Faculty of Arts and Science - Department of Political Science

POL479H1 F

Topics in Middle East Politics

Fall 2024 Syllabus

Course Meetings

POL479H1 F

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode
LEC5101 Rethinking Middle East Politics	Thursday, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	In Person

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

Course Contacts

Instructor: Lana Salman
Email: lana.salman@utoronto.ca
Office Hours and Location: On zoom Thursday 2-3:30 PM sign-up here
https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ebvca zoom link under module 1 in Quercus

Course Overview

How should we understand political phenomena in the Middle East beyond notions of lack or negation, common ways of understanding the region? How can we think of Middle East and the collective lifeworlds people have built, as well as the multiple forms of dispossession and precarity that characterize their lives, with terms beyond authoritarianism, Islamism, and sectarianism? How are we to assess the politics of knowledge production in/about the region in relation to these ways of knowing it, and their persistence? This seminar presents students with the three themes of (the need for) development, state (failure), and (impossible) peace. The aim is to critically assess the ways in which such themes are mobilized to make the Midde East an object of knowledge.

Each three weeks of this class, we will examine one country, Egypt, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine, and ask how the questions of development and its lack, state failure, and the impossibility of peace are conceived and measured, and by whom. We will focus on our readings with the objective of establishing links not only across these geographies but also between the themes we are investigating. For example, development, in the way in which we are approaching it in this class, is a way of describing and measuring the successful functioning of the modern state. Security is a metric of development but also a crucial way of thinking through 'state capacity', so is bureaucracy and the ability to maintain and record census data. We will be establishing such connections between the readings throughout our sessions.

We will draw on readings from various disciplines such as history, development studies, anthropology, and geography to examine these themes. Most of the readings are about the present, but some cover the twentieth century, and help us understand how we arrived at the contemporary moment.

Course Learning Outcomes
- Assess the politics of knowledge production concerning the Middle East.
- Situate processes of 'development,' 'state failure', and 'impossible peace' within broader historical trajectories.
- Connect 'development', 'state failure', and 'impossible peace' to one another and across different geographies.
- Discuss long texts, such as long book sections, holistically in preparation for reading entire manuscripts.

Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
Reading response	100%	You are required to submit 9 reading responses for this class starting the third week of class. Each reading response will count for 12.5% of your final grade. So, I will drop the lowest grade. Each response should include (i) your articulation of the argument, (ii) the evidence the author puts forward to support this argument with at least one example from the reading, (iii) the theory(ies)/argument(s)/view(s) the author is writing against, and (iv) a link with at least one other reading. Reading responses should be at most 800 words and are due on Thursday at 3:00 pm.	2024-09-19, 2024-09-26, 2024-10-03, 2024-10-10, 2024-10-17, 2024-10-24, 2024-11-14, 2024-11-21, 2024-11-28

Course Schedule

Week	Description
Week 1 Sept 5	In this first introductory session, I will give an overview of the class content, requirements, and policies. I will ask you to complete a short survey to get to know you better, and together we will set expectations and norms for discussion and participation throughout this semester.
Week 2 Sept 12	**The idea of the Middle East** • Lewis, Bernard. 2002. "What Went Wrong?" *The Atlantic*, January 2002. • Lockman, Zachary. 2010. "Said's Orientalism: A Book and Its Aftermath." In *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd ed., 183–216. Cambridge University Press. • Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science." In *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, edited by David L. Szanton. 1-24.
Week 3 **Part I**	• Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. "The Object of Development, The Market's Place, Dreamland." In *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, 1st ed., 169–95, 196–217, 218–42. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sept 19	
Week 4 Sept 26	• Elyachar, Julia. 2005. "Introduction: The Power of Invisible Hands", "Mappings of Power: Informal Economy and Hybrid States", "NGOs, Business, and Social Capital", Empowering Debt." In *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*, 1–36, 66–95, 167–90, 191–212. Politics, History, and Culture. Durham: Duke University Press.
Week 5 Oct 3	• Barnes, Jessica. 2022. "Introduction", "Staple Becomings", "Subsidized Bread (with Mariam Taher)." In *Staple Security Bread and Wheat in Egypt*, 1–38, 39–80, 153–90. Durham: Duke University Press.
Week 6 **Part II** Oct 10	• Gilsenan, Michael. 1996. "Figures in a Landscape: One," "Figures in a Landscape: Two," "Fathomless Ocean, Precarious Archaism," and "Underdeveloped Periphery." In *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*, 3–22, 23–37, 67–78, 79–94, 95–111. London; I.B. Tauris.
Week 7 Oct 17	• Mikdashi, Maya. 2022. "Introduction. Sextarianism", "Chapter 1 Afterlives of a Census: Rethinking State Power and Political Difference", "Chapter 3 Regulating Conversion: Sovereignty, Bureaucracy, and the Banality of Religion." In *Sextarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism, and the State in Lebanon*, 1–23, 24–47, 83–116. Stanford University Press.
Week 8 Oct 24	• Safieddine, Hicham. 2020. *Banking on the State: The Financial Foundations of Lebanon*. Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. **(selections to be determined)**
Week 9 Nov 7	**Professor away at a conference - no class**
Week 10 **Part III** Nov 14	• Herzl, Theodor. 2008. "Introduction", "The Jewish Question", "The Jewish Company", "Local Groups", "Society of Jews and Jewish State." In *The Jewish State*. Project Gutenberg. • Segal, Rafi, Eyal Weizman, and David Tartakover, eds. 2003. "Preface and Introduction", "Wall & Tower", "The Plan", "To Start A City from Scratch: An Interview with Architect Thomas M. Leitersdorf." In *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*, Rev. ed., 15–26, 37–56, 59–76, 151–65. Tel Aviv: Babel. • Jabotinsky, Ze'ev. 1923. "The Iron Wall." file:///D:/Downloads/the-iron-wall.pdf.
Week 11 Nov 21	• Bhungalia, Lisa. 2024. *Elastic Empire: Refashioning War through Aid in Palestine*. Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. **(selections to be determined)**
Week 12 Nov 28	• Rabie, Kareem. 2021. *Palestine Is Throwing a Party and the Whole World Is Invited: Capital and State Building in the West Bank*. Durham: Duke University Press. **(selections to be determined)**

