

**POL479H/POL 2418H - Topics in Middle East Politics,
Department of Political Science, University of Toronto,
Fall 2012, 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 authoritarian context of the Middle East, a context that remains in the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings ('Spring'?) of 2011. It is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on the question of authoritarian resilience. 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 next two weeks of the course examines various frameworks within which to examine the factors that have contributed to the resilience of authoritarian rule: (i) intra-regime politics, and (ii) 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 movements. 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 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 two required texts for this course.

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).
4. The remainder of the course readings can be found in short-term loan in Robarts Library or, for journal articles, on-line in the Roberts electronic catalogue.

Course Requirements:

- 10% for one oral presentation of an article. It should be 10-15 minutes in length (no longer!) and follow the following format rigorously: (i) an articulation of the analytical question that the

article is asking and the thesis that the article proposes, (ii) a summary of the argumentation used to support the thesis (the bulk of the presentation); and (iii) 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 as well as the quality of participation – 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 distinct summaries of weekly readings. 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), and is worth 5% each. Note - *these should NOT be organized solely on the basis of an 'article by article' summary but include comparative cross-cutting analysis of themes that the articles collectively bring out.*
 - * **Undergraduate students will be required to summarize *three of the four articles* for any four of the first five weeks of the course.**
 - * **Graduate students will be required to summarize *all four articles* for any four of the first five weeks of the course.**
- 20% for a 5 page/12 pt font short paper on social movement theory, due on 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 by **Monday, December 3rd bynoon** and must be deposited in the main office of the Department of Political Science (3rd floor Sidney Smith Building).

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 29th). I will then assign topics – hopefully, your top choices! - and draw up a seminar roster. Graduate students should be prepared to present their seminar's 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” 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 13th):

Bellin, Eva, "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring" in *Comparative Politics*, 44, 2, January 2012, p. 127-150.

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 20th):

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

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

Zubaida, Sami, "Classes as Political Actors in the Iranian Revolution", in *Islam, the People, and the State*, 1989, p 64-82.

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 27th):

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

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.

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 4th)

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 *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 2007, p. 195-211.

Lawson, Fred, "Intra-Regime Dynamics, Uncertainty, and the Persistence of Authoritarianism in the Contemporary Arab World" in *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*, 2007, 109-127.

Stacher, Joshua, "Adaptation and Elite Cooptation" in Stacher, *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria*, 2012, p. 79-119.

5. State-Society Relations and the Management of the Political Opposition (October 11th):

Alley, April Longley, "The Rules of the Game: Unpacking Patronage Politics in Yemen" in *Middle East Journal*, 64, 3, Summer 2010, p. 385-409.

Haddad, Bassam, "Enduring Legacies: The Politics of Private Sector Development in Syria" in (ed.) Fred Lawson, *Demystifying Syria*, 2009, p. 29-55.

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

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

6. Social Movement Theory in the Middle East – A Workshop (October 18th):

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 25th!!!!

**Section Two: Protest Politics in the Middle East (Student Seminars) –
October 25th to November 29th**