

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS
Department of Political Science
Political Science 760.1
Seminar: Middle East and North Africa

Fall 2005
T: 5:30-8:20
WRI B 224

Prof. Mehran Tamadonfar
Office Hours:
T: 3:30-5:30 p.m.
and by appointment
Office:
WRI B212 and B225

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this advanced area-study course is to examine the politics of the Middle East and North Africa. Given my own methodological and theoretical preferences, I am of the belief that politics of a complex region like the Middle East and North Africa cannot be comprehensively studied without a thorough understanding of its context. Thus, a good part of this course will be allocated to the study of socio-cultural and economic determinants of the politics of this region. Furthermore, this course will not be limited to a thematic analysis of subjects traditionally covered in Comparative Politics, rather it will attempt to underscore the links among domestic, regional, and global aspects of Middle Eastern politics. In other words, we will be studying subjects like terrorism, the Arab-Israeli imbroglio, the politics of oil, trade imbalances, and economic and political dependencies (mainly topics discussed in IR courses) in addition to comparative topics like patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism, nationalism, Islamic politics, etc.

RESERVED REQUIRED READING:

***History:**

1. William Cleveland, *A History of Modern Middle East*.

***Contemporary Politics and Institutions:**

1. Mackey, Sandra, *The Iranians, Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*.
2. James Bill and R. Springborg, *Politics in the Middle East*. 4th ed.
3. Mehran Kamrava, *Revolution in Iran, The Roots of Turmoil*.
4. Bahgat Korany, et.al., *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, Vol. 2, Comparative Experiences.

5. Mehran Tamadonfar, ‘ Monarchism, populism, and Political Authority in the Iranian Traditions: Some Observations Relative to Nation-Building,” *New Global Development*, Vol. XV, 1999.
6. Hisham Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy, A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*.

***Islam and Politics:**

1. Mehran Tamadonfar, *The Islamic Polity and Political Leadership*.
2. Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*.
3. Mir Zohair Husain, *Global Islamic Politics*.
4. Sami Zubaida, *Islam, People and the State*.
5. E. Rosenthal, “ Some Reflections on the Separation of Religion and Politics in Modern Islam,” *Islamic Studies*, Vol. III, No. 3.
6. Bernard Lewis, “ Islam and Liberal Democracy,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1993.
7. Mehran Tamadonfar, “ Islam, Law and political Control in Contemporary Iran,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, No. 2.

***International Relations of the Middle East:**

1. Tareq Ismael, *International Relations of the Contemporary Middle East*.
2. John Quigley, *Palestine and Israel, A Challenge to Justice*.

OFFICE HOURS:

My office hours as the chair are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. I have allocated Tuesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5: 30 to meeting with the students in my seminar. Please do not hesitate to come by my office any time convenient for you. I will try to make time for you. In a seminar format, it is imperative that you keep in touch with me on a regular basis and discuss your concerns and questions as they arise.

COURSE CONDUCT AND EVALUATION POLICY:

This is an advanced seminar with a great deal of emphasis on student class participation. While I will be lecturing on the main themes of the course to start the discussions, I will be mainly observing and commenting on your inputs in class discussions. Therefore, all students are **required to attend all class meetings**. Tardiness and non-attendance will result in failing grades for this course. I strongly recommend that you reconsider taking this class, if you are uncertain about your ability to attend class. Furthermore, I do **expect all students to participate in discussions effectively**. Quite often, we fail to encourage such participation in undergraduate courses. To succeed in a seminar format, you will need to be willing to express your views, to tolerate others’ opinions, and to reexamine your thoughts and observations in the marketplace of ideas.

This is normally a difficult task in a seminar on Middle Eastern politics in the United State, given our sensitivities and political considerations. While we need to be cognizant of others' sensitivities our main responsibility is to ensure an objective course of study on the Middle East. To ensure constructive and informative discussions, your representations must be based on solid factual understating of this complex region of the world.

Student course grades will be determined as follows:

1. Class participation20% of the grade
2. Weekly Class presentations30% of the grade
3. Term-paper on a pre-approved topic..... 50% of the grade

You will be assigned weekly class presentations from the attached bibliographical list or any other timely reading materials. You are expected to prepare short summaries and make them available to your classmates by leaving them in the designated box outside my office no later than every Friday at 3 p.m. This would enable other students to read your summaries before Tuesday class meeting. Also, I do expect all students to choose their paper topics by no later than **September 13, 2005**. If you fail to finalize a topic by that date, you will forfeit this part of your evaluation. In selecting your topics, you may focus on a comparative or IR topic. However, all papers are expected to have a theoretical component and range between 20 and 30 pages.

COURSE OUTLINE:

The following topics and times are subject to minor changes to accommodate your interests and needs. Weekly presentation assignments will be made at least one week before the summaries are due. I will be choosing these assignments in consideration of your interests and questions.

August 30	Introduction and Overview
September 6	Middle East in Historical Perspective Required reading: - William Cleveland, 1ff
September 13	Socio-economic Contexts of Contemporary Politics Required readings: - Sharabi, 1ff - Bill, Chapters 2-4 & 9
September 20, 27 Oct. 4	Contemporary Political Institutions and Processes Required reading:

- Bill, Chapters 1, 5, 6
- Mackey, 1ff

Oct. 11, 18

Democratization in Comparative Perspective

Required reading:

- Korany, Chapters 1-12
- Tamadonfar, “ Monarchism,..”

Oct. 25

Revolution and Reaction

Required reading:

- Kamrava, 1ff
- Zubaida, 1ff

Nov. 1, 8

Islam and Contemporary Politics

Required reading:

- Enayat, 1ff
- Rosenthal, pp. 249-284
- Tamadonfar, *The Islamic Polity*, 1ff
- Tamadonfar, “ Islam, Law...”
- Husain, Chapters 1-12
- Lewis, “ Islam...”

Nov. 15, 22

Middle East in Global Politics

Required reading:

- Ismael, Part I
- Quigley, Parts one through Five

Nov.29, Dec. 6

Paper Presentations

Concluding Remarks

Have a wonderful semester!!!