Class code: POL-UA 9540 - 001/ MEIS-UA 9750 - 001

Instructor Details: Hagai M. Segal

Class Details: Spring 2018
Politics of the Near & Middle East

Prerequisites: None

Class Description: Historical-political background of the Middle East and its contemporary social and political problems, including the impact of the West; religious and liberal reactions; conflict of nationalisms (Arab, Iranian, Turkish, and Zionist); and revolutionary socialism. Specific social, political, and economic problems using a few selected countries for comparison and analysis-including the role of the military, the intelligentsia, the religious classes, the legitimation of power, urban-rural cleavages, bureaucracy, and political parties.

Lectures (including class discussions), occasional audio visual aids (video, etc), one field trip.

Desired Outcomes:
To give a basic grounding to the politics, history and society of the modern Near and Middle East.

To introduce working with primary sources by the use of limited original documents and sources.

To illustrate models of political and economic development in the region that differ from Western models of liberal democracy, secularism, and capitalism.

To provide a foundation for the analysis of past and current regional conflicts.

Assessment Components: Coursework – 40% (1st essay 15%, 2nd essay 25%); Simulation Exercise – 20%; End of course examination – 40%.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations:
Grade A: A-quality work is based on a range of primary and secondary sources, but it will go beyond those sources to draw its own conclusions. An A-quality essay will also be elegantly structured and very well argued and written.

Grade B: B-quality work is well organized, using a close analysis of its sources to make a useful point, backed up with some secondary material. Conversely, a B-quality paper may be as original, even adventurous, as an A-grade paper, but only merit a B because it is badly-structured or poorly written.

Grade C: C-quality work fulfills the basic conditions of the assignment. It has an argument and demonstrates a basic understanding of the subject, but this is not supported by close or wide reading. A C-quality essay may contain obvious gaps or internal contradictions and it may also be structured in a confusing way or full of grammatical errors.

Grade D: D-quality work lacks an argument and its point is unclear. It may often leap from subject to subject without a smooth transition. A D-quality essay may simply summarise material without analysis. Serious grammatical flaws or unreadability can result in a D being awarded to a paper that would otherwise have earned a C.

Grade F: An F is awarded to a paper which barely tries to tackle its subject. It will have no argument and show little acquaintance with the relevant texts. Any paper which is plagiarized, incomprehensible or incomplete will earn an F.
NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66

F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the mid point of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.


*(All are paperbacks, quite reasonably priced, and easily purchased)*


*(All paperbacks, quite reasonably priced, and easily purchased)*

**Session 1**

**Introduction Class – Colonialism and Imperialism in the Middle East, and the rise of Arab nationalism.**

Introduction class to the course, charting the colonial legacy from which the modern Middle-East emerged and the State’s and political movements that developed after foreign rule and as a reaction to it. Are the terms Near and Middle-East themselves but artificial constructions of European powers, or the representation of genuine cultural, ethnic and geographical ties that still define social and political life in the region? Are the State’s that have emerged genuine representations of the political and ethnic identities, or are they, as some have argued, arbitrary entities invented on the whim of Britain and France? And how has the identity ‘Arab’, and the notion of Arab Unity, influenced these issues?

**Required Reading** –
Milton-Edwards – Introduction Chapter, Pages 2 to 9; and Chapter 1, Colonial Rule.
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 1, Introduction: Middle Eastern and North African States in Comparative Perspective

Additional Reading
Yapp, ‘Introduction’.

Session 2

Arab Nationalism – ‘Revolutionary’ Movements, Arab Socialism + Pan-Arabism in light of ‘The Arab Spring’

In the 1960s and in the 1970s one of the most enduring images in international affairs was the ‘Arab Freedom Fighter/Guerrilla’, epitomised by the PLO and their leader Yasser Arafat. This public face was a reflection not only of the level of attention that had been generated by the activities and operations of such groups, but of the profound effect revolutionary, Arab Socialist ideologies were having in the Middle-East and within individual Arab States at the time. But what are these ideologies, what do they share and how do they differ, why for a time were they so popular and effective, and what factors must we consider when seeking to explain the relative demise of their support and influence today? The key ideologies and movements will be examined, as will leaders like Gaddafi and Nasser whose personal visions have come to be viewed as revolutionary ideologies and who have been so profoundly involved in the attempt to bring about a Middle-East defined by pan-Arabist and Arab Socialist principles. We will also begin our examination of the ‘Arab Spring’ (as it’s been dubbed) – the remarkable 2011 uprisings from Tunisia to Egypt to Libya to Syria to Bahrain – and what it tells us about the role of nationalism in the Arab world today.

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – Chapter 2, Nationalism.
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 14, Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and pages 371 – 377 (the PLO section of Chapter 12).

Additional Reading –
Foreign Affairs – The Turmoil Within, by James Piscatori, Page 171.

