

**POL479H/POL 2418H - Topics in Middle East Politics,
Department of Political Science, University of Toronto,
Fall 2013, Thursdays 5-7pm.**

Course Title: *Authoritarianism and Protest Politics in the Middle East*

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Course Description: This course sets out to understand the challenges facing protest politics in the unsettled but still resiliently authoritarian Middle East region. It is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on the question of authoritarian resilience or, in the language of social movement theory, the restricted nature of political opportunities. It will begin by critiquing some of the more prevalent 'essentialist' approaches to the study of the Middle East and encourage the use of approaches that incorporate insights from political economy and comparative history. This will be followed by an examination of historical processes of state formation in the region. The following two weeks then examine two distinct but interdependent frameworks within which to examine the factors that have contributed to the resilience of authoritarian rule: the dynamics of intra-regime politics, and the dynamics of state-society relations.

The second part of the course begins with a workshop on 'social movement theory'. This workshop will provide a testing ground for the short papers that you will be asked to submit the following week. The remainder of the course revolves around student seminars on a particular **country-based** protest movement. These seminars should be the trial run for the major research paper in the course. Given the current context, I am hoping that many of you will chose to examine different aspects of the Arab Spring (but this is not obligatory). The classes will be organized around student presentations of their research – quick, sharp, and concise presentations of approximately 15 minutes each. These presentations should act as a trial run/first draft of the final research papers and the class will be designed as a workshop, aimed at providing constructive feedback to the student presenter as to how their arguments and analysis for their papers can be enhanced. Ideally, depending upon your own choices of protest movements, each week will be devoted to seminars that focus on the same country or group of countries with similar regime types.

Course Readings: There are three required texts for this course with the remainder of the course readings can be found in short-term loan in Robarts Library or, for journal articles, on the on-line electronic catalogue.

1. Oliver Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism: Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, (2007).
2. Quinton Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004).
3. Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel (eds), *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, (2011)

You may also want to find copies of (eds.) Steven Hydemann and Reinoud Leenders, *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 2013.

Course Requirements:

- 10% for at least one oral presentation of an article. It should be 10-15 minutes in length (no longer!) and follow the following format **rigorously**: (i) present the analytical question that the article is asking and the thesis that the article proposes, (ii) provide a well-organized summary of the argumentation used to support the thesis (the bulk of the presentation); and (iii) give a constructive (but brief) commentary on the article, following by one **substantive** questions around which class discussion can revolve. Depending on the size of the class, I would like each student to do at least one article presentation.
- 10% for class participation. This evaluation will be based upon both the degree of participation in class discussions (5%) as well as the quality of participation (5%) – the latter indicated by evidence of whether students have done their readings. ***Although the formal reading for the course takes place during the first six weeks, the participation mark will be based on participation (and attendance!) throughout the whole course.***
- 20% for four summaries of weekly readings (one for each week from week 2 to week 5 – 5% each). Each summary is due ***one week after the material has been discussed in class***, must be no longer than 3 pages long (double-spaced and 12 point font). Note - *these should NOT be organized solely on the basis of an 'article by article' summary but include the most important comparative cross-cutting themes that the articles collectively bring out.* Hint – don't take these lightly, these are difficult!
 - * Undergraduate students will be required to summarize any ***three of the four articles for each week.***
 - * Graduate students will be required to summarize ***all four articles for each week.***
- 20% for a 5 page/12 pt font short paper on social movement theory, due on October 24th. Students are asked to answer the following question: *"What is social movement theory, what advantages are derived from its application to the Middle East, and does it provide comprehensive causal explanations for the dynamics of collective action in the region?"*
 - * Undergraduate students are required to answer this question using the text by Wiktorowicz, ***Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach (2004).***
 - * Graduate students are required to answer this question using the two courses texts on social movements in the Middle East: Wiktorowicz, ***Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach (2004)***; and Beinin and Vairel, ***Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa, (2011).***
- 40% for a final paper - *5% of which will be based upon a crisp and concise 15 minute class seminar presentation of the framework and main arguments of the paper.* All papers are due without exception at the beginning of the last class on **Thursday, November 28th.**

Paper Requirements:

1. Papers are to be between 20-25 pages/12 pt font.

2. All papers must focus on a protest actor/movement in a particular country in the Middle East region. Obviously, given the momentous changes in the region in 2011, I am expecting (and hoping!) that students will focus on actors and movements associated with the Arab Spring.

3. I will be asking each student to provide me with their top three preferences for both (i) protest actors and (ii) country of focus **by the beginning of the third class (Thursday, September 26th)**. I will then assign topics – hopefully, your top choices! - and draw up a seminar roster. Graduate students should be prepared to present their seminars early in the process, even if their research papers are only in embryonic form.

