

**POLITICS OF MIDDLE EAST**  
(POLSC 624, TU 11:30-12:45pm, Ackert Hall 221)

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Office Hours:  
Wednesday: 9:00 – 11:00 am  
Thursday: 9:00 – 10.30 am  
-or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a review of the comparative politics of Middle East. Throughout the course we will discuss the domestic politics of the Arab Middle East and the three non-Arabic nations, -Turkey, Iran and Israel. The course will focus on a wide array of topics including nation-state formation, Political Islam, the political economy of oil, Arab-Israeli conflict, authoritarianism, democratization, and political participation. We will not be able to discuss the political processes in every country in detail, but we will cover the common themes across the region.

The purpose of this course is to give you a better understanding of the region with its diverse social, political and economic features. You are expected to become more knowledgeable about the internal dynamics of the Middle East politics with the completion of this course. This is essential for a better assessment of the US foreign policy in the region. It should be noted that this course focuses on the comparative politics of the region. The international politics of Middle East is the subject matter of another course which will be offered next semester.

**Course Website**

The course website is accessed through <https://signin.k-state.edu> You will have to check the course website regularly for changes to the reading assignments and the class schedule.

**Reading Requirements**

There is one required textbook for this course.

Mehran Kamrava, *A History of Modern Middle East*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

The textbook is available at KSU Bookstore and Varney's. You may also purchase your book online. In addition to the main textbook, there will be additional readings (book chapters or articles) during some weeks. These readings will be available online. I strongly recommend you follow the Middle East section of newspapers, reports from prominent think-tanks, and online portals about the region.

**Structure and Student Responsibilities**

**Readings, participation and attendance (10%):** Although class attendance is not part of your overall grade, it is imperative that you attend class and complete the assigned readings. In addition, the course website will have a discussion board where you will post your comments about an assigned reading every two weeks. This reading will be a newspaper article or a commentary on a current topic in the Middle East. The board will be closed by 5:00 pm, Friday during the week the discussion is due. Your online attendance is worth 10% of the overall grade.

**Midterm Exam (20%):** The midterm exam will cover the assigned readings and the lecture notes. There will be multiple choice, short essay, short answer questions and a map quiz section in the exam. For your success in the exam, you are expected to have a good understanding of the concepts and topics introduced in the class. The midterm exam constitutes 20% of your overall grade.

**Final Exam (30%):** The final exam will be cumulative. There will be multiple choice, short essay, and short answer questions in the exam. You will be responsible from all material covered and are expected to have a good knowledge of the political systems, concepts and topics covered in the class. The final exam constitutes 30% of your overall grade.

**Group Presentation (20%) and Analytical Paper (20%):** As a part of this assignment, you will do a group presentation comparing political institutions in two Middle Eastern countries. Then you will write an independent analytical paper. You will be evaluated as a group for your presentation, but separately

for your individual papers. The presentation topics and details about this assignment are listed at the end of the syllabus.

**Extra Credit (5%):** Extra credit is possible for a maximum of 5% contribution to the overall grade. The course website has a discussion board where you can post your reaction or comments about the readings and topics covered in the course. You should post 5 comments, each 150-200 words long for full credit. The posts should be meaningful and show that you have read the material carefully.

**Academic Honesty/ Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Kansas State University has an Honor System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance in academic matters one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor System. The policies and procedures of the Honor System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The honor system website can be reached via the following URL: [www.ksu.edu/honor](http://www.ksu.edu/honor).

"Any student with a disability that needs a classroom accommodation, access to technology or other assistance in this course should contact Disability Support Services and/or their instructor."

**Grading**

Letter grades for the course will be assigned along the following scale:

*A: 90% or greater      B: 80-89%      C: 70-79%      D: 60-69%      F: Below 60%*

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Note:** K=K-State online resources or course webpage

| <b>Week</b>               | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Readings</b>   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Week 1<br>Jan 17 & Jan 19 | Introduction: Middle of Where, East of What, Who Lives There?    | Kamrava, Chapter 1 pp. 9-34<br>Held and Cummings, "The People and Cultures of the Middle East," 13-30 (K).  |
| Week 2<br>Jan 24 & Jan 26 | Formation of Nation States                                       | Kamrava, Chapter 2 pp. 35-66<br>Andersen, Siebert and Wagner "The Rise of the State System," 60-76 (K)  |
| Week 3<br>Jan 31 & Feb 2  | The Age of Nationalism   | Kamrava, Chapter 3  |
| Week 4<br>Feb 7 & Feb 9   | Arab Israeli Wars<br>Palestinian Israeli Conflict                | Kamrava Chapter 4 & Chapter 7   |
| Week 5<br>Feb 14 & Feb 16 | Presentations<br>Round 1   | Tunisia and Algeria (Tuesday)<br>Jordan and Morocco (Thursday)  |
| Week 6<br>Feb 21 & Feb 23 | Revolution in Iran   | Kamrava, Chapter 5  |
| Week 7<br>Feb 28 & Mar 1  | Rise of Political Islam, Muslim Democracy and Islamist Movements | Nasr, Vali. 2005. The Rise of Muslim Democrats, Journal of Democracy, 16(2) pp. 13-27-(K).<br>Hamzawy and Ottoway, Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Gray Zones (K)<br>The metamorphosis of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, M. Gobashy, International Journal of Middle East Studies (2005), 37: 373-395 (K) |

