POLITICS and INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, Part II / Part IIB, 2023-2024

POL12: The Politics of the Middle East

Course Organiser

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> *This version was last updated on 24th October 2023, with changes to the first and third mini-subjects and associated changes to the mock exam paper.*

1. Introduction

This paper on the politics and international relations of the modern Middle East is built around three thematic sections. The first section explores states in the Middle East through debates on the state, security and the politics of authoritarianism. The second section is on the politics of identity in the Middle East, looking at the interplay of national, religious and gender affiliations within and across the politics of the countries of the region. The third section is on the Middle East in global politics, understanding the role of Middle Eastern states, movements and diasporas within international political debates and their place within global political imaginaries. Students taking the paper should do 5 supervisions across these sections.

There will also be three separate 'mini-subjects' within the paper. The mini-subjects are on (i) language politics in contemporary North Africa; (ii) China's role in the Middle East; and (iii) the place of the Gaza Strip in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The mini-subjects are taught in Lent term, by a seminar. Students are encouraged (but not required) to choose *one* of these on which to have a supervision, which will be held as their last supervision in Lent term.

It is important to attend the introductory lecture on Thursday 5th October, 4pm, in week 1 in the Alison Richard Building room SG2, as structures for potential supervision arrangements during the year will be presented at that lecture. Any specific preferences that you have will be taken into account when arranging supervisors and supervision topics. Typically, though, students will have five or six supervisions, comprising:

- 1 supervision on the historical emergence of modern politics in the region;
- 4 supervisions in total on the thematic sections, with at least one from each section;
- Optionally, 1 supervision on the 'mini-subject' (Language Politics in the Maghreb; China in the Middle East, the Gaza Strip).

The exam paper is undivided, and a mock exam paper is contained in the section 6 of this paper guide. There will be one question on each of the mini-subjects.

To benefit from this paper, it is important to have a sense of the overall contours of the modern history of the region. Students who took the POL4 option on Syria and Iraq will already have this sense from studying these two crucial countries; that prior knowledge is presupposed on this paper, and it will not be repeated in this year's lectures. It is still worth returning to one of the standard histories of the region at the start of the year to refamiliarise yourself with key events, historical processes and core terminology:

Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 3rd edition, 2004) **[OL]**

Betty S. Anderson, *A History of the Modern Middle East: Rulers, Rebels, and Rogues* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016)

Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 4th edition, 2018)

William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Westview Press, 6th edition, 2016)

Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991; updated edition, 2012)

Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Penguin, 3rd edition, 2018)

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5th edition, 2020)

These seven texts are quite different: Owen's historical account is only of the modern period and is fairly short, but has separate thematic accounts that develop the history. It is still useful, even though it is now dated. Cleveland takes in a longer sweep of history, and is detailed, but excludes North Africa west of Egypt from its account; it's perhaps better to use as a reference text than to read through. Anderson also excludes North Africa, but it is a lively and readable text, although it doesn't engage with academic literature. Hourani is a celebrated classic, with the longer historical sweep, but only of the Arab world (so excluding Turkey, Iran and Israel), and is brief on the post-1939 era; Rogan's is more up to date, and is focused more heavily on the 20th Century. The account from Milton-Edwards is that of an accessible textbook. Gelvin incorporates a social history within the political narrative to a considerably greater degree than the others. It's generally better to flick through each, and purchase the one you prefer: it will come in useful throughout the year.

The reading lists that follow in this paper guide are generally quite long, but this is to give you a choice about what to look at. We do not expect you to work through each item listed. Those that are particularly recommended are starred (*). Most of the items can be obtained online, especially journal articles, and we have marked items that are not obviously online with **[OL]** (ie it is on-line) or **[M]** (a scanned article on the library Moodle site). If there are problems in connecting to the relevant Moodle site, then speak to the library. But if you find that specific pieces are not available electronically at the sites listed below, please contact the lecturer: URLs change and pieces are taken down, and it's helpful to inform us if that happens. Many of the reading lists below include works that are quite dated, and which provide judgements and prognoses that are no longer relevant. (Some of them, needless to say, you will rightly find to be flawed in their analysis). They are on the list sometimes because they were influential texts that shaped how particular regions or themes were studied – and sometimes to give you something to react against. You should also make sure you keep up to speed with the contemporary politics of the region, not least because of the widespread sense (which may of course be inaccurate) that the Middle East is currently in a period of flux. Some on-line sources are recommended in the last part of this course guide.

1.2 POL12 lecture list in brief

All of the lectures and seminars for this paper will be in the ARB, room SG2.

Introduction: Thursday 5th October, 4pm.

