Comparative Politics of the Middle East (CPO 6938)

University of Central Florida
Spring 2019

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I. Description

This 3-credit course offers a thematic study of comparative politics of the Middle East. The introductory sections discuss the historical formation of the modern Middle East, address different epistemological and methodological approaches to the study of the regional politics, and explore the main political issues borders of the region. These sections will help students develop a good knowledge of the Middle Eastern politics. The rest of the course focuses on themes central to Middle Eastern politics as studied by comparative politics subdiscipline of the political science discipline: political regimes, political economy, ethnic politics, political violence, mass mobilization, environmental politics, elections and parties, religion and politics, politics of gender, and judicial politics.

The main course objectives are to

- Introduce students to the basic historical, geographical, and societal characteristics of the Middle Eastern countries.
- Stimulate students' curiosity about the complexity and diversity of the Middle Eastern politics.
- Make students proficient in the theoretically guided and empirically sophisticated comparative politics literature on Middle Eastern politics.
- Enable students to identify the causal dynamics of political phenomena in the Middle East.
- Empower students to undertake their own independent research projects related to comparative politics of the Middle East.

II. Requirements & Assignments

Mandatory First Week Academic Activity

All UCF faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. For this purpose, I have added an ungraded question to Assignments titled "Required Academic Engagement." Please answer this question by 2 pm on Friday, January 11. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

The following books are required and should be purchased:

- James L. Gelvin. *The Modern Middle East: A History*. 4th Ed. New York: Oxford UP.
- Robert Owen. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East.* New York: Routledge, 2004.

All other required readings are available online at webcourses@UCF.

Assignments

The course has six different types of assignments:

A. 5%: Survey of the Middle East Exam

B. 15% Book Review

C. 15%: Tableau Graph

D. 15%: Class Participation

E. 25%: Two Literature Review Papers

F. 25% Research Paper

Assignment Calendar & Checkbox

Assignment	Due Date	Completed Check
Academic Engagement Question	January 11	
Survey	January 17	
Book Review	February 15	
Tableau Graph	March 1	
First Lit Review Paper	By March 7	
Second Lit Review Paper	By April 18	
Research Paper	April 25	

A. Survey of the Middle East Exam

The material covered in the first two weeks will be the basis of this exam on January 15, including the entire content of Gelvin book. Students are expected to develop a solid understanding of the evolution of the modern political history of the Middle East, its geography, and salient contemporary issues in the region.

B. Book Review

A list of scholarly books on comparative politics of the Middle East will be distributed among class at the beginning of the semester. Each student will choose a book from this list and write a review that is between 1,000 and 1,500 words. The reviews will be submitted electronically via webcourses@UCF by 5 pm, February 15.

C. Tableau Graph

Tableau software produces visually informative and appealing graphs that will boost academic presentations and writings. Each student should download Tableau for free (a 1-year license) at http://www.tableau.com/academic/students. A cross-national dataset with a variety of indicators will be provided. Students will have the opportunity to collect additional data. The goal is to generate graphs that will offer informed and insightful comparative perspectives about the Middle Eastern countries. A training session will be offered in advance. The Tableau graphs will be submitted electronically via webcourses@UCF by 5 pm, March 1.

D. Class Participation

Class participation involves informed and active contribution to discussions we have on the themes in each session. Obviously, the quality of one's participation matters significantly more than its frequency and intensity. Counterintuitive and creative comments offering unique insights will be especially rewarded. Such participation is possible only if students come to classroom only after reading the required readings for the week. Additionally, every student will be assigned a leadership role at least once a semester. The assignments will be made at the beginning of the semester. In this capacity, students are expected to lead and stimulate discussion by staging questions, offering criticisms of the arguments and methodologies, and identifying promising areas of research.

E. Literature Review Papers

Students are expected to write two literature review papers on themes we cover in this class. At least one of the papers needs to be written before the Spring Break. A student may **not** write a literature review paper for a week s/he acts as a discussion leader. Literature review papers should critically engage with the required readings and some of the additional readings. In these papers, students should focus on how scholars approach one or several research questions central to the theme.

