The Comparative Politics of the Middle East, POLI 4061

Spring 2010
10:30-12:00 TTh, E130 Howe-Russell Hall

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

Texts: David E. Long, Bernard Reich, and Mark Gasiorowski (eds.), The Government
and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa, Fifth Edition (Boulder: Westview
Note: I will donate my royalties from LSU sales of Government and Politics to the LSU
Foundation.

Grades: You have a midterm exam (Thursday, March 11), a final exam (Thursday, May
13, 12:30-2:30 pm), and a term paper (due Thursday, April 22). 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. Semitotalitarian and Post-Semitotalitarian Regimes. Government and Politics, chs. 5,
9, 13, 16, 17, 13, 14, 7, 3.

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 13-17 double-spaced pages in length, including notes and/or
bibliography but excluding the cover page. You must submit a one-paragraph (i.e., at
least five sentences) summary of your paper to me by Thursday, February 11, including
its title and the names of at least six books, articles, or websites you plan to use. The
paper is due on Thursday, April 22. Late papers will receive at least one letter grade off.
I will grade your paper mainly on the depth and insightfulness of your analysis, though also on its organization, quality of sources, and writing style (for native English speakers only). Your paper should be factual and analytical, not opinionated. At least four of your sources must have been published in 2005 or later.

The best places to look for source material are the LSU library catalog and the databases available at www.lib.lsu.edu/databases, especially International Political Science Abstracts and LexisNexis Academic. The reference librarians in Middleton Library can help you use these resources effectively. Good Middle East internet sites include http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/, http://menic.utexas.edu/menic.html, http://www2.etown.edu/vl/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. Browse the following journals: 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 at http://www.lib.lsu.edu/epubs/iejournals.html. Internet searches can be useful, though quality and reliability vary greatly. Once you have found a few good sources, use them to find others, e.g., by continuing to search with the same keywords, looking in other issues of the same journal or magazine, looking at footnotes or the bibliography in books and articles, looking near a book in the stacks, or using the library catalog to search for other books with the same subject classification. Do not cite class readings, local newspapers, Wikipedia, or other encyclopedias, though you can use them for general information.

For an excellent guide to writing a research paper, see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/, especially “The Writing Process” and “General Academic Writing.” Use a separate cover page giving the title, your name, the date, and the class name and number. Break your paper up into separate sections with section titles. Include a proper introduction and conclusion, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/728/01/. Organize your paper to flow smoothly from one section to another. Express your ideas clearly. Each paragraph should express a single idea and should not be too long, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/. Avoid run-on sentences. Use proper writing style, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ “Grammar and Mechanics.” Do not plagiarize, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/. Quote only when necessary, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/01/. Cite your sources and any quotations correctly, using either MLA or Chicago style, as explained in http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/ or http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/. If you use endnotes or a bibliography, put them on a separate page. Proofread your work, using a dictionary or dictionary.com when necessary. Be sure your paper is neat and clean. Keep an extra copy. For help with your writing, make an appointment with a tutor or use the Grammar Garage at the LSU Writing Center, www.lsu.edu/writingcenter. Remember: good ideas are wasted if they are not clearly presented.