Course Description

This course focuses on the domestic, regional, and international factors that produce and shape development outcomes in the Middle East and North Africa (here, MENA region). The MENA constitutes a regional state system, not unlike other regions, shaped by complex state-society relations with states divided by the degree of their resource wealth, societal heterogeneity, national and sub-national variation, regime typologies, and starkly divergent social and economic conditions. Although many states are outcomes of European colonial creations, some, like Turkey, Iran, Morocco, and the Arab Gulf states, are historical anomalies. Understanding the genesis of states in the MENA, the factors that shaped their creation, and the domestic, regional, and international conditions that dictate their formation illuminates their current socio-economic and political development and their position in the international system. At the end of the course, students will be able to answer the following questions: What explains cross-national variation in development outcomes? How has state formation affected subsequent statebuilding? What is the relationship between oil and development? Why is the MENA region susceptible to external influence and intervention? And, lastly, what is the role of Islam in politics and society?

To answer these questions, this course will survey pertinent topics relating to the socio-economic and political development of the Middle East and North African throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Students will explore and critical analyze themes relating to colonialism and state formation and statebuilding, regime types, oil and rentierism, civil society, authoritarianism and democratization, military spending, gender relations, Islamist movements, elections, revolutions and social movements, territorial disputes, foreign intervention, and sectarianism and identity politics. We will compare and contrast development between oil and non-oil producing states, regime types, and institutional capacity in order to elucidate factors that produce divergent development outcomes. By the end of this course, students will be able to synthesize and analyze qualitative, quantitative, and historical data from multiple sources to contextualize and analyze cross-national variation.

Hub Learning Outcomes

The course fulfills the Hub areas of Social Inquiry I, Oral/Signed Communication, and Critical Thinking through the following learning objectives:

Social Inquiry I
• Students will identify theoretical and empirical tools used for analyzing social, economic, and political development across the MENA region states;
• Students will analyze qualitative and quantitative data such as country reports, economic, political and autocracy rankings, population statistics, human development reports, and survey data from the region from governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental sources to construct a deeper understanding of the drivers of human behavior;
• Students will be able to evaluate and critique the socio-political and structural factors that produce cross-national and regional variation in development through their oral presentation and policy paper.

Oral and/or Signed Communication

• Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to formulate empirically-grounded oral arguments regarding development policy issues in the Middle East through a well-crafted PowerPoint presentation;
• Through in class discussions and weekly Blackboard responses, students will thoughtfully craft logical arguments and pose critical questions relating to weekly topics;
• Students will critically reflect on weekly topics through in-class discussions and are expected to respond sensitively to their instructor and peers to recognize the value of competing ideas.

Critical Thinking

• Through close readings of colonial arguments, including primary source material from the British archives, the League of nations, and Western development scholars, students will recognize Orientalist biases toward MENA states and juxtapose those with how such biases shape development practices by multilateral and international organizations and states outside the region;
• Furthermore, students will evaluate and critique the impact of Western notions of development as embedded in the aforementioned sources on early state formation and explain its past and contemporary impact on socio-economic and political development policies in the MENA;
• Throughout the semester, students will be tasked with assessing the validity of their arguments about the themes outlined above by submitting online weekly responses about the readings and by using group discussion time to distinguish development policy claims from policy outcomes.

CLASSROOM ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

Tolerance, respect, and diversity of opinion: You are expected to behave with respect for others and their opinions – as you would in any class, and especially given the often-heightened sensitivities around the people, politics, and attitudes concerning the Middle East, including U.S. relations with the region. While discussions about “the Middle East” are frequently controversial, this class is a safe space where you may express your opinions as well as your informed judgments and can expect to have them heard. Rude or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
questions and comments are to be treated with respect by all member of the class: students, faculty, and any visitors that might join us. There may be times when you disagree with an opinion or statement made in class. You are absolutely encouraged to discuss and even debate any point, provided that you do so in a civil, respectful manner.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students who require reasonable accommodations or modifications should speak with me at the start of the semester to ensure proper arrangements are made in advance. Boston University is committed to providing equal access to our coursework and programs to all students, including those with disabilities. In order to be sure that accommodations can be made in time for all exams and assignments, please plan to turn in your accommodations letter as soon as possible after the first class to the instructor. After you turn in your letter, please meet with me to discuss the plan for accommodations so that we can be sure that they are adequate and you are supported in your learning. If you have further questions or need additional support, please contact the Office of Disability Services (access@bu.edu).

