Description
The events that culminated in the 2011 Arab uprisings, commonly known as the ‘Arab Spring’, altered analyses of Arab-region politics. While countries that constitute the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) continue to be - home to some of the world’s longest standing authoritarian regimes, the uprisings and revolutions challenged previous notions of authoritarian durability as republics, monarchies, secular, and theocratic countries across the region experienced varying degrees of instability sparked by protest movements calling for socio-economic and political change. Beginning in Tunisia late 2010 and quickly spreading to Egypt, and Morocco, Bahrain, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, the uprisings differed in degree and scope resulting in divergent outcomes. While some regimes were overthrown following decades of rule; others acquiesced to citizen demands by engaging in various concession-making processes; yet others heavily suppressed the protest movements in order to maintain their hold on power. Egypt experienced re-emergent authoritarianism following regime change.

This course analyzes divergent outcomes of the Arab uprisings by framing the uprisings along a historic continuum of domestic, regional, and international political developments. As an introductory course to the topic, it will critically and systematically analyze the events that continue to affect governance across the region. In doing so, it seeks to contextualize the historical and contemporary processes that affected mass mobilization by examining how and why linkages between regional and international states and actors affected historical and contemporary statebuilding and transitional outcomes. Beginning with North Africa, students will explore socio-economic and geopolitical relations between Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia and European states of the Mediterranean. Emphasis will be on analyzing the historical roots of contemporary relations based on shared historical interactions. Students will also be exposed to the role of regional and external actors in grievance consolidation and protest mobilization in Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Yemen, and Libya by analyzing the consequences of international and regional intervention prior to and post-2011.

The course consists of lectures and discussions based on assigned weekly readings. Students are expected to come to class prepared and informed about the assigned topic in order to contribute to classroom discussions and debates. The course is divided into two parts. Students will first gain a theoretical and ontological understanding of the socio-economic and political dynamics through an analysis of four interlinked variables: state
and regime type, civil society, gender relations and women’s mobilizations, and external intervention. Attention here is paid to the nature of the MENA state system with a focus on the domestic, regional, and international factors that have influenced its formation, development and transformation in the twentieth century. The second section will analyze the uprisings across the seven country cases to better conceptualize and situate the processes that led to divergent cross-national outcomes that continue to affect governance across the region, and the globe.

Hub Learning Capacities and Outcomes
This course fulfills the following HUB objectives: writing-intensive course, oral and/or signed communication, and research and information literacy in the following ways:

**Communication**

**Writing-intensive course**

- In order to cultivate and evaluate student ability to write succinctly and instructively, students are assigned three written assessments each with its own pedagogical merit. First, students are expected to submit weekly reading assignments (15%) that reflect close reading and critical engagement with required readings by analyzing their empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of contentious politics and the Arab uprisings. Second, students will produce a well-structured research outline relating to their final policy paper (10%) for which I will assign clear instructions at the beginning of the course. Lastly, students are expected to produce a final research-driven policy paper (40%) that will evaluate and analyze a key policy issue relating to the Arab uprisings. The latter two assignments are ‘scaffolded’, meaning students are required to revise and resubmit two versions of both assignments and are required to integrate critical feedback before final submission. The aim is to enable students to develop well-structured skeletal versions of their work and to integrate and expand on the outline in the policy paper by proposing practical policy options that compare and contrast their utility in a coherent and convincing manner. **Pre-requisite: CAS WR 120.**

- In order to explicitly define the intensive reading and writing expectations for the course, I will distribute a printed hand out of Patrick Rael’s instructions on how to read primary and secondary sources and how to engage in “predatory reading”. Students will be applying critical reading and writing tools in their weekly written assignments as well as weekly class discussions.

- Students are expected to produce a variety of written assignments, each with its own pedagogical and analytical utility, including weekly reading analyses, a well-structured outline of their policy paper, and a final research paper that identifies and analyzes a contemporary challenges to governance in the MENA region.

**Oral and/or Signed Communication**

- Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to formulate empirically-grounded oral arguments pertaining to their major research topic on contentious politics and the Arab uprising 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.

Students will be given guided instructions on effective presentation techniques one week prior to the start of the presentation schedule. Students will also be exposed to various presentation tools including, but not limited to, the effective use of PowerPoint, Keynote, and the use of vignettes. Students are expected to evaluate and provide constructive presentation feedback based on content, technique, and clarity.

**Research and information literacy**

Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to use a wide range of academic and policy relevant materials for their final research paper, including articles from academic journals, books, chapters in edited volumes, and policy papers relating to their selected topics. Students are expected to research the most recent and relevant policy papers regarding their paper topic using the platforms noted below on the MENA region. All students are also expected to incorporate socio-economic and political development data available from Freedom House, the World Bank, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, UNDP, the Fragile States Index, the World Economic Forum, and the Arab Barometer Index for the most up to date indicators on their country and topic of research.

