.

Yom, S. L., & Gause III, F. G. (2012). Resilient royals: How Arab monarchies hang on. *J. Democracy*, 23, 74.

Wed. Apr. 5: Posusney, M. P. (2002). Multi-party elections in the Arab world: Institutional engineering and oppositional strategies. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36, 34-62.

Week 14- The Iraq War (2003) and its aftermath. The rise of ISIS and Iranian influence in the region.

Mon. Apr. 8: 20 years on a question lingers about Iraq: Why did er invade? New York *time*: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/18/world/middleeast/iraq-war-reason.html>

Brands, H., & Feaver, P. (2017). Was the Rise of ISIS Inevitable? *Survival*, 59(3), 7-54.

Wed. Apr. 10: Fawcett, L. (2023). The Iraq War 20 years on: towards a new regional architecture. *International Affairs*, 99(2), 567-585.

Fri. Apr 12: Nasr, V. (2003). Regional implications of Shi'a revival in Iraq. *Washington Q.*, 27, 7.

Chomsky, N. (2004). Truths and Myths about the Invasion of Iraq. *Socialist Register*, 40.

Week 15- Democratic Erosion in the Middle East.

Mon. Apr. 15: Feinstein, Y., & Ben-Eliezer, U. (2019). Failed peace and the decline in liberalism in Israel: A spiral model. *Mediterranean Politics*, 24(5), 568-591.

Esen, B., & Gumuscu, S. (2016). Rising competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), 1581-1606.

Wed. Apr. 17: Final papers presentations/workshop.

Fri. Apr. 19: Final papers presentations/workshop.

Week 16- Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East.

Mon. Apr. 22: Israeli, O. (2015). Israel's nuclear amimut policy and its consequences. *Israel Affairs*, 21(4), 541-558.

Wed. Apr. 24: Kadhim, A. (2006). The Future of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East. *Nonproliferation Review*, 13(3), 581-589.

Sagan, S., Waltz, K., & Betts, R. K. (2007). A nuclear Iran: promoting stability or courting disaster? *Journal of International Affairs*, 135-150.

Fri. Apr. 26: Final Exam review (Q and A).

****Analytical paper due on Friday April 26th at 5 pm on ELC****

Week 17-

Mon. Apr. 29: Final Exam.

****Final papers due on May 7th at 7 pm through ELC****