**Readings** are noted in the syllabus for the day they are due. **You are responsible for reading the assigned material before class.** The readings will give you valuable background for the lectures, films, and potential guest speakers. **Demonstrating your knowledge of the readings is central to your attendance & participation grade.** You will receive a study guide 1 week prior to the mid-term.

**Attendance & Participation:** Attendance is more than “just showing up” – it includes being actively engaged in the class, including participating in daily class discussions, asking questions, or responding to other students’ questions/comments. For that reason, attendance is mandatory and I take attendance every class. More than one unexcused absence will automatically impact your participation grade. Excessive tardiness will be marked as absence(s). If you must arrive late (or leave early) please notify me via email. One weekly summary is to be submitted every **Wednesday before Thursday’s class by 5pm on BB**, for all the week’s assigned readings. Responses are not content summaries. Rather, students are expected to critically evaluate and reflect on the basic theoretical and empirical contributions of the readings. Weekly responses account for 10% while attendance accounts for 10%. Research has shown that the use of mobile devices in class detracts from active learning and can be disruptive to your instructor and peers. For these reasons, the use of **electronic devices in class is strictly prohibited.** Exceptions are made on an individual basis.

**On missing assignments:** Students are expected to submit all required assignments on time. Being able to fulfill required assignments in a timely manner prepares you for the real work-your boss will not tolerate you submitting late work, and neither will I. Thus, developing this responsibility early on only serves to prepare you for your future. In the absence of a substantive reason for missing deadlines in class, which require official documentation detailing the extenuating circumstance. **This is the only way to make-up a missed assignment.** You will be receiving a study guide 1 week prior to teach scheduled test.

**Email policy:** Do not ever hesitate to email me regarding any aspects of the course-I am here to help. I strive to respond to all emails within 24-48 hours. **I do not respond to emails after 5pm.** It is not good practice to email an instructor a couple of days prior to when an assignment is due. Professors have many other obligations, including research commitments, service to the
University, and research related travel. Students should take these limitations into account when seeking assistance with course material and impending deadlines.

**Academic code of conduct:** cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and other types of dishonest activities are taken very seriously. Plagiarism is defined broadly as taking ideas, concepts, or actual words of another person and passing them off as your own work – including “cut-and-paste” plagiarism, such as downloading phrases (and more) from websites or other sources. Please consult BU’s Conduct Code for further information.

**Supporting Students with Disabilities:** Students who require reasonable accommodations or modifications should speak with me at the start of the semester to ensure proper arrangements are made in advance. Boston University is committed to providing equal access to our coursework and programs to all students, including those with disabilities. In order to be sure that accommodations can be made in time for all exams and assignments, please plan to turn in your accommodations letter as soon as possible after the first class to the instructor. After you turn in your letter, please meet with me to discuss the plan for accommodations so that we can be sure that they are adequate and you are supported in your learning. **If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at (617) 353-3658 or access@bu.edu to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests. ODS is located at 25 Buick Street on the 3rd floor.**

**Course Requirements**

**Texts (available for purchase at the Boston University Bookstore)**
3. All other required readings can be found on Blackboard.

