

POL S 331: Government and Politics in the Middle East and North Africa

Professor Asli Cansunar

Spring 2023

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Office Hours: Thursday 10-12 pm, or by appointment

Class Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 11:30 AM - 12:50 PM

Venue: 132 Hitchcock Hall

Course Description

For decades, the Middle East was widely perceived as a bastion of authoritarianism and a hotbed of ethnic and religious politics and political violence. What explains the persistence of these perspectives, and why have citizens across the region risen up to try to overthrow dictators and authoritarian regimes? Why have Islamists gained prominence in many MENA countries? By learning about key questions and debates in the field of Middle East politics, this course aims to give students a critical understanding of politics in the region. The course combines systematic analytical approaches to big questions with concrete knowledge of events and developments in specific countries. Topics include “persistent authoritarianism” in the Middle East, Political Islam, sectarian violence, economic development and underdevelopment, social mobilization, and the foundations of the Arab Spring.

1 Course Requirements

1) Lectures: Professor Cansunar will lecture on the Monday and Wednesday sessions of the class at the allocated lecture time. In lectures, Professor Cansunar will cover the broad themes for the week’s topics, in addition to various theories, hypotheses, data, and case studies from around the world that speak to these topics. While attendance is not recorded for lectures, Professor Cansunar highly recommends attending them as students’ success in class is largely determined by their level of engagement.

2) Participation & Quiz Section: The TAs will conduct Quiz Sections during the allotted class time on Fridays. TAs will lead discussions of the week’s readings, focusing mainly on the case studies, and students will be able to ask questions on assigned readings for each week and regarding the discussion questions. The participation grade recorded in quiz section will be based on the discussion question assignments, and attendance in quiz section is necessary to improve

the quality of a student's discussion question assignments and understanding of other course material, especially the country case studies. TAs will provide additional information about the policies and expectations of their Quiz Sections in Week 1.

3) Canvas Students should familiarize themselves with the course's Canvas website. On the Canvas page for the lecture, students will find course readings, syllabus, and other materials. If students have any questions on course policies, logistics, due dates, etc., they should consult Canvas and the syllabus. Any question that has already been answered on the syllabus, Canvas, or in lecture, or should be directed to a student's TA, is unlikely to receive an email response from Professor Cansunar. Professor Cansunar and TAs will use Canvas to make class announcements and post news items or other links. As such, students may want to set their Canvas settings to receive notifications via email and/or regularly check the Canvas page.

2 The Role of Quiz Section TAs:

2) TA Information:

- Tongtian Ziao
Email: ttxiao@uw.edu
AA Section: Fridays, 9:30-10:20, GUG 204
AB Section: Fridays, 10:30-11:20am, GUG 204
- Yusri Supiyan
Email: yusri@uw.edu
AA Section: Fridays, 10:30-11:20, SMI 311
AB Section: Fridays, 11:30-12:20pm, SMI 311

Quiz sections are vital to students' learning, and students who do not engage with the discussion in quiz sections will not be successful in this class. Professor Cansunar, therefore, values the important role that TAs play in the success of his course management and instruction. This course will not be successful without the contributions from TAs, and students should view TAs as their "first line of defense" regarding any challenges that may arise due to the pandemic. First, TAs will be responsible for all of the grading of class assignments (discussion question responses, midterm, and final exam) under the direction of Professor Cansunar. TAs will manage their own quiz section Canvas pages that will be used by students to turn in discussion question assignments and either in-person or remote midterm and final exams. Any questions about grading and assignments should therefore be directed to TAs. Second, TAs will manage and operate their own quiz sections during the allotted times that students are registered for on Fridays every week. TAs will not introduce any additional course material or lesson plans during the quiz section, but they will often cover material not otherwise covered in the lecture and use that time to answer student inquiries on that week's material from the lecture or regarding clarification or discussion on the country case studies and discussion questions. Any questions about the quiz section or discussion questions should therefore be directed to TAs. Third, while Professor Cansunar will be in constant management of the TAs, students should view their TAs as the "first line of defense" should problems arise in students' experience with this class. They should avoid reaching out to Professor Cansunar for a matter that can be handled by a TA, they should

reach out only to their TA assigned to their registered quiz section, and they should not contact their TA for this class with a matter related to problems in another class. Should students be required to quarantine, they should let their TA know immediately (see also below). Professor Cansunar will provide additional information about the expectations for TAs in Week 1, and TAs will provide additional information about the policies and expectations of their Quiz Sections in Week 1.