Students must submit their papers as WORD documents via webcourses@UCF before the class session we will discuss that particular theme. For instance, if a paper reviews the literature on

non-violent mass mobilization, it is due 5 pm, March 5. All papers should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words. Shorter or longer papers will incur a penalty in grading. Late papers will not be graded.

F. Research Paper

Each student is also expected to write a research paper on a specific research question related to the themes we cover in this course. The research question guiding the paper could be general, while the empirical focus could be narrower. For instance, a paper addressing the following question, "What are the sources of anti-Americanism in the Middle East?" can utilize data from a freely available public opinion survey conducted in a single country such as Jordan or Egypt. While they will be considered work-in-progress (not ready for publication), papers should demonstrate a systematic attempt to consult original sources that may include printed and online texts in primary languages (e.g., Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, etc.), public opinion data (e.g., Arab Barometer, World Values Surveys, Pew Global Attitudes Project), cross-national databases (e.g., the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes Data Project, the Ethnic Power Relations Dataset), and memoirs and documents related to foreign policy making (e.g., the National Security Archive). Papers can focus on a single case (remember, a case is not necessarily a country) or several cases. They may employ large-N statistical as well as in-depth historical analyses. Readings provided in the syllabus will be useful in deciding on the research papers.

Research papers are graded on the basis of six criteria:

1. The articulation of a feasible and interesting research question
2. The scope and depth of literature review
3. The soundness of research design
4. The organizational cohesion
5. The quality of research
6. Language

Students have to communicate their research paper topics to me by the April 2 session after consultations with me. Research papers must be submitted as WORD documents via webcourses@UCF due 5 pm, April 25. They should be between 6,500 and 8,000 words. Shorter or longer papers will incur a penalty in grading. Late papers will not be graded.

Below is a list of potential research questions:

- What factors explain the success or failure of popular mobilizations in the Middle East?
- Why are some Middle Eastern regimes more stable than others?
- Under what conditions do movements with progressive agendas such as gender equality and environmental protection achieve more success in the Middle East?
- Under what conditions do parties and movements develop democratic commitments in the Middle East?
- Why are some armed groups more successful than others in mobilizing mass support in the Middle East?
- Why do some armed groups employ terrorist tactics but not others in the Middle East?

- Why do ordinary people join political groups risking their well-being in the Middle East?
- Why do some ethnic and religious identities become source of political conflict in the Middle East?
- What factors impede or foster gender equality in the Middle East?

Grade and Make-Up Policy

Due dates are absolutely non-negotiable. Students who fail to complete Tableau and paper assignments receive **0 point for the assignment**. Students have to present proper documentation for any make-ups. The following grade scale is applicable in this class: A: 100-94, A-: 93-90, B+: 89-87, B: 86-84, B-: 83-80, C+: 79-77, C: 76-74, C-: 73-70, D+: 69-67, D: 66-60, F: 59-0. Grades are rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 79.4=79, 79.6=80).

III. Academic Honesty

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: "**whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.**"

All acts of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating, submitting false documents, and copying another student's work will be penalized by **an F for the course** without any exception and leniency. If you are not sure what constitutes as academic dishonesty while doing your research, you should consult me at once.

IV. Accessibility

The UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before **requesting accommodations from me.**

V. Course Schedule

Week I (January 10): Middle East Politics as a Research Inquiry: Area Studies & Positivism

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East.* Entire book.

Week II (January 17): Methodological Approaches

Nikki R. Keddie, "Is there a Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 255-271.

Fred Halliday, "'Orientalism' and its Critics," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1993): 145-163.

Lisa Anderson, "Scholarship, Policy, Debate and Conflict: Why We Study the Middle East and Why It Matters," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 38 (2004): 2-15.

Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism.* New York: Cambridge UP, 2009, excerpts.

Survey of the Middle East Exam.

Week III (January 24): State & Society

Robert Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East.* Entire book.

Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 1995, chapter 1.

Week IV (January 31): Political Regimes: Authoritarianism and Democratization

Eva Bellin, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 36 (2004): 139-157.

Lisa Anderson, "Searching where the Light Shines: Studying Democratization in the Middle East," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 189-214.

Raymond Hinnebusch, "Authoritarian Persistence, Democratization Theory and the Middle East: An Overview and Critique," *Democratization* 13 (2006): 373-395.

Amaney Jamal, *Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009, excerpts.

F. Gregory Gause, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability," *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011): 81-90.

Week V (February 7): Political Economy: Rentier State and Neoliberalism

Hazem Beblawi, "The Rentier State in the Arab World," in Giacomo Luciani ed., *The Arab State.* London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 85-98.

Timur Kuran. "Why the Middle East is economically underdeveloped: historical mechanisms of institutional stagnation." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18 (2004): 71-90.

Steffen Hertog, "Defying the Resource Curse: Explaining Successful State-Owned Enterprises in Rentier States," *World Politics* 62 (April 2010): 261-301.

Melani Cammett and Sukriti Issar. "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon." *World Politics* 62 (2010): 381-421.

Kevan Harris, "The Rise of the Subcontractor State: Politics of Pseudo-Privatization in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013): 45-70.

Week VI (February 14): Ethnicity & Nationalism: Minorities & Majorities

Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State." *American Political Science Review* 86 (1992): 432-443.

Oren Yiftachel. "'Ethnocracy': The Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine." *Constellations* 6 (1999): 364-390.

Mariz Tadros. "Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41 (2009): 269-287.

Erdem Yörük. "Welfare Provision as Political Containtment: The Politics of Social Assistance and the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey." *Politics & Society* 40 (2012): 517-547.

Ceren Belge and Ekrem Karakoç, "Minorities in the Middle East: Ethnicity, Religion, and Support for Authoritarianism," *Political Research Quarterly* 68 (2015): 280-292.

Week VII (February 21): Political Violence – Macro/Meso Levels

Quintan Wiktorowicz. "Anatomy of the Salafi movement." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29 (2006): 207-239.

Ian Lustick. "The Absence of Middle Eastern Great Powers: Political 'Backwardness' in Comparative Perspective." *International Organization* 51 (1997): 653–83.

Robert Pape. "The strategic logic of suicide terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003): 343-361.

Mirjam Sorli, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Havard Strand. "Why is there so much conflict in the Middle East?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (2005):141-165.

Holger Albrecht, and Dorothy Ohl. "Exit, resistance, loyalty: military behavior during unrest in authoritarian regimes." *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (2016): 38-52.

Week VIII (February 28): Political Violence – Micro Level

Mia M Bloom. "Palestinian suicide bombing: Public support, market share, and outbidding." *Political Science Quarterly* 119 (2004): 61-88.

Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson, "Organizing rebellion: Rethinking high-risk mobilization and social networks in war." *American Political Science Review* 107 (2013): 418-432.

Scott Atran, Hammad Sheikh, and Angel Gomez. "Devoted actors sacrifice for close comrades and sacred cause." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (2014): 17702-17703.

Jacob N. Shapiro and Nils B. Weidmann. "Is the Phone Mightier than the Sword? Cellphones and Insurgent Violence in Iraq." *International Organization* 69 (2015): 247-274.

Güneş Murat Tezcür. "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Joining an Ethnic Rebellion." *American Political Science Review* 110 (2016): 247-264.

Week IX (March 7): Nonviolent Contentious Politics – Mass Mobilization

Kurt Weyland. "The Arab Spring: Why the Surprising Similarities with the Revolutionary Wave of 1848?" *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2012): 917-934.

Amy Holmes. "There are weeks when decades happen: structure and strategy in the Egyptian revolution." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 17 (2012): 391-410.