**Grade Breakdown**

- Map Quiz 10%
- Attendance & Participation 20%
- Include a weekly summary of the assigned readings to be uploaded on BB no later than 5pm the day prior to class
- Mid-term 30%
- Policy papers (2, 20% each) 40%
  (Topics to be selected by Feb. 21)

**Keeping Informed:** You are expected to keep informed of current events in the region—many of which will be discussed in class. Please read a major newspaper, or Middle East-based newspapers, daily. Some examples:

*Al-Ahram Weekly*, [http://english.ahram.org.eg/](http://english.ahram.org.eg/)
Topics and Reading Schedule

**This is a tentative schedule. I reserve the right to change and update the syllabus as the semester progresses.** Keep in mind that it may be beneficial to begin reading some of the books for class well in advance. Please come prepared for every class.**

Part I: State Formation and Development in the MENA

Jan. 21 Course introduction and syllabus overview.
Lisa Anderson, “The State in the Middle East”-on BB; Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916

Jan. 23 Reading: Pye, Lucia, “The Concept of Political Development”; Samuel Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay”- BB


Jan. 30 Melani Cammett, et al., “Chapter 3: Political Regimes in the Middle East” in A Political Economy of the Middle East

Feb. 4 Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany and Paul Noble, “Introduction: Theoretical Perspectives on Arab Liberalization and Democratization” and Giacomo Luciani, “Resources, Revenues, and Authoritarianism in the Arab World: Beyond the Rentier State?” both in Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Vol. I-on BB

Part II: Themes and Case Studies
Role of the military

Expenditure and Inequality in the Middle East and North Africa: a Panel Analysis”-on BB

Feb. 11 Anthony H. Cordesman and Nicholas Harrington, “The Arab Gulf States and Iran: Military Spending, Modernization, and the Shifting Military Balance”, pages 22-53 (only); “Gulf States’ Defence Spending to Hit Record High Amid Ongoing Regional Conflict”; James Conca, “Could we Blunder into a Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East?”

Feb. 13 Larry Diamond, “Why are there no Arab Democracies?”; Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, “Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism” and Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East”-on BB

Feb. 18 No Class (President’s Day), Monday’s schedule

Oil and Resource wealth


Feb. 27 Introduction to Minorities in the MENA
Short film: Yazidi Girls: Prisoners of IS

Mar. 3 Mid-term test

Multiethnic States


March 7-15: Spring break

First policy paper due
Mar. 19  Mira Sucharov and Hamed Mousavi “State of Israel” in The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa; Andrew Carey and Oren Liebermann, Israel passes controversial ‘nation-state’ bill with no mention of equality or minority rights; Ultraorthodox vs. the IDF

Theocratic States


Single party and military regimes


Mar. 31  The confused person’s guide to the Syrian civil war; https://www.thenation.com/article/the-debate-over-syria-has-reached-a-dead-end/; Egypt’s leader says Arab Spring uprising was ill-advised; Egyptian society being crushed five years after military coup; Timeline: what’s happened since Egypt’s revolution?

Apr. 2  Documentary: Frontline: Inside Assad’s Syria

Democracies and hybrid regimes

Apr. 7  Lindsay J. Benstead “Chapter 15: Republic of Tunisia” and Gregory White “Kingdom of Morocco” in The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa; Robert Kubinec, How Foreign Aid Could Hurt Tunisia’s transition to democracy; Human Rights Watch, Support Real Reform in Morocco

Apr. 9  Mira Sucharov and Hamed Mousavi, “Chapter 5: State of Israel” and Henri J. Barkey and Omer Taspinar, “Chapter 7: Republic of Turkey” both in The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa;

Sectarianism and Political Islam

Apr. 14  Fanar Haddad, “Sectarianism and its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East”—on BB; F. Gregory Gause III, Beyond Sectarianism: the new Middle East Cold War

Politics of resistance

April 21  Eberhard Kienle, “Civil Society in the Middle East”- on BB; Melani Cammett, et al. “Chapter 11: Solidarism and its enemies: civil society and social movements in the Middle East” in A Political Economy of the Middle East

April 23  Shadi Hamid, Civil Society in the Arab World and the Dilemma of Funding and The Struggle for Middle East Democracy

April 28  Filipe R. Campante and Davin Chor, “Why was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring,” and Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud, Andrew Reynolds, “Why the Modest Harvest?” Journal of Democracy on BB
Second policy paper due

Gender Relations

Apr. 29  Valentine Moghadam, “Chapter 1: Gendering the Middle East and North Africa” in Modernizing Women; and Souad Joseph, “Patriarchy and Development in the Arab World”-both on BB

April 30  Class recap