COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is designed as a pro-seminar where students will engage the contemporary politics of the Middle East region, with active participation in the student-led discussions. Regular student participation is expected, focused on five core topic areas where you will exhibit flexibility in applying the scholarly materials and other media assigned to both current events as well as the scholarly issues raised. This will be done across the themes explored throughout the course, which touch on topical empirical events in real time, while also speaking to the scholarly literatures assigned that comprise contemporary debates scholars are engaging in Middle East politics.

It requires the student to think analytically and conceptually about politics in the region, thus the expectation is that students will have completed POLI 369 as an introduction to the field of study and come to class well prepared to discuss the assigned materials. ‘Contemporary Political Problems’ will focus on five primary drivers of change in the contemporary Middle East. These will include: the growing sectarianism of political identity and analytical discourse, the role of foreign intervention and its impact(s) on regional states and peoples, the popular opposition against authoritarian regimes highlighted by the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2010/11 and the emergence of non-state actors, the growing humanitarian crisis that has been driven by and exacerbated increasing attacks on the vulnerable - women, children, ethnic or religious minorities, as well as the withering of the regional state system that was developed following the World Wars and post-colonial period. Each phenomenon will be engaged in depth and the interconnections between all five explored.

The objectives of the course are for students to further develop habits of mind that exhibit critical thinking about sources of information, assumptions within descriptions and analysis of politics by scholars and media, and to thereby question the agenda-setting and framing of politics by the mainstream media, policy analysts, academics and political actors. The classroom sessions and written assignments are meant to provide opportunity for exercising a critical faculty towards politics as well as a mindfulness that demonstrates a student’s ability to study the subject without being subsumed by any one perspective.
Upon completion of the course students should be familiar with and able to demonstrate an active grasp of the five primary drivers of change and their impacts upon the contemporary Middle East. This will require the student to evidence the capability to critically evaluate and distinguish media and other sources of information, as well as confidence in discussing ideas freely within the pro-seminar classroom setting with the instructor and their fellow students. In doing so, students are expected to demonstrate both competencies with the basics of contemporary Middle East politics as well their own facility with critical thinking. Critical thinking is differentiated from critique, rather it demonstrates a habit of mind and should be found within both oral and written work. This will include, an ability to analyze and debate political events in a coherent manner, the ability to form individual conclusions, as well as an ability to think systematically in an effort to construct logical arguments about Middle East politics all while engaging in a collegial and supportive manner with the rest of the seminar attendees.

ASSIGNMENTS

The class will be run as a pro-seminar, thus the assessed components will include:

- Exams (3) 40%
  - October 04 15%
  - October 25 15%
  - November 29 10%

- Group Presentation 25%
- Book Review 20%
- Class Participation 15%

EXAMS (total of 40% of final grade)

There will be three multiple-choice exams assessing the assigned materials:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam #1</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Materials (readings and media – inclusive of …)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week 05</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45 m/c questions</td>
<td>Week One – 06 September 2019 through Week Four – 27 September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>04 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td>Week 08</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>45 m/c questions</td>
<td>Week Five – 04 October 2019 through Week Seven – 18 October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #3</td>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30 m/c questions</td>
<td>Week Eight – 25 October 2019 through Week Eleven – 15 November 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29 November</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GROUP PRESENTATION (25% of final grade)

The purpose of the group presentation is to elaborate - not just summarize! - on the theme of the week by utilizing the assigned materials as well as your own research, provide an update on the situation and to then integrate the theme with the course objectives.

**Groups will be organized through the D2L by Session 2 of the course schedule**

Each group will make a 60-minute presentation based on the integration of the following:

1. The readings assigned for that class session;
2. An examination of the assigned readings’ relationship to the course objectives;
3. Five full text articles selected by the group that provide substantiation for the arguments made in point 2 above. A copy of each full text article is to be sent electronically to the course instructor; and the full citation for each article is to be provided in the presentation hand-out;
4. Ten (10) multiple-choice prompts / questions (including answers) based on the presentation to be submitted with the handout.

Each presentation will be followed by a 30-minute question and answer period. The Group is expected to facilitate this discussion and ensure it remains relevant, interesting, and participatory.

- Due: as assigned in class
- Format: Powerpoint or equivalent
- Handout/hand-in: Powerpoint presentation handouts (3/page) or equivalent (please be sure all group member names are clearly identified)

*Note:* Any videos utilized in total should not exceed 20 minutes.

*Note:* A rubric for the presentation is included below.

BOOK REVIEW (20% of final grade)

Due: 29 November 2019 prior to 11:59 p.m. via the D2L dropbox

Each student will be responsible for selecting one (1) of the following books for review. You will also need to select three (3) scholarly journal articles (or similar pieces) with which to combine with your chosen book to complete the review.

The three articles must be approved by the instructor on or before 25 October 2019.

The book review will see you ‘situate’ the book in relation to the other course components (required readings, lectures, documentaries etc.).

