

**POL479H/POL 2418H - Topics in Middle East Politics,
Department of Political Science, University of Toronto,
Fall 2014, Thursdays 5-7pm.**

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

Paul Kingston, kingston@chass.utoronto.ca

Associate Professor, Political Science,

Office: SS 3124, 416-946-0180,

Office Hours: Thursdays from 2-4pm

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 three weeks then examine distinct but interdependent frameworks within which to examine the factors that have contributed to the resilience of authoritarian rule: the regime's management of the coercive apparatus and the regime's management of social incorporation, first with respect to economic and political elites and, second, with respect to popular forces.

The second part of the course begins with a class 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 and one recommended. The majority of the courses readings, however, can be found in short-term loan in Robarts Library or on the on-line electronic catalogue (for journal articles).

1. Milan Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
2. Quinton Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Indiana University Press, 2004.
3. Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel (eds), *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2nd edition, Stanford University Press, 2013.

4. Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders (eds.), *Middle East Authoritarianisms Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, Stanford University Press, 2013 (recommended but not required).

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 question** 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 this term.
- 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 very short - 3 pages double spaced, 11 point font - weekly papers. Each should provide an analytical comparison of the themes within the weekly readings. Students can choose to write about the readings from any four of the (five) weeks from week two to week six. Each analytical comparison is worth 5% and is due **one week after the material has been**

discussed in class. Note - these should NOT be organized on the basis of an 'article by article' summary but should address the most important themes and issues that cross-cut the articles.

*** Undergraduate students will be required to provide a comparative analysis of *three of the five articles for each week.***

*** Graduate students will be required to provide a comparative analysis of *all five articles for each week.***

- 20% for a 5 page/12 pt font short paper on social movement theory, due on **October 30th**. Students are asked to answer the following:

“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 these questions using the text by Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (2004).**

*** Graduate students are required to answer these questions 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*, 2013.**

- 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 **Monday ,December 1st**.

Paper Requirements:

1. Papers are to be between 20-25 pages/11 pt font.
2. All papers must focus on a protest actor/movement in a particular country in the Middle East region.
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...)**. 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. Topics and thesis statements will be worked out in consultation with the professor but, by and large, I am expecting students to apply 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 let me know or email disability.services@utoronto.ca or visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Section One –

Authoritarian Origins and Dynamics in the Middle East (Article Presentations):

1. Introduction (September 11th):

What have the events surrounding the various Arab Springs of 2011 taught political scientists interested in the Middle East about the nature of authoritarianism in the region? Can authoritarian regime resilience be understood without reference to the social forces that lie ‘beneath’ (and did political scientists interested in the region miss this!)?

Bellin, Eva and Lust, Ellen, and Lynch, Marc “Responses to Howard and Walters” in *Perspectives on Politics*, 12, 2, June 2014, p. 409-416.

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.

Svolik, Milan, *The Politics of Authoritarianism Rule*, 2012, p. 1-49.

2. Avoiding ‘Essentialisms’ – Debating Theories and Methodologies in the Study of Middle East Authoritarianism (September 18th):

What methodological approaches to the study of politics in the Middle East does each of these authors critique? What methodological approaches does each of these authors prioritize?

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.

Svolik, Milan, *The Politics of Authoritarianism Rule*, 2012, p. 53-117, p. 196-202.

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. Authoritarian State Formation and Regime Consolidation in Historical Perspective (September 25th):

What is the difference between state formation and regime consolidation? What are the key factors that have complicated these processes in the Middle East region and which have led to the emergence of diverse authoritarian trajectories and institutional profiles?

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

Brownlee, Jason, "The Inception of Ruling Parties" in *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*, 2007, p. 44-81.

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

Tell, Tariq, *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan*, 2013, p. 83-138.

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

4. Politics within the Ruling Coalition: The Authoritarian Management of the Coercive Apparatus (October 2nd);

Authoritarian regimes face a difficult dilemma in managing their coercive apparatus and, when these regimes have faltered, most have done so as a result of 'revolts from within the state'. How have Middle Eastern states tried to solve this dilemma and what have been the consequences?

Svolik, Milan, *The Politics of Authoritarianism Rule*, 2012, p. 123-161.

Baylouni, Anne Marie, "Militarizing Welfare: Neo-Liberalism and Jordanian Policy" in *Middle East Journal*, 62, 2, Spring 2008, p 277-303.

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

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.

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. Politics within the Ruling Coalition: The Politics of Elite Incorporation (October 9th):

Authoritarian regimes face an acute dilemma in managing their relationships with elite social forces. On the one hand, their power is directly linked to the degree to which elite social forces are incorporated into their regime networks; on the other hand, their power can also be directly threatened by these processes of socio-political incorporation. How have authoritarian regimes in the Middle East managed these dilemmas?

Svolik, Milan, *The Politics of Authoritarianism Rule*, 2012, p. 162-192.

Blaydes, Lisa, "Elections and Elite Management" and "Elections and Elite Corruption", in *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*, 2010, p. 48-64 and 125-148.

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.

Masoud, Tarek, "Clientelism and Class: The Tragedy of Leftists" in *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt*, 2014, p. 45-73.

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. What Happened to Authoritarian Populism? State-Society Relations and the Authoritarian Management of Popular Forces (October 16th):

Why have popular forces not proved to be effective socio-political allies of authoritarian states, even in the age of authoritarian populism? How has the management of popular forces and classes changed with the on-set of neo-liberalism in the region?

Baylouni, Anne Marie, "Creating Kin: New Family Associations as Welfare Providers in Liberalizing Jordan" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38, 3, August 2006, p. 349-368.

Bellin, Eva, *Stalled Democracy: Capital, Labour, and the Paradox of State-Sponsored Development*, 2002, p. 86-143.

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.

Heydemann, Steven, "Social Pacts and the Persistence of Authoritarianism in the Middle East" in *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 2007, p. 21-38.

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.

7. Social Movement Theory in the Middle East – A Workshop (October 23rd):

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*, 2014.

Short Essays on Social Movement Theory Due on October 30th !!!!

Section Two: Protest Politics in the Middle East (Student Seminars) –

October 30th to November 27th: