

Proseminar in Comparative Politics
PSCI 503
Spring 2020

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Office Hours: T-R 11 am – 1 pm
W 4 pm – 6 pm
and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the major debates in Middle East Studies from a comparative perspective. The overall aim of the course is to enable students to broaden their understanding of the Middle East by using the comparative method as an analytical tool. The course starts with a discussion on the foundations of Comparative Politics. Students will then be exposed to various debates Middle East politics including authoritarianism, nationalism, sectarianism, democracy and democratization, gender and the Arab Uprisings of 2011.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will become familiar with the comparative method in discussing events and issues in the Middle East.
- **Social Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate an awareness of societal and/or civic issues in the international arena.
- **Personal Responsibility:** Students will form their own research agendas in comparative politics of the Middle East and will practice academic honesty in their writing assignments.
- **Communication:** Students will enhance their oral skills and communicate in a manner appropriate to audience and occasion, with evident message and organizational structure.
- **Empathy skills:** Students will develop empathy skills and be encouraged to see the world from multiple perspectives.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no textbooks for this course. All required readings are available on MyLeo.

FORMAT OF THE COURSE

This is a graduate seminar, and as such depends heavily on student-led discussion and analysis. Each student is expected to a) come to class b) prepared to participate and to lead discussions. Preparation entails not simply reading the assigned material but thinking about it and arriving in class with specific points to contribute during a scholarly exchange of ideas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Participation: Attendance is vital to your success in class. Acceptable excuses for missing class include documented health and family emergencies. Participation points are earned through your contribution to class discussions and debates.

Presentations: A good seminar presentation helps to get the discussion going. You are free to compose your own presentation style - so long as you include the basic ingredients: definitions, overview of the readings and detailed engagement with the arguments. However you organize your presentation, remember: the presenter's role is to stimulate discussion by presenting an answer to the seminar question. There is no need to summarize the week's readings! Please refer to MyLeo for detailed guidelines regarding the role of presenters.

Weekly Responses: Students are required to write short weekly responses (about 500-600 words), that critically and constructively engage each week's seminar question. Weekly responses should not be summaries. Instead, they should make a clear argument that responds to the seminar question based on the readings. You may compare and contrast the readings, critique the readings, offer fruitful alternative approaches, suggest new research questions that emerge from the readings, connect readings to current events, etc. Whatever style you follow, the requirement is to provide a well thought out response to the seminar question. These reflections are due **every Wednesday 5 pm on MyLeo.**

Midterm: There will be a take-home midterm exam, due **March 15, 11.55 pm, on MyLeo.**

Final Research Paper: Final research paper will be a 5000-7500 word (20-25 pages) paper that addresses what you consider to be a key analytical or empirical issue in the study of the comparative politics of the Middle East and North Africa. Your paper should include the following sections:

- Problem Statement, Abstract and Research Question(s)
- Literature Review
- Empirical analysis
- Findings
- Conclusion

Throughout the semester, each component of the final research paper will be submitted as separate assignments and presented in class for feedback. Final presentations will take place during the last week of classes. Final drafts of research papers are due **May 7, 11.55 pm on MyLeo.** A detailed guidelines and grading rubric for the final research paper assignment will be available on MyLeo.

Format Requirements: All assignments must be double-spaced, typed and written with Times New Roman, 12-point font. Sources for each assignment must include books, academic articles and news pieces. All sources must be cited properly and listed in a bibliography or in footnotes/endnotes format. Regarding citations, you may use any academically accepted format.

GRADING

Course Requirements	Weight
Attendance & Presentations	25%
Weekly Responses	15%
Midterm	20%
Final Paper	40%
Total	100%

GRADE SCALE

90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
Below 60 =F

MAKE-UP POLICY

Late submission of assignments is allowed only under special circumstances such as medical or family emergencies. However, you must request them prior to the deadline and present documentary proof. Post-deadline late submission requests will not be granted under any circumstances. If you submit any of your assignments late without an excuse, I will cut off 5 points for each day after the deadline.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY DURING CLASS

Unless we assign a day to use technology as part of the learning process, use of cell phones, computers or any other electronic devices in the classroom is strictly prohibited.

CIVILITY AND RESPECT

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. I expect everyone to be respectful of each other's perspectives and opinions during class discussions. Any behavior that disrupts the class or impedes other student's ability to fully engage with the course will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is required to be responsible for purposefully pursuing and honestly submitting research and work that is original and is the sole work of the individual. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a student purposefully or unintentionally takes information directly from a source without proper citation. If you are unclear about the ethics of an academic action, please consult me during my office hours.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Texas Senate Bill-11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

1/15 Overview of the syllabus/What is Comparative Politics?

