

Democratization and Political Change in the Middle East

SIS 619.036

American University
School of International Service
Fall 2015
Tues.:11:45-2:25 PM
Room: ASB 226

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12:15-3:45 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines both various aspects of the recent push for political change in the Middle East and the formidable obstacles and setbacks with which it has been faced. In pursuing its inquiry, the course considers the Middle East's authoritarian structures and their resilience; shifting societal norms and demographics; emerging social movements including women and youth movements; the role of moderate Islamist politics and its relationship with secular political forces; the rise of radical Islamist politics and violence in Iraq, Syria and Libya; and the role of Western hegemony in the region. The course looks extensively at the roots, and trajectories of the Arab Uprisings of 2011 and Green Movement protests in Iran which preceded them, for example by juxtaposing the politics of the Egyptian and Tunisian democratic transitions and the diverging paths towards renewed authoritarianism and significant democratic gains each has taken. Through the course, students will gain considerable insight into the current predicament and prospects for long-term political change in select Middle Eastern countries and the region as a whole.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Assess the pre-existing theories and assumptions on political and social transformation in the Middle East in light of developments of the last decade.
- Gain insight into the political, social, economic dynamics that can be attributed to both the continuity and change in political outcomes in the Middle East.
- Identify the role played by various internal and international actors in each case studied and the impact on outcomes of the recent wave of mobilizations.
- Consider the future of political change in the Middle East.
- Improve writing and oral presentation skills.
- Develop critical thinking skills (the ability to evaluate information, question assumptions and draw conclusions based on more than one's pre-conceived ideas).

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students should be able to discuss and analyze the following questions:

- What social, economic and political dynamics have contributed to both the contemporary wave of protests and revolutions in the Middle East and their modest gains to date?
- In what ways have both the individual countries studied and the region as a whole changed since the contemporary wave of mobilizations for political change emerged?
- What are individual countries studied and the region's prospects for long-term political liberalization?
- What has been/ can be the role of international actors and institutions? How can we assess the role of international actors- as facilitating or inhibiting change in the Middle East?

There have been a number of insightful documentaries produced about the recent push for political change in the region. We will try to incorporate as many of these documentaries as our time allows, particularly during the first half of the semester.

Through the course, students will also improve their writing, critical thinking and presentation skills. Students will be researching, writing about and presenting/ teaching the class on topics not covered in our readings and lectures.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE:

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary actions will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR INTERRUPTION OF CLASSES:

In the event of an emergency, American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of

distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of an emergency, students should refer to the AU Student Portal, the AU Web site ([www. prepared. american.edu](http://www.american.edu)) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.

COURSE POLICIES:

1. Students are encouraged to bring laptops to class but for use in specified assignments only. Students may not use laptops during class in all other circumstances (i.e. students should not be using their laptops during lectures, class discussions, group discussions etc. unless otherwise directed to do so). The only exception to this policy is in cases in which a student has a documented special need to use a laptop. Bring pen and paper to take hand-written notes.
2. Students are expected to attend class regularly and attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Excessive absences may result in grade deductions or an "X" grade for the semester. More than three unexcused absences is likely to impact a student's grade and students with more than three unexcused absences will be asked to meet with the instructor to discuss their absences.
3. Extensions are granted only in cases of documented illness, emergencies or special need. Late papers or assignments are docked 5 points for every day they are late.

GRADE RANGE:

- "A" : 93.5 and above (Excellent, Surpasses Expectations)
"A-": 89.5- 93.49%
"B+": 86.5- 89.49%
"B": 83.5- 86.49% (Good, Meets Expectations)
"B-": 79.5-83.49%
"C+": 76.5-79.49%
"C" : 73.5-76.49% (Meets Most, but not all Expectations)
"C-": 69.5-73.49%
"D" 59.5-69.49% (Meets Minimum Expectations)
"F" : 69.49 and below (Failed to Meet Minimum Expectations)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The grade for this course will comprise of the following:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Points</u>
Class Participation	10%
Reading Reflection Quizzes	15%
Case Study Paper	20%
Case Study Presentation	20%
Final Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper	25%

Total	100%

Class Participation:

This course relies heavily on student participation. Ten percent of your grade is derived from your contributions to class discussions, debates and exercises. A prerequisite for quality class participation is preparation. Thus, while not every discussion will relate to assigned readings, a significant part of this grade will be derived from your contributions that are clearly informed by the assigned readings. See this rubric for how class participation will be evaluated at <http://www46.homepage.villanova.edu/john.immerwahr/TP101/EvDay/discussion%20rubric.pdf>

Reading Reflection Quizzes

In numerous classes throughout the semester, we will begin by taking a few minutes for you to reflect on the assigned readings and the questions they pose in writing. I will pick up these reflection pieces, but on three unannounced dates, your reflections will be graded. These grades will be based on how clear it is that you have read the assigned materials and the extent to which you seem to be engaging with the material.

Case Study Presentation and Paper

You will choose one of the following topics on which to write both a mid-semester paper and give a class presentation. The topics are listed more broadly below. Many of you may want to choose a narrower research question/ focus for your papers and presentations.

1. The role of youth in contemporary political change in the Middle East (10/6)
2. The role of Labor Movements in contemporary political change in the Middle East (11/10)
3. Sexual Minorities and Political Change in the Middle East (10/6)

4. Artistic productions of recent protest movements and transitions in the Middle East (11/10)
5. Dissent and prospects for political change in Saudi Arabia (10/27)
6. The push for political change in Kuwait (11/3)
7. The Moroccan response to the Arab Uprisings and its outcome today (9/29)
8. Democracy, authoritarianism, political Islam and protests in Turkey (10/13)
9. Al Wefaq, the leading Islamist opposition in Bahrain (10/13)
10. Political Change in Iraq (10/20)
11. Possible resolutions of the Syrian conflict (10/27)
12. Palestinian prospects for / path towards political change after the Arab Uprisings (10/20)

Due Dates: The dates for your papers and presentations are listed above.

- One week before paper/presentation: bibliography and advanced outline of paper to be e-mailed to me. (note: you may send me a first draft of the paper for comment instead of an advanced outline).
- Midnight of the Sunday prior to your presentation: email me your powerpoint presentation for comments and suggestions.

Presentations:

Your presentations are to be about 15 minutes long. The presentation should bring to the class what was most interesting and compelling in your research and paper; it should contribute something new and worthwhile to the class. Above all else, be respectful of your classmates' time and make sure the presentations are interesting and engaging! Use relevant images and/or video clips (the latter to the extent time allows). Remember the presentation is equal in worth to the paper: 20% of your grade each. I will be looking for evidence of substantial effort in the preparation of these presentation.

You are encouraged to use Powerpoint (or other presentation programs), but please make sure there is virtually no set-up time required. That means you have the presentation up on a laptop, **you have the correct adaptors if you have a Mac** or otherwise need an adaptor, and you get to class early to do a test run and make sure it works.

For your presentations, please keep in mind the following:

1. Practice your presentations enough times that it flows and you are clearly familiar and comfortable with the material.
2. Get the most important points across concisely.

3. You should primarily be looking at your audience. Do not look at the projector screen, your laptop screen or your notes for more than a few seconds at a time if need be.
4. Your voice and demeanor should convey energy and interest in the topic.
5. You should not put too much written information on slides. Most slides should have relevant images to maintain your audience's interest.

Case Study Papers:

Your papers are to be 8 to 10 double-spaced pages long and will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Your development of a research question and thesis within the parameters of the topic assigned to you.
- Quality of your research: There is a wealth of information you can find on the internet and I expect you to incorporate information found on-line research into your paper. **However, if your paper is limited to internet-based research and non-academic sources, you will not meet the requirements for the paper.** In addition to such more empirical on-line research, I expect you to have consulted at least five scholarly sources for your paper. Scholarly sources are academic journal articles and books which you will generally have access to through the library.
- Quality of analysis. This includes your ability to link your writing to course concepts and display multi-dimensional and critical thinking in your treatment of the topic.
- Proper grammar, punctuation, good word choice and sentence construction. This will usually mean allowing enough time to edit your paper and investing time and effort on not only the content of your paper, but the writing as well.
- Organization of your paper. The paper has an appropriate length introduction and conclusion. Ideas are organized into appropriate length paragraphs. There is a logical order to the way paragraphs are organized.
- Proper citation. The MLA citation system is recommended. Make sure you are citing any ideas you are taking from other sources, even if you are using your own words in presenting them.

Final Paper and Paper Presentation

Your final paper will be a 10 to 12 page double-spaced paper, this time, on a topic of your choosing. Please see the paper grading criteria provided above.

You will be placed on panels and you will present your research question, findings and conclusions, and any issues you are still grappling with to the class before the final papers are due. These presentations are to be no more than five minutes long and you **should not** have powerpoints for these presentations. You will be graded on to what extent you are prepared,

meaning you are well versed in the material and your questions and comments clearly indicate you have been grappling with the key issues based on informed research. If the presentation indicates that you are in the very early stages of your research and formulation of your paper, meaning you have hardly gotten started, you should expect a low grade for the presentation. Please see the tips for effective presentations provided above.