(1) Step one: select one of the following books to review [note: these books have not been ordered into the University of Calgary Bookstore. They are widely available in bookstores and online – should any single volume pose a concern please inform the instructor]:

Step two: select three (3) scholarly journal articles (or similar pieces) with which to combine with your chosen book to complete the review. Journal articles can be searched, by subject keyword, author, journal etc. in the databases available through the University of Calgary library. Databases to use include: SocINDEX, Web of Science, Index Islamicus, Project Muse Journals, Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Academic OneFile or Google Scholar. You may consult with a research librarian or consult with the LibGuide for political science if you are unfamiliar with search techniques (http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/polisci).

Book chapters from edited collections, government publications or research reports by reputable organizations may also be considered. It would be wise to not proceed with your work prior to having the three journal articles / items approved by your instructor.

The three articles must be approved by the instructor on or before 25 October 2019.

Step three: read the book and three articles / items and craft your review! As with all of your writing assignments remember that your book review is written for an audience – who is your reader? In this case a fellow student from POLI 469, who is knowledgeable in the discipline of political science and is interested not just in the coverage and content of the book being reviewed, but also in your critical assessment of the ideas and argument that are being presented by the author. The review should not be a summary of the book. Instead it should state what the book sets out to do and assess how well the author achieves that goal. Largely, the exercise we are all pursuing is asserting a truth claim – whether that is in an article, book, presentation or discussion in class: what is the central truth claim of your chosen author? Is there more than one?

Several ideas might well guide you as you read the book and develop your critical analysis – with the three journal articles in mind to support and inform your decisions: what does the author(s) set out to accomplish with the book – why did they write it and what do they mean to get across to a reader? Is there a theoretical framework found – is it explicit or are there theoretical and conceptual assumptions made by the author(s) you can take note of?
What are those guiding concepts – are they clearly defined? Does the author(s) acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses’ of the chosen approach? What is the thesis or central argument(s) found in the book? Are they presented as hypotheses? What methods are employed to test hypothesis, argument or assertions found in the book? The author’s style – writing, expression, clarity etc. may play a role in your assessment – especially if it ‘gets in the way’ of understanding the material(s) or persuading a reader. What evidence is marshaled and is it critically evaluated – do you find the author’s evidence persuasive in support of the overall argument? Does the book fit within the broader literature you have read in political science – now in your fourth year are patterns and ‘schools of thought’ emerging? If so, where does this book fit? Does the book advance our knowledge of the subject?*

*Note: A rubric of expectations as well as assessment for the book review is included below.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (15% of final grade)

This has four components
1. Attending class
2. Being prepared by reading assigned work
3. Participating in class discussions
4. Reading inventory (8%): for each class, students are to prepare a ‘Reading Inventory’, not to exceed 2 pages (double spaced, standard type). For each session, the inventory should identify and define the 3 major concepts/issues introduced in the assigned readings and explain their significance to the larger course objectives. They are due in class and will not be accepted thereafter.

I keep careful track of participation because of points one through three above. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check with your classmates or to meet with me during office hours so that you can participate effectively in the following weeks.

Writing Statement: Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, including this one, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at [http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support](http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support).

Carleton University (USA). How to Write a Critical Book Review [https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/resources/study/criticalbookreview/](https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/history/resources/study/criticalbookreview/)
POLI 469 L01 Fall 2019 Grading Schema:

The Department of Political Science adheres to the University of Calgary Grading System.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good - clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Satisfactory - basic understanding of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>Receipt of a grade point average of 1.70 may not be sufficient for promotion or graduation. (See individual undergraduate faculty regulations.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Minimal pass - marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Fail - unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See: [https://ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html](https://ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/f-1-1.html)

A note on grades

I do not negotiate grades; however. I am available for clarification. If you believe that your grade does not accurately reflect the quality of your work, you are advised to initiate the Faculty's formal appeal process.

The Use of Electronics:

Laptops are not allowed in class. Cell phones should be turned off, and are not to be used in class for any reason.
Email Policy:

Email should be treated as a professional communication. Basic rules of grammar and etiquette apply. Emails that do not follow this will not be answered. Emails will be answered in due time, but not always immediately.

If you have questions regarding class material please raise them in class; it is often to the benefit of others. Office hours are for questions relating to the course mechanics and should not be seen as an opportunity for a private 'tutorial'. Moreover, grades will not be discussed over the phone or by emails. Students are encouraged to use the office hours and class time for that purpose.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

There is no required text for this course – required readings will be assigned as designated below, found variously on library reserve, on D2L, or available freely online.

Because this is a developing topic, this outline is only a general guideline; you are expected to keep abreast of developments in the region, especially as they apply to the five core thematic foci listed in the introduction. Updates and communications will be issued by email and on D2L as required, so ensure your email address on file is up to date and that you check it regularly during the semester.

