

PLSC S396-E/MMES S-364-E
Politics of the Contemporary Middle East

Summer 2021

Instructor: Professor Elizabeth Nugent

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Office Hours: Thursday 1-3pm, sign up on Calendly [here](#)

Class Meetings: Session A, June 7-July 9, 2021, Tuesday and Thursdays 10-11:30am EST

Course Description

This course provides an overview of politics of the contemporary Middle East through the lens of the 2010-2011 Arab Spring uprisings. We interrogate the main debates surrounding the democratic deficit in the region to understand whether recent developments mark change or continuity. We explore the ways in which a variety of factors including foreign intervention, oil, and religion have contributed to persistent authoritarianism in the Middle East. We consider a number of different aspects of domestic politics including redistribution, gender politics, political mobilization, and public opinion. The course materials combine academic and popular writing, documentaries, and pre-recorded lectures with synchronous seminar discussions.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected in all seminars. You will be deducted 2 points from your participation grade for each unexcused absence. Please communicate absences ahead of class when possible.

E-mail Policy

If you have a quick (i.e. non-substantive) question, email is the best way to contact me. While I typically respond to emails quickly, please allow 48 hours for a response. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, follow up with a reminder. This [article](#) is recommended reading about how to draft an effective email to your professor or teaching fellow.

If you email me or your teaching fellow before a deadline with a last minute request, please do not expect a response. It is important that you look at the assignments early to ensure we can answer any questions you may have in a timeframe that is useful to you. Longer questions -- for example, those dealing with your performance in the course or substantive questions about the course material -- are better asked in person. Your teaching fellow and I will hold regular office hours throughout the summer session. Appointments can also be made on an individual basis.

Policies on Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

For every day a written assignment is late, you will lose 2 points out of the total points available. Familiarize yourself with [Yale University's policy on incomplete grades](#).

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with Yale University's policy on academic integrity. In short, don't turn in the same paper for two classes, don't plagiarize someone else's work, and don't cheat on the in-class exam or other assignments. When in doubt, come talk to me. To ensure that you do not accidentally violate Yale's academic honesty policies, please review [Yale University's Definitions of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Documentation of Sources](#).

Commitment to Diversity

Your experience in this class is very important to me. If you have already established accommodations with the [Resource Office on Disabilities](#), please communicate those to me as early as possible so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through ROD, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), please contact ROD. ROD offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, me, and the ROD.

Commitment to an Inclusive Learning Environment

Yale University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or violence. If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, [Stephanie Spangler](#), or [any of the University Title IX Coordinators](#). You may also report an incident to me. I am required to notify the Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident, though you may choose to request confidentiality from the University.

Teaching Fellow

We are very lucky to have Dana Stuster as the teaching fellow for this course. You can contact him at dana.stuster@yale.edu.

Course Format, Requirements, and Grading

The course is split evenly between asynchronous materials required to listen, view, and read on your own, and two 90-minute sessions each week. Please note that the lectures were recorded in spring 2021; follow the lectures as they are labeled on our Canvas website and ignore any discrepancies with the introduction of the audio. I recommend starting with readings, then lectures, then viewings.

Our 90-minute sessions will be further divided up into two parts. During the first half of class, we will go over the material assigned and discuss both the substantive and theoretical aspects. This is a great time for you to raise any questions or comments you had about the material. During the second half of class, students will be randomly divided up into breakout rooms to

read a piece of news from the region. We will then discuss how academic scholarship on the topic of the day helps us to better understand contemporary political developments in the Middle East.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20 points of your grade will be determined by attendance and participation

The class will be taught as a seminar and revolves around class discussion. The quality of a seminar hinges on the quality of class discussion. Regular attendance and participation are important for understanding the material and for getting the most out of this course. Students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned reading, listening, and viewing, and be prepared to talk about them in depth. This may require you to prepare notes in order to remember important aspects of the readings.

- 40 points of your grade will be determined by weekly reading quizzes

Each reading quiz will consist of questions touching on the material covered in class and in assigned listening, viewing, and reading over the previous week. You will have one half hour to complete the quiz between 9am and 2pm on Fridays. The quiz is open note but do not use the internet or speak to anyone else about the content. There will be 5 total quizzes, but only the top 4 will count towards your final grade.

- 40 points of your grade will be determined by two reading responses

Each reading response will count for 20 points. The response should be 5-7 pages double-spaced, using 12 point font, and should address all material (listening, viewing, reading) from one week of the syllabus. The response should quickly summarize the material and then move into analysis. Each paper should make an argument about how these materials help us to understand divergent outcomes in the Arab Spring, and where the materials fall short. The choice of which week's material you will analyze is up to you. However, one is due at the midterm (weeks 1, 2, or 3), and a second is due at the final (weeks 4 or 5).

Book to Purchase

Please purchase *The Middle East* edited by Ellen Lust (15th edition, Sage, 2019). The book is available in electronic and paper form through Yale Bookstore and online retailers. Pay attention to the edition; I can't guarantee that other versions of the textbook contain the correct material. All other readings are available online and linked through Canvas.