Michaelmas 2023	Michaelmas 2023	Lent 2024	Lent 2024
Series A: the State and Security *Tuesdays 4pm*	**Series B: Identity** *Wednesdays 10am*	**Series C: Global Politics** *Wednesdays 10am*	**Series D: the mini-subjects** *Thursdays 2pm*
10th Oct: The formation of states	11th Oct: The formation of nations	24th Jan: The many international histories of the Middle East	
17th Oct: The politics of authoritarianism	18th Oct: Texturing national identity: the case of Jordan	31st Jan: Oil in a post-carbon age	1st Feb: Language Politics in the contemporary Maghreb
24th Oct: Democratic experiments authoritarian resilience	25th Oct: Professing religious identity: the case of Palestine	7th Feb: the Middle East in the global economy	8th Feb, 2.00-3.30pm: China in the Middle East
31st Oct: Economic liberalisation and state repression	1st Nov: Blaming sectarian identity: the case of Yemen	14th Feb: Transnational religio-political movements	15th Feb, 2.00-3.30pm: the Gaza Strip in the Israel-Palestine conflict
7th Nov: The military between economics and politics	8th Nov: Locating minorities' identities: the cases of the Kurds	21st Feb: Interventionism	
14th Nov: The security market after 2011	15th Nov: Flexible class identities: the case of Egypt	28th Feb: Mobile populations	
21st Nov: Authoritarianism and international interests	22nd Nov: Asserting gender identities: Tunisia and Iran	6th Mar: The politics of perpetual crisis	
28th Nov: Authoritarian adaptation	29th Nov: Transforming identities: the case of Israel	13th Mar: the Middle East in the Global Political Imaginary	

Details of revision teaching in Easter term will be circulated at the start of that term.

2. The Politics of the State in the Middle East

Lectures: MT Tuesdays @ 4.00pm in Room SG2.
Lecture A.1 by Dr Glen Rangwala, lectures A.2-A.8 by Dr Engy Moussa

The first two substantive lectures of the term (on the formation of states in this series, and the formation of nations in the 'identity' series) are intended to set up the course historically, from the late Ottoman era (1839-1922) through to the creation of modern independent states throughout the region. From there, this lecture series focuses on debates about authoritarianism and democratisation in the region, on the role of the state in the economy, the military, and on how the repressive features of the state are challenged and supported.

A.1   The formation of states

The first four texts set up the context for the formation of modern states in the Middle East, Hourani in terms of intellectual context and Fromkin, Provence and Rogan in military/political context. Perhaps the most useful is Provence, especially chapter 3, on the takeover by colonial powers and their attempts to suppress rebellion. The central theme in the remaining works is the character of the Middle Eastern state. Anderson provides an introduction to the field. Tripp in Hakimian/Moshaver presents three themes through which to understand that character, and Owen discusses change. Ayubi's broad text is worth reading in its entirety, but those pressed for time should concentrate on Chapters 1, 3, 8 and 12. Beblawi (listed with lecture A.5) draws out an influential characterisation of many Middle Eastern states. Gongora, Heydemann, Cronin (see the introduction and chapter 1) and Gaub (particularly chapter 2) look to the centrality of the institutions of violence to the Middle Eastern state, though in different ways. Saouli usefully shifts the focus to the international position of Middle Eastern states: chapters 2 and 6 give you the core argument. Fortna's short article provides a useful way of thinking about the different trajectories of state-formation after the end of the Ottoman Empire. The lecture will make particular use of the case of Saudi Arabia. In the reading, the first three chapters of Al-Rasheed's *History* are the best starting point. Hertog provides a helpful literature review, but it is the three articles by Bsheer, Rich/MacQueen and Baumann that provide helpfully different focuses in understanding what we mean by Saudi state formation. Vitalis provides a more detailed account of the US role, and the opening chapter of Al-Rasheed's *Most Masculine State* provides a gendered angle.

Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, new edition, 1983 [1962]), particularly the epilogue. **[OL]**

David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922* (London: André Deutsch Ltd, new edition, 2009 [1989]), especially Part XII.

* Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), especially chapter 3.

Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: the Great War in the Middle East, 1914-1920* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), particularly chapter 13.

* Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver (eds.), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001) – see especially the

chapters by Charles Tripp ('States, elites and the "management of change"') **[M]** and Roger
    Owen ('The Middle Eastern state: repositioning not retreat?')

* Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995/2006), chapter 3 [**OL**]

* Lisa Anderson, 'The State in the Middle East and North Africa', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 20, No. 1
    (October 1987), pp.1-18 **[OL]**

Adham Saouli, *The Arab State: Dilemmas of Late Formation* (London: Routledge, 2012), chs 2 & 6

Ben Fortna, 'Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire and After', in Sally Cummings and Ray Hinnebusch,
    eds., *Sovereignty after Empire: Comparing the Middle East and Central Asia* (Edinburgh
    University Press, 2012), pp.91-103 [**OL**]

Stephanie Cronin, *Armies and State-building in the Modern Middle East: Politics, Nationalism and
    Military Reform* (London: IB Tauris, 2014), introduction & chapter 1

Florence Gaub, *Guardians of the Arab State: When Militaries Intervene in Politics, from Iraq to
    Mauritania* (London: Hurst, 2017), chapter 2

Thierry Gongora, 'War making and state power in the contemporary Middle East', *International
    Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29 (1997), pp.323-340 **[OL]**

Steven Heydemann, ed., *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East* (Los Angeles:
    University of California Press, 2000) **[OL]** – especially chs 1 (by Heydemann) and 11 (by Owen)

Case study – state-formation in Saudi Arabia

* Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition,
    2010), especially chapters 2 and 3

Steffen Hertog, 'Shaping the Saudi State: human agency's shifting role in rentier-state formation',
    International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol. 39/4 (2007), pp.539-563

* Rosie Bsheer, 'A counter-revolutionary state: popular movements and the making of Saudi
    Arabia', *Past & Present*, vol. 238/1 (2018), pp.233–277

Ben Rich and Ben MacQueen, 'The Saudi State as an identity racketeer', *Middle East Critique*, vol.
    26/2 (2017), pp.105-121

* Hannes Baumann, 'The transformation of Saudi Arabia's rentier state and "the international"',
    Globalizations, vol. 16/7 (2019), pp.1165-1183.

Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso,
    updated edition, 2009), especially chapter 8

Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics, and Religion in Saudi Arabia*
    (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), chapter 1

A.2   Authoritarian rule: adapting foundations and diverse manifestations

This lecture engages with the politics of authoritarianism in the Middle East theoretically and
empirically. We explore authoritarianism as a distinct form of government by looking at its

foundations and diverse manifestations. In the meantime, we interrogate how the conditions surrounding state formation in the region facilitated the establishment of authoritarian rule.

Bellin, E. (2004) The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective. *Comparative Politics*, 36(2), pp.139-157. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4150140/

Brownlee, J. (2007) Authoritarianism in the Age of Democratization. Cambridge University Press.

Hinnebusch, R. (2006) Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. *Democratization*, 13(3), pp.373-395. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13510340600579243

Kailitz, S. (2013) Classifying political regimes revisited: legitimation and durability, *Democratization*, 20(1), pp.39-60, DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2013.738861

* Levitsky, S. and Way, L. (2010) *Competitive authoritarianism*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2

Saouli, A. (2012) *The Arab State: Dilemmas of Late Formation*. London: Routledge. Particularly chapter 3, but the whole book is highly recommended.

* Sassoon, J. (2016) *Anatomy of authoritarianism in the Arab republics*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 7

* Shama, N. (2014) *Egyptian foreign policy from Mubarak to Morsi*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 1

* Svolik, M. (2012) *The politics of authoritarian rule.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2

A.3 Democratic experimentations and authoritarian resilience

The 2011 uprisings took many of the region's scholars by surprise as the concept of authoritarian resilience or robustness has for years been well established in the literature. Yet the 2011 uprisings were certainly not an overnight or isolated event. They were the product of years of accumulating popular discontent and social mobilisation that gradually built up across the region. In the meantime, some countries in the region have previously experienced attempts at democratisation, with varying degrees of success and authenticity. At large, since 2001, all Middle Eastern ruling elites were under considerable and continuous pressure to democratise and open their public sphere. In response, some regimes engaged in reinventing their authoritarian policies to please the West, while ensuring they preserve their local power and privileges. Against this background, this lecture goes beyond the simplistic authoritarianism/democracy dichotomy as it seeks to examine how Middle Eastern states were effectively able to resist democratization waves and maintain authoritarian rule, particularly in the pre-2011 period as later years are mostly covered in the final lecture.

* Schlumberger, O. (2007) *Debating Arab Authoritarianism*. Stanford University Press. Especially chapters 1, 2 and 10.

* Bellin, E. (2012) Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. *Comparative Politics*, 44(2), pp.127-149. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23211807

Salāmah, G. (1994) *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World*. I.B. Tauris Publishers. Especially Waterbury's chapter.

