

POLS 2590 – Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

Spring 2024

MWF 12:00-12:50 pm, McGannon 121

Professor Matthew Nanes – matthew.nanes@slu.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 11:00-12:00, McGannon 133

Course Description:

This course examines the modern politics of the Middle East and North Africa, emphasizing the years 1960 to 2010. Students who complete each of the written assignments for this course will gain a stronger understanding of the system of contemporary knowledge production about the region.

Course Motivation and Goals:

This course introduces students to the politics of the contemporary Middle East. It is a course in “comparative politics,” meaning that we will focus primarily on the domestic politics of various countries, including their institutions and cultures. The course assumes minimal knowledge of the region and is appropriate for students from all majors. You may find it helpful to have taken an introductory course in international politics, but there are no required prerequisites.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Identify key characteristics of the current government of most Middle Eastern countries, including whether the country is democratic or authoritarian (and the nuances between different types of authoritarian governments), the current economic situation in the country, the religious makeup of the country and religion’s role in politics, and the most important social and political issues citizens face.
- Identify the religious and ethnic cleavages that are politically relevant in the Middle East, explain their origins, and analyze how these divisions affect contemporary politics.
- Explain the degree to which different countries do or do not rely on oil revenues, and how this reliance affects their political situations.
- Apply political science theories on identity, protest and revolution, federalism, and civil conflict to contemporary events in the Middle East.
- Analyze isolated events like those you might find in a newspaper article in a broader context. Explain the background of the event in question, identify the key players and their preferences, and predict what we might expect to happen next.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance and active participation are expected at every class session. Throughout the semester, you will participate in several classroom activities, including simulations, presentations, discussions, and short written assignments. If you are absent for a reason that is both unforeseeable and unavoidable, you will be allowed to make up the assignment if possible, otherwise you will be exempt from the grade. Missed assignments due to unexcused absences will receive a 0.

If you miss a class, please be in touch as soon as it is feasible so we can make the necessary arrangements. My goal is to be reasonable and accommodating.

Grading and Assignments:

1. **READING QUESTIONS – 25%.** These take-home assignments are designed to ensure that you have completed the assigned readings and are prepared to discuss them. They are open-book, but you must work alone. Your responses are due before the start of class in which we discuss the relevant reading, and they cannot be turned in late. If you miss an assignment due to an *excused* absence, you will be exempt from the grade. For the most part, I've assigned reading questions for the most difficult readings to help guide you through them. If you can answer the questions correctly, you should feel confident that you got what you were supposed to out of the reading. Note: Professor may convert these quizzes to in-class if there is evidence of cheating on the take-home quizzes.
2. **CLASS PARTICIPATION – 20%.** All students are expected to contribute to in-class discussions in a thoughtful manner. Your performance on any in-class activities is included in this category, including (but not limited to) the OPEC simulation and reflection, collective action activity, critical analysis of research articles, and discussions of current events.
3. **COUNTRY PRESENTATION – 5%.** Each student (or small group, depending on class size) will be assigned a country at the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester, students will give a short (5-8 minute) presentation on a current political event in their assigned country. If noteworthy events occur in your assigned country during the semester, I may ask you to briefly discuss them with the class.
4. **MIDTERM PAPER – 25 %.** Due March 6th at 9:00 pm
5. **FINAL PAPER – 25%.** Due May 10th at 10:00 am

Students taking this course for honors credit will give a more extensive presentation and lead a classroom discussion on an agreed-upon topic. Please contact me by the end of Week 2 so we can discuss details.

I will convert your numeric grades to a letter course grade using this scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Making the Most of Lectures:

This class deals with topics that may be sensitive, emotionally-charged, and of course “political.” You may find yourself outside of your comfort zone, either due to something in the readings, something I say, or something a classmate says. This is a normal part of the learning experience. So long as we remain open-minded and respectful of these differences, they are a source for learning. You should feel free to challenge statements that you disagree with, regardless of whether they come from me or from a classmate. Just be sure that you do so in a respectful manner. Be open to the possibility that you are both right (or both wrong). Always make sure to challenge the statement, not the person who said it.

If you find yourself uncomfortable with the way a topic is being discussed in class, please come talk to me about it.

Readings and Resources:

You do not need to purchase any books. All assigned reading will be posted on the course website or linked directly from this syllabus.

