

Democratization and Political Change in the Middle East

SIS 619.036

American University
School of International Service
Fall 2016
Fri: 11:20AM-2:10 PM
Room: BLIB B60

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Office Hours: Mon, 10:30AM-3:00PM

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:

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- 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" : 94 and above (Excellent, Surpasses Expectations)
"A-": 89.5- 93.99%
"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 Group Presentation	20%
ISIS Book Review and 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/EveryDay/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 PAPERS:

You will choose a topic falling within a broader topic area on which to write a mid-semester paper. The broad topic areas are provided below.

1. Artistic Productions of the Protest Movements and Uprisings
2. Social Movements and Resistance since the decline of protest and change
3. Democratization and politics in contemporary Turkey
4. How has the role and substance of political Islam in the Middle East changed during the era and what is the future of political Islam?

5. Democratization and political change amid the backdrop of occupation? Prospects for democratization in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine
6. The region's other "Revolution and War" Stories: Yemen and Libya

Presentations:

While you will research and write your papers individually, you come together with members of your broader topic area group to put together a presentation. The presentation should synthesize and coherently 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. This is your contribution 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 collaborative effort in the preparation of these presentations.

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.

Due Dates: The dates for your papers and presentations will vary and will be provided when you sign up for your topic areas. However please note:

- One week before paper/presentation: a bibliography and advanced outline of your paper must be e-mailed to me.
- The Wednesday prior to your presentation: your powerpoint presentation must be e-mailed to me for comments and suggestions.

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.

Paper Guidelines and Grading Criteria:

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.

ISIS BOOK REVIEWS AND DISCUSSION:

There are a handful of recent books published on ISIS. You along with several classmates will read one of these books (listed below under required books) and you will each write an approximately 500-word review of the book highlighting both the key points made and your assessment of the authors' arguments and analysis. Your reviews are due on Piazza by 5PM, Nov. 9th. You and other students who read the same book will then be asked to make a brief summary of your book to the class when we discuss the books and the topic on Nov. 11th in class. You will have a few minutes in class to coordinate what and how you want to present your book. Please read or at least browse through your classmates' reviews before class in order to ensure what you bring to the class is not the same point being made by many others and that you are again contributing something new to the broader conversation.

FINAL PAPERS:

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.

E-mail me your topics by Nov. 4th for approval.

The final papers are due on the last day of class, Dec 9th

REQUIRED BOOK:

- Thanassis Cambanis, *Once Upon a Revolution: An Egyptian Story* (Simon and Schuster, 2016).
- Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al Shami, *Burning Country, Syrians in Revolution and War* (Pluto Press, 2016).
- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015).

One of the following for which you will sign up a few weeks into the semester:

- Jean-Pierre Filiu, *From Deep State to Islamic State: The Arab Counter-Revolution and Its Jihadi Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 311 pages.
- Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*. New York: Regan Arts, 2015. 270 pages.
- Patrick Cockburn *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution*,. London: Verso, 2015.
- Abdel Bari Atwan *Islamic State: The Digital Caliphate*, by. London: Saqi Books, 2015.
- Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger *ISIS: The State of Terror*, New York: Ecco, 2015.
- *The Syrian Jihad: Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Evolution of an Insurgency*, by Charles Lister. London: C. Hurst & Co., 2015. (500 pages).
- William McCants *The ISIS Apocalypse: The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*, by. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015.

All other 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. All required books will be available for 2-hour loans at the reserves desk.

COURSE READING SCHEDULE:

Session 1 (Sept. 2)- Course Introduction

Session 2 (Sept. 9)- **Backdrop and Introduction to our Inquiry**

- Chapter 10: “Kinship, Class and Ethnicity”, in Julian Schwedler Ed. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 4th Ed. (Lynn Reiner, 2014). pp. 315-345.
- 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).
- Explaining the Arab Uprisings: transformations in Comparative Perspective
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13629395.2015.1081450>

Session 3 (Sept. 16)- **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.
- 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.
- Vincent Durac, “Social Movements, Protest Movements and Cross-Ideological Conditions: the Arab Uprisings Re-appraised” *Democratization*, 22:2 (2015).

Session 4 (Sept. 23) – **The Response from the Authoritarian State**

- 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.
- 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/>

Session 5 (Sept 30) – The Green Movement and Iran’s Post-Protest Trajectory

- If you do not have much background on Iran and would like to orient yourself before doing this week’s readings, a resource to browse is USIP’s Iran Primer at <http://iranprimer.usip.org/>
- Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, *The People Reloaded*, (Melville House, 2011) Introduction, P. 41-52, 82-108, 109-119, 140-164, 168-172, 271-276, 332-345
- Daniel Brumberg and Farideh Farhi, “Introduction: Politics of Contention and Conciliation in Iran’s Semiautocracy” in *Power and Change in Iran: Politics of Contention and Conciliation*, Daniel Brumberg and Farideh Fathi eds. (University of Indiana Press, 2016).

Session 6 (Oct. 7) – Tunisia: The First Uprising and Only Democratic Transition

- Anthony Shadid, “Joy as Tunisian Leader Flees, Offers Lessons to Other Arab Leaders” *NYT* (January 14, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/15/world/africa/15region.html>
- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015) pp. 125-146.
- Doris H. Gray, “Tunisia after the Uprising: Islamist and Secular Quests for Women’s Rights.” *Mediterranean politics* 285 (2012).
- Amel Boubekeur, “Islamists, Secularists and Old Regime Elites in Tunisia: Bargained Competition,” *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol 21 (2016).

No Class (Oct 14)

Session 7 (Oct. 21) – Egypt

- Thanassis Cambanis, *Once Upon a Revolution: An Egyptian Story* (Simon and Schuster, 2016).
- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015) pp. 104-124.

Session 8 (Oct. 28)- Understanding Transition Outcomes

- Jason Brownlee, Tarek Massoud and Andrew Renalds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform* (Oxford, 2015) pp. 169-210.
- Chapters 7 and 8 in Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power* (Oxford, 2014).

Session 9 (Nov. 4)- Syria in Revolution and War

- Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al Shami, *Burning Country, Syrians in Revolution and War* (Pluto Press, 2016).

Session 10 (Nov 11) - **ISIS and Political Change in the Middle East**

Individual ISIS Book Assignments

Session 11- (Nov. 18) **The West and Political Change in the Middle East**

- Excerpts from *The Arab Spring: The End of Post-Colonialism* (Zed Books: 2012).
- "The United States and Bahrain: Interpreting Differentiated Responses to the Arab Spring" *Digest of Middle East Studies* (Fall 2014)
- Additional Reading TBD

Session 12 (Nov 22) – Women and Gender Amid Protest and Change in the Middle East

- Chapter 11: “The Role of Women” in Julian Schwedler Ed. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, 4th Ed. (Lynn Reiner, 2014). pp. 345-376.
- 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.
- 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).
- Nadja al-Ali “Gendering the Arab Spring” *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5:1 (2012) pp. 26-31.
- Tamara al-Om, “Syria’s ‘Arab Spring’: Women and the Struggle to Live in Truth” in the *Routledge Handbook on the Arab Spring* (Routledge, 2015).

Session 13 (Dec. 2) – A Transformed Middle East and Implications for The future of Political Change and Democratization in the Middle East?

- 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)
- Matthew Taylor, “Brazil’s Transition to Democracy,” Paper presented at the Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective Conference, American University (May 2013).
- Asef Bayat, “Revolution and Despair” *Mada Masr* (January 1, 2015)
<http://www.madamasr.com/opinion/revolution-and-despair>

Session 14 (Dec. 9)- Course Wrap-Up

***Final Papers Due