Democratic experimentations in different Arab countries

* Herb, M. (2009) A nation of bureaucrats: political participation and economic diversification in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 41(3), pp.375-395

 * Kinninmont, J. (2012) Kuwait's parliament: an experiment in semi-democracy. *Chatham House.* https://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/agora-documents/kuwait_parliament_0.pdf

Martin, G. (2021) The Failure of Karamat Watan: State Legitimacy and Protest Failure in Kuwait. *Partecipazione & Conflitto,* 14(2), pp.702–26. https://doi.org/10.1285/I20356609V14I2P702

Robinson, G. (1998) Defensive democratization in Jordan. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30(3), pp.387–409

Salem, P. (2007) Kuwait: politics in a participatory emirate. *Carnegie Papers*. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec3_salem_kuwait_final1.pdf

Szmolka, I. (2021) Bipolarisation of the Moroccan political party arena? Refuting this idea through an analysis of the party system. *Journal of North African Studies*, 26(1), pp.73-102. DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2019.1673741

Tétreault, M.A. (2000) *Stories of Democracy: Politics and Society in Contemporary Kuwait*. Columbia University Press. Chapters 3 and 4

A.4   Economic liberalisation and state repression

This lecture examines the political economy of authoritarian rule in the region using two different, yet complementary, approaches: an economic approach that focuses on the concept of rentierism and its manifestations and consequences in the region; and a historical approach that traces the development of crony capitalism across different Middle Eastern states starting with the establishment of populist authoritarianism in the 1950s and 1960s, then the inevitable move to post-populist authoritarianism, and lastly, the embracement of neoliberal economic models from the 1980s onward. Next, asking why and how economic liberalisation accompanied a significant increase in state repression, we explore how crony capitalism shapes political, economic and social arenas, and how widening elites' interests and wealth accumulation among a relatively small segment of the population lead to widespread popular grievances and public discontent which the ruling elites have met with increased repression alongside selective co-optation.

Abdelrahman, M. (2016) Policing neoliberalism in Egypt: the continuing rise of the 'securocratic' state. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(1), pp.185-202. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1133246

Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. (2005) *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

* Beblawi, H. (1990) The rentier state in the Arab world. In Giacomo Luciani, ed., *The Arab State.* University of California Press. Or alternatively: Beblawi, H. and Luciani, G. (eds.). (1987) *The Rentier State.* Croom Helm.

Cammett, M., Diwan, I., Richards, A. and Waterbury, J. (2015) A Political Economy of the Middle East. 4th edition. Boulder: Westview Press. Earlier editions are perhaps more widely available in Cambridge libraries.

Ehteshami, A. and Murphy, E. (1996) Transformation of the corporatist state in the Middle East. *Third World Quarterly*, 17(4), pp.753-772

El-Houdaiby, I. (2014) Changing Alliances and Continuous Oppression: The Rule of Egypt's Security Sector. *Arab Reform Initiative.* https://www.arab-reform.net/en/node/600

* Hakimian, H. and Moshaver, Z. (eds.) (2001) *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa.* Curzon. Especially chapter 9 by Tripp and chapter 10 by Owen

Henry, C. and Springborg, R. (2010) *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press.

* Heydemann, S. (eds.). (2004) Networks of Privilege: the Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East. Palgrave Macmillan

Hibou, B. (2004) *Privatizing the State*. Columbia University Press. The introductory chapter.

* Ismail, S. (2015) The resurgence of police government in Egypt. In: Lynch, M. (ed.) *The Arab Thermidor: The Resurgence of the Security State.* The Project on Middle East Political Science. https://pomeps.org/wp- content/uploads/2015/03/POMEPS_Studies_11_Thermidor_Web.pdf

Menza, M. (2013) *Patronage politics in Egypt.* Routledge. Chapter 1.

Murphy, E. (2001) The State and the Private Sector in North Africa: Seeking Specificity. *Mediterranean Politics*, 6(2), 1-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713604511

Owen, R and Pamuk, S. (1998) A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century. London: IB Tauris.

Springborg, R. (2011) The Political Economy of the Arab Spring. *Mediterranean Politics*, 16(3), pp.427-433, at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2011.613678

Sulaymān, S. and Daniel, P. (2011) The Autumn of Dictatorship: Fiscal Crisis and Political Change in Egypt under Mubarak. Particularly chapters 2 and 5

A.5   The military between economic ventures and political adventures

Many Middle Eastern states have for decades been ruled by agents of the military or domestic security apparatus. Moreover, alongside businessmen and privileged bureaucrats, the security and military elite have often represented powerful actors within the authoritarian patrimonial networks across the region. The Arab uprisings largely failed to change this situation, witnessing instead a growing and assertive role for the military institution in the design and provision of domestic security and public services. In this light, this lecture examines the origins and contemporary manifestations

of the political and economic power of the military institution across the region. Of particular interest is how the uprisings changed the nature of the military involvement in the economy, domestic repression and national politics.

