The Comparative Politics of the Middle East, POLI 4061

Spring 2009
1:30-3:00 TTh, Howe-Russell E130

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Course Objectives: This course covers domestic politics in the contemporary Middle East. It focuses on three main topics: the types of political systems that exist in the region, Islamist movements, and the status of women in the region. It also provides a detailed overview of recent political history in the various countries of the region.


Grades: You will have a midterm exam (Thursday, March 5), a final exam (Thursday, May 7, 12:30-2:30 pm), and a term paper (due Thursday, April 30). The best two of your three grades will each count for 40% of your final grade; the worst will count for 20%. Exams will consist of definitions and essay questions and will not be cumulative. I give makeups only under exceptional circumstances and only with prior permission from me.

Schedule of Readings (to be read in the order listed):


2. Monarchical Regimes. Long, Reich, & Gasiorowski, Government and Politics, chs. 4, 6, 10, 15.


4. Islam and Politics. Kepel, Jihad; Long, Reich, & Gasiorowski, Government and Politics, ch. 3.

5. Women in the Middle East. Keddie, Women in the Middle East.
Term Paper:

Your term paper can be on almost any topic dealing with domestic politics in the Middle East, such as a study of an important leader or political organization or a major domestic political event like as the Algerian revolution or the Lebanese civil war. Do not choose a topic covered extensively in class or in the readings. You must go well beyond the material contained in any class readings pertaining to your topic. If you have any doubt about the suitability of a topic, see me before you begin.

Your paper must be 12-17 double-spaced pages in length, including notes and/or bibliography. You must submit a one-paragraph (i.e., at least four sentences) summary of your paper to me by Thursday, February 12, including its title and the names of at least four books or articles you plan to use. The paper is due on Thursday, April 30, with no exceptions. If your summary or paper is late, you will receive an F on the paper.

I will grade your paper mainly on the depth and insightfulness of your analysis, though I will also take into account its organization, the quality of your sources, and your writing style (for native English speakers only). Papers should be factual and analytical, not opinionated. You must use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical name/date citations (with bibliography) for any quotes and for important information or arguments taken from a particular source. At least three of your sources must have been published in 2004 or later, or you will receive an F. For pointers on how and what to cite, where to find source material, and other matters, see my “Guidelines for Writing Term Papers” handout. I will expect you to follow these guidelines closely. Your paper must be typed (double-spaced) and proofread. If you have any trouble finding a topic or organizing your paper, see me for suggestions. For help with your writing, try the LSU Writing Center, at www.lsu.edu/writing-center.

The main places to look for source material are the LSU library catalog; International Political Science Abstracts (http://www.lib.lsu.edu/databases/descriptions/polisciabstracts.html); LexisNexis (http://web.lexis-nexis.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/universe); and Middle East internet sites such as: http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/, http://menic.utexas.edu/menic.html, http://www2.ctown.edu/v1/mideast.html, http://hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast, http://www.mideastweb.org/, http://www.middle-east-pages.com/, and http://mepc.org/resources/resources.asp. You should also browse through journals like Current History, Middle East Journal, International Journal of Middle East Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Report, Middle East Policy, and Journal of Palestine Studies, most of which are available online at http://www.lib.lsu.edu/epubs/ejournals.html. When you find a recent book or article related to your topic, look through its footnotes or bibliography for additional useful references. For specific factual details you may also want to look at The New York Times Index, The Washington Post Index, Keesing’s Record of World Events, Political Handbook of the World, The Middle East and North Africa, and Middle East Contemporary Survey. Do not cite material used in class, local U.S. newspapers, or Wikipedia. And see me or the reference librarians in Middleton for help in finding material.
Guidelines for Writing Term Papers

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General Points

Before writing your paper, plan out its overall structure: the general theme, the order in which you will present various issues, the relative emphasis you will give to each issue, whether you have enough information on the issues you will cover, the main conclusions you will draw, etc. The best way to do this is to develop a detailed outline of the paper before you start writing. A little effort at this stage will save you a lot of time later and help you write a better paper.