RESERVE READINGS


CURRENT AFFAIRS

In both participation and leading discussions, students are responsible for addressing current affairs. In particular, students should pay attention to the nature of media coverage by comparing western reports on current affairs with indigenous sources. To this end the following sites are recommended:

Al-Monitor (USA): http://www.almonitor.com/
Al-Jazeera (Qatar): http://english.aljazeera.net
Al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt): http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/
Haaretz (Israel): http://www.haaretz.com/
Jordan Times (Jordan): http://www.jordantimes.com
Asian Times Online (Taiwan): http://www.atimes.com/
BBC (UK): http://www.bbc.co.uk/
CBC (Canada): http://www.cbc.ca/
Foreign Policy (USA): http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/
Foreign Affairs (USA): https://www.foreignaffairs.com/
National Interest (USA): https://nationalinterest.org/
The Economist (UK): http://www.economist.com/world/middle-east-africa
The New Yorker (USA): http://www.newyorker.com/
The Guardian (UK): http://www.theguardian.com/uk
The Independent (UK): http://www.independent.co.uk/
LA Times (USA): http://www.latimes.com/
Toronto Star (Canada): http://www.thestar.com/
RT (Russia): http://rt.com
Lobelog: https://lobelog.com/

Scholarly platforms and publications:

Jadaliyya: http://www.jadaliyya.com/
Middle East Report and Information Project (MERIP): https://merip.org/
Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS): https://pomeps.org/
Middle East Institute | Middle East Journal: https://www.mei.edu/
International Journal of Middle East Studies: https://ijmes.chass.ncsu.edu/
Middle East Studies Association: https://mesana.org/
The British Society for Middle East Studies: http://www.brismes.ac.uk/
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS
(tentative and subject to change; all articles are available through the library or online)

Week One – 06 September 2019: The state of the Middle East today

Required Readings:


Curtis R. Ryan, “Shifting Theories and Shifting Alliances in the Middle East,” (pp. 7-13), Waleed Hazbun, “In America’s Wake: Turbulence and Insecurity in the Middle East,” (pp. 14-17) and Bassel F. Salloukh, “From State-Building to State-Fraying Permeability: NSAs in the Post-Popular Uprisings Arab World,” (pp. 72-75) in POMEPS Studies 34: Shifting Global Politics and the Middle East (March 2019). Link: https://pomeps.org/pomeps-studies-34-shifting-global-politics-and-the-middle-east

“Ask A Muslim: Everything you wanted to know about Islam and Muslims but were embarrassed to ask,” The 1A (NPR). 15 March 2017). Link: http://the1a.org/shows/2017-03-15/ask-a-muslim.


Recommended Readings:


**Week Two – 13 September 2019: Sectarianism I**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week Three – 20 September 2019: Sectarianism II**

*Required Readings:*


**Recommended Readings:**


https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/01402390.2013.790314

**Week Four – 27 September 2019: Popular Uprisings I – Revolution?**

*Required Readings:*


*Recommended Readings:*

https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1215/00382876-2644185

https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1177/0263276414549264


https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A304051117/AONE?u=ucalgary&sid=AONE&xid=0ff5bfa

**Week Five – 04 October 2019: Popular Uprisings II – Counterrevolution?**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Week Six – 11 October 2019: Foreign Intervention I: Iraq

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Week Seven – 18 October 2019: Foreign Intervention II: Libya

Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week Eight – 25 October 2019: Foreign Intervention III: Syria**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/01436597.2015.1015788


http://hdl.handle.net/10023/7195

Danny Postel, “The War on ISIS: Views from Syrian Activists and Intellectuals" 
Dissent Blog, blog of Dissent Magazine. (20 September 2014) [Link] 
http://www.dissentmagazine.org/blog/war-isis-views-from-syrian-activists-and-intellectuals

https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/0163660X.2014.1002154

https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1093/jcsl/krt025

https://www.newcoldwar.org/seymour-m-hersh-on-obama-erdogan-and-the-syrian-rebels-april-2014/

**Week Nine – 01 November 2019 – Foreign Intervention IV: Yemen**

**Required Readings:**

Ariel I. Ahram, “Southern Yemen,” in his *Break all the Borders* (2019), pp. 95-120


*Recommended Readings:*


**Week Ten – 08 November 2019 – The end of the Arab state?**

*Required Readings:*


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week Eleven – 15 November 2019 – no class – Term Break**

**Week Twelve – 22 November 2019 – Attack on the Vulnerable I**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week Thirteen – 29 November 2019: Attack on the Vulnerable II**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

Week Fourteen – 06 December 2019: Islamic radicalism and the GWoT

Required Readings:


“If Islam’s Militants are Sons of the West,” Video: interview with Faisal Devji (Oxford University) Reset DOC. (30 November 2014). Link: http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022383 or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnBLK7zDIMY

Recommended Readings:


IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at ucalgary.ca/registrar). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit ucalgary.ca/registrar.

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html

Please note that while the form of supporting documentation provided is at the discretion of the student, the instructor has the discretion not to accept the supporting documentation if it does not corroborate the reason(s) given for the exemption/special request.

Absence From a Mid-term Examination:
Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferral of a Final Examination:
Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams.
Appeals:
If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

Student Accommodations:
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf.

University Regulations:
Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html.

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct:
Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Copyright Legislation:
As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, “students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.”

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP):
FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.
Evacuation Assembly Points:
In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:
For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students’ Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Library Block.

Important Contact Information:
Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students’ Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students’ Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students’ Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources:
SU Wellness Centre: http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/
Campus Mental Health Strategy: https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/