On the political and economic role of the military institution

* Cook, S.A. (2007) Ruling, but not governing: the military and political development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Particularly chapter 2

Cronin, S. (2014) Armies and State-building in the Modern Middle East: Politics, Nationalism and Military Reform. IB Tauris. Introduction and chapter 1

Gaub, F. (2017) Guardians of the Arab State: When Militaries Intervene in Politics, from Iraq to Mauritania. Hurst. Chapter 2

Gongora, T. (1997) War making and state power in the contemporary Middle East. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 29, pp.323-340

Grewal, S. (2023) *Soldiers of Democracy? Military Legacies and the Arab Spring*. Oxford University Press.

Heydemann, S. (ed.) (2000) *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East.* University of California Press. Especially chapters 1 by Heydemann and 11 by Owen

Lutterbeck, D. (2011) Arab Uprisings and Armed Forces: Between Openness and Resistance. *SSR Paper 2.* DCAF. http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Arab-Uprisings-and-Armed-Forces-Between-Openness-and-Resistance

* Svolik, M. (2013) Contracting on Violence: The Moral Hazard in Authoritarian Repression and Military Intervention in Politics. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 57(5), pp.765-794. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24545570

Case study – Militarization in/of Egypt

Abd Rabou, A. (2016) *Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East: A Comparative Study of the Political Role of the Military in Egypt and Turkey.* Arab Reform Initiative. https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/civil-military-relations-in-the-middle-eastcivil-military-relations-in-the-middle-east/

* Abul-Magd, Z. (2017) Militarising The Nation: The Army, Business, and Revolution In Egypt. Colombia University Press.

Joya, A. (2017) Neoliberalism, the State and Economic Policy Outcomes in the Post-Arab Uprisings: The Case of Egypt. *Mediterranean Politics*, 22(3), pp.339-361

* Marshall, S. (2015) The Egyptian armed forces and the remaking of an economic empire. *Carnegie paper.* http://carnegieendowment.org/files/egyptian_armed_forces.pdf

Roll, S. (2016). Managing change: how Egypt's military leadership shaped the transformation. *Mediterranean Politics*, 21(1), pp.23-43

Sayigh, Y. (2021) Politics of Military Authoritarianism in North Africa. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. https://carnegie-mec.org/2021/03/17/politics-of-military-authoritarianism-in-north-africa-pub-84072.

Springborg, R. (2017) The rewards of failure: persisting military rule in Egypt. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44(4), pp.478-496

Stacher, J. (2016) Egypt running on empty. *MERIP online.* http://www.merip.org/mero/mero030816

A.6   Security market reconfigurations since 2011

Complementing the two previous lectures on the political and economic role of public security institutions, this lecture explores the implications of the Arab uprisings on the wider security market. In particular, the multiplicity of state and non-state security actors spreading across the region from 2011 onward, between supporters and opponents to the concerned states, has considerably disrupted and occasionally challenged the dominant position traditionally claimed and established by the region's state security forces over the means of violence. While we would expect the state and its security forces to reject and counter this development, we find that on many occasions the ruling elites actually encouraged this change, trying to shape and manipulate the diversification of the security market to advance specific political and economic objectives. Looking at various examples, we examine how the diversification of the security market manifested differently across different Arab states, what conditions shaped this discrepancy and how the ruling elites reacted to the changes affecting the security market.

*Abrahamsen, R. and Williams, M. (2011) *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Baresh, M. (2020) *Private Security Companies in Syria: New Agents at the Regime's Service.* European University Institute. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/68315/Private%20Security%20Companies-NEW.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

*Collombier, V. (2011) Private Security…Not a Business Like Any Other. Arab Reform Initiative. https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/private-security-not-a-business-like-any-other/

Greitens, S. (2016) *Dictators and their Secret Police.* Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 2

Krause, K., and Milliken, J. (2009) Introduction: The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups. *Contemporary Security Policy,* 30(2), pp.202-220. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13523260903077296

Krieg, A. (2016) The Privatization of Civil-Security Sector Relations and the Struggle for Public Security in Iraq. *Journal of Political & Military Sociology,* 44, pp.79–102. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599042

*Krieg, A. (2018) Defining Remote Warfare: The Rise of the Private Military and Security Industry. London: Remote Warfare Programme. https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1309-defining-remote-warfare-the-rise-of-the-private-military-and-security-industry-by-andreas-krieg

Linder, A. (2018) Russian Private Military Companies in Syria and Beyond. *New Perspectives in Foreign Policy Issue,* 16, pp.17–21. https://www.csis.org/npfp/russian-private-military-companies-syria-and-beyond.

Marten, K. (2019) Russia's Use of Semi-State Security Forces: The Case of the Wagner Group. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 35, 3, pp.181–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2019.1591142.

*Moussa, E. (2023) Privatizing security and authoritarian adaptation in the Arab region since the 2010-2011 uprisings. *Contemporary Security Policy,* 44(3), pp.462-490, https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2023.2214757

News articles and short pieces on the topic

Abu al-Khair, W. (2021) Private Security Firms Proliferate in Syria as Regime's Military Falters. https://almashareq.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_am/features/2021/03/05/feature-01

Carr, S. and Adam, M. (2013) Private security firms attempt to fill a gap left by a weakened security apparatus. Egyptindependent.com. http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/private-security-firms-attempt-fill-gap-left-weakened-security-apparatus

Hardan, M. (2021) Russia, Iran Compete for Influence in Syria via Private Security Companies. Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/02/syria-iran-russia-recruit-private-security-companies.html.

Hussein, M. (2022) The totalitarian dream: Gulf and Israeli surveillance is going global. Middle East Monitor. https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20220902-the-totalitarian-dream-gulf-and-israeli-surveillance-is-going-global/

McHaty, R. and Moye, J. (2021) The US Military Must Plan for Encounters with Private Military Companies. Brookings Institute. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1060586X.2019.1591142

Middle East Monitor (2017) Iraq signs contracts with US mercenaries to protect trade routes. Middle East Monitor. https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170512-iraq-signs-contracts-with-us-mercenaries-to-protect-trade-routes/

Stronski, P. (2020) Implausible Deniability: Russia's Private Military Companies. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/02/implausible-deniability-russia-s-private-military-companies-pub-81954.

A.7   Authoritarianism serving international interests and vice versa

While traditionally central to international relations, the Middle East has in recent decades represented a major and persistent arena of international security concerns. Historically, international interference has shaped the region's politics and economic development, with foreign powers long benefiting from the region's resources and actively influencing its structure and development. In the meantime, authoritarian systems across the region have flourished and survived many challenges thanks to foreign support in the form of foreign aid or poor foreign support to local aspirations and calls for regime change and democratic rule. This lecture seeks to understand the dynamics of this mutually beneficial relationship, particularly exploring what is at stake for international and regional powers since the 2011 uprisings.

The Middle East and the West

* Colombo, S. and Dessi, A. (eds.) (2020) *Fostering a New Security Architecture in the Middle East.* Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies

Ehteshami, A. (2007) Globalization and Geopolitics in the Middle East: Old Games, New Rules. Routledge

Hinnebusch, R. (2011) The Middle East in the world hierarchy: imperialism and resistance. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233578647_The_Middle_East_in_the_world_hierarchy_Imperialism_and_resistance

Tansey, O., Koehler, K. and Schmotz, A. (2016) Ties to the Rest: Autocratic Linkages and Regime Survival. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(9), pp.1221-1254. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0010414016666859

International responses to the Arab uprisings

* Baev, P.K. (2015) Russia as opportunist or spoiler in the Middle East?. *The International Spectator*, 50(2), pp.8-21

* Dandashly, A. (2015) The EU Response to Regime Change in the Wake of the Arab Revolt: Differential Implementation. *Journal of European Integration*, 37(1), pp.37-56. DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2014.975988

* Dodge, T. and Hokayem, E. (eds). (2014) Middle Eastern Security, the US Pivot and the Rise of ISIS. *Adelphi Series, 54*(447-448). http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/tadl20/54/447-448. Particularly the pieces by Allin (on the Obama administration), Noël (on oil interests) and Neill (on Chinese policy).

Gerges, F. (2013) The Obama approach to the Middle East: the end of America's moment?. *International Affairs*, 89(2), pp.299-323

Haass, R. N. (2013). The Irony of American Strategy: Putting the Middle East in Proper Perspective. *Foreign Affairs*, *92*(3), pp.57–67. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23526836

Leech, P. and Gaskarth, J. (2015) British Foreign Policy and the Arab Spring. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 26(1), pp.139-160. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2015.999631

Öniş, Z. (2014) Turkey and the Arab revolutions: boundaries of regional power influence in a turbulent Middle East. *Mediterranean Politics*, 19(2), pp.203-219

Rangwala, G. (2013) Returning to the Middle East: the second term amidst the Arab Uprisings. *ISPI Analysis* 221, http://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_221_2013.pdf

A.8 New era with old aura

The 2011 uprisings marked an overt confrontation between some of the region's entrenched authoritarian systems and their highly discontent populations. The unprecedented scale of the protests, the large international echo and the authoritarian systems' internal weaknesses amplified some immediate results, including the ousting of the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt and the temporary breakdown of their domestic security forces. Nonetheless, since these initially favourable outcomes were enabled by powerful agents from within the authoritarian systems, the post-uprisings years featured more continuity than change, with both ironically contributing to

authoritarian survival as different elite factions have vigorously thriving to reconstitute themselves and reclaim their power and privileges.

Have the Arab uprisings definitely failed then or are there still signs of hope for the popular aspirations for social justice, political pluralism and inclusive economic development? This lecture engages with this question by exploring the different forms of authoritarian adaptation embraced by different Arab states since 2011 while outlining some of the majors challenges, both domestic and foreign, to authoritarian rule.

On the 'poor' outcome of the uprisings

Brownlee, J., Masoud, T. and Reynolds, A. (2013) Why the Modest Harvest?. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(4), pp.29-44. http://cddrl.fsi.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/tracking_the_arab_spring.pdf

Hamid, S. (2022) The day Tunisia's democracy died. Democracy for the Arab World Now. https://dawnmena.org/the-day-tunisias-democracy-died/

Hinnebusch, R. (2015) Towards a Historical Sociology of the Arab Uprising: Beyond Democratization and Post-Democratization. In: Sadiki, L. ed., Routledge *Handbook of the Arab Spring: Rethinking Democratization*. Routledge.

* Stacher, J. (2015) Fragmenting states, new regimes: militarized state violence and transition in the Middle East. *Democratization*, 22(2), pp.259-275, at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510347.2015.1010810

Way, L. (2011) Comparing the Arab Revolts – The Lessons of 1989. *Journal of Democracy*, 22(4), pp.13-23, at: http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Way-22-4.pdf

On authoritarian survival and adaptation

* Allinson, J. (2022) *The Age of Counter-Revolution: States and Revolutions in the Middle East*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, 2 and 3.

Aziz, S.F. (2017) Military Electoral Authoritarianism in Egypt. *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy*. June 2017, 16(2), pp.280-295. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2810956

Heydemann, S. (2007) Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World. *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy and the Brookings Institution.* Analysis Paper, 13. Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/research/upgrading-authoritarianism-in-the-arab-world/

Heydemann, S. (2015) Mass politics and the future of authoritarian governance in the Arab world. In: M. Lynch, ed., *The Arab Thermidor: The Resurgence of the Security State.* The Project on Middle East Political Science. https://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/POMEPS_Studies_11_Thermidor_Web.pdf

* Hinnebusch, R. (2015) Introduction: understanding the consequences of the Arab uprisings – starting points and divergent trajectories. *Democratization*, 22(2), pp.205-217. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13510347.2015.1010807

Schlumberger, O. (2021). Puzzles of Political Change in the Middle East: Political Liberalisation, Authoritarian Resilience and the Question of Systemic Change. German Institute of Development and Sustainability. www.idos-research.de/en/discussion-paper/article/puzzles-

of-political-change-in-the-middle-east-political-liberalisation-authoritarian-resilience-and-the-question-of-systemic-change/

Stacher, J. (2012) Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria. Stanford University Press.

Ongoing challenges to authoritarian survival

Dunne, M. (2020) As gulf donors shift priorities, Arab states search for aid. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/09/as-gulf-donors-shift-priorities-arab-states-search-for-aid-pub-82001

Maddah, M. (2021) Political participation in Lebanon: A look into emerging political movements. Middle East Centre. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2021/09/20/political-participation-in-lebanon-a-look-into-emerging-political-movements/

Rutherford, B.K. (2018) Egypt's New Authoritarianism under Sisi. *The Middle East Journal, 72*(2), pp.185-208. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/693086

Global manifestations of authoritarian practices

* Hallsworth, S. and Lea, J. (2011) Reconstructing Leviathan: Emerging contours of the security state. *Theoretical Criminology*, 15(2), pp.141–157. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1362480610383451

Oswick, C., Harney S. and Hanlon, G. (2008). The New Securocracy and the "Police Concept" of Public Sector Worker Identity. *International Journal of Public Administration,* 31(9), pp.1024-1036. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01900690801924033

Suggested supervision questions:

- Are the origins of the Middle Eastern state to be found in the Ottoman Empire, Western imperialism or post-independence politics?
- What factors and/or forces were core to the establishment of authoritarianism in the Arab region before 2011?
- EITHER: How have economic liberalization in the Middle East empowered the state and its security institutions instead of enhancing a free-market economy and a strong private sector?
  OR: Is successful democratization in the Arab region dependent on weakening the military institutions?
- How did the Arab uprisings affect the security market in the Arab region and with what effect on the ruling elites' security and interests?
- Are Western interests at odds with the establishment of democracy in the Middle East?
- Is the continuing turbulence across the Arab region since 2011 a sign of the failure of authoritarian adaptation?