- Timothy C. Lim. 2006. "Introduction: Doing Comparative Politics" in *Doing Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Approaches and Issues*, 3-30.
- Philippe C. Schmitter. 2009. "The Nature and Future of Comparative Politics," *European Political Science Review*, 1(1): 33-61.

Week 2

1/22 Orientalism

Does the (Western) discipline of political science provide an adequate framework through which to understand politics and society in the Middle East?

- Edward Said. 1978. "Introduction" in *Orientalism*, 1-28
- Edward Said. 1980. "Islam through Western Eyes," *The Nation*.
- Zachary Lockman. 2009. *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, chapter 6, 182-214 and chapter 7, 215-267

Week 3

1/29 Authoritarianism

Why is authoritarianism a persistent phenomenon in the Middle East?

- Eva Bellin. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36 (2): 139-157.
- Eva Bellin. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring," *Comparative Politics* (January): 127-149.
- Michael Herb. 2004. Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal* 58(3): 367-384.
- Stephen Heydemann and Reinoud Leender. 2013. "Authoritarian Governance in Syria and Iran: Challenged, Reconfiguring, and Resilient," in Heydemann and Leender, eds., *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 1-31.

Week 4

2/5 Nationalism

How has nationalism (Arab and non-Arab) affected the consolidation of states in the Middle East and North Africa?

- Youssef M. Choueiri. 2005. "Nationalisms in the Middle East: the Case of Pan-Arabism" in Youssef Choueiri, ed. *A Companion to the History of the Middle East*, chapter 15, 291-312 and chapter 16, 313-333.
- Abbas Kelidar. (1993). "States without Foundations: The Political Evolution of State and Society in the Arab East," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28(2): 315-339.
- Nikki R. Keddie. 1969. "Pan-Islam as Proto-Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern History* 41(1): 17-28.
- Behlul Ozkan. 2014. "Turkey, Davutoglu and the idea of pan-Islamism," *Survival* 56(4): 119-140.

Presentations: "Problem Statement, Abstract and Research Question(s)"

Week 5

2/12 Democracy and Democratization

Islam and Democracy: Incompatible?

- Lisa Anderson. 2006. "Searching Where the Light Shines: Studying Democracy in the Middle East," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9: 189-214.
- Michael L. Ross. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3): 325-361.
- Sven Oskarsson and Eric Ottosen. 2010. "Does Oil Still Hinder Democracy?" *The Journal of Development Studies* 46(6): 1067-1083.
- Larry Diamond. 2010. "Democracy's Past and Future: Why Are There No Arab Democracies?" *Journal of Democracy* 21(1): 93-112

- Mark Tessler. 2002. "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries," *Comparative Politics* 34: 337-54.

Week 6

2/19 Political Islam

To what extent does the 'inclusion-moderation hypothesis' apply to the cases of Hamas and ISIS?

- Benedetta Berti. 2015. "Non-State Actors as Providers of Governance: The Hamas Government in Gaza between Effective Sovereignty, Centralized Authority, and Resistance," *Middle East Journal* 69(1): 9-31.
- Charles C. Caris and Samuel Reynolds. 2014. *ISIS Governance in Syria*, Institute for the Study of War.
- Jillian Schwedler. 2011. "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics* 63(2): 347-376.
- Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones Luong. 2014. "Is There an Islamist Political Advantage?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 17.

Week 7

2/26 Gender I

What are the main debates can you pinpoint regarding women in the Middle East?

- Nima Naghibi. 1999. "Bad Feminist or Bad Hejabi? Moving Beyond the *Hejab* Debate," *Interventions* 1(4): 555-571.
- Annabelle Sreberny. 2015. "Women's Digital Activism in a Changing Middle East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47(2): 357-361.
- Michael Ross. 2008. "Oil, Islam and Women," *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 107-123.
- Lila Abu-Lughod. 2002. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.
- Paul Amar. 2011. "Middle East Masculinity Studies: Discourses of 'Men in Crisis,' Industries of Gender in Revolution," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 7 (3): 36-70.

Week 8

3/4 Gender II

In the context of the debates we covered regarding women in the Middle East, how exceptional do you think is the case of Kurdish women?

- Masoud, Tarek, Amaney Jamal, and Elizabeth Nugent. 2016. "Using the Qur'an to Empower Arab Women? Theory and Experimental Evidence from Egypt," *Comparative Political Studies* 49(12): 1555-1598.

- Margot Badran. 2005. "Between Secular and Islamic Feminisms: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1(1): 6-28.
- Ofra Bengio (2016) "Game Changers: Kurdish Women in Peace and War," *The Middle East Journal*, 70(1).
- Bahar Simsek and Joost Jongerden (2018) "Gender Revolution in Rojava: The Voices beyond Tabloid Geopolitics," *Geopolitics*.

Presentations: "Literature Review"

Week 9

3/11 **Spring Break – No Class**

Week 10

3/18 **Arab-Israeli Conflict**

To what extent religion directs political behavior in Arab-Israeli conflict?

- Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar. "Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israel Conflict: A Primer," *Middle East Research and Information Project*.
- Mim Kemal Oke. 1982). "The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine (1880-1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14(3): 329-341.
- Meir Litvak. 1998. "The Islamization of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: The Case of Hamas," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34(1): 148-163.
- Frode Lovlie. 2014. "Questioning the Secular-Religious Cleavage in Palestinian Politics: Comparing Fatah and Hamas," *Politics and Religion* 7: 100-121.
- Herbert C. Kelman. 2011. "A One-Country/Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Middle East Policy* 18(1): 27-41.

Week 11

3/25 **No Class – Watch the documentary "Iran and the West"**

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka-Wu1jYY9U>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91xuueQ7RmI&t=4s>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfisKgJ8UWY&t=6s>

Week 12

4/1 **Sectarianism: The Sunni-Shia Divide**

Sunni-Shia Divide: A political or a religious conflict?

- Eric Davis. 2008. "A Sectarian Middle East?" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40: 555-558.
- Ely Karmon. 2007. "Radicalization of the Sunni-Shia Divide," *Geopolitical Affairs* 1(1): 273-293.

- Mai Yamani. 2008. "The Two Faces of Saudi Arabia," *Survival* 50(1): 143-156.
- Samuel Helfont. 2009. "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Emerging Shia Crescent," *Orbis* 53(2): 284-299.
- F. Gregory Gause III. 2014. "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War," *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* 11: 1-27.

Presentations: "Empirical Analysis"

Week 13

4/1 Iranian Revolutions I

Which analytical framework best explains the Iranian Revolution of 1979?

- Ervand Abrahamian .2009. "The Crowd in the Iranian Revolution," *Radical History Review* 105: 13-38.
- Theda Skocpol. 1982. "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," *Theory and Society* 11(3): 265-283.
- Mansoor Moaddel 1992. "Ideology as Episodic Discourse: The Case of the Iranian Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, 57(3): 353-379.
- Said Amir Arjomand. 1986. "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective," *World Politics* 38(3): 383-414.

Week 14

4/15 Iranian Revolutions II

Iranian Revolutions: Where do they converge? Where do they diverge?

- Nikki Keddie. 1983. "Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective," *The American Historical Review* 88(3): 579-598.
- Victor Sundquist. 2013. "Iranian Democratization Part I: A Historical Case Study of the Iranian Green Movement," *Journal of Strategic Security* 6(1).
- Victor Sundquist. 2013. "Iranian Democratization Part II: The Green Movement – Revolution or Civil Rights Movement?" *Journal of Strategic Security* 6(1).
- Mahmood Monshipouri and Ali Assareh. 2009. "The Islamic Republic and the Green Movement: Coming Full Circle," *Middle East Policy* 16(4): 27-46.

Week 15

4/22 The Arab Uprisings

Which of the following presents the most promising avenue of inquiry for studying the Arab revolts: (i) state weakness; (ii) social movements; (iii) emotions?

- Pearlman, Wendy. 2013. "Emotions and the Micro Foundations of the Arab Uprisings," *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2): 387-409.
- Reinoud Leenders. 2013. "Social Movement Theory and the Onset of the Popular Uprisings in Syria," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 35(3): 273-289.

- Mark Beissinger, Amaney Jamal, and Kevin Mazur. 2015. "Explaining Divergent Revolutionary Coalitions: Regime Strategies and the Structuring of Participation in the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions," *Comparative Politics* 48(1): 1-21.
- Gregory F. Gause. 2011. "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability" in *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2011).
- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2013. "Why the Modest Harvest?" *Journal of Democracy* 24: 29-44.
- Nikki R. Keddie. 2012. "Arab and Iranian Revolts 1979-2011: Influences or Similar Causes?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44(1): 150-152.

Week 16

4/29 Final Paper Presentations

Final Papers due May 7, 11.55 pm on MyLeo