Week 1. Overview of the Course and the Arab Spring

Module 1: Introduction

June 8, 2021

Please come to our first class having read, listened to, and watched the following:

Read

Chapter 1 of Lust, “The Making of the Modern Middle East” (3-62).

Listen

Lecture #1 (18 minutes)

Watch

“Karama Has No Walls” (26 minutes); Yemen

“A Conversation with Sara Ishaq” (50 minutes)

Module 2: Overview of the Arab Spring

June 10, 2021

Read

Jason Brownlee, Tarek E. Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Chapter 3: “Breakdowns and Crackdowns”

Chapter 4: “Post-Breakdown Trajectories”

Listen

Lecture #2 (23 minutes)

Lecture #3 (24 minutes)

Quiz #1 posted at 9am June 11, due by 2pm June 11

Week 2. Political Regimes and Institutions

Module 3: Regime Types

June 15, 2021

Read

Chapter 3 of Lust, "States and Institutions" (133-168).

Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III. "Resilient royals: How Arab monarchies hang on." *Journal of Democracy* 23.4 (2012): 74-88.

Listen

Lecture #4 (25 minutes)

"A Conversation with Omar Shakir" (50 minutes)

Module 4: Political Institutions: Elections, Courts, and Coercion

June 17, 2021

Read

Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust-Okar. "Elections under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 403-422.

Derek Lutterbeck, "Tool of Rule: the Tunisian Police under Ben Ali." *The Journal of North African Studies* 20.5 (2015): 813-831.

Tamir Moustafa, "Law and Courts in Authoritarian Regimes." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 10 (2014): 281-299.

Watch

"Tunisia, Year Zero" (52 minutes)

"A Conversation with Daniel Tavana" (50 minutes)

Quiz #2 posted at 9am June 18, due by 2pm June 18

Week 3. Participation in Non-Democracies and Religion & Politics

Module 5: Participation in Non-Democracies

June 22, 2021

Read

Chapter 5 of Lust, "Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation" (201-232).

Yael Zeira, "From the Schools to the Streets: Education and Anti-Regime Resistance in the West Bank." *Comparative Political Studies* 52.8 (2019): 1131- 1168.

Elizabeth R. Nugent and Chantal E. Berman. "Ctrl-Alt-Revolt?: Online and Offline Networks during the 2011 Egyptian Uprising." *Middle East Law and Governance* 10.1 (2018): 59-90.

Listen

Lecture #5 (22 minutes)

Watch

"A Conversation with Yael Zeira" (50 minutes)

Module 6: Religion

June 24, 2021

Read

Chapter 4 of Lust, "Religion, Society, and Politics in the Middle East" (169-200).

Amr Hamzawy and Nathan J. Brown. "Islamist Parties and Democracy: A Boon or a Bane for Democracy?" *Journal of Democracy* 19.3 (2008): 49-54.

Listen

Lecture #6 (25 minutes)

Watch

"The Judge" (1 hr 22 mins); Palestine

First Reading Response Due by 5pm June 24

Quiz #3 posted at 9am June 25, due by 2pm June 25

Week 4. Gender and Political Economy

Module 7: Gender

June 29, 2021

Read

Chapter 6 of Lust, "Social Change in the Middle East" (233-268).

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." *American Anthropologist* 104.3 (2002): 783-790.

Listen

Lecture #7 (15 minutes)

Watch

"A conversation with Hind Ahmed Zaki" (50 minutes)

Two short videos:

"Tunisia: Keeping the Promise" (5 minutes)

"Egypt: Life's Sentence" [here](#) (5 minutes)

Module 8: Political Economy

July 1, 2021

Read

Chapter 7 of Lust, "The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East" (269-306).

Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53:3 (2011), 325-361.

Lydia Assoud, "Inequality and its Discontents in the Middle East," March 12, 2020. *Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center*.

Listen

Lecture #8 (20 minutes)

Quiz #4 posted at 9am July 2, due by 2pm July 2

Week 5. Foreign Influence and Conclusion

Module 9: Foreign Influence on Domestic Politics

July 6, 2021

Read

Chapter 8 of Lust, "International Relations" (307-338).

Gregory F. Gause, III, "Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War." *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* 11 (2014): 1-27.

Listen

Lecture #9 (19 minutes)

Watch

"For Sama" (1 hr 40 minutes)

"A conversation with Professor Nicholas Lotito" (50 minutes)

Module 10: The Arab Spring 10 Years On

July 8, 2021

Read

Kali Robinson, "The Arab Spring at Ten Years: What's the Legacy of the Uprisings?" Council on Foreign Relations December 2020.

Philippe Fargues and Christine Fandrich, "Migration after the Arab Spring." Migration Policy Centre Research Report September 2019.

Marwan Muasher, "Is this the Arab Spring 2.0?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2019.

Second Reading Response Due by 5pm July 8

Quiz #5: posted at 9 am July 9, due by 2pm July 9