Session 3

Egypt – All Change! The Arab Superpower after Mubarak... and after Morsi!

We will examine here one of the key regional powers, historic and contemporary, whose colonial and post-Independence experiences have been central to the fortunes of the entire Middle-East and the Arab world, and whose recent political upheaval has defined the ‘new’ Middle-East. For years dominated by its leader Gamel Abdul Nasser and his pan-Arabist ideology, with its anti-Israel and anti-Colonialist emphasis and its aim of establishing a unitary Arab State, Egypt changed radically after his death in the early 1970s, his successor Anwar Sadat signing a peace treaty with Israel and establishing intimate relations with the USA. And it changed radically again in 2011 when Hosni Mubarak, President for the previous three decades, was forced from office by an unprecedented popular ‘revolt’. His successor, Egypt’s first elected President, Mohamed Morsi, was himself removed by the military after just a year in office, with army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi then being elected in his stead in June 2014. Will the ‘new’ Egypt now develop as a stable democracy, or is further instability and turmoil likely?

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – ‘Case Study : Egypt’ section, Chapter 1; and ‘Unification Nationalism’ section (inc. Case Study : Egyptian Nationalism), Chapter 2.
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 13, Arab Republic of Egypt.

Additional Reading –
Yapp, ‘Egypt since 1952’

Session 4

The Levant, Part 1 : Lebanon – Consociational democracy and Lebanese politics today.

This class will examine development in the countries that were to emerge from French colonial rule, and the political, ethnic and sociological divisions and conflicts that formed with the division of historic ‘Greater Syria’ into the two states of Syria and Lebanon. Firstly we will look at Lebanon, and its model of Consociational democracy. What is meant by this term, what specific elements made up the Lebanese system, and has it worked as a system designed to ensure political representation for each of Lebanon’s religious and ethnic groupings and avoid conflict between them? Was the notion of a united and peaceful Lebanon ever viable, and what role did its electoral system play in the failed
attempts at nation building? Could the ethnic and factional conflicts that deteriorated into bloody civil war in the 1970s have been avoided, and has the new system since the end of the civil war addressed the political and social challenges that still dominate the country? Has Lebanon ‘normalised’ politically and socially? And following Syria’s withdrawal from Lebanon, Israel-Hizbollah conflict, and the ongoing turmoil in neighbouring Syria, what challenges, domestic and foreign, does it continue to face?

Required Reading –
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 8, Republic of Lebanon.

Additional Reading –
ME Yapp, ‘Syria and Lebanon since 1958’

Session 5

The Levant, Part 2 : Syria – Assad, Assad + Beyond; Jordan – The Politics of Legitimacy + The Hashemite Kingdom

The class will first examine Syria, currently in the midst of unprecedented political and social upheaval. We will assess where Syria stands (stood?!!?) under Bashar Assad, who came to power after the death of his father who had ruled Syria for 30 years. How has Syria changed politically and socially since Bashar came to power, and why have his people risen-up against him? Will the current regime survive, and if not what are the implications for Syria, its neighbours and the wider region?

Then we move to Jordan: The death of King Hussein in 1999 created a potentially problematic power vacuum in Jordan, but the transition of power to his son Abdullah has been surprisingly smooth. Jordan nonetheless continues to be in a delicate position regionally, a militarily weak state lying between powerful Israel and Iraq, and linked, politically and geographically, to the Palestinian areas. This reflects its historic position as a part of historic Palestine, claimed in the past by both Zionists and Palestinians, and considered an illegitimate state by many Arab Nationalists. Serious domestic challenges continue to face the young King, including threats from al-Qaeda and ISIS in neighbouring Iraq and Syria, growing numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only unresolved but is as volatile as it has been for many years, with all the implications this has for Jordan’s predominantly Palestinian population. How might this factor affect Jordan’s posture towards its own peace treaty with Israel, and in regards its political relations with Israel and the Palestinians, and might it even be a factor that threatens the future of the Hashimite regime itself?

Required Reading –
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 9, Syrian Arab Republic.

Additional Reading –
ME Yapp, ‘Syria and Lebanon since 1958’.

Session 6

Iraq – Post-Saddam, post-US, and ISIS/IS and Iraq today.

The 1958 coup in Iraq brought an end to pro-Western Hashemite rule, and brought to power the region’s second Ba’athist regime. This new Iraq would be prominent in the Pan-Arabist initiatives in the years to come, and in the wars with Israel, but would only come to true prominence, regionally and globally, after Saddam Hussein’s rise to power in 1979. Within months he had invaded Iran, and once the war with them was over was to invade Kuwait in 1990. After years of increasing international pressure, and the slide into international pariahdom, Saddam was finally toppled earlier this year after the defeat of Iraq by the US and its allies. This class will examine the ‘new’ Iraq after, and how it may emerge as a State in the post Saddam reality. Can stability and true democracy be brought about in the new Iraq? Which internal elements - ethnic, religious and political - are vying for power now that the US has departed? How can a State and political system be constructed that will keep Shi’ites and Sunnis happy, Arabs, Kurds and Turkman happy, and provide for the desires and needs or all the country’s constituent communities?. What role might neighbours Iran, Syria and Turkey potentially play in the future shape and identity of Iraq? And what are the implications and consequences of ISIS gains in the country, and the declaration of an Islamic State in parts of Iraq?

