PSC 2478: International Relations of the Middle East

Semester: Spring 2018
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:45 to 6:00pm; Location: Rome 205
Office Hours: by appointment on Fridays between 10am and 1pm, at my office at 1050 Connecticut Ave, suite 1060.

Lecturer
Karen E. Young, PhD
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: karenyoung19@email.gwu.edu or my other work email: Karen.young@agsiw.org

Course Description
This course examines the international relations of the Middle East, focusing on questions of how states developed, what drives conflict, and how the regional order has shifted over time. The course draws on theories of International Relations, and applies them to the politics of the Middle East. The course analyzes the interplay of levels of analyses, with specific attention to the role of ideology, identity, and the interaction between domestic and international politics, in the formulation of foreign policy. The course analyzes the development of the “nation-state” system in the Middle East, and examines the nature of transnational identities and ideologies. We will consider a number of frameworks for understanding the region’s international politics and Great Power involvement, roughly characterized as Realist, Liberal and Constructivist approaches, but we will always focus on how these approaches can help us understand real-world decisions and outcomes.

Texts
Recommended for purchase:

Assigned readings (N.B. ALL readings available on Blackboard, in pdf format.):


**Learning Objectives**

1. Gain a greater understanding of the international relations of the Middle East.
2. Understand what different IR theories contribute to our understanding of international politics within and about the Middle East.
3. Understand the historical perspective and shifts in the balance of power within the Middle East.

**Class Participation**
The course will follow a lecture format, with significant time for class discussion. Each member of the class should come prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the week, with prepared notes and outlines. Debate is welcome, but must always be respectful of alternative viewpoints. Attendance and participation are part of your course grade. I encourage you to keep up with events in the region. We will spend some class time each session on current events. Read from multiple sources, and local sources when you can.

*Note: If you know that you will miss a class, please inform the instructor before the missed class occurs.

**Map Quiz**
In the first month of class, you will take a quiz that requires you to label countries in the MENA region. The map quiz will be held in class on Wednesday, January 31.

**Country Report/Policy Recommendation**
As a part of this course, you will be required to write a short briefing on the MENA country of your choice. The briefing should explain the basic structure of the country’s government, and a specific and current challenge in international relations this government faces. The briefing should be 3-5 pages, single-spaced/12 pt. font; maps and graphics are in addition to the text, and do not count towards the length-limit. The brief is due, in hard copy format, on Tuesday, October 24 in class. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will present your brief to a small group for feedback in class on March 28. Groups will be formed based on country overlap/issue overlap.

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation/Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
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<td>Country Report</td>
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<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**January 17: Course Introduction**
Introduction
Overview of Syllabus

**January 22: Reviewing International Relations Theory and the Middle East**
Fawcett, Chapter 1, Fred Lawson “IR Theory and the Middle East”

**January 24: Applying IR Theory to Cases—Thinking about your Country Briefing**
Marc Lynch and Curtis Ryan “The Arab Uprisings and International Relations Theory”

Read the whole Symposium, which we will refer to throughout the course. Focus on this first essay to get an idea of why applying theory to the region has been complicated. Can you describe different theoretical ways to engage current politics in the Middle East?

**January 29 and 31: Emergence of the Modern State and the Cold War’s Impact on the Middle East**
Fawcett, Chapters 2-3
Eugene Rogan “The Emergence of the Middle East into the Modern State System”
Peter Sluglett “The Cold War in the Middle East”

**February 5: Current Politics in the Middle East—Accessing news sources and assessing facts and points of view**

**February 7: Map Quiz**

**February 12, 14: Ideology and Islam in Middle East International Relations**
Fawcett, Chapter 7
Raymond Hinnebusch “The Politics of Identity in Middle East International Relations”

**Feb 19 holiday**

**February 21 and 26**
Fawcett, Chapter 8
Peter Mandaville “Islam and IR in the Middle East: From *Umma* to Nation State”
Guest lectures: Dr. Hussein Ibish

**February 28**
Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics, Chapter 4 and Chapter 20
John Voll “Political Islam and the State”
Moataz Fattah “Islam and Politics in the Middle East”

**March 5: Foreign Policymaking in the Middle East**
Fawcett, Chapter 11
Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond Hinnebusch “Foreign Policymaking in the Middle East: Complex Realism”

**March 7: Overlapping Contests: Domestic Transnational and International Politics in the Middle East**

Considering case studies of current conflicts and their multiple sites of contestation: Yemen, Syria, Iraq.
Can you identify key actors in these conflicts? Their interests? Ideas and ideologies that motivate them?

March 12-17: Spring Break, no class

March 19: Political Economy in The International Relations of The Middle East
Fawcett, Chapter 5
Giacomo Luciani “Oil and Political Economy in the International Relations of the Middle East”

March 21: Petro-Aggression

March 26: Mid-term Exam, in Class

March 28: Country Brief Consultations and Research Groups
Country Briefs are due in class on April 2.

April 2 and 4: Political Reform in the Middle East: The Foundations of the Arab Revolt
April 2—Country Brief due in class. Late assignments are not accepted.

Fawcett, Chapter 6
Augustus Richard Norton “The Puzzle of Political Reform in the Middle East”


April 9 and 11: Security States and Regional Disorder
Fawcett, Chapter 9 and 10
Louise Fawcett “Alliances and Regionalism in the Middle East”
Matteo Legrenzi and Marina Calculi “Middle East Security: Conflict and Securitization of Identities”

April 16 and 18: The Rise of the Gulf States in International Politics
Fawcett, Chapter 14
Matteo Legrenzi and F. Gregory Gause III “The International Politics of the Gulf”
Guest lecture: Dr. Kristin Smith Diwan
**April 23: US Foreign Policy in the Middle East-Case of Israel/Palestine**

Fawcett, Chapter 16  
Michael Hudson “The United States in the Middle East”


**April 25: The International Problem of Iraq**


Guest lecture: Yerevan Saed on Iraq and Kurdish politics

**April 30: International Law and Conflict in Middle East, case of Syria**

Ford, Christopher M., Syria: A Case Study in International Law (April 11, 2017).  
University of Cincinnati Law Review. Available at  
SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2951235


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**Academic Integrity**

I expect full compliance with the GW Code of Academic Integrity, which states:  
“Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.”

**Course Schedule or Readings subject to change. Guest lectures may be scheduled in addition to the syllabus planned lecture. Pay attention to e-mail/blackboard announcements.**