

## POLI 340

# Developing Areas: Middle East

**INSTRUCTOR:** Prof. Rex Brynen  
Leacock 510  
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**CLASS HOURS:** Lectures will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays, 16h05-17h25 in STBIO S1/4. There are no conference sessions.

**OFFICE HOURS:** I have “drop-in” office hours on Friday from 12h45 to 14h15 on Fridays in LEA 510. I am also available for Zoom or in-person meetings by appointment.

**IMPORTANT:** If anything is not clear, or if you are encountering difficulties dealing with the course or university more broadly, **please reach out and let me know** so that I can offer assistance (and consider possible accommodations, if necessary). Be sure to check myCourses often for information, announcements, and updates.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, and as public health directives evolve, the content, delivery, and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

### Course Description

This course will explore key political factors across that shape politics across the contemporary Middle East (Part 1), offer a more detailed examination of selected regimes (Part 2), and look ahead at future trends and trajectories in the region (Part 3).

This course consists of class lectures—there are no conference sessions, although there will be some (optional) research paper support sessions organized outside class hours during the term. It is my intention that the lectures will be recorded and be made available later via myCourses. HOWEVER, class attendance is strongly recommended—in part so that you can ask questions, discuss, and otherwise engage, and in part should there be a failure of the lecture recording system.

The prerequisite for POLI 340 is a previous course in comparative politics or a previous course on the region. Please note that Middle East international relations/foreign policy and Israeli politics will not be covered in this course, since they are addressed in POLI 341 and POLI 437 respectively.

## Text

The text for this course is:

- Ellen Lust, *The Middle East* 16<sup>th</sup> edition (SAGE, 2023)—hereafter, *TME*.

While an e-copy of the text should be available via the McGill library, **do not rely on this**—there is a limit of how many students can access it at any one time, and there is a good chance it may become unavailable during high-demand periods. You should therefore purchase the textbook. Do not use previous editions.

All other readings for the course have been placed online via myCourses (<http://www.mcgill.ca/mycourses>). Additional required readings may be placed on myCourses during the term, so please check it regularly.

In addition, students are encouraged to follow regional events via some of the following websites:

- *al-Jazeera English* (<http://english.aljazeera.net>)
- *BBC News* ([http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/middle\\_east](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/middle_east))
- *Jadaliyya* (<http://www.jadaliyya.com>)
- *al-Monitor* (<http://www.al-monitor.com>)

## Course Requirements and Grading

- midterm exams
  - October 16 15%
  - November 8 15%
- research paper (4-5,000 words, due via myCourses on November 15) 35%
- take-home final examination (university-scheduled) 35%

The *midterm exams* will take part in class and consist primarily of multiple-choice questions, although there may be some short essay questions too. Be sure to be on time for the exams, and bring a pen, pencil, and eraser to class for these.

The requirements of the *research paper* will be detailed in a special handout distributed in mid-September, which will list the available paper topics. The expectations for this will be quite high, so do not leave it to the last minute! Late papers will only be accepted up until November 25 (at a penalty of 2% per day). Only documented medical excuses (or equivalent, including mental health and personal or family crisis) justify the unpenalized late submission of a paper. Submission of an unplagiarized research paper is a required part of the course.

The *final exam* will be an online take-home exam consist of longer essay questions. It will cover all course content the course. The exam will be made available (via myCourses) 72 hours before the university-scheduled exam date and will be due (via myCourses) at the scheduled time. Submission of an unplagiarized final exam is a required part of the course.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

**Plagiarism:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <https://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest> for more information).

If parts of someone else’s work are used directly (paraphrased or quoted) without acknowledgement, this constitutes plagiarism. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is or how to identify your sources, ask the course instructor or consult a style manual. Plagiarism is cheating, to the detriment of both the university and fellow students. Generative AI (such as ChatGPT) may not be used to generate content for the research paper or final exam—this also constitutes plagiarism.<sup>1</sup>

All work submitted for evaluation as part of this course may be checked with text matching and AI detection software.

Research papers or take-home exams that contain plagiarized material will receive a grade of zero, and the student will be assigned an incomplete J (F) grade for the course overall. In addition, they will be reported to the Faculty with a recommendation for strong disciplinary action.

**Supplemental exams:** As outlined in the Faculty of Arts calendar, students receiving a final grade of D or F for the course may write a supplemental exam, which will replace their original final exam grade. If so, they may also submit a supplemental research paper at this time (which will replace their original research paper grade), UNLESS the failing grade was the result of plagiarism.

## Lecture and Reading Schedule

August 30	Introduction to POLI 340	
<b>PART 1: Key Factors in Middle East Politics</b>		
September 6	Overview of the Middle East	
September 11	Historical Context	Gaspar, “The Making of the Modern Middle East,” in <i>TME</i> (chapter 1).
September 13		
September 18	Religion, Society, Politics	Lee and Ben Shitrit, “Religion, Society, and Politics,” in <i>TME</i> (chapter 4)
September 20	Political Economy	Cammett, Diwan, and Heydemann, “The Political Economy of Development in the Middle East,” in <i>TME</i> (chapter 7).
September 25	States and Political Institutions	Lust, “States and Institutions” and El-Mahdi, “Citizen’s Participation: Actors, Arenas, & Dilemmas,” in <i>TME</i> (chapters 3 and 5).
September 27		

<sup>1</sup> You may use generative AI as a source of ideas and approaches, much as you might talk to a friend about your research paper. However, keep in mind it is a Large Language Model based on scraping internet content and is optimized to “sound right” (to a non-expert reader) rather than “be right.” Despite its confident tone, it generally produces material below the expected quality for POLI 340, is not up to date on recent political developments, and sometimes is simply wrong. Consequently, treat it a bit like you would the advice of a mansplaining buddy who is very sure of himself but who never took a class in Middle East politics and instead learned everything he knows about the world by reading old Reddit threads.

October 2	Social Change	Moghadam, "Social Change in the Middle East," in TME (chapter 6).
October 4	International Context	Lynch, "International Relations," in TME (chapter 8).
October 9	<i>Fall Break</i>	
October 11	<i>Fall Break</i>	
October 16	<b>Midterm 1</b>	
<b>PART 2: Regime Case Studies</b>		
October 18	Tunisia and Egypt	Masoud, "Egypt" and Kherigi, "Tunisia," in TME (chapters 10 and 24)
October 23	Jordan and Morocco	Brand, "Jordan" and Zerhouni and Maghraoui, "Morocco," in TME (chapters 14 and 19).
October 25	Kuwait and Saudi Arabia	Al-Awadi, "Kuwait" and Sowayel, "Saudi Arabia," in TME (chapters 15 and 21)
October 30	Iraq and Lebanon	Choucair-Vizoso, "Iraq" and Salem, "Lebanon" in TME (chapters 12 and 16).
November 1	Syria and Yemen	Hinnebusch, "Syria" and Phillips, Yemen," in TME (Chapters 22 and 26).
November 6	OPEN TOPIC	
November 8	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
<b>PART 3: Looking Ahead</b>		
November 13	Looking Ahead: Authoritarianism and Democracy	Freedom House, <i>Freedom in the World 2023</i> , pp 1-23 (overview) and p. 29 (Middle East).
November 15	Looking Ahead: Religion and Politics	TBA
November 20	Looking Ahead: Regional Conflict	International Crisis Group, <i>Crisis Watch interactive map</i> (skim MENA).
November 22	Looking Ahead: Environment	Wehrey and Fawal, "Cascading Climate Effects in the Middle East and North Africa," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 24 February 2022.
November 27	Conclusion and exam review	
December 4	<i>No class</i>	

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.