Fall 2003
Pols 243 (#63265)
Politics and Government of the Middle East
Dr. Sultan Tepe
1:00-2:15   T, R   285   BSB
Office Hours: Thursday 2:15 to 5:15.

Recent events have shown that the Middle East remains one of the most strategic regions, if not the most important one, for the maintenance of the stability in world politics. Despite its growing importance, however, the region remains one of the most obscure areas in the public imagination. Even a cursory review reveals that most analyses of the Middle East promote biased perceptions of the area while only a few raise the questions of "why" without assuming an answer. Given the dearth of analytical understanding of the region and crucial importance of such understanding the main objective of this course is to provide students with necessary analytical skills to differentiate rhetorical/polemical assessments of the region from the analytical ones. Among others the course will address the questions of why political instability is so prevalent in the region? Is the lack of democracy a regional or a cultural predicament? Is fundamentalism a quintessential Middle East product? Is the abundance of some natural resources such as oil and the lack of others such as water a barrier for democracy? Why does the Middle East have such sharp differences in wealth from one country to the next? Are religious differences the major reasons for the perpetual conflicts in the region?

In order to assist students in tackling these questions in an informed and analytical way, the course first questions the terms we use to understand the politics of the Middle East. Second, it provides a critical assessment of a set of historical political negotiations and consensus that shaped today's Middle Eastern landscape. This part will introduce students to the historical, institutional, and ideational foundations behind the current challenges facing the political systems in the Middle East. The third part will look at the region through the lenses of nationalism, political economy democracy, and gender. The final part will delve into some of the pressing issues and alternative solutions through a set of simulations.

Readings: Most of the readings are available on line through blackboard. (blackboard.uic.edu)
A course package will be available at Kinko's (843 W Van Buren).

Week I Rules of the Road
> **August 26 Introduction**
> **August 28 No class (American Political Science Annual Convention)**

Week II Firm ideas and Murky boundaries: Defining and Understanding the Middle East:
> " Middle East" is a widely used term, and yet the region does not have a clearly accepted boundary. Why is that the Middle East is one of the most mentioned regions yet its boundaries are still questioned? Given its popular coverage why do the region's locales complain about misrepresentation of their institutions and ideas? Can we adopt a balanced conceptual language to analyze the region without imposing our expectations on it? This section questions the very name of the region and points out the presence and possibility of some barriers for a better understanding of its local actors, culture and political systems. Accordingly, it will draw attention to the very terms we draw on to describe the region, introduce the idea of Orientalism, and its critique as well as the possibility of developing a balanced language that will reconcile the local ideas and institutions with those of the West.

September 2 Introduction Conflict and Peace in the Middle East (T-3277)

Sadowski Yahya, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy" in *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report, (*Joel Beinin and Joe Stork eds), University of California Press, 1997 (available online)

September 4 Orientalism, Edward Said, T-2674

Week III Colonial Legacy in the Middle East

One cannot grasp the current problems facing the countries of the Middle East without understanding its encounter with colonialism. This part will introduce the colonial legacy in the Middle East by raising the questions of how the implantation of certain political institutions affected the consolidation of nation-states and democracy in the region.

September 9 Berberoglu, Berch, Turmoil in the Middle East: Imperialism, War, and Political Instability, Albany, NY State University of New York Press, 1999 (available online)

September 11 Middle East After World War II. Drawing Boundaries and Dividing a Region (available online)

Assignment I due

Week IV Nationalisms failed or incomplete project

What does nationalism mean in the context of the modern Middle East? Are religious identities are more decisive than the nationalist ones? How did Pan Islamism Pan Arabism, Zionism relate to each other? Do we observe a new wave of nationalism where Syrian, Jordanian, Israeli etc national identities are more important than the ethnic religious or regional ones?

September 16 Karsh, Efraim, Karsh, Inari, "Reflections on Arab Nationalism", Middle Eastern Studies, Oct 1996. (available online)

September 18 Kadioglu, Ayse, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity,"Middle Eastern Studies, Apr 1996.

Donna Robinson Divine, "Zionism and Transformation of Jewish Society," *Modern Judaism*, 20 (2000): 257–276

Week V Political Economy of the Middle East

Can we speak of a regional oil economy in the Middle East? Why does the region host both the world's poorest and richest states? How does the economic dependence on oil affect democracy in the region? While it is tempting to believe that the issues affecting contemporary economics in the Middle East revolve solely around oil there are a number of other issues that are equally important such as import substituting industries, urbanization, the region's poor economic performance in global markets etc. This section shows natural resources are both a blessing and a curse in the region. A variety of economic systems have been practiced in the Middle East with varying degrees of success and there has been no single uniform pattern of economic relations across the region.