You should follow the news in the Middle East throughout the semester. Some resources that provide a good place to start:

New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/middleeast/index.html>

Al-Jazeera English: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

Al-Monitor: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/home.html>

Ynet News (Israel-specific): <http://www.ynetnews.com>

There is a lot of “biased” news (or perhaps biased “news”) on the internet. Read broadly, but always consider the source and the perspective of that source when interpreting new information. Also remember to check whether you are reading news or analysis.

Academic Integrity:

I take academic integrity very seriously. I intend to make the guidelines for each assignment clear. If you are not sure what is allowed on an assignment, you should contact me for clarification. Unless I specify otherwise, assignments should be completed on your own with no input from anyone else. Any violation of academic integrity will result in an automatic F in the class.

You should familiarize yourself with the university’s general guidelines on academic integrity found here: <http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php>

Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented need who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please visit their website (<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/accessibility-and-disability-resources/index.php>) for details. Please also contact me as soon as possible if you wish to discuss any of these options.

Also see: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt-disability-accommodations.docx>

Title IX

SLU policy and federal law requires that I pass along certain types of information that you share with me. Even if you ask me to keep the information confidential, I am not allowed to do so. You can find full information here: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt-title-ix.docx>

Student Success Center

“In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.”

University Writing Services

“Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the Student Success Center or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.”

Basic Needs Security

“Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.”

Equity and Global Identities - Identities in Context

This course is part of the Saint Louis University Core, an integrated intellectual experience completed by all baccalaureate students, regardless of major, program, college, school or campus. The Core offers all SLU students the same unified approach to Jesuit education guided by SLU’s institutional mission and identity and our nine undergraduate Core Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

Identities in Context is one of 19 Core Components. The University Core SLO(s) that this component is designed to intentionally advance are listed below:

University Core Student Learning Outcomes

The Core SLO(s) that this component is intentionally designed to advance are:

SLO 5: Analyze how diverse identities influence their lives and the lives of others

Additionally, the Core Component-level Student Learning Outcomes are listed below:

Component-level Student Learning Outcomes

- Students who complete this course will be able to:
- Examine interdependent / interrelational qualities of identity categories such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, race, class, ability, and sexual orientation
- Analyze how interdependent / interrelational identities are constructed through and shaped by relations of power
- Assess how other people’s social identities and biases shape and are shaped by their interactions within a social context
- Articulate how one’s own notions of identity and otherness are contingent on the social contexts in which they develop and which they in turn shape

Date	Before Class	In Class
Module 1: Origins of the Modern Middle East		
<p>Wednesday 1/17/24</p>	<p>Al Jazeera: Sykes-Picot a Century On http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/sykes-picot-100-years-middle-east-map/index.html</p> <p>Jacobs, Frank (2012), “Winston’s Hiccup.” <i>New York Times</i> http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/06/winstons-hiccup/?_r=0</p>	<p>Course introduction</p> <p>Discussion of borders</p>
<p>Friday 1/19/24</p>	<p><i>The readings below discuss the Balfour Declaration. As you read, pay attention to similarities and differences between the way that each source discusses the same information. Note how even though all three sources are factually accurate, they paint different pictures of these facts.</i></p> <p>Knell, Yolande (2017), “Balfour Declaration: The divisive legacy of 67 words.” https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-41765892</p> <p>Ettinger, Shmuel, “The Balfour Declaration of 1917: A landmark in efforts to secure a Jewish state.” https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-balfour-declaration/</p> <p>Tahhan, Zena (2018), “More than a century on: The Balfour Declaration explained.” https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/11/2/more-than-a-century-on-the-balfour-declaration-explained</p>	<p>Making of the modern Middle East</p> <p>Discussion of “bias” in presenting factual information</p>
Module 2: Monarchies and the Gulf		
<p>Monday 1/22/24</p>	<p>Yom and Gause (2012), “Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On” Reading Q’s due before class</p> <p>Study for map quiz</p>	<p>Map quiz</p> <p>Discussion of monarchies</p>