Wendy Pearlman, "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings," *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2013): 387-409.

Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, "Religion in the Arab Spring: Between Two Competing Narratives," *Journal of Politics* 76 (2014): 593-606.

Selim Erdem Aytaç, Luis Schiumerini, and Susan Stokes. "Protests and Repression in New Democracies." *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (2017): 62-82.

Week X (March 21): Politics of Environment

Jeannie Sowers, Avner Vengosh, and Erika Weinthal. "Climate change, water resources, and the politics of adaptation in the Middle East and North Africa." *Climatic Change* 104.3-4 (2011): 599-627.

Janpeter Schilling, Korbinian P. Freier, Elke Hertig, and Jürgen Scheffran. "Climate change, vulnerability and adaptation in North Africa with focus on Morocco." *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment* 156 (2012): 12-26.

Eran Feitelson, Abdelrahman Tamimi, and Gad Rosenthal. "Climate change and security in the Israeli–Palestinian context." *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (2012): 241-257.

Debra Javeline. "The most important topic political scientists are not studying: adapting to climate change." *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (2014): 420-434.

Colin P. Kelley, Shahrzad Mohtadi, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager, and Yochanan Kushnir. "Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112 (2015): 3241-3246.

Week XI (March 28): Electoral Politics: Voters & Parties

Ellen Lust-Okar. "Elections under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan." *Democratization* 13 (2006): 456-471.

Lisa Blaydes and Drew A. Linzer. "Elite Competition, Religiosity, and anti-Americanism in the Islamic World." *American Political Science Review* 106 (2012): 225-243.

Daniel Corstange. "Vote Trafficking in Lebanon." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012): 483-505.

Tarek Massoud. *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2014, excerpts.

Carolina De Miguel, Amaney A. Jamal, and Mark Tessler. "Elections in the Arab World: Why do citizens turn out?" *Comparative Political Studies* 48 (2015): 1355-1388.

Week XII (April 4): Politics of Religion: Islamist Moderation

Carrie Rosefsky Wickham. "The Path to Moderation: Strategy and Learning in the Formation of Egypt's Wasaf Party." *Comparative Politics* 36 (2004): 205-228.

Mona El-Ghobashy. "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 373-395.

Güneş Murat Tezcür. "Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political Actors." *Party Politics* 16 (2010): 69-88."

Jillian Schwedler. "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis?" *World Politics* 62 (2011): 347-376.

Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone. "Moderation through Exclusion? The Journey of the Tunisian *Ennahda* from Fundamentalist to Conservative Party." *Democratization* 20 (2013): 857-875.

Week XIII (April 11): Politics of Gender: Gender Inequality, Feminism & Women's Movements

Deniz Kandiyoti. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender & Society* 2 (1988): 274-290.

Saba Mahmood. "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival." *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (2001): 202-236.

Valentine M. Moghadam. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003, excerpts.

Michael L. Ross. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102 (2008): 107-124.

Amy C. Alexander, and Christian Welzel. "Islam and patriarchy: How robust is Muslim support for patriarchal values?" *International Review of Sociology* 21 (2010): 249-276.

Week XIV (April 18): Courts, Constitutions & Citizens: Legal Mobilization

Tamir Moustafa. "Law versus the State: The Judicialization of Politics in Egypt." *Law & Social Inquiry* 28 (2003): 883-930.

Lisa Hajjar. "Religion, state power, and domestic violence in Muslim societies: a framework for comparative analysis." *Law & Social Inquiry* 29 (2006): 1-38.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini. "Muslim women's quest for equality: Between Islamic law and feminism." *Critical Inquiry* 32 (2006): 629-645.

Nathan Brown. *The Rule of Law in the Arab World: Courts in Egypt and the Gulf*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2006, excerpts.

Güneş Murat Tezcür. "Judicial activism in perilous times: the Turkish case." *Law & Society Review* 43 (2009): 305-336.