

Political Science (POLS) 3230  
**Middle East Government and Politics**

Fall 2021

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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

**Tuesday/ Thursday 3:00–4:15 PM**  
Classroom: [Old Main Hall 301](#)

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*Instructor:* Austin J. Knuppe  
(pronounced *nuh-pee*)

*Office:* [330C Old Main Hall](#)  
*Office Hours:* Wednesday, 4:00–6:00 PM,  
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## Course Description

This course provides an overview of the politics of the contemporary Middle East (1917–present). The course is organized thematically and (more or less) chronologically. We will examine prominent explanations for the democratic deficit in the Middle East, and challenge the notion that the region is completely devoid of competitive and meaningful politics.

More specifically, we will explore the ways in which a variety of factors—including foreign intervention, persistent authoritarianism, oil, and religion, among others—has affected domestic politics in Middle Eastern countries. We will consider a number of different aspects of domestic politics, including redistribution, gender politics, political mobilization, and public opinion. We will end the course by building on what we have learned to make sense of the 2010-2011 “Arab Spring” uprisings, in an effort to understand whether these recent developments mark change or continuity.

The course consists of four parts:

- Collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Effects of European Colonialism (1917–1945)
- Post-Colonial Independence and Cold War Competition (1945–1989)
- Middle East Politics in the Shadow of U.S. Hegemony (1989–2010)
- Aftermath of the Arab Spring (2011–present)

## Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The course readings, writing assignments, and exams are intended to achieve four primary objectives. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify key characteristics of the current government of most Middle Eastern countries, the current economic situation in the country, the religious makeup of the country and religion's role in politics, and the most important social and political issues facing citizens.
2. Identify the religious and ethnic cleavages that are politically relevant in the Middle East, explain their origins, and analyze how these divisions affect contemporary politics.
3. Explain the degree to which different countries rely on oil revenues, and how this reliance affects their political and economic development.
4. Analyze isolated events—like those you might find in a newspaper article—in a broader context. Explain the background of the event in question, identify the key players and their preferences, and predict what we might expect to happen next.

## Course Texts

Most course readings are from the following required books, both available at the USU campus store or on reserve at the university library:

MacQueen, Benjamin. 2018. *An Introduction to Middle East Politics*, 2nd Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ruthven, Malise. 2012. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*, 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cleveland, William L., and Martin Bunton. 2016. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. London: Routledge, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. **(Optional)**

Older editions of these books are not suitable. Other supplemental journal articles, news articles, and book sections are available online or on reserve, as noted in the syllabus. Access to certain websites is available only via an Utah State internet connection. The instructor will distribute detailed instructions for finding online journal articles.

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend every lecture, to complete all of the required readings, and to watch or read any additional material that is posted to Canvas each week. When additional materials are posted, I will note explicitly whether they are required or merely optional for interested students. Note that lectures will sometimes cover material that is not in the readings, and the readings may contain material that is not covered in the lectures. Both are critical to your success on quizzes and exams.

The required graded items are:

- Reading Quizzes & Class Participation (25%)
- Midterm Examination (25%)
- Journal Assignment (25%)
- Final Examination (25%)

## Lectures

To succeed in the course, it is essential to attend class and participate in the lectures. Lecture slides will also be posted as PDFs on Canvas. I recommend that you have the slides in front of you while you're listening to the lecture so that you can take notes and follow the overall outline of the course material.

## Quizzes

During the first week, students will take a short quiz based on the content of the syllabus. The quiz is required to access course materials on Canvas and students must receive a 80% or higher to get credit for it. Students will have five percentage points subtracted from your final grade if they do not complete it.

In the second week of the course, students will complete a map quiz based on key geographic features of the Middle East and North Africa (e.g., capital cities, waterways, country borders). The instructor will provide a list of electronic flash cards to help students prepare for the quiz.

In addition, occasional multiple-choice reading quizzes will be posted on Canvas. The quiz will remain available for a 24-hour period. The quizzes are open-book and open-note but no collaboration between students is permitted. Once you begin the quiz, you will have a limited amount of time to complete it (approximately 15 minutes), so one should prepare as if one is taking an in-class quiz. **Students will be allowed only one attempt to complete each quiz.**

## Examinations

Students will complete a take-home midterm and final examination. Both examinations are open-note and will be submitted electronically to Canvass at the designated date and time. For both examinations, students can access notes, readings, and other materials, but they must work independently.

The midterm will cover material from the first half of the course and is designed to be completed in approximately 60 minutes. Students will receive the prompt on Canvass and will have 24 hours to submit their answers.

