

GVPT888B: Selected Topics in Comparative Governmental Institutions: Middle East (Fall 2008)

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About This Class

This class is an introduction to the contemporary politics of the Middle East and, more specifically, *researching* the contemporary politics of the Middle East. We will make no attempt to cover all the elements of conceptual interest in the Middle East — a better start for this would be the graduate comparative politics proseminar — but will instead highlight several key veins of political science research in the first few weeks. After that, our focus will shift to elements of research design, describing a variety of ways to accomplish reliable social science research in the Middle East and critiquing several studies along the way.

Research designs are the running projects for the course of the term. Students will develop a research proposal over the semester. These proposals will not actually be carried out in this class, but rather will serve as the potential basis for a dissertation prospectus or funding proposals. The purpose of the project is to provide students with an opportunity to focus systematically on the components of a well-conceived research program upon which they may build in their subsequent graduate careers. Drafts of sub-components of the research design will be due at various points throughout the semester, with the final version due at the end of term. Students will also have a chance to present their ideas before the class at several junctures to get peer comments.

Class Sessions

08 September

- Topic: Introduction to the course: social science and the Middle East
- Readings:
 - King et al. (1994, Ch. 1)
 - Huntington et al. (1996)
 - Itzkowitz (1972) (Suggested: skim/read)
 - Hourani (1962, Ch. 1–3) (Suggested: skim/read)
 - Cleveland (2004) (Suggested: skim/read)

15 September

- Topic: Area studies, social science, and inferences
- Readings:
 - King et al. (1994, Chs. 2–3)
 - Bates (2007)
 - Tessler et al. (1999, Introduction, Chs. 1–3, 7)
- *Assignment Due: Class presentation of research question and motivation.*

22 September

- Topic: Political economy and development
- Readings:
 - Richards and Waterbury (1996, Chs. 1–5, 7–9, 11–13)
 - United Nations Development Programme (2006, Exec. Summary)
 - Beblawi (1987)
 - Lerner (1958, Chs. 1–2)
 - Deutsch (1961)
 - Huntington (1968, Ch. 1)
 - Przeworski and Limongi (1997)
- *Assignment Due: Written research question and motivation.*

29 September

- Topic: Democracy and authoritarianism
- Readings:
 - Anderson (2006)
 - Bellin (2004)
 - Lust-Okar (2004)
 - Posusney (2004)
 - Kedourie (1992)
 - Waterbury (1994)
 - Korany (1994)

06 October

- Topic: Islam and democracy
- Readings:
 - Choueiri (1996)
 - Philpott (2007)
 - Gill (2001)
 - Iannaccone (1994)
 - Juergensmeyer (1995)
 - Sadowski (2006)
 - Keddie (1998)
 - Ajami (1981, Introduction, Chs. 1, 3)
 - Kassir (2006)

13 October

- Topic: Case studies and the comparative method
- Readings:
 - Gerring (2007)
 - Lijphart (1971)
 - King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, Ch. 4, 6)
 - Jamal (2007, Chs. 1–2, 5)
 - Brownlee (2007, Introduction, Chs. 1, 7)
- *Assignment Due: Preliminary literature review.*

20 October

- Topic: Case selection issues
- Readings:
 - King, Keohane, and Verba (1994, Ch. 5)
 - Geddes (1990)
 - Achen and Snidal (1989)
 - Schwedler (2006, Chs. 1–2, 6)
- *Assignment Due: Preliminary theoretical argument.*

27 October

- Topic: Surveys
- Readings:
 - King et al. (1994, Ch. 5)
 - King et al. (2003)
 - Tessler (2002)
 - Inglehart et al. (2006)
 - Corstange (2008b)
 - Tessler and Nachtwey (1998)

03 November

- Topic: Field research and unobtrusive measures
- Readings:
 - Clark et al. (2006)
 - Wood (2007)
 - Webb et al. (1981, Selections)
 - Wedeen (1999)
 - Corstange (2007)
 - Corstange (2008a)

10 November

- Topic: Large- N research, cross-national research, political economy
- Readings:

- Przeworski and Limongi (1997)
- Ross (1999)
- Ross (2001)
- Makdisi et al. (2007)
- Makdisi and Elbadawi (2007)
- Chaudhry (1994)

- *Assignment Due: Preliminary case selection and justification.*

17 November

- Topic: History and historiography
- Readings:
 - Lustick (1996)
 - Salibi (1988)
 - Lewis (2002, Introduction, Conclusion)

- *Assignment Due: Empirical methods proposal.*

24 November

- Topic: Peer review of research designs (week 1)
- Readings:
 - *Drafts of 6 students' research designs.*

01 December

- Topic: Peer review of research designs (week 2)
- Readings:
 - *Drafts of 6 students' research designs.*

08 December

- Topic: Conclusions
- Readings:
 - Medawar (1979)
- *Assignment Due: Final draft of research design.*

References

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