Nov. 3rd- Paper Topics Due via e-mail

Nov. 27th- Bibliography and Advanced Paper Outline or First Draft of Final Paper Due

Dec. 1st- Panel Presentations of Your Final Papers Due

Dec. 4th 5pm- Final Papers Due on Blackboard

REQUIRED BOOK:

Adel Iskandar, *Egypt in Flux: Essays on an Un-Finished Revolution*

All readings will be made available on blackboard. Most readings will be in the Course Reserves section, but some will be in the Course Contents section. Make sure you look in both sections.

COURSE READING SCHEDULE:

Session 1 (Sept. 1)- Course Introduction

Session 2 (Sept. 8)- Authoritarianism Resilience and the Roots of Revolution in the Middle East

- Larry Diamond, "Why Are There No Arab Democracies?", *Journal of Democracy* (2010)
- Shadi Hamid, "The Struggle for Middle East Democracy: Why the Arab Street Finally Revolted?" *Cairo Review of Global Affairs* (Spring 2011).
- Morten Valbjorn, "Reflections on Self-Reflections: On Framing the Analytical Implications of the Arab Uprisings" *Democratization*, 22:2 (2015).

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the various factors put forth to explain the Middle East's Democracy Gap before the Arab Uprisings?
2. According to Hamid, what factors contributed to the 2011 protest movements and uprisings?

3. What are the competing theories about the prospects for political change put forth by academics before the Arab Uprisings? How does Valbjorn suggest we understand these theories today?

Session 3 (Sept. 15)- Social Movement Theory and the Roots of Protest and Change in the Middle East

- Excerpts from *The Social Movement Reader: Cases and Concepts* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
- Asef Bayat, “The Art of Presence” in *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford UP, 2013) pp. 1-29.
- Interview of Sadri Khiari by Beatrice Hibou, “The Tunisian Revolution Did not Come out of Nowhere” *Africa Awakening: The Emerging Devolutions* (Pambazuka Press, 2012).
- Raymond Hinnebusch, “Syria: From ‘Authoritarian Upgrading’ to Revolution?” *International Affairs* 88:1 (January 2012) pp 95-113 .
(Skim pp 95-105 and make sure you understand what “authoritarian upgrading “ is. Read more carefully pp 105-113.)
- Vincent Durac, “Social Movements, Protest Movements and Cross-Ideological Conditions: the Arab Uprisings Re-appraised *Democratization*, 22:2 (2015).

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the various dimensions of social movements identified by the traditional literature?
2. How does social movement theory shed light on the protest movements of the Middle East and what are its limits? How are social movements in the Middle East different?
3. What are some of the roots of the Tunisian and Syrian uprisings?

Session 4 (Sept. 22) - The Arrival of Contemporary Protests and Uprisings in the Middle East

- Charles Tripp, “The Politics of Resistance and the Arab Uprisings” in *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*, Fawaz A. Gerges Ed. (Oxford UP, 2014) pp. 135-154.

- Peter J Schrader and Hamadi Redissi, “Ben Ali’s Fall”, *Journal of Democracy* (July 2011) pp. 5-19.
- Gabriel Vom Bruck, Atiaf Alwazir, and Benjamin Wiacek, “Yemen: Revolution Suspended” in *The New Middle East: Protest and Revolution in the Arab World*, Fawaz A. Gerges Ed. (Oxford UP, 2014) pp. 285-309.
- Karim Mezran, “Libya in Transition: From Jamahiriya to Jumhuriya”, in *The Arab World*, Fawaz A. Gerges Ed. (Oxford UP, 2014) pp. 309-332.
- Recommended: Adel Iskander, *Egypt in Flux*, pp 1-72

Questions to Consider:

1. What were the primary grievances of each of the uprisings covered in the readings?
2. What are similarities and differences between the various protest movements and uprisings which materialized?

Session 5 (Sept 29) - The Response from the Authoritarian State

- Danny Postel, “Counter-revolution and Revolt in Iran: An Interview with Iranian Political Scientist Hossein Bashiriyeh” in *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and The Struggle for Iran’s Future* (Melville House, 2011) pp 82-108.
- Eva Bellin, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring" *Comparative Politics*, 44:2 (2012) pp. 127-151.
- Steve Heyderman and Reinoud Leenders, “Authoritarian Learning and Counterrevolution” in *The Arab Uprisings Explained*, Marc Lynch ed. (2014)pp. 75-92.

Questions to Consider:

1. According to Bashiriyeh, how did the Iranian government survive the 2009 challenge it faced?
2. According to Eva Bellin, what is the primary factor that determined whether a popular uprising succeeded or not?
3. According to Heyderman and Leender, what were the various lessons learned by authoritarian leaders following the uprisings?

Session 6 (Oct. 6) - Women and Gender Amid Protest and Change in the Middle East

- Ziba Mir Hosseini, “Multiplied, not Humiliated: Broken Taboos in Post-Election Iran” in *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and The Struggle for Iran’s Future* (Melville House, 2011)140-147.
- Nadja al-Ali “Gendering the Arab Spring” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5:1 (2012) pp. 26-31.
- Theresa A. Hunt, “Launching Revolutions and Challenging the State: Egyptian Women’s Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaigns 2004-2012” Paper presented at the 2014 Middle East Studies Association Meeting (Dec. 2014). 15 pages.
- Doris H. Gray, “Tunisia after the Uprising: Islamist and Secular Quests for Women's Rights.” *17.3 Mediterranean politics* 285 (2012).

Questions to Consider:

1. What have been some of the positive developments for Women and facing gender-based discrimination? What have been the setbacks?
2. How have authoritarian regimes co-opted women’s rights?
3. What did women’s rights factor into politics between Islamists and secular forces in the Tunisian transition?

Session 7 (Oct. 13) – Islamists and Political Change in the Middle East

- Abdullah Al Arian, “Islamist Movements and the Arab Spring” in *Beyond the Arab Spring*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Oxford, 2014) pp. 99-130. (Skim pp 99-101, read carefully, pp. 102-130).
- Chapters 7 and 8 in Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power* (Oxford, 2014).

Questions to Consider:

1. Describe attributes of post-uprising Islamist politics discussed by these authors.
2. What is possibly different about Tunisia’s Islamists?

Session 8 (Oct. 20) – Political Change in the Middle East and the West

- Excerpts from *The Arab Spring: The End of Post-Colonialism* (Zed Books: 2012).
- Further reading to be finalized prior to this class.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the impact of Western foreign Policy and geopolitics on the prospects of democratization in the Middle East? Do people in the region have the ability to challenge existing authoritarian structures in the face of Western support for authoritarian governments?
2. Did the Arab Uprisings signal the demise of Western hegemony in the Middle East or was Dabashi's thesis premature?

Session 9 (Oct. 27) – Regional Politics and the Rise of ISIS

- Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that Wasn't* (Stanford UP, 2013), Chapters 3 and 4.
- Excerpts from Patrick Cockburn, *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution* (Verso 2015).
- Fredrick Wehrey, "Saudi Arabia's Anxious Autocrats," *Journal of Democracy* 26:2 (April 2015).
- Elizabeth Dickinson, "The Case Against Qatar," *Foreign Policy* (September 30, 2014). <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/30/the-case-against-qatar/>

Questions to Consider:

1. What has been the role of regional actors in the Arab Uprisings
2. To what can we trace the roots of ISIS and its military success?

Session 10 (Nov 3) – Juxtaposing the Egyptian and Tunisian Transitions

- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds, “Chapter 4: Post-Breakdown Trajectories” *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015) pp. 98-169.
- Adel Iskandar, *Egypt in Flux* (AUC Press, 2013) pp. 72-160.

Questions to Consider:

1. What sets the handful of transitions attempted apart from each other?
2. What were the major reasons all but Tunisia’s transitions have largely failed?

Session 11 (Nov. 10) – Media, Norms and Diffusion

- Marc Lynch, “Media Old and New” in *The Arab Uprisings Explained*, Marc Lynch ed. (2014).
- Olivier Roy, “The Transformation of the Arab World” *Journal of Democracy* (July 2012)
- Shadi Mokhtari, “Power and Human Rights Amid Protest and Change in the Arab World” *Third World Quarterly* (June 2015).

Questions to Consider:

1. What has been the role of social media in quests for political change in the Middle East?
2. What are some normative transformations which materialized early on? To what extent have the normative transformations endured?

Session 12 (Nov 17) –The future of Political Change and Democratization in the Middle East

- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds “Chapter 6 ”Limits and Legacies of the Arab Spring” *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015) pp. 98-169.
- Matthew Taylor, “Brazil’s Transition to Democracy,” Paper presented at the Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective Conference, American University (May 2013).

Questions to Consider:

Session 13 (Dec. 1) – Final Paper Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

*****Final Papers Due Friday Dec. 4th by 5pm**