The final examination will cover material from the second half of the course (i.e., it is not cumulative) and is designed to be completed in two hours. Students will have 24 hours to upload their exam responses electronically to Canvas. The midterm and final exam will each consist of 25% of students' final grade.

Both exams will follow the same format, including a combination of short- and long-answer essay questions. Unlike in-class examinations which often quiz students on course "trivia" (e.g., people, dates, events, and concepts), the exams in this course will concentrate on analysis and application. They will require students to take a theory, concept, or event from the course and apply it to a contemporary problem, question, or policy.

The instructor will provide a brief study guide for both examinations approximately one week before the exam date.

## Journal Assignment

One of the core requirements of the course is for students to become informed consumers of current news coverage about the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Toward that end, students will select a region and write semi-regular journal entries based on news stories, podcasts, or documentaries they follow over the course of the term. Students should select one of the following regions:

- **North Africa** (Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan)
- **Turkey & the Levant** (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Turkey)
- **Persian Gulf** (Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman)

Over the course of the semester, students are required to follow news coverage in their region each week. Students will then write five, 500–750 word journal entries based on a news story of their choice due at regular intervals throughout the semester. Journal entries should briefly summarize the key events in the article (two paragraphs or less) and analyze the news based on concepts, theories, and historical events covered in the course. Students will submit their entire journal to Canvass for instructor review.

The following sources are suggested for following current affairs in the Middle East and North Africa:

- ▶ **Newspapers:** *The New York Times, Washington Post, Jerusalem Post, Haaretz*
- ▶ **Magazines:** *The Atlantic, The Economist, Middle East Eye, The New Yorker*
- ▶ **Websites:** Al Jazeera English, Al Monitor, BBC News Middle East, The New Arab, Middle East Monitor
- ▶ **Think Tanks:** Brookings Institution, Middle East Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, U.S. Institute of Peace, American Enterprise Institute, Center for a New American Security
- ▶ **Podcasts:** Middle East Focus, Kerning Cultures, POMEPS Conversations, LSE Middle East Centre, Oxford Middle East Centre, Aswat Voices of Arabia

## Extra Credit

Students often find themselves a percentage point or two shy from their desired final grade (e.g., an 89% but they want to earn an A- for their final grade). To address these concerns—and mitigate any panicked emails at the end of the semester—I offer an optional extra credit assignment that can **boost a student's final grade by 1% point**.

To receive extra credit, students should select one of four possible assignments:

- ▶ Select a recipe and prepare a dish of Middle Eastern cuisine to share with the class; come prepared to share with the class for 5–10 minutes about what you learned about the region by exploring MENA cuisine
- ▶ Attend a Friday prayer service or “Sunday School” class at the Logan Islamic Center; come prepared to share your experience with the class for 5–10 minutes
- ▶ Record a 45-60 minute “podcast interview” with an individual from the MENA region; ask them about their family history, country of origin, etc.
- ▶ Read a book or long-form magazine article (*The Atlantic, The Economist, Middle East Eye, The New Yorker*) about MENA politics and write a 1,000 word review relating the article to key themes, concepts, and case studies we have discussed in class

Extra credit assignment selections must be entered into Canvas and pre-approved by the instructor prior to submission. Assignments are due by 11:59 PM MDT on the last full day of class (Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> 2021).

## Course Policies

### Attendance Policy

I have no formal attendance policy, but active participation in the lectures is an integral component of students' participation grade. Class attendance will also help students prepare for the midterm and final examinations, as well as the journal assignment.

### Communication and Office Hours

I primarily use emails and announcements on Canvas to communicate with students. Please check Canvas frequently throughout the semester.

You should feel free to email me with any specific questions about course materials or logistics. Please treat your email as a professional correspondence and be as clear and specific as possible, and please include "PS 3230" somewhere in the subject line. Because of the high enrollments and format of this course, I receive many emails and can only respond effectively if I understand your inquiry. I will hold weekly office hours in Old Main Hall, as indicated at the top of the syllabus. If you are unavailable during this time period, feel free to email me to schedule a separate appointment.

### Collaboration With Other Students

In completing the assignments, you are encouraged to interact with your instructor and student colleagues. However, sharing answers to the assignments, including online reading quizzes or exams, is strictly prohibited. If assignments are submitted that look suspiciously similar, they will be investigated for academic misconduct (see below).

### Late Assignments

**Late assignments will not be accepted, unless a prior extension has been granted by the instructor** (Canvas will not accept assignments after the stated deadline on the relevant due dates). For this reason, you are strongly encouraged to start working on your assignments early, and to attend class and office hours to have questions answered promptly.

