Politics in Modern and Contemporary Iran

POL 443Y1 (Y)

Tuesday 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Prof. Ramin Jahanbegloo

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide students with an opportunity to explore politics in modern and contemporary Iran, as well as to address open questions in the relationship between the state and civil society, causes of regime change during the Pahlavi era and the rise of Islamic theocracy in Iran. The course has three interrelated goals: 1) making students familiar with the basic aspects of modern Iranian history, 2) providing them with analytical tools and knowledge for an in-depth understanding of the contemporary politics in Iran, and 3) generating theoretical insight into the question of how modern politics have been perceived and practiced in Iran from the late nineteenth century to the present. Students will learn about Iran’s encounter with modernity, Iranian intellectual trends, the causes and consequences of the 1979 revolution, and the nature of the post-revolutionary political system.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. They will be held responsible for all the material covered in readings and lectures. To ensure class participation and to spread out the work a bit, each student is required to make one oral presentation in class concerning one of the topics listed in the syllabus in which they are interested. Preparation, attendance and participation: In addition to the lectures, we will devote time in class to a discussion of the reading materials. Students should therefore plan to keep up with weekly reading assignments. Students are expected to attend class regularly, having done the assigned readings, and to contribute to class discussions.
**Papers:** Students are required to write one term paper **due on January 11, 2011.** No late papers will be accepted. The due date is a deadline. The paper must have a cover page and bibliography, which should consist of scholarly publications. Each student is expected to write a 15 to 20 page (typed, and double-spaced) research paper on one of the following Iran related topics: Assembly of Religious Experts; Bureaucracy; Cabinet; Class situation (income distribution, inequality); Clerical Establishment; Civil liberties, rights and freedoms; Constitution; Corruption; Cultural life; Economic Performance (employment, inflation, monetary policy, privatization); Educational system; Elections; Electoral system; Environmental issues; Ethnicity; Exile Community; Expediency Council; Foreign Policy; Guardian Council; Intelligence Community and secret police; Interest groups; Legal System and Judiciary; Media; Non-Governmental Organizations; Opposition forces; Legislative Branch; Political Culture; Political elite; Political parties; Political participation (forms/modes/trends); Population and migration policy; Presidency; Social cleavages; Social movements; Social welfare policies (pension, poverty, education); Sources of political legitimacy; Supreme Leader; Theocracy; Youth; Women and Gender issues.

**Presentations** will be based on topics chosen by students and discussed with the instructor. No presentations on the days of film screenings.

**Response Papers:** Three films on Iranian politics will be screened in class as preparation for response papers. **Response papers are supposed to be handed in on March 22, 2011.** Everyone must screen films critically and carefully. You are responsible for writing one response paper (minimum 5 pages, double-spaced) discussing and analyzing the historical contents in films screened.

**Grading Criteria:**

- Response Papers 10%
- Oral Presentation 20%
- Research Paper 30%
- Final Exam 40%
Required Readings:


Suggested Readings:


Course expectations and description:

As an instructor, I have a responsibility to come to class prepared, to be accessible when you have questions, to provide you with feedback on your performance, and to help you discover the Iranian politics. This is a two-way street, however. For the course to be successful, you need to come to class having read some materials and with an open mind to consider a diversity of perspectives. Students are expected to read the assigned material in advance. I will start each lecture with a 45-minute
discussion of the topic. This will be followed by a general class discussion. All
students are strongly encouraged to participate in the discussion based on the reading
materials available a week before the lecture. The method of instruction will be
directed lecture and discussion, interspersed with occasional films. The title of the
documentaries will be announced later.

**Course Schedule**

September 14, 2010: Introduction: Understanding Modern and Contemporary Iran

September 21, 2010: Qajars and the Encounter with Modernity

September 28, 2010: Politics and Society in 19th Century Iran

October 5, 2010: Reform and Dissent

October 12, 2010: Traditionalism and Westernization

October 19, 2010: **Film Screening**

October 26, 2010: The Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1906

November 2, 2010: Post- Constitutional Revolution State-Building

November 16, 2010: The Rise and Fall of Reza Shah

November 23, 2010: Mossadeq and Iranian Nationalism

November 30, 2010: Royal Dictatorship: 1953-1977

December 7, 2010: Iranian Intellectuals and the West

January 11, 2011: The Iranian Revolution of 1979

January 18, 2011: Politics and Praxis of Clerics and Ayatollah Khomeini

January 25, 2011: The Islamic Republic of Iran: A Theocracy or a Republic?

February 1, 2011: Society, Gender, Culture Society, Gender, in Post- Revolutionary Iran
February 8, 2011: **Film Screening**

February 15, 2011: Iranian Civil Society and the Dilemmas of Reform

March 1, 2011: Constitutionalism, Secularism and Religion in Iran

March 8, 2011: **Film Screening**

March 15, 2011: Youth Politics and Media in Iran

March 22, 2011: Democratizing Iran

March 30, 2011: Iran: A Rising Regional Power?

April 5, 2011: The Political Future of Iran

**Additional Readings on Modern and Contemporary Iran**


William Beeman, *The "Great Satan" vs. the "Mad Mullahs": How the United States and Iran Demonize Each Other* (Praeger Publishers, 2005).


Mark J. Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne (eds.), *Mohammed Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (Syracuse University Press, 2004)


Gary Sick, All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran (New York: Random House, 1985).


SELECTED WEBSITES
HISTORY:

Iranian History Forum

Persian, Greek, Roman and Byzantine Eras (500 BCE - 500 CE) Benchmarks in Modern History of Iran

Political Chronology
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/tehran/etc/cron.html

DATA:

US Department of State http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5314.htm

Iran's Size Comparison with the US
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/atlas_middle_east/iran_area.jpg

Atlas of Iran http://www.mgm.fr/PUB/Iran

Land Use http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/atlas_middle_east/iran_land.jpg

Country Profile http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Iran.pdf


Statistics on Iran http://www.nationmaster.com/country/ir-iran

Iran's Share of World Crude Oil Reserves
http://www.opec.org/home/PowerPoint/Reserves/OPEC%20share.htm

NEWS:

News and Views about Iran www.Iranian.com

News Site on Iran http://www.iranmania.com/defaultenglish.asp

Radio Farda http://www.radiofarda.com/

Iran Daily http://www.iran-daily.com/
GOVERNMENT:


Iranian Mission to the UN http://www.un.int/iran/


Presidency of the Islamic Republic http://www.president.ir

Who Rules Iran?

OTHER: Encyclopædia Iranica  http://www.iranica.com/

Sample Persian Miniatures http://www.superluminal.com/cookbook/index_gallery.html

Iranian women's homepage http://www.irandokht.com/

Pictures of Iran http://www.worldisround.com/articles/73022/index.html

Pictures of Iran http://www.riccardozipoli.com/

Pictures of Tehran http://www.worldisround.com/articles/98910/

Selected Internet Sources on Iran http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/iran/iran.html

Persian Calendar Program http://www.payvand.com/calendar/

Iran's First National Anthem http://www.iranclip.com/player/1012