September 23 Ghonemy m. Riad, Affluence and Poverty in the Middle East, Routledge, Chapter II (available online)

September 25 Ross Michael, Does Oil Hinder Democracy" *World Politics* 53 (April 2001) (available online)

Allan J.A, Hydro-Peace in the Middle East: Why no Water Wars? A Case Study of the Jordan River Basin, *SAIS Review* vol. XXII no. 2 (Summer–Fall 2002) (available online)

Week VI

September 30: Review

October 2 Exam I

Week VII: Democratization

Democratization, liberalization and the promotion of liberal democracy in the Middle East became catchwords in the 1990s. The conventional view is that democracies are strangers to the Middle East arguing that the combined forces of Arab and Muslim political culture promote the region as an exception to the global rise of democracy. This section will

question whether a democratic Middle East is an oxymoron and assess the challenges facing the consolidation of liberal democracy in the region.

October 7 Pripstein-Posusney Marsha, Behind the Ballot Box: Electoral Engineering in the Arab World, Middle East Report, Winter 1998. (Available online)

October 9 TBA

Bassam Haddad, "Business As Usual in Syria?" Middle East Report, 2001. (Available online)

Schwedler Jillian, "Don't Blink Jordan's Democratic Opening and Closing," Middle East Report, 2002.

Week VIII Ethnic Minorities

The nation-state, the dominant political unit of the twentieth century has created a variety of illiberal practices in the Middle East with respect to its ethnic religious plurality. Many states in the region suffer from malintegration of state and society and consequently limited legitimacy among ethnic groups that are excluded from political power. This section looks at politics of the Middle East from the lenses of ethnic politics and wrestles with the question of whether "hegemonic control", control of ethnic and cultural plurality by an ethnic group is a norm in the Middle East? How can liberal democratic practices take root under hegemonic control? To what extent can the regimes accommodate ethnic and cultural plurality? Can Iraq be a model for an ethnic plural democracy?

October 14 Basam Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old Tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East" in Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East. (Available online).

October 16 *Dawisha Adeed,* The Assembled State Communal Conflicts and Governmental Control in Iraq, in **Ethnic Conflict and International Politics in the Middle East**, Binder, Leonard. Gainsville, Fla. University Press of Florida, 1999. (available online)

Week IX Invisibles: Women

Do women still remain largely a marginal force in the Middle East? If so is religion the sole reason for such marginalization? How do the regional conflicts, the prevalence of rentier states or lack of liberal public sphere affect the role of women in their respective societies? Can we talk of a patriarchal state in the Middle East? This part will review the political institutions and processes of the region vis-a-vis their treatments of women and highlight their contradictory visions.

October 21 Moghadam, Valentine M.; "Gender, National Identity and Citizenship: Reflections on the Middle East and North Africa," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol.19, No.1, 1999.

October 23 TBA

Vaziri Persheng, "**Caught in the Middle Women and Press Freedom in Iran," Middle East Report, Winter 2001. (available online)**

Week X War and Lack of Peace?

Continual failure of the peace agreements in the region led many to conclude that lack of peace is the predicament of the region due to the irreconcilable cultural and religious differences. This part will challenge such culturalist evaluations by showing that the lack of peace is a choice adopted by the region's major political actors. Instead of looking at the bargaining between the two parties this section reintroduces the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians by emphasizing the role of radical forces within each polities.

October 28 Klein, Menachem; "By Conviction, Not by Infliction: The Internal Debate Over Reforming the Palestinian Authority," *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.2, Spring 2003.

Rosenfeld, Maya; "Power Structure, Agency, and Family in a Palestinian Refugee Camp," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.34, 2002.

October 30 Yiftachel Oren, "Democracy or Ethnocracy: Territory and Settler Politics in Israel/Palestine," Middle East Report, Summer 1998. (Available online)

Assignment II Due

Week XI Illiberal Democracies

November 4 Zubaida, Sami; "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.34, 2002. **(course package)**

November 6 Kamrava, Mehran; "The Politics of Weak Control: State Capacity and Economic Semi-Formality in the Middle East," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol.22, No.1-2, 2002. **(course package)**

Week XII Liberalization Impulse?

November 11 Seifzadeh, Hossein S.; "The Landscape of Factional Politics and its Future in Iran," *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003. **(course package)**
Takeyh, Ray; "Iran at Crossroads," *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.1, Winter 2003. **(course package)**

November 13 Dekmejian, Richard; "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.3, Summer 2003. **(course package)**

Greenwood, Scott; "Jordan's 'New Bargain:' The Political Economy of Regime Security," *Middle East Journal*, Vol.57, No.2, Spring 2003. **(course package)**

Week XIII Leaders, Issues and Alternative Solutions
November 18 Student Presentations
November 20 Student Presentations

Week XIV: Leaders, Issues and Alternative Solutions

November 25 **Assignment III Due Student Presentation**
November 27 No Class Thanksgiving

Week XV: Leaders, Issues and Alternative Solutions
December 2 Review

December 4 **Final Exam**

Course Requirements:

Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%
Assignments I 5%	
Assignment II 20 %	
Assignment III 20 %	
Participation	10%

Exams are designed to assess your grasp of main historical events and analytical terms. You will be provided with a list sample questions before each exam.

Assignments are prepared to enable students to apply their acquired knowledge to new issues and assess the regional developments from new perspectives.

Assignment I
How relevant is Said's orientalism today? Review at least three news articles about the Middle East and evaluate how they framed the issue? What do they emphasize and what do they leave out? What are the alternative ways they could have used to frame the news?

Assignment II
Choose one of the following ethnic or religious groups. Imagine yourself as one of their contemporary members in one of the countries of the Middle East. Write a brief report about your history, present situation and expectations. To complete this assignment you need to know the minority/majority position of a given group in a country of your choice, overall socioeconomic condition of the group and their political ideals. Please note that depending on their locations these groups have different status. Although Palestinians are regarded as a minority in Jordan they are the dominant group in West Bank and Gaza. If you are an Alewi in Syria you can be a high officer in the military. To complete the assignment you need to know that

although Alewis are in the minority they control the state apparatus in Syria. Because Alewis have disproportional power in Syria they fear that Sunni majority will take over the state. Therefore, a Syrian Alewi should have a relatively better off position in the Syrian society and expect that the state will maintain the status quo. However if you are a Palestinian in Jordan you might be leaving in a small town as an unskilled laborer. Given that the Jordanian government sees the Palestinians as a destabilizing force a Palestinian in Jordan can be very critical of the state policies and expect their alterations.

Ethnic or religious groups
Druze,Jews, Kurds, Moronites, Alewis, Shi'is, Azeris, Turkomans, Wahabis, Palestinians, Bedouins

Assignment III

The final assignment requires you to work in a team and prepare for a simulation game. Simulation intends to place you in the role of a player in a real-world political situation an encourage you to interpret reality, and power relationships. It is not about making a poor pantomime of real-life events.

You will be assigned to a team, and each team is allocated a role - that is, a character from the region who is a prominent political, religious or social leader. For example, one team may play Yasser Arafat, or the Secretary General of the United Nations or the Prime Minister of Turkey. The team is expected to prepare a role profile, which outlines their character's background, interests, political agenda, motivations, objectives, allies and enemies, and influences. Each team is issued with a computer account on the e-mail network.

During week X you will be presented with a scenario which sets the scene. It will be a situation is in the hypothetical world of the Simulation, and is usually set some time in the near future. Scenario will include a dramatic incident to which each character will have to react. The real world is always the starting point and a source of continued inspiration but students will create a microcosm of the Middle East by adopting policies in the persona of their character. The players then communicate with each other using electronic mail with the aim of develop the political situation to their advantage and furthering the interests of their character. They must act in character - that is, as their character would.

Although for this assignment you will be working as a team, you alone will prepare a role-profile. A properly prepared role-profile will illuminate not only the black and white elements of each role, but the many shades of grey and the personal touches that invariably form part of an individual or team. A role-profile need only be 5 pages in length and may be in any format that will best convey the necessary information.

To research your profile, contemporary and specialist sources are recommended. You may wish to turn to biographies and books to give an overview of your character, but make prudent use of up-to-date journals, magazines and news articles when really profiling your character. Online searches via the internet as well as specialist news services (such as Reuters Business Briefing) are particularly useful in that they allow keyword searches relevant to your role. When using the internet please verify the quality of the information source as numerous web-pages will present biased information as "factual".

In preparing a profile, you should not consume yourself with incidental biographical data such as birthdates, schooling, etc, except where this has a particular influence on your role - in which case the relevant effect should of course be discussed. A short historical overview should then link into information about philosophy and/or ideology - is your character more pragmatic or idealistic, reactive or active?

After a brief outline of your character and background, a profile should address your aims - both long term and short term. Your aims are indicative of an underlying philosophy or ideology and give motivation and direction to your character. Finally, you may wish to address your regional political relationships. Who are your internal allies and foes? Who are your regional partners, which enemies do you have? More importantly, why have such regional relations formed and how do they impact on your aims and goals?