## Technical Problems

It is your responsibility to ensure that you can view lecture videos and other material posted to Canvas, and that you can use the Canvas site to take quizzes and exams, submit papers, etc. We cannot troubleshoot technical problems for all of our students, so you should consult the online [Service Desk](#) or contact their phone number at (435)-797-HELP or email [servicedesk@usu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@usu.edu). If you are having a problem with Canvas, a good first step is to try a different internet browser or computer.

## Academic Integrity

The University expects that students and faculty alike maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University ([Student Conduct](#)) addresses academic integrity and honesty and notes the following:

### Academic Integrity

Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the University by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty and by reporting all violations or suspected violations of the Academic Integrity Standard to their instructors.

### The Honor Pledge

To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." Violations of the Academic Integrity Standard (academic violations) include, but are not limited to cheating, falsification, and plagiarism.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

## Students with Disabilities

USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn #101, 435-797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

## Mental Health

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Utah State University provides free services for students to assist them with addressing these and other concerns. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students are also encouraged to download the [SafeUT App](#) to their smartphones. The SafeUT application is a 24/7 statewide crisis text and tip service that provides real-time crisis intervention to students through texting and a confidential tip program that can help anyone with emotional crises, bullying, relationship problems, mental health, or suicide related issues.

## Sexual Harassment

Utah State University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from acts of sexual misconduct and discrimination and to fostering respect and dignity for all members of the USU community. Title IX and [USU Policy 339](#) address sexual harassment in the workplace and academic setting.

The university responds promptly upon learning of any form of possible discrimination or sexual misconduct. Any individual may contact USU's [Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity \(AA/EO\) Office](#) for available options and resources or clarification. The university has established a complaint procedure to handle all types of discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment ([USU Policy 305](#)), and has designated the AA/EO Director/Title IX Coordinator as the official responsible for receiving and investigating complaints of sexual harassment.



# Course Schedule and Readings

Please note the page numbers listed below, as only selected pages of certain articles or book sections are assigned.

## Part I: Collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Effects of European Colonialism

Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>

### Making the Modern Middle East

- Fisher, Max. “40 maps that explain the Middle East.” *Vox*. 26 March 2015.

Thursday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Legacies of the Ottoman Empire, Part I

- MacQueen, Ch. 1, pp. 1–13
- Ruthven, Ch. 1 & Appendix, pp. 1–26 and 159–164
- **Complete syllabus quiz**

Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>

### Legacies of the Ottoman Empire, Part II

- MacQueen, Ch. 1, pp. 13–24
- Rogan, Eugene. *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East*. New York: Basic Books, 2015, pp. 385–406.

Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

### European Colonialism, Part I

- MacQueen, Ch. 2, pp. 27–37
- Owen, Roger. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Third Edition. Ch. 1: “The End of Empires,” pp. 5–22.
- **Select region for journal assignment**

Tuesday, September 14<sup>nd</sup>

### European Colonialism, Part II

- MacQueen, Ch. 2, pp. 37–50

▷ Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1987, pp. 1–28.

**Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup>      European Colonialism, Part III**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 2, pp. 50–59

▷ Cleveland, William L., and Martin Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. London: Hachette, 2016. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, pp. 239–260.

▷ **May Quiz (by 11:59 PM MDT)**

**Part II: Post-Colonial Independence and Cold War Competition**

**Tuesday, September 21<sup>nd</sup>      The Cold War in the Middle East, Part I**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 3, pp. 64–72

▷ Cleveland, Ch. 13, pp. 261–271

**Thursday, September 23<sup>th</sup>      The Cold War in the Middle East, Part II**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 3, pp. 72–82

▷ McDermott, Rose. *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001, pp. 135–164.

▷ **Journal entry #1 due**

**Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>      The Cold War in the Middle East, Part III**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 3, pp. 82–95

▷ Parkinson, Sarah E. 2013. “Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War.” *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 418-432.

**Thursday, September 30<sup>st</sup>      Nationalism, Islamism, and Political Ideology, Part I**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 4, pp. 97–116

▷ Dawisha, Aheed. *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 1–13.

Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>

Nationalism, Islamism, and Political Ideology, Part II

- ▷ MacQueen, Ch. 4, pp. 116–128
- ▷ Ruthven, Ch. 2 & 3, pp. 27–81

Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>

Nationalism, Islamism, and Political Ideology, Part III

- ▷ MacQueen, Ch. 4, pp. 128–135
- ▷ Ruthven, Ch. 4 & 6, pp. 82–99 and 126–158

Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Part I

- ▷ MacQueen, Ch. 5, pp. 141–155
- ▷ Waxman, Dov. *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019: Ch. 4, pp. 105–154

Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Part II

- ▷ MacQueen, Ch. 5, pp. 155–165
- ▷ Waxman, Ch. 5, pp. 155–202
- ▷ **Journal entry #2 due**

Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>

**Midtem Examination (submit online by 11:59 PM MDT)**

- ▷ Study Guide provided by instructor

Thursday, October 21<sup>nd</sup>

Oil, Economy, and Development, Part I

- ▷ MacQueen, ch. 6, pp. 170–182

- Kuran, Timur. “Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 18, no. 3, Summer 2004: pp. 71–90.

Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>

**Oil, Economy, and Development, Part II**

- MacQueen, ch. 6, pp. 182–194
- Ross, Michael L. *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013. pp. 1–14, 223–253.

Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup>

**Military, Security, and Politics, Part I**

- MacQueen, ch. 7, pp. 198–216
- Mousavian, Seyed Hossein, and Sina Toossi. “Assessing US–Iran Nuclear Engagement.” *The Washington Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2017): 65–95.

Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Military, Security, and Politics, Part II**

- MacQueen, Ch. 7, pp. 216–230
- Islamic State, “Why We Hate You and Why We Fight You,” *Dabiq*, 31 July 2016.

Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

**Authoritarianism, Part I**

- MacQueen, Ch. 8, pp. 234–248
- Bellin, Eva. 2004. “The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism.” *Comparative Political Studies* 36:2, pp. 139–157.
- **Journal entry #3 due**

Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>

**Authoritarianism, Part II**

- MacQueen, Ch. 8, pp. 248–257

▷ Wedeen, Lisa. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 1–34.

**Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup>      Authoritarianism, Part III**

▷ Quinlivan, James; “Coups-proofing: Its Practices and Consequences in the Middle East”, *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 131-165

▷ Pan Jennifer, and Siegel, Alexandria A. “How Saudi Crackdowns Fail to Silence Online Dissent,” *American Political Science Review* 114(1): pp. 109-125.

**Part III: Middle East Politics in the Shadow of U.S. Hegemony**

**Tuesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>      Democratization and the Arab Uprisings, Part I**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 9, pp. 263–275

▷ Pearlman, Wendy. 2013. “Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 11(2): pp. 387–409.

**Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup>      Democratization and the Arab Uprisings, Part II**

▷ MacQueen, Ch. 9, pp. 275–285

▷ Gause, Gregory F. “Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability.” *Foreign Affairs*. vol. 90, no. 4 (July/August 2011).

▷ **Journal entry #4 due**

**Tuesday, November 23<sup>th</sup>      Democratization and the Arab Uprisings, Part III**

▷ Lynch, Marc. *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2016, pp. 1–46.

**Thursday, November 25<sup>th</sup>      Thanksgiving Break**

## Part IV: Aftermath of the Arab Spring

Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

### U.S. Military Intervention and the Global War on Terror

- MacQueen, Ch. 10, pp. 291–317
- Benaim, Daniel, and Michael Wahid Hanna. “[The Enduring American Presence in the Middle East.](#)” *Foreign Affairs*, 7 August 2019.

Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

### Legacies of the Iraq War

- MacQueen, Ch. 10, pp. 318–329
- Berman, Felter, and Shapiro (2018), “Chapter 5: The Role of Development Assistance.” In *Small Wars, Big Data: The Information Revolution in Modern Conflict*, Princeton University Press: 2018, pp. 109–151.

Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

### Syrian Civil War (2011–?)

- MacQueen, Ch. 11, pp. 335–350
- “[Why has the Syrian war lasted 10 years?](#)” *BBC News: Middle East*.
- **Journal entry #5 due**

Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>

### The Refugee Crisis

- MacQueen, Ch. 11, pp. 350–356
- Brand, Laurie A. and Lynch Marc. “[How the refugee crisis is transforming the Middle East,](#)” *The Monkey Cage, The Washington Post*, 30 March 2017.
- Fabbe, Kristin, Chad Hazlett, and Tolga Sinmazdemir. “A Persuasive Peace: Syrian Refugees’ Attitudes Towards Compromise and Civil War Termination.” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 1 (2019): pp. 103–108, 113–115.

Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>

### Final Examination (online take-home due at 11:59 PM MDT)

- Study Guide provided by instructor
- Complete online course evaluation to access final grade