Neither Professor Cansunar nor the TAs will be in a position to offer students individual technical support, medical advice, or any alterations to UW, state, and federal policy with respect to the pandemic – we advise students to consult other UW and IT resources as needed to address specific problems related to accessibility or access.

3 Course Evaluation:

1. **Quiz Section Participation and Assignments (30%)**
2. **In-class midterm exam (20%)**, Monday, May 1
3. **Final exam (30%)**, Monday, June 5, 2023
4. **Country report (20%)**, due: Friday, June 2, 2023

You will write a country report (around 2500 words) on one of the following themes: democracy, economy, or religion&secularization. More details about the nature of the assignment will be presented during the lectures.

Class Schedule

Monday, March 27: Introduction and Overview

No readings

Wednesday, March 29: States and Institutions I

Required readings

Ellen Lust. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. States and Institutions, pp. 132–169.

Monday, April 3: States and Institutions II

Required readings

Eva Bellin. "The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective". In: *Comparative politics* (2004), pp. 139–157.

Larry Diamond. "Democracy's Past and Future: Why Are There No Arab Democracies?" In: *Journal of democracy* 21.1 (2010), pp. 93–112.

Wednesday, April 5: Religion, Society, and Politics

Required readings

Robert Lee and Lihi Ben Shitrit. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. Religion, Society, and Politics in the Middle East, pp. 169–200.

Monday, April 10: Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation

Required readings

Janine A. Clark. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation, pp. 201–232.

Wednesday, April 12: No Class

Monday, April 17: Social Change in the Middle East

Required readings

Valentine M. Moghadam. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. Social Change in the Middle East, pp. 233–260.

Wednesday, April 19: The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East

Required readings

Melani Cammett and Ishac Diwan. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East, pp. 269–306.

Monday, April 24: The Long Divergence

Required readings

Timur Kuran. *"The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East"*. Chapters 1-2. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Wednesday, April 26: Early Islamic Institutions: Inheritance Rules, Legal System and the Courts, and Partnerships

Required readings

Timur Kuran. *"The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East"*. Chapters 3-5. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Monday, May 1: In-Class Midterm

Wednesday, May 3: Early Islamic Institutions: Public Goods and Civil Society

Required readings

Timur Kuran. *"The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East,"*. Chapters 6-7. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Monday, May 8: Social Movements: Turkey, Erdogan, and Gezi Protests

Required readings

Mine Eder. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. Turkey, pp. 269–306.
Erdem Yörük. "The Long Summer of Turkey: The Gezi Uprising and Its Historical Roots". In: *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113.2 (Apr. 2014), pp. 419–426.

Wednesday, May 10: Elections in Turkey

Required readings

Mine Eder. "The Middle East". In: ed. by Ellen Lust. SAGE Publications, 2019. Chap. Country Profiles: Turkey, pp. 695–728.

Monday, May 15: Elections in Turkey

Required readings

Gönül Tol. *Erdogan's War: A Strongman's Struggle at Home and in Syria*. Oxford University Press, 2022.

Wednesday, May 17: The Arab Spring

Required readings

Jason Brownlee et al. *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform, Chapter 3*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Monday, May 22: The Welfare State in the Middle East

Required readings

Melani Cammett and Lauren M MacLean. *The politics of non-state social welfare*. Cornell University Press, 2014.

Wednesday, May 24: Islam and Gender

Required readings

Lisa Blaydes. "How Does Islamist Local Governance Affect the Lives of Women?" In: *Governance* 27.3 (2014), pp. 489–509.
Suad Joseph. "Women and politics in the Middle East". In: *Women and power in the Middle East*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Chap. Overview, pp. 21–58.

Monday, May 29, 2023: Memorial Day, No class

Wednesday, May 31, 2023, Wrapping up

Monday, June 5, 2023, 8:30-10:20 a.m. FINAL EXAM

Grade complaints

You have the right to dispute a grade if you disagree with it. You must do so in writing, no more than 3 working days after we have returned the exam/paper to you. Upon receiving your appeal, your TA will re-grade the entire exam. Note that as your TA re-evaluates the exam, they may realize that while we were too strict with some answers, we were too generous with others. Your overall grade may go up, but it may also go down.

Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for the accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).