POLS 363: GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

San Diego State University
Fall 2016
T, Th 12.30-1.45
AH-3110

Prof: Ahmet T. Kuru
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Office: Nasatir Hall 125
Office hrs: M 8.30-10.30

Description
This course is designed to contribute to students’ critical thinking on socio-political phenomena and help them ask appropriate questions, develop well-grounded arguments, and analyze the validity of alternative perspectives. The lectures will be interactive, in a sense that students will be active by asking questions, answering questions, and participating class discussions. To do so, they have to read the materials in the syllabus before coming to the class.

Middle East is an intriguing area to analyze. Historically, it is the birthplace of three monotheistic religions and several ancient civilizations. Currently, the region is the core of the Muslim world and includes more than half of the world’s oil reserves. The study of the Middle East politics includes many controversial issues. Students will encounter readings that may challenge their personal opinions. They should keep in mind that in highly politicized issues such as this subject, there are multiple answers to the questions posed. The purpose of the course is to encourage students to read the materials seriously and, then, develop their own arguments.

Goals for GE Courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences
This is a GE course with the following goals:
Goal 1: Explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences. Goal 2: Comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences. Goal 3: Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness. Goal 4: Enhance understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

Student Learning Objectives:
In this course, students will:
- Utilize basic approaches, perspectives, and theories on Middle East Politics.
- Define, explain, and illustrate by contemporary examples various theories of political regimes in the region, by addressing their origins, evolution, institutions, processes, and effects.
- Compare and contrast key concepts of political ideologies, as systems of organizing political movements and institutions in the Middle East.
- Analyze the meaning of citizenship in the Middle East, including the rights, duties, and obligations of the citizen.
- Examine the effects of increasing globalization on the state and society in Middle Eastern countries.
- Exercise skills in critical thinking, close reading of texts, verbal and written communication, organization and integration of ideas, and problem-solving.

Class Requirements
Students are expected to complete all assigned readings. Attendance is mandatory.
Required Readings
Ellen Lust, ed., *The Middle East* (CQ Press)
Other book chapters and journal articles are in the Blackboard.

Grading
Class Participation: 20 %
Midterm Exam: 40 %
Final Exam: 40 %
TOTAL: 100 %

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Disability Accommodation
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Academic Dishonesty
Students caught engaging in cheating will receive an automatic F and will be reported.

SCHEDULE

PART I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
August 30 Islam and Islamic Empires I

September 1 Islam and Islamic Empires II
In Class Videos: The Message (Migration to Abyssinia); Islam, Empire of Faith (Baghdad and Cordoba).

September 6 Ottoman Empire

September 8 First World War and its Aftermath
PART II: CONTEMPORARY STATES

September 13 Turkey
Ahmet Kuru, “Turkey’s Failed Policy toward the Arab Spring: Three Levels of Analysis,” Mediterranean Quarterly (Fall 2015), pp. 94-116 (BB).

September 15 Iran
The Middle East, “Iran,” pp. 478-506.
In Class Video: Iranian Shah and American Presidents.

September 20 Egypt

September 22 Saudi Arabia

September 27 Iraq

September 29 Syria

October 4 Israel
The Middle East, “Israel,” pp. 537-563.

October 6 Palestine and Jordan / Map Quiz
The Middle East, “Palestinian Authority,” pp. 688-716.

October 11 The Arab Spring?

October 13 Review

October 18 10 MIDTERM EXAM
PART III: AUTHORITARIANISM AND DEMOCRACY

October 20 Islam, Secularism, and Democracy

October 25 Arab-Majority Countries

October 27 Patriarchy

November 1 Rentier States
Giacomo Luciani, “Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East” in Louise Fawcett, ed., International Relations of the Middle East (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 81-103 (BB).

November 3 Regional Diffusion
Ahmet Kuru, “Authoritarianism and Democracy in Muslim-majority Countries: Rentier States and Regional Diffusion,” Political Science Quarterly (Fall 2014), pp. 399-427 (BB).

PART IV: THE WEST AND THE MIDDLE EAST: A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS?

November 8 Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods
The Middle East, “International Politics of the Middle East.”

November 10 Clash of Civilizations

November 15 Orientalism
Homework Video: Orientalism with Edward Said.

November 17 The US and the Middle East
Mohammad Ayoob, Chapter 8, pp. 161-169.

PART V: POLITICAL ISLAM
November 22 From Quietism to Radicalism
Mohammad Ayoob, Chapters 1 and 2.

November 24 Thanksgiving Break

November 29 Saudi Arabia and Iran
Mohammad Ayoob, Chapter 3.

December 1 Egypt and Pakistan
Mohammad Ayoob, Chapter 4.

December 3 Turkey and Indonesia
Mohammad Ayoob, Chapter 5.

December 8 Lebanon and Palestine / Mohammad Ayoob, Chapter 6, 7, and 8 (only pp. 161-168).

December 10 Transnational Islamists

December 13 Review

FINAL EXAM Th, December 15 at 10.30-12.30