4. I am expecting students to apply (to the extent that it is appropriate) the ‘social movement theory’ framework to their seminars and research papers.

5. Students will also be expected to integrate into their seminars and research papers insights from the first half of the course on the political context and/or “political opportunity structures” within which their respective protest politics case study operates.

6. I am expecting students to consult with me early on in the term and often if needs be about the exact topic of the paper, an appropriate bibliography and, once the research is underway, the precise question and thesis that the research paper will pursue.

7. **Late Penalties:** .5% of the final mark in the course per day of the assignment that is late.

8. **Plagiarism:** Every year, students are caught for plagiarism. This is defined by the University of Toronto’s Code of Behavior on Academic Matters as “the wrongful appropriation and purloining, and publication as one’s own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas...of another”. Please do not even think of doing this. The penalties are severe. For more information, please see <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Accessibility Needs: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation or have any accessibility concerns, please email disability.services@utoronto.ca or visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Section One - Authoritarianism in the Middle East (Article Presentations):

1. Introduction (September 12th):

Gause, Gregory, III, "Why Middle East Studies Missed the Arab Spring: The Myth of Authoritarian Stability" in *Foreign Affairs*, 90, 4, July/August 2011, p. 81-90.

Heydemann, Steven and Leenders, Reinoud, "Authoritarian Governance in Syria and Iran: Challenged, Reconfiguring, and Resilient" in Heydemann and Leenders (eds.), *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 2013, p. 1-20.

Schlumberger, Oliver, "Arab Authoritarianism: Debating the Dynamics and Durability of Non-Democratic Regimes" in *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, p. 1-20.

2. Avoiding 'Essentialisms' – Debating Theories and Methodologies in Middle East Studies (September 19th):

Bromley, Simon, "Rethinking Middle East Politics" in *Rethinking Middle East Politics*, 1994, p. 86-118

Hertog, Steffen, "Shaping the Saudi State: Human Agency's Shifting Role in Rentier-State Formation" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 39, 2007, p. 539-563.

Wedeen, Lisa, "Practicing Piety, Summoning Groups: Disorder as Control" in *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen*, 2008, p. 148-185.

Zubaida, Sami, "The Nation State in the Middle East" in *Islam, the People, and the State*, 1989, p. 121-182.

3. Debating State and Regime Formation - Authoritarianism in Historical Perspective (September 26th):

Anderson, Lisa, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830-1980*, (1986) p. 17-35, p. 141-157, and p. 203-222.

Chaudhry, Kiren Aziz, "The National Market Unified" in *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East*, 1997, p. 43-100.

Migdal, Joel, "The Egyptian State Attempts to Transform Egyptian Society" in *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, 1988, p. 181-205.

Waldner, David, "State-Building and the Origins of Institutional Profiles" in *State-Building and Late Development*, (1999), p. 19-49.

4. Politics within the State: Intra-Regime Dynamics (October 3th)

Bellin, Eva, "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective" in *Comparative Politics*, 36, 2, January 2004, p. 139-158.

Droz-Vincent, Philippe, "From Political to Economic Actors: The Changing Face of Middle East Armies" in (ed.) Oliver Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 2007, p. 195-211.

Kandil, Hazem, "The Long Lull before the Perfect Storm: Revolt in January 2011" in *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesmen: Egypt's Road to Revolt*, 2012, p. 175-220.

See Michael Knights, "The Military Role in Yemen's Protests: Civil-Military Relations in the Tribal Republic" in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36, 2, 2013, p. 261-288.

5. State-Society Relations and the Management of the Political Opposition (October 10th):

Donati, Caroline, "The Economics of Authoritarian Upgrading in Syria: Liberalization and the Reconfiguration of Economic Networks" in (eds.) Steven Hydemann and Reinoud Leenders, *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 2013, p. 35-60.

Harris, Kevan, "A Martyrs' Welfare State and its Contradictions: Regime Resilience and Limits through the Lens of Social Policy in Iran" in (eds.) Steven Hydemann and Reinoud Leenders, *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 2013, p. 61-82.

Lust-Okar, Ellen, "The Management of Opposition: Formal Structures of Contestation and Informal Political Manipulation in Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco" in (ed.) Oliver Schlumberger, *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 2007, p. 39-58.

Pierret, Thomas, "The State Management of Religion in Syria: The End of 'Indirect Rule'", in (eds.) Steven Hydemann and Reinoud Leenders, *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, 2013, p. 83-106.

6. Social Movement Theory in the Middle East – A Workshop (October 17th):

Quinton Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004).

Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel (eds), *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, (2011).

Short Essays on Social Movement Theory Due on October 24th!!!!

**Section Two: Protest Politics in the Middle East (Student Seminars) –
October 24th to November 28th**