Required Reading –
Session 7

War and Peace In The Middle-East - The Arab-Israel Conflict, the Oslo accords and the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict/peace track.

The conflict between the State of Israel and its Arab neighbours, that had in essence begun before Israel had even been officially established, had been the dominant context of the politics and history of the post-War Middle-East. For the contemporary issues to be appreciated in full context, the political, diplomatic and military history of the last half century or so needs to be understood. For the regional parties it was a conflict about survival and continuance (in Israel’s case), recognition (in the Palestinians’ case), and for national pride, independence and regional status (for the Arab world). Also a testing ground for the arms of the USA and the Soviet Bloc, and a playground for the political, diplomatic and covert conflicts of East and West, the Middle-East was a region that formed a major facet of the Cold War and was an area in which many feared may as a consequence have been the genesis for a Third World War.

The Israeli-Palestinian peace process that arose in the early 1990s was a development of truly historic proportions, promising to bring to an end the region’s longest lasting, and most sensitive and important, political and military conflict. Defined by mutual recognition, and the notions of Land For Peace and a Two-State Solution, the formula worked out at Oslo and developed later in negotiations between the two sides for a time looked like it would indeed be the structure through which a lasting peace would develop. The reasons why this did not come to pass, and why the process actually collapsed after the Camp David talks in late-2000, is now a debate of huge political significance, and will be examined here at length. What factors need to be considered, can one side alone be blamed, was the process always doomed to failure or are individual leaders to blame for its collapse, and what lessons can be learned if peace is to be attained in the future? What affect did US and international involvement and pressure have on the successes and failures of the process, and what role can they play in current and future attempts to achieve the allusive Israeli-Palestinian peace? And what role can the wider Arab world play in the process?

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – Chapter 4, War and Lack of Peace.
(And the whole of the short Schulze text deals with this entire period, each war separately and the peace process)

Additional Reading –
Yapp, ‘Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians since 1950’.
Foreign Affairs – Introduction, and ‘From Peace To War’ section.

Session 8

Israel: Democracy or Anarchy ? A Democratic Audit –The Party List System and Israeli coalition politics;

The State of Israel, from its inception until the present day, has known nothing but coalition government, there being no less than three parties in every single one of its governments to date. This has come to pass due to Israeli elections being conducted under the ‘purest’ of Proportional Representation systems, The Party List mechanism, under which percentage of votes received are translated into an equivalent percentage of parliamentary seats. While it can be rightly argued that the system has allowed Israel’s multifaceted, multiethnic population to be reflected in political life, which some claim may have helped it avert civil war, many believe however that the system has frequently rendered Israel politically impotent. Why has this been the case? Why have attempts at electoral reform always failed or only resulted in only limited change? And how is the continued necessity for coalition government affecting Israel’s governance and political life today?

Required Reading –
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – pages 324 – 328 and pages 330 – 347 (the ‘Political Environment’, ‘Religion and the State’ and then the three political sections of Chapter 11).
Session 9

Palestinian Politics – PLO v Hamas - Secular Nationalism vs dedicated Islamism?

Palestinian politics is in a vital and intriguing place, with the secular ‘Old Boys’ the PLO and the Islamist ‘Newcomers’ Hamas vying for power and control, with Hamas now in control of Gaza. Examining the Palestinian Authority and its political institutions we will look at which of the two will likely prevail in their power struggle, whether either faction’s policy agenda will change in regards to domestic and regional challenges that will need to be faced, how Palestinian democracy and governance will be affected, and how this will all impact the lives of average Palestinians. Finally, how will developments affect Palestinian-Israeli relations, and thus the prospects for peace?

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – Case Study : Hamas, Chapter 5.
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – pages 324 – 328 and pages 330 – 347 (the ‘Political Environment’, ‘Religion and the State’ and then the three political sections of Chapter 11).

Session 10

Iran – Politics, Religion and Revolt in the post-Revolutionary Islamic Republic

The Iranian Revolution in 1979, and the replacement of a secular, pro-Western regime with a state run under traditional Islamic religious precepts, was an event of enormous importance not just for Iran but for the Muslim world and the Middle-East. Its implications and affect are still felt today. This class will examine whether the characterisations ‘Revolutionary State’ and ‘Islamic Governance’ apply to the Iran of today. How has Iran changed in the years following the death of the revolution’s leader and spiritual leader Ayatullah Khomenei? How far did Iran change politically under Mohammad Khatami, what difference did the election of Ahmadinejad make, and are the ‘reformist’ or ‘conservative’ wings exerting most influence on Iranian political life today? Finally, how will the recent election of a new President, Hasan Rohani, affect Iran’s domestic and foreign policy, and what impact will it have on the growing international crisis surrounding Iran’s nuclear programme?