Your grade will be based mainly on content, but presentation also is important. Include a separate cover page with the title, your name, the date, and the class name and number. Put your endnotes or bibliography on a separate page. Break your paper up into separate sections with section titles. Organize your paper so it flows smoothly from one section to another. Express your ideas clearly. Your paragraphs should be neither too short nor too long. Avoid run-on sentences. Cite your sources correctly, as discussed below. Avoid quotations, except where necessary. Proofread your work for spelling and grammatical mistakes, using a dictionary (or dictionary.com) when necessary. Be sure your paper is neat and clean. Keep an extra copy. The LSU Writing Center, at www.lsu.edu/writingcenter, can help you improve your writing skills. Remember: good ideas are wasted if they are not clearly presented.

Sources

The best places to look for source material are the LSU library catalog; International Political Science Abstracts (find it online through the catalog); LexisNexis Academic and other electronic resources on the LSU library website (www.lib.lsu.edu/databases); and the internet. The reference librarians in Middleton Library can help you find and use these sources. Once you have found a few good sources, you can use them to find others, e.g., by continuing to search with the same keywords; by looking in other issues of the same journal or magazine; by looking at footnotes or the bibliography in books and articles; by looking near a book in the stacks; or by using the library catalog to search for other books with the same subject classification (usually listed in the library catalog entry and on the front or back page of a book). Do not cite material from class, local U.S. newspapers, Wikipedia, or other encyclopedias.

The types of source material you need depend on what type of paper you are writing. If the paper is about a current or very recent topic, the most useful sources usually are good national newspapers and magazines, like The New York Times, The Washington Post, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, and The Economist. See also the following websites (some have links to foreign newspapers): nytimes.com, washingtongpost.com, wsj.com, miamiherald.com (for Latin America), news.bbc.co.uk, economist.com, newsweek.com, time.com, usnews.com,
cnn.com, www.afp.com, newsdirectory.com, policy.com, gulf2000.columbia.edu (for the Middle East), ciaonet.org, and mepc.org. Many of these websites are cleared daily, so check them often for full coverage. Journals focusing on current events also may be useful, including Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Washington Quarterly, and Current History. Books and other journals may be useful for background material. Local newspapers (e.g., the Morning-Advocate) generally are not useful for international topics.

If your topic is more than a few years old, books and journal articles probably are more helpful. For the Middle East, the main journals are Middle East Journal, International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Journal of Near East and South Asian Affairs, Middle Eastern Studies, Middle East Report, Middle East Policy, and Journal of Palestine Studies. For specific historical details, see New York Times Index, Keesing's Contemporary Archive, Political Handbook of the World, Middle East Contemporary Survey, The Middle East and North Africa, and Wikipedia. And see me or the reference librarians in Middleton for help in finding material.

Citations

There are three main reasons to cite source material. First, you must give the source (including page number) of any quotation you make. Second, you should cite the source of any important information you present that is controversial or not widely known. Third, you can show the reader how much work you have done by finding a way to cite each of the important sources you have used in one of the two preceding ways. You must include recent citations and use reputable sources. Note: if you quote or paraphrase extensively from an uncited source, you may be guilty of plagiarism. Do not let this happen.

There are two main ways to cite an article or book. First, you can include the author's last name, year of publication, and page number parenthetically in the text, like this (Keddie, 2007: 204), and then give the full citation for the article or book in a bibliography. Second, you can include the full citation (including page number) in a footnote or endnote, in which case you do not need a bibliography. A full citation for a book includes the author's full name, the full name of the book (italicized), the city the book was published in, the publisher, and the year of publication. A full citation for an article includes the author's full name (if available), the name of the article (in double quotes), the name of the journal or magazine it appears in (italicized), the date of publication, the volume and issue numbers, and the page numbers. In a bibliography, the author's last name should come first and the entries should be alphabetized by author name. In footnotes or endnotes you can use just the author's last name and the title if you have already given the full citation in a previous note. The easiest way to do your citations is simply to follow the format used in some appropriate book or article. See also Kate L. Turabian, A Manual For Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), or see me. If you cite material from the internet, you must include the author's name (if available), the title (italicized), the publication date, the original source (if available), and the full internet address and date at which you accessed it.