Wednesday 1/24/24	Gardner, Andrew (2012), “Why do they Keep Coming? Labor Migrants in the Persian Gulf States.” In Kamrava and Bara (eds.), <i>Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf</i> . Reading Q’s due before class	Discussion of migration and migrant labor in the Gulf Student Presentations (countries TBA)
Friday 1/26/24	Kinzer, Stephen. <i>All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror</i> . Wiley 2008. Pages 1-16	Iran’s Monarchy
Module 3: Petro-Politics		
Monday 1/29/24	Ross, Michael (2012), “The Oil Curse.” Chapters 1 (p. 1-14) and 2 (p. 27-62) OR Chapters 3 (p. 63-93) and 4 (p. 111-144)	Lecture: Oil and Democracy Peer-to-peer teaching of The Oil Curse
Wednesday 1/31/24	Vander Zanden, Jenny (2020), “What is OPEC?” https://www.breakthroughfuel.com/blog/what-is-opec-overview Danielsen, Albert, “OPEC.” https://www.britannica.com/topic/OPEC	Student Presentations (countries TBA) Discussion of cartels and natural resource production
Friday 2/2/24		OPEC simulation
Module 4: Israel and Palestine		
Monday 2/5/24	Watch “The Oslo Diaries” (linked from Canvas)	NO CLASS Use time to watch the documentary
Wednesday 2/7/24	Anti-Defamation League (2013), “A Brief History of Anti-Semitism” Shlaim, Avi (1999), Prologue: The Zionist Foundations. In <i>The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World</i> , p. 1-27	Jewish Immigration to Palestine
Friday 2/9/24		University Wellness Day – No Classes

Monday 2/12/24	<p>Brown, Jeremy (2017), “1967 War: Six Days that changed the Middle East.” https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39960461</p> <p>Laub, Zachary (2017), “How Six Days in 1967 Shaped the Modern Middle East.” https://www.cfr.org/expert-roundup/how-six-days-1967-shaped-modern-middle-east</p>	Pan-Arabism; Arab-Israeli Wars
Wednesday 2/14/24	<p>Qurie, Ahmed (2006), <i>From Oslo to Jerusalem: The Palestinian Story of the Secret Negotiations</i>. Pages 1-5, 34-51, 290-298.</p>	Oslo Accords and the partitioning of Palestine
Friday 2/16/24	<p>B’Tselem (2012), “Arrested Development: The Long Term Impact of Israel’s Separation Barrier in the West Bank.” <i>Read, watch the video and explore the interactive presentation.</i> https://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201210_arrested_development</p> <p>Scheindlin, Dahlia (2016), “Israel’s Deepest Divide” http://972mag.com/israels-deepest-divide/117987/</p> <p>Solomon, Shoshanna (2018), “To help Arabs integrate, Israel should help strengthen Arab identity – study.” https://www.timesofisrael.com/to-help-arabs-integrate-israel-should-help-strengthen-arab-identity-study/</p>	Intifadas, terrorism, and anti-Arab discrimination
Monday 2/19/24	<p>1988 Hamas Charter: http://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818.htm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative translation for reference: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp <p>Bhasin and Hallward (2013), “ Hamas as a Political Party: Democratization in the Palestinian Territories.” Reading Q’s due before class</p> <p>Al-Jazeera (2017), “ Hamas accepts Palestinian state with 1967 borders” http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/hamas-accepts-palestinian-state-1967-borders-170501114309725.html</p> <p>Norman, Julie (2021), “ Israel-Palestine conflict: the role of Hamas and Fatah rivalry in latest violence.” https://theconversation.com/israel-palestine-conflict-the-role-of-hamas-and-fatah-rivalry-in-latest-violence-160814</p>	Governing Palestine

	<p><i>Recommended Readings (optional)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown (2010), “The Hamas-Fatah Conflict: Shallow but Wide.” • Shikaki (2006), “The Palestinian Elections: Sweeping Victory, Uncertain Mandate” • 	
Wednesday 2/21/24		GUEST SPEAKER
Friday 2/23/24	Abrahams, Alexei (2019), “Not Dark Yet: The Israel-PA Principal-Agent Relationship.” In Berman and Lake (eds.), <i>Proxy Wars</i> .	Cycles of war Discussion of 2023 Israel-Hamas war
Monday 2/26/24		Electoral Institutions
Wednesday 2/28/24	Nanes (2017), “Political Violence Cycles: Electoral Incentives and the Provision of Counterterrorism” Reading Q’s due before class	Political incentives and (counter)terrorism Discuss Midterm paper assignment
Friday 3/1/24		Student Presentations (country TBA)
Module 5: Religion and Sectarianism		
Monday 3/4/24	<p>Cook, Michael. “The Koran: A Very Short Introduction.” Oxford University Press 2000. Pages 5-7, 127</p> <p>NPR: The origins of the Shiite-Sunni Split, http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2007/02/12/7332087/the-origins-of-the-shiite-sunni-split</p> <p>Browse for more information: http://www.cfr.org/peace-conflict-and-human-rights/sunni-shia-divide/p33176#!/?cid=otr-marketing_url-sunni_shia_infoguide</p> <p>“A More Complex Map of Sunnis and Shiites” http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/01/04/world/middleeast/sunni-shiite-map-middle-east-iran-saudi-arabia.html?_r=0</p>	<p>Historical origins of Islam in the Middle East</p> <p>The Sunni-Shia cleavage</p>

