PSC 225 – POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Furman University
Spring 2012

Instructor: A.Kadir Yildirim
Meeting Days and Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00-2:15pm
Meeting Location: Johns 201
Office Location: Johns 111N
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9:00-10:30am, or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
This course is an introduction to the politics of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region encompassing the states of the Arab world, Iran, Israel and Turkey. We will cover three general themes throughout the course. First, we will discuss the historical and contemporary sources of nation-state building, class structures and politics. Second, we will analyze the political economy of the region. Economic underdevelopment, politics of oil and globalization are among the topics we will cover. And finally, we will review the interplay between democratization, political Islam and secularism in the region. More specifically, we will deal with questions on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. The course will also discuss some of the important issues in the region such as colonialism and the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the recent Arab Spring. The course will feature country-case studies to apply the theoretical framework introduced in the earlier part of the course.

By the end of this course students are expected to attain more accurate, nuanced and complete understanding of the region, its culture, history, economy, people and states. The students are also expected to employ this basic understanding of the region and its politics to make sense of the contemporary issues and developments in the region.

TEXTBOOKS:
The textbooks are available for purchase at Furman Bookstore. However, you may purchase them online at various booksellers such as Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble, including used copies. There are large portions of reading from both books, and I encourage you to purchase both books. All other readings are available electronically on Moodle (http://courses.furman.edu).


COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and in-class participation are important elements of learning in class. Students are expected to participate in and contribute to class discussions. The subject matter of this course may be particularly complex for some students; in order to facilitate the learning process, I encourage every student to ask questions where clarification is needed. It is my
responsibility to introduce key concepts and subjects in a comprehensible manner; whenever I fail to do so, I encourage the students to remind me. At the same time, it is the students’ responsibility to come to class having read the required reading material. Prior exposition to the subject matter will greatly enhance chances of learning, and contribute to an interactive classroom atmosphere. Student participation in the classroom will positively affect your participation grade. In order to move beyond superficial commentaries that can be found in the media on a regular basis, I expect the students to avoid stereotypical comments and remarks. Students are free to take any positions they see reasonable, yet proper reasoning and empirical evidence should accompany arguments. Students are also expected to contribute to news discussions each class.

**Quizzes:** There will be several quizzes throughout the semester on different subjects. Quizzes will be short and will evaluate the reading of course materials for the relevant sessions. No make-ups will be given for missed quizzes.

**Book Review:** In order to obtain in-depth expertise of a particular country and/or an issue in the region, I expect each student to write a book review from a list provided by the instructor. Details will be given throughout the semester.

**Exams:** There will be two midterm exams and one final exam in this course. The exams will be a mixture of short answers and essay questions. Detailed information will be provided prior to each exam.

**Late Paper and Make-up Exam Policy:** Failing to submit your paper on time will cause a 15% decrease in your grade for the paper for each period of 24 hours until 48 hours after which I will not accept any submissions. It is the student’s responsibility to turn in the assignment on the due date and time. Make-up exams are highly discouraged as they will be more difficult than on-time exams. Make-up exams will be given only for medical reasons, and I will need proper official documentation to this effect.

**Student Conduct:** As adults I expect every student to act responsibly in the classroom. Even though it is your choice to ignore what is happening in the classroom, I will not tolerate any behavior disrupting other students’ in-class learning. Consistent disruptive behavior will be reflected as a negative participation to your final grade. Examples of disruptive behavior include reading of not-course-related material (i.e., newspaper or magazine), eating, using cell phones or leaving them on.

**Grading:**
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Quizzes & Assignments: 15%
- Midterm Exam I: 20%
- Midterm Exam II: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%
- Book Review: 15%

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT:**

Academic conduct at Furman University is governed by the Academic Policies Committee according to the academic integrity policy (121.5). The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of violation of academic integrity policy illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. The student engaging in academic misconduct will fail this class. See overview of Academic Integrity Policy for more information: [http://www2.furman.edu/sites/integrity](http://www2.furman.edu/sites/integrity).

It is essential that the arguments in your written work be your own, that quotations be properly attributed and placed within quotation marks, and that you specifically acknowledge sources whose
arguments you are drawing on even if you do not quote them directly. Quoting or paraphrasing without attribution constitutes plagiarism. If you have questions or you are in doubt, I am happy to answer your questions on issues pertaining to academic honesty. I will examine research papers and exams for possible abuses of this policy; to this end, I use www.turnitin.com.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in the Earle Informatory, Room 002. Website: http://www2.furman.edu/sites/disability.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**January 10 (Tuesday) – Introduction & Course Overview**

**January 12 (Thursday) – Video**
- “Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet” (PBS Documentary)
- “Islam: Empire of Faith” (PBS Documentary)

**The Middle East – Conceptual and Historical Background**

**January 17 (Tuesday) – Introduction to the Middle East**
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 1-4.

**January 19 (Thursday) – History I – The Rise of Islam and Ottoman Period**
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 37-59.
- CQ – Middle East, pp. 1-25.

**BOOK SELECTIONS DUE – January 19**

**January 24 (Tuesday) – History II – Colonial Period and Post-Independence Era**
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 59-89.
- CQ – Middle East, pp. 25-50.

**Political Economy of the Middle East**

**January 26 (Thursday) – Oil**
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 255-279.
January 31 (Tuesday) – Rentier State and Politics

February 2 (Thursday) – State-led Economic Development and Globalization
- CQ – Middle East, pp. 113-141.
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 221-251.
- Gerner and Schwedler, pp. 281-307.

Political Islam, Islam and Democracy

February 7 (Tuesday) – Origins of Political Islam

February 9 (Thursday) – Contemporary Political Islam and Policy Implications

⇒ MIDTERM I – February 14 (Tuesday)

February 16 (Thursday) – Islam and Democracy – Theory

February 21 (Tuesday) – Islam and Democracy – Empirics

Arab-Israel Conflict

February 23 (Thursday) – Origins of the Conflict
- CQ – Middle East, pp. 238-276.
- Beinin, Joel and Lisa Hajjar. “Palestine, Israel and Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer.” *MERIP* (Middle East Research & Information Project).
February 28 (Tuesday) – Current Situation and Policy Implications

- CQ – Middle East, pp. 277-313.

March 1 – Video

- “Paradise Now” (Movie by Hany Abu Assad)

➔ BOOK REVIEW SUMMARIES DUE – March 15

Country Case Studies

March 13, 15, 20 – Egypt

- CQ – Middle East, pp. 387-411.

➔ MIDTERM II – March 22 (Thursday)

March 27, April 3, 5 – Turkey

- CQ – Middle East, pp. 730-760.

April 10, 12, 17 – Iran

- CQ – Middle East, pp. 411-436.
The Arab Spring

April 19 – The Arab Spring I


⇒ BOOK REVIEWS DUE – April 19

April 24 – The Arab Spring II


⇒ FINAL EXAM – April 26 (12:00-2:30pm)