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – ‘Case Study : The Iranian Revolution’ section, Chapter 5; and ‘Case Study : From Beyond The Veil – Iran Since the Revolution’ section, Chapter 7.
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 3, Islamic Republic of Iran.

Additional Reading –
Foreign Affairs – Iran In The Balance, by Puneet Talwar, Page 133.
Yapp, ‘Iran since 1960’

Session 11

SIMULATION EXERCISE

Session 12

Turkey – The notion of a secular Muslim state, and Turkey’s unique Military-Civil relations.

The nature of the internal dynamic within the modern state of Turkey has been a source of continued academic debate, its unique official status as a secular Muslim state, and the reality of the relationship between its political and military establishments making it something of an anomaly in the region. Also a non-Arab Muslim state, and sitting on the cusp of Europe and the Middle-East, it holds a singular place sociologically and geographically. Is the nature of the contemporary State still guided by the principles of its founder Ataturk, and what does the Turkish example tell us about the notion of a secular Muslim state in the Middle-East? How has the challenge of Islamism / Islamic Parties been met by government, and how is it effecting Turkey’s political geography today? Could Turkey’s experience be a model for change in other countries in the region, or should the decades of political instability and military intervention caution against implementing institutionalised secularism at State level elsewhere ? And how is Turkey’s affiliation with NATO, its close political and military links with the USA and Israel, and particularly its efforts to join the EU, affecting its relations with its neighbours and the Arab world in general?

Required Reading –
Milton-Edwards – ‘WWI and the Death of the Ottoman Empire’ section, Page 21, (Chapter 1).
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 2, Republic of Turkey.
Session 13

**Additional Reading** –
Yapp, ‘Turkey since 1950’

**Saudi Arabia – ‘Rentierism’, The House of Saud, Wahabi Islam + the guardianship of the Muslim holy cities.**

While the Saudi political and social system has been described by many as being ‘feudal’, the reality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is that it is a contradiction, both a traditionalist Islamic State and an oil economy, an ally of the US while at the same time the home of ideological movements from which radical elements like al-Qaeda have emerged. Also the land of the two holiest cities in Islam, the House of Saud have for decades had to navigate a fine line between the economic realities of the State, the demands of being protectors of the Holy sites, and dealing with nationalist and Islamist elements inside and out questioning the legitimacy of the regime. This class will examine the nature of the regime, the House of Saud and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the role of its oil and associated wealth on its internal political and social dynamic, and the Wahabi Islamic theology that is an important part of its theological grounding and worldview. Does the ‘Rentierism’ principle, a concept that stipulates that Saudi Arabia’s financial autonomy has granted the oil-rich state immunity from societal pressures, still apply to it today, or do many of its domestic challenges actually stem from its oil wealth? And what challenges does the rise in Islamic radicalism within the Kingdom and the wider Middle-East bring for the Saudi regime and its ability to maintain order and ensure its future ability to exist as a Western orientated oil economy?

**Required Reading** –
Milton-Edwards – Chapter 3, Political Economy: Riches of a Region
Long, Reich + Gasiorowski – Chapter 4, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Additional Reading** –
Foreign Affairs – Trouble In The Kingdom, by Eric Rouleau, Page 100.
Yapp, ‘Saudi Arabia since 1964’

Session 14

**Revision Class**

**Examination**

**Final examination**

**Classroom Etiquette**

Students are expected to remain in class for the duration of the class.

Toilet breaks should be taken before or after class or during class breaks.

Food & drink, including gum, are not to be consumed in class.

Mobile phones should be set on silent and should not be used in class except for emergencies.

Laptops are only to be used with the express permission of the teacher.

Hagai M. Segal is an award-winning academic, consultant and analyst. A political scientist and historian, he has specific expertise in regards the Middle-East and terrorism. A frequent contributor on radio and TV, and an advisor to counter-terror and security agencies across the globe, Segal serves on the London First Security & Policing Advisory Board and Global Risk Network Executive Advisory Committee. He has lectured at NYU in London since 2004.
NYU GLOBAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

Policies and procedures for Global Academic Centres, including policies on academic integrity and the Study Away Standard, can be found here: https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/student-services.html

Absences: Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html

NYU London work submission policies can be found here: http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html

Classroom conduct: Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services.

Please refer to the NYU London Disruptive Student Behaviour Policy at https://goo.gl/Nvt5Vu for examples of disruptive behaviour and guidelines for response and enforcement.