In order to execute their research skills, students will be guided throughout the course on the following research processes in order to formulate and refine their research topic and hypothesis in a final research paper: 1) to identify the best practices for choosing appropriate research outlets for their research topic 2) to use seek out, interpret, and apply descriptive statistics relating to socio-economic and political indicators pertaining to their research question and hypothesis and 3) to implement their research findings by synthesizing information from multiple sources and points of analysis from academic and non-academic outlets.

**Required course readings**


Other assigned readings are posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking the syllabus and Blackboard for weekly reading assignments.
Grade Breakdown
Attendance and participation: 30% (include a weekly summary of the assigned readings to be uploaded on BB no later than 5pm the day prior to class).

Research presentation: 20%

Paper outline: 10%

Final research paper (10-15 pages) 40%

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. All 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 and participation accounts for 20%. 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—l 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**.
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 Development in the MENA Pre-and Post 2011 Uprisings

Jan. 21  Course introduction and syllabus overview.

Jan. 23  Marc Lynch, “Introduction” in *The Arab Uprisings Explained*

Jan. 28  Chapter 1: Michael Gasper, “The Making of the Modern Middle East” in *The Middle East*

Jan. 30  Raymond Hinnebusch, “Authoritarian Persistence, democratization theory, and the Middle East: an overview and critique” and Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East”, both available on BB

Feb. 4  Valentine Moghadam and Tabitha Decker, “Social Change in the Middle East” and Ellen Lust, “Institutions and Governance”, both in *The Middle East.*

Feb. 7:  Daniel Brumberg, “Theories of Transition” in *The Arab Uprisings Explained*; Theda Skocpol, “France, Russia, China: a Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* and Jack A. Goldstone, “Understanding the Revolutions of 2011” *Foreign Affairs*—both on BB.

*Paper topics to be decided*


Feb. 13  
Eva Bellin, “Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East”-on BB; Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders, “Authoritarian Learning and Authoritarian Resilience: Regime Responses to the ‘Arab Awakening’,” The Arab Uprisings Explained

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

Feb. 20  

Feb. 25  

Feb. 27  
Michael Hoffman and Amaney Jamal, “Political Attitudes of Youth Cohorts,” The Arab Uprisings Explained; Filipe R. Campante and Davin Chor, “Why was the Arab World Poised for Revolution? Schooling, Economic Opportunities, and the Arab Spring,” on BB

Mar. 3  
The Square documentary

Mar 5  
Patricia Bauer, “European-Mediterranean Security and the Arab Spring: Change and Challenges,” Democracy and Security; Rosemary Hollis, “No Friend of Democratization: Europe’s role in the genesis of the Arab Spring,” International Affairs, both on BB

*Paper outline to be submitted by 5pm on BB*

March 7-15  
Spring break

Mar. 17  
Part II: Regional case studies

Mar. 19  

Mar. 24  

Mar. 26  
Tarek Masoud, “Egypt” in The Middle East, pp. 424-54; Egypt’s leader says Arab Spring uprising was ill-advised; Egyptian society being crushed five years after military coup; Sisi supporters call for constitutional changes to secure Egyptian president’s future in power; Timeline: what’s happened since Egypt’s revolution?

Mar. 31  
Jacob Mundy, “Libya”, in The Middle East, pp. 615-43; A Quick Guide to Libya’s Main Players; Russia has a plan for Libya-another Qaddafi; “Libya’s Civil War: That it should come to this,”

Apr. 2  
Raymond Hinnebusch, “Syria” in The Middle East, pp. 781-806; The confused person’s guide to the Syrian civil war; The Debate Over Syria has Reached a Dead End; There’s more propaganda than news coming out of Aleppo this week;

Apr. 7  
Sarah G. Phillips, “Yemen,” The Middle East, pp. 895-916; Yemen: United Nations experts point to possible war crimes by parties to the conflict; Human Rights Watch: It’s time for the U.S. to stop supplying weapons to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen; History won’t look kindly on Britain over arms sales feeding war in Yemen; An Unnatural Disaster

Apr. 9  
Bahrain, The Arab Uprisings: What Everyone Needs to Know, pp. 116-126; The Battle for Bahrain: Iranian-Saudi Rivalry; How Bahrain’s crushed uprising spawned the Middle East’s sectarianism; No Applause for Bahrain’s Sham Election

Apr. 14  
Elizabeth Dickinson, Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria’s Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home; F. Roula Khalaf and Abigail Fielding-Smith, Qatar Bankrolls Syrian revolt with cash and arms
Apr. 16  Justin Gengler, *Sectarian Backfire? Assessing Gulf Political Strategy Five Years after the Arab Uprisings*; Gregory Gause III, *Beyond Sectarianism: the New Middle East Cold War*

April 21  Guest speaker-TBD

April 23  Simulation: Syrian civil war

April 28  Simulation: Yemen civil war
           Final paper due-to be submitted on BB by 5pm

April 30  Class recap