

UPDATED SYLLABUS FOR MAYTERM 2019

PLSC 3345 POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Instructor: Dr. LaiYee Leong
Contact information: lleong@smu.edu
Office: Dallas Hall 58E (History Department)

Class meeting: TBD
Classroom: TBD
Office hours: by appointment



COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a region always in the news: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Libya.... Do you wonder at what is really going on beyond the headlines, and why the US sends American troops – and trillions of dollars – to the region? Whether it's American military involvement, the war in Syria, or US-Iran tensions over nuclear disarmament, this course will help you make sense of the issues and understand the context.

We will study why MENA represents an area of critical interest to the US. Among the reasons, as a site of longstanding territorial disputes and ongoing military conflict, as the origin of a major refugee crisis, as the crucible of jihadism, and as the home of the world's largest producers of oil.

This course will provide you with an opportunity to engage more deeply with the dynamic forces that shape government and politics in MENA. It will challenge you to reconsider many common assumptions about the region's peoples and societies. We begin by exploring complex historical legacies. We then investigate some of the most important themes – regime, economy, security, nationalism, religion – that shape contemporary realities. We also examine US foreign policy in the region, how it is perceived, and its impact.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to

- explain the historical context for politics in MENA,
- demonstrate knowledge of issues related to regime, political ideologies, economy, and security in MENA, and
- discuss the manner in which US foreign policy shapes and is shaped by developments in MENA.

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Academic: Yale University (B.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.)

SMU appointments: John G. Tower Center for Political Studies (Senior Fellow), Center for Presidential History (Fellow), Political Science Department (Lecturer)

My current research projects concern US foreign policy during the George W. Bush administration. I teach semester-long courses on the politics of Islam (PLSC 4345) and movements and revolutions (PLSC 4346).

COURSE READINGS

The required textbook is MacQueen, Benjamin. 2018. *An Introduction to Middle East Politics*. 2nd ed.. It is available at the SMU Bookstore.

Journal articles are available online through SMU's Library Resources.

The anthology, *Are You Listening? Voices of the Middle East*, is available on Canvas.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

There is no prerequisite for this course.

Attitude: Your enrollment in the course is a promise of professional commitment. Diligent and consistent work is expected. Please take the initiative to raise questions in class or to see me after class.

Attendance: You are expected to come to class on time and to stay for its entire duration. Non-attendance will lead to a commensurate penalty in your grade for the course. An excused absence MUST comply with university regulations (see appendix at the end of the syllabus for more details.)

This course is designed to be student-driven and discussion-centered. Attendance is therefore essential for success in this course.

Conduct: Mature, respectful behavior befitting an SMU student is expected. Please turn off mobile phones. If you use a laptop, you must sit in the front row. Laptop use is strictly for taking notes. Any other use during class may lead me to ban laptops. Disruptive or unprofessional behavior may cause points to be deducted from the class participation part of your grade.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

You are expected to complete the readings assignments for each class BEFORE the session meets. Be prepared to ask and answer questions. Constructive participation will earn credit, and will be remembered when final grades are set, especially in borderline cases.

PLEASE NOTE:

Due to the accelerated schedule of MayTerm, and the importance of having context for class discussion, you are strongly encouraged to begin reading the anthology, *Are You Listening? Voices of the Middle East*, before the first class meeting. It is an accessible collection of short literary fiction that provides valuable insights into the Middle East from the perspective of writers from the Middle East. It gives depth to the political science scholarship you will encounter in this course.

QUIZZES

Occasional quizzes based on reading assignments will be given. They are intended to provide a continuing incentive for you to keep up with the readings.

IN-CLASS GROUP WORK

Students will engage in in-class group work. As an incentive for everyone to contribute equally, a grade will be assigned based on the instructor's observation and assessment.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The short writing assignments aim to help you synthesize concepts learnt and hone writing ability. Papers will be graded on quality of writing as well as content. They should demonstrate analytical thinking and skillful discussion of ideas rather than a mere regurgitation of information from class lectures or reading notes.

There are TWO writing assignments in this course. They are short papers (3 to 5 pages each) for which prompts are provided and draw on assigned readings (no additional research required).

A paper copy of these papers must be uploaded to Canvas by the deadline. Late papers will receive a full-grade deduction as penalty (e.g., an "A" becomes a "B"). Papers that are not submitted after 12 hours past the start of class on the date it is due will receive an automatic 0 score.

Papers should be standard sized, printed in 12-point Times New Roman style, and double-spaced. Please number the pages. No cover page is necessary.

