IRAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

All revolutions contain a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, a revolution is the outcome of very specific social and political conditions in a country. On the other hand, revolutionaries perceive their experience as having universal significance, which means that revolutionary governments try to address and influence foreign populations over the heads of their respective governments. This means that a revolutionary state engages in both government-to-government and government-to-people diplomacy. The Iranian case is not different from this general pattern, except that here the universalist appeal of the revolution was limited by its sectarian (shi’ite) origins.

This seminar is divided into two parts. The first half focuses on Iran’s domestic politics. The nature of the Shah’s regime, the revolution, and Khomeini’s ideology will be examined. The second half analyzes certain key areas of Iranian foreign policy, such as the Iran/Iraq War, the Arab/Israeli conflict, Lebanon, security in the Persian Gulf, and Central Asia, but concentrates on those countries with large Shi’ite populations. How were these affected by the Iranian revolution? Can revolutions be “exported”?

The seminar’s format is reading and discussion. Requirements for the course are class participation (20%), a class presentation (30%) and a research paper on a different topic (50%). The paper is due on December 1st. Office hours are T. and Th. 2:00-3:00, and W. by appointment.

Schedule of Meetings

September 2: Introducing the Land of Iran

September 9: The Legacy of Pre-Revolutionary Iran


Mark Gasiorowski, “The 1953 Coup d’Etat Against Mosaddeq,” and “Conclusion,” in Mark Gasiorowksi and Malcolm Byrne, eds., Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran.
**September 16:** The Revolution of 1978-79


**September 23:** The Islamic Republic: Constitutional Design


**September 30:** The Islamic Republic: Politics


**October 7:** Post-Revolutionary Iranian Foreign Policy

