

**New York University
Department of Politics**

**Middle Eastern Government and Politics
G53.2590/G77.2590
Fall Semester 2005
Tuesdays 4:10-6pm
Silver Center 512**

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Course Description

This course analyzes politics in the contemporary Middle East by focusing on several major themes and political issues. It assumes basic knowledge and familiarity with contemporary history and politics of the region. Among the topics examined are: decline of the Middle East and the process of state formation, the Great Powers' interests and policies in the region, domestic turmoil, coups, revolutions and wars, the Islamic state, religious militancy, the politics of gender, urban/rural politics, political economy of oil and the rentier state, civil society and political reform, Middle East and its future. The amount of time devoted to the above topics may vary considerably. For purposes of illustration, examples are drawn from a few selected Middle Eastern countries. No one country is analyzed in depth.

This is primarily a lecture course. Questions, comments, and discussion are encouraged. Furthermore, some of you will be asked to lead the discussion on some of the assigned topics. Guest lecturers are occasionally invited to share some of their expertise on a particular subject with the class.

Course Requirements

The requirements for the course include (1) a **term paper** of some **5,000-6,000 words** (20-25 pages); (2) **seven précis** of no more than two-pages each based on the required course books. In addition, several reading assignments (primarily in article

format) will be either distributed in class or sent to you via email (NYU Blackboard).

All topics for term papers must be approved by the instructor. Your choices are indeed wide and practically any relevant topic dealing with politics, economy, society, and culture of the modern Middle East is appropriate. Select topics that are specific and narrow and raise a central research issue or query. Avoid unnecessarily general or overview topics. **Please submit as soon as possible (but by no later than October 11, 2005) a one-page description of your research paper to the instructor.** This can be done either in class or via email to the instructor. All other written material should be given to the instructor in hard copy. If you prefer, you may place them in my mailboxes at either Politics Department or the Kevorkian Center (4th floor).

The précis need to summarize the major theses of the assigned readings and make some critical commentaries on their validity or relevance. The précis will be marked by one, two, or three check points. One check point indicates that you have misinterpreted the book and/or its major thesis. Should you receive a single check point, then you should make an appointment to see me. Two or three check points indicate acceptable summary and analysis.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Term Papers: All term papers are due on **December 13, 2005**. (Please note that your paper topics have to be approved by the instructor by no later than October 11, 2005). Please also note that the last day of classes (for this course and all Tuesday classes) is on **December 6, 2005**.

Précis: You may submit the précis **any time** during the term. You should begin readings the required books in the order suggested below and submit your précis immediately afterwards. It is not a good idea to wait until the end of the term to submit the précis. Reading the books (and other assignments) routinely will enhance your appreciation of the course.

Required Books & Readings

The following books (all paperbacks) are available at the NYU Book Center. They are also available at Barnes and Noble (Fifth Ave. store) and other book shops in the area.

Michael Cook, Forbidding Wrong in Islam: An Introduction, Cambridge.

Fawaz Gerges, America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests, Cambridge.

Sohail H. Hashmi, ed., Islamic Political Ethics: Civil Society, Pluralism, and Conflict, Princeton.

Yitzhak Nakash, The Shi'is of Iraq, Princeton.

Laribi Sadiki, The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses, Columbia.

Jenny White, Islamic Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics, Washington.

Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt, Columbia.

The following books have not been ordered but have relevance to our discussions.

Naha Abdelrahman, Civil Society Exposed: The Politics of the NGO's in Egypt, American University in Cairo.

Laurie Brand, Women, the State, and Political Liberalization: Middle Eastern and North African Experiences, Columbia.

Changing Minds and Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World, submitted to the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, October 1, 2003. [The Advisory Group chaired by Edward Djerejian].

Robert Hefner, ed., Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization, Princeton.

Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, The Government and Politics of Israel, Westview.

Marjan Satrapi, Persepolis, volumes 1 and 2, Pantheon.

TOPICS

The lecture topics and the readings do not easily correspond to one another. The general order of readings should begin in the following order: Laribi, Gerges, Cook, Nakash, Hashmi, White, and Wickham. Additional required readings relevant to the topics below will be made available either in class or electronically. Consult with your instructor for additional recommended readings.

Decline of the Middle East and State Formation

Culture and Politics/ Area Studies and Social Sciences

The Great Powers: Interests and Roles

Social Unrest, Coups, Riots, Revolutions, and Wars

The Islamic State

Religious Militancy and the Islamists

The Politics of Gender

Urban and Rural Politics

Rentier State, Civil Society, Political Reform, and Democracy

The Middle East and Its Future