Wednesday 3/6/24	Midterm Paper due via Canvas – 9:00 PM	Constructivism
Friday 3/8/24	Hashemi and Postel (2017), “Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East” Reading Q’s due before class	A more complex understanding of sectarianism
March 11-15: Spring Break / No Classes		
Module 6: Political Islam		
Monday 3/18/24	Sadowski, Yahya (2006), “Political Islam: Asking the Wrong Questions?” Reading Q’s due before class	Political Islam
Wednesday 3/20/24	Abdo, Geneive (2000), <i>No God but God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam</i> . Chapter 1, p. 3-18. Reading Q’s due before class	Popular Islam
Friday 3/22/24	Freer, Courtney (2016), “The Changing Islamist Landscape of the Gulf Arab States”	The Muslim Brotherhood
Monday 3/25/24		Student Presentations (countries TBA)
Wednesday 3/27/24	Katouzian, Homa (2009), “The Iranian Revolution of 1979” https://www.mei.edu/publications/iranian-revolution-february-1979 Brookings: Forty years after the Iranian revolution https://www.brookings.edu/articles/four-decades-later-did-the-iranian-revolution-fulfill-its-promises/	1979 Iranian Revolution
Friday 3/29/24		Easter Break – No Classes
Monday 4/1/24		
Module 7: Protest, Revolution, and the Arab Spring		

Wednesday 4/3/24	Bellin, Eva 2004, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> Reading Q's due before class	How dictators rule
Friday 4/5/24		NO CLASS – Professor Nanes at a conference
Monday 4/8/24		NO CLASS – go see the eclipse
Wednesday 4/10/24	Steinert-Threlkeld, Zachary (2017), "Spontaneous Collective Action" Reading Q's due before class	Collective action activity
Friday 4/12/24	Bellin, Eva (2012). "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring."	
Monday 4/15/24	Campante and Chor (2012), "Why was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring." Reading Q's due before class	
Module 8: Federalism and Power Sharing		
Wednesday 4/17/24	Raymond, Elad (2020), "Federalism in a Unitary Desert: Analyzing the Successes of Federal Political Structure in the United Arab Emirates." Onero Institute." https://www.oneroinstitute.org/federalism-in-uae	The United Arab Emirates and Confederal Politics
Friday 4/19/24	Harb, Imad (2006), "Lebanon's Confessionalism: Problems and Prospects." <i>United States Institute of Peace</i> .	Lebanon's National Pact
Monday 4/22/24		The 2003 US Invasion of Iraq
Wednesday 4/24/24	Wimmer, Andreas (2003), "Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq"	Ethno-Federalism I
Friday 4/26/24	Galbraith, Peter W. "Kurdistan in Federal Iraq." In O'Leary, McGarry, and Salih (2005), <i>The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq</i> . p. 268-281 Reading Q's due before class	Ethno-Federalism II

Module 9: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency		
Monday 4/29/24	Berman and Matanock (2015), "The Empiricists' Insurgency" <i>Reading Q's due before class</i>	"Hearts and minds" counterinsurgency
Wednesday 5/1/24	Lake, David (2019), "Iraq, 2003-11." In Berman and Lake (eds.), <i>Proxy Wars: Suppressing Violence Through Local Agents</i> . p. 238-263.	Insurgency in Iraq
Friday 5/3/24	Mironova, Vera (2019), <i>From Freedom Fighters to Jihadists: Human Resources of Non-State Armed Groups</i> . Chapters 2 (p. 47-66) and 6 (p. 135-172).	Internal workings of insurgent organizations
Monday 5/6/24	Kao and Revkin (2021), "Retribution or Reconciliation? Post-Conflict Attitudes Toward Enemy Collaborators" <i>Reading Q's due before class</i>	Post-conflict reconciliation
Friday 5/10/24	<i>Final exam due via Canvas – 10:00 AM</i>	