EACH PAPER MUST BE YOUR OWN WORK. You may discuss ideas in it with others and refer to published authorities. You are encouraged to visit writing tutors at the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center (see below). But the final written work must be your own. You may not re-use work completed for another course. You may also not recycle work from the earlier assignment for the later assignment in this course.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offence. See SMU's Honor Code. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse. Violations include but are not limited to those stated in the Code. When in doubt about what is acceptable, ask. I am required to refer academic misconduct to the university's Honor Council if confronted with evidence of academic dishonesty.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Class participation | 15% |
| In-class group work | 15% |
| Quizzes | 15% |
| Paper #1 | 15% |
| Paper #2 | 15% |
| Final exam | 25% |

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Final grade | 100% |
|-------------|------|

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

My contact information is found at the top of this syllabus. The best time to meet face-to-face is immediately after class. If you have questions that do not require a face-to-face meeting, email is the best way to get in touch.

IF YOU NEED ACADEMIC HELP

If you believe you are having trouble keeping up with the demands of the course despite honest effort on your part, please let me know. The sooner you seek help, the less likely you are to find yourself in academic trouble when it is too late.

Also remember that student and faculty tutors, including writing specialists, are available at the Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center to help you. THEY ARE THERE FOR YOU. Make the most of them. (A-LEC: <http://smu.edu/alec/> 214.768.3648)

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

| DATE | TOPIC | READING ASSIGNMENT |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Prior to start date | Start reading - Shedd, Carole Johnson, ed.. 1998. <i>Are You Listening? Voices of the Middle East</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard College. | |
| May 16 | Legacies of Empire and Colonialism How did colonial rule shape the region's interactions with the West? To what extent are the political challenges in MENA rooted in colonialism? | MacQueen – Chs. 1 & 2. |
| May 17 | The Cold War How did superpower politics affect the region? How did newly emerging regimes use Cold War dynamics for their own interests? | MacQueen – Chs. 3. Khalidi, Rashid. 2018. "The Superpowers and the Cold War in the Middle East." <i>The Middle East and the United States</i> . David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas, eds., 6 th ed.. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. (SMU online) |
| May 20 | Political Ideologies – Nationalism Why does nationalism take such varied forms in MENA? How does that complicate state-building? <i>*First essay due – a response to short stories from the anthology.</i> | MacQueen – Ch. 4 (relevant section). Ahram, Ariel. 2018. "On the Making and Unmaking of Arab States." <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 50(2): 323-327. |
| May 21 | Political Ideologies – Islamism What is Islamist ideology? How do regimes and their oppositions use it to their own purpose? | MacQueen – Ch. 4 (relevant section). Mandaville, Peter. 2017. "Islamism and US Foreign Policy." <i>Rethinking Political Islam</i> . Shadi Hamid and William McCants, eds.. New York, NY: Oxford UP. |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| May 22 | Economy and Oil How does oil affect the region's economic development and its politics? | MacQueen – Ch. 6. Snider, Erin. 2017. "International Political Economy and the New Middle East." <i>PS Political Science & Politics</i> 50(3): 664-667. |
| May 23 | Military and Security Why does violence characterize MENA at both the inter-state and intra-state levels? How does potential nuclear proliferation complicate the security landscape? | MacQueen – Ch. 7. Lynch, Marc. 2018. "The New Arab Order: Power and Violence in Today's Middle East." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 97(5): 116-126. |
| May 24 | Israel and the Palestinians What are the intractable issues and how do they contribute to violence? What is the impact of the longstanding conflict on the region? <i>Documentary: TBD</i> | MacQueen – Ch. 5. |
| May 28 | Authoritarianism, Democracy, and the Arab Spring Why has MENA lagged behind in measures of democracy? What is the significance of the Arab Spring? Documentary: <i>The Uprising</i> (2013) by Peter Snowden (excerpt) <i>*Second essay due.</i> | MacQueen – Chs. 8-9. Masoud, Tarek. 2015. "Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?" <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 26(1): 74-87. |
| May 29 | Terrorism and Iraq What conditions in MENA enable terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS? What has been the legacy of the US war in Iraq? | MacQueen – Ch. 9. Karlin, Mara, and Tamara Wittes. 2019. "America's Middle East Purgatory: the Case for Doing Less." <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 98(1): 88-100. |

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| May 30 | Syria and Other Conflicts What caused the wars in Syria and Yemen? Why have Russia and the US intervened? What roles are Saudi Arabia and Iran playing in these conflicts? | MacQueen – Ch. 10. Orkaby, Asher. 2017. “Yemen’s Humanitarian Nightmare.” <i>Foreign Affairs</i> 96(6): 93-101. |
| May 31 | FINAL EXAM | |

DISABILITY, RELIGIOUS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- * Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4.)
- * Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)
- * Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)