Policies & Statements

Coming to class prepared

This is a reading intensive course, and you will get the most out of it if you come prepared, which means completing all the readings before each class. The assigned readings are 100 pages a week on average. I will lead this class in an interactive manner, and may give some introductory remarks that situate the readings in a broader body of knowledge and thought.

The best way to prepare for class is to complete thoughtful reading responses. I will print these responses and bring them with me to class, and we will spend the first 20 minutes of each session reading them collectively. It is, therefore, **crucial** that you come prepared to discuss the readings, not only because it will ensure that we have a fruitful time together, but also because it will allow you to learn from each other.

One way to make this material more fun is to read it and discuss it with others. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences sponsored study groups, the Recognized Study Groups, are a great way to do this. You can apply to lead or join a study group here.

Participation + Conduct in Class

Discussion and participation are a vital component of learning. To ensure we all get the best out of this course, we must adhere to basic principles of civility and professionalism. As shared learning environments, classrooms may sometimes be challenging to navigate because we can get confronted with ideas and viewpoints very different from our own. Disagree with ideas and be open when challenged in your own beliefs, but refrain from using offensive or derogatory language and engaging in personal attacks. Make this exchange an opportunity to discuss these ideas in a shared learning environment where we assume the best of others in the class and, in turn, expect the best from them.

The Code of Student Conduct and The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters begins with a compelling call for faculty and students to collectively uphold the "integrity of the teaching and learning relationship." You can find both codes at the Governing Council website.

During our first session, we will agree on a code of conduct and collective community norms, and I will post our agreement under module 1 on Quercus as reference to return to throughout the semester. It is our collective responsibility to uphold these community norms.

Assignment submission and late assignments policy

Late reading responses will not be accepted since the deadline for submitting them is Thursday at 3:00 PM, two hours before we meet for class.

Using generative AI

You can use generative AI models (ChatGPT, Elicit, GitHub Copilot, etc.) in this class to brainstorm ideas, edit your prose, etc. But these models are imperfect and can generate errors and misconceptions. You will be responsible for any errors, biases or offensive or unethical content submitted as part of your assignments whether or not it is AI generated. If you use content generated through an AI model, you must acknowledge this contribution in your work, like you would cite a source you use in your paper. If you use AI for editing, or translating, or correcting English writing or grammar, you must list that at the beginning of the paper, e.g. "This paper was produced using generative AI, (e.g. ChatGPT) for editing, summarizing and proof-reading purposes."

Academic Integrity

Any submission with your name on it is presumed to represent your own original work. If you use the words or ideas of other people, you must clearly attribute this work to their authors by properly citing them and explain how you use it in your own work. Your undergraduate career at the University of Toronto is your opportunity to discover and learn. You do not want to have this career tainted by allegations of cheating and plagiarism. Academic misconduct of this sort will result in a failing grade in this class, in addition to being investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019).

If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me, and consult institutional resources on campus. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca.

Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity (https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca)](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca).

Plagiarism Detection Tool

You are required to submit your assignments to Turnitin, the University's plagiarism detection tool, to review textual similarity and detect possible plagiarism. In doing so, you will allow your essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq). If you have any issues about submitting your work in Turnitin, please talk to me.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Your mental health is very important. I understand that some of you may be under different sorts of duress for various reasons throughout the semester, as many experiences and circumstances can impact your mental health and well-being.

If you're in distress, you can access immediate support here: https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed

As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/) such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit **https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare** to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices

Specific Medical Circumstances

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form.

The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Accommodation for Personal Reasons

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

Quercus Info

This Course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. For this course, I may be posting additional material related to our sessions. I may also change or update the readings, so please consult the course website regularly. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at https://q.utoronto.ca.

Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Online Communication

If you have questions about this course, the most expedient way to have them answered is to talk to me before or after class. You can also check the syllabus which contains all relevant information. If you have any questions that remain answered, you can send me an email. Please use your mail.utoronto.ca email addresses for all course-related communications and check this address regularly. Do not use the Quercus built-in communication tool, called "Inbox". This is not the same as email.

Recording Lectures

Recording by students: You may not create audio or video recordings of classes with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability, who should speak to me prior to beginning to record lectures. Creating unauthorized audio recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct.

Recording by instructor: The last three sessions of this class on Israel-Palestine will be recorded, given the tension that exists in our universities about the ongoing war in the region. If you have a problem being recorded, please speak to me so we can work out an alternative arrangement.