| Week                       | Topic   | Readings   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Week 8<br>Mar 6 & Mar 8    | Gulf Wars and the US in the Middle East<br><b>***MARCH 8 MIDTERM</b>            | Kamrava ,Chapter 6<br><b>MARCH 8 MIDTERM</b>                                       |
| Week 9<br>Mar 13 & Mar 15  | Presentations<br>Round 2  | Iraq and Syria (Tuesday)<br>Iran and Saudi Arabia (Thursday)                       |
| Mar 19-Mar 23              | Student Holiday   | No Reading   |
| Week 10<br>Mar 27 & Mar 29 | Oil and Political Economies   | Melani Cammett, "The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East,"99-142   |
| Week 11<br>Apr 3 & Apr 5   | Presentations<br>Round 3  | Egypt and Yemen (Tuesday)<br>Turkey and Israel (Thursday)                          |
| Week 12<br>Apr 10          | Political Institutions and Governance<br><b>April 12: NO Class MPSA Meeting</b> | Ellen Lust, "Institutions and Governance," 143-192 (K)                             |
| Week 13<br>Apr 17 & Apr 19 | Public Opinion and Participation  | Amaney Jamal, "Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation," 193-236 (K, e-reserves) |
| Week 14<br>Apr 24 & Apr 26 | Presentations Round 4   | UAE-Qatar-Bahrain and Libya<br>Lebanon and Palestinian Authority                   |
| Week 15<br>May 1 & May 3   | The Arab Awakening  | Roland Flamini, "Turmoil in the Arab World," (K, e-reserves)                       |
| Week 16                    | Final Exam  | Date: May 11, 2012 Friday<br>Time: 9:40 am -11:30 am, Ackert Hall                  |

## PRESENTATIONS AND PAPER

There will be 8 presentations in the class. Each presentation will be carried by 4-5 students and we will form the groups in the first week of the semester. Then, each team will research their assigned topic and present in the classroom. While you present as a group, each student will write an analytical paper independently. You will conduct your own research to select the bibliography to be used in your project. I will have one special research session with each group during my office hours to approve or make changes/add new titles to your preliminary bibliography. Your bibliography should have at least 5 titles and may include books, book chapters, academic papers, reports written by prominent think tanks etc. I recommend you do not wait until the last minute and act fast for a successful project.

**Topic:** In this project, you are expected to compare political processes in two Middle Eastern countries. The comparative case study is a technique widely used by scholars of comparative politics. In this technique, two cases are compared by similar and different characteristics they may have. In your project, you should start with a brief description of the cases (location, population, and in a nutshell some history). Then you should move on to discuss the regime types, political institutions, elections if exists, political actors, and political change. In the end, you should provide the similarities and differences between your cases. I will assign one or two readings that will teach you how to use this technique.

**Presentation:** You will give a brief presentation to the class where you will provide (i) a brief outline of the cases (ii) description of political actors, institutions, regimes and actors (iii) comparative case study and

your conclusions. You will have 35-40 minutes to complete your presentation and then open the floor for a debate and the questions. For a good discussion, all students in the class are expected to participate in the class discussion. You may design your presentation as you like, but I strongly encourage you to use technology, visuals, and power-point or *prezi* in your presentation. Remember that your audience will learn from you and that your success depends on how effectively you can communicate the information you have. You will be evaluated as a group for your presentation. It is recommended that you meet with the professor at least two weeks before your presentation to discuss the structure and the content of your presentation.

**Paper:** Students will submit individual analytical papers on their topic. The paper will be due in one week from the date of presentation. The papers should summarize the topic, critically assess the readings and include your own ideas. I recommend you write 1 page for case description, 2-3 pages for political processes, 1-2 pages for comparative case study, and 1 page for your own comments and discussion. I expect well-organized and well written papers. The analytical papers should be double spaced, maximum 6-7 pages long, typed in word and stapled. Remember that this is the maximum length; a well researched and well written paper can be shorter. Please include page numbers for direct quotes, and properly cite the resources you may use. Late submissions will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade for each late day. The papers are due one week from the day of the presentation.

### **Presentation Topics**

| <b>Date</b>          | <b>Topic</b>                      | <b>Paper Due Date</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| February 14, Tuesday | Tunisia and Algeria               | February 21           |
| February 16 Thursday | Jordan and Morocco                | February 23           |
| March 13, Tuesday    | Iraq and Syria                    | March 27              |
| March 15, Thursday   | Iran and Saudi Arabia             | March 29              |
| April 3 Tuesday      | Egypt and Yemen                   | April 10              |
| April 5 Thursday     | Turkey and Israel                 | April 12              |
| April 24 Tuesday     | UAE-Qatar-Bahrain and Libya       | May 1                 |
| April 26 Thursday    | Lebanon and Palestinian Authority | May 3                 |