3. The Politics of Identity in the Middle East

Lectures (Glen Rangwala): Michaelmas weeks 1-8, Wednesdays @ 10am. SG2

After the first lecture which sets up the debates historically about the origins and disputed meaning of national identity, the series of lectures covers the range of themes that come into understanding the politics of identity – such as nationalism, religion, sect, class and gender. From the start, the lectures present 'identity' as multifaceted and malleable: these are historically constructed concepts with shifting definitions and significance between places and eras. What the lectures develop are some themes about how and when identities become *politicised* in the Middle East; that is, how and when states and political movements orient themselves around promoting or defending identity constructions, or, conversely, criticising them.

From lecture B.2 onwards, each lecture focuses on a particular place, and much of the reading in each list is about the issues specific to that country. Naturally, this is not meant to imply that you should exclusively or primarily discuss that country in your essays; you are welcome to draw upon reading lists in other parts of this paper guide (or, for Syria and Iraq, the separate reading lists in the POL4 paper guide), and wider knowledge, for instance to contrast or compare issues across the region.

B.1   The formation of nations

The first major analyses of the modern politics of the Middle East were on the development of the idea of a pan-Arab nation, portrayed as emerging out of the Ottoman Empire and in tense relations with Western imperial powers. This is a literature that continues to shape studies of the Middle East. Tibi's volume to a large extent reflects this tradition of analysis, in Parts II-IV of the book; Choueiri (especially chapter 3 and 6) is an alternative. The critique is presented by the articles in Gershoni/Jankowski volume (essays 1,4,5,8 and 12 especially), and also Bromley (chapter 3). A second literature then traces the decline of Arab nationalism after 1967; it is represented here by Ajami and Salem. The critique is from Gelvin.

* Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State* (London: Macmillan, 3rd edition, 1997 [1981]), Parts II-IV. **[OL]**

Youssef Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: a History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), chapters 3 & 6

* James Gelvin, 'Modernity and its discontents: on the durability of nationalism in the Arab Middle East', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 5/1 (1999), pp.71-89 **[OL]**

Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, ed., *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1997) (chapter 1 on **[M]**)

Rashid Khalidi, 'The 1967 war and the demise of Arab nationalism: chronicle of a death foretold', and Fawaz Gerges, 'The transformation of Arab politics: disentangling myth from reality', in W. Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim, eds, *The 1967 Arab-Israeli war: Origins and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994) (chapter 3 on **[M]**)

Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition, 1992), especially part III.

Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab world* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994)

R. Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire* (University of California Press, revd ed, 2005), chapter 3: 'The strange career of pan-Arabism'

B.2   Texturing national identity: The case of Jordan

The main topic of the lecture is the multiple identities that animate political argument and contestation in the Middle East. The introduction and the article by Tibi in the Khoury/Kostiner volume, and chapter 1 of the Christie/Masad volume provide a way of thinking about identity politics in the region. Alongside Arabism (lecture B.1), political identity is most frequently framed in the literature in religious terms. Bayat's book (esp chapter 10) provides an alternative frame of reference: by looking at 'everyday cosmopolitanism' in the Middle East, it challenges the literature which focuses on the political significance of particularistic identity claims.

Jordan provides the case study, due to the complex interlinkage of identity claims at work in this country. Robins provides the general history. It's useful to have a good sense of the colonial heritage: see especially Massad's chapter 2 and, in a different register, Alon. Anderson takes you through the development of nationalist politics after independence. Nanes and Köprülü explore the complexity of national identity, and are worth comparing. The main works in exploring the particular position of religious movements in politics are Wiktorowicz (especially chapter 3) and the Moaddel article. Culcasi is most useful on how the concept of the Jordanian nation is presented to the population.

Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, ed., *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 1992) **[OL]**, introduction and article by Tibi (pp.127-152)

Kenneth Christie and Mohammad Masad, eds, *State Formation and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), chapter 1 on **[M]**

* Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010) **[OL]**, chapter 10

Case study – religion, nation and tribe in Jordan

Philip Robins, *A History of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

* Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)

Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (London: IB Tauris, 2007)

Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan: The Street and the State* (Austin: Texas University Press, 2005)

* Stefanie Nanes, 'Choice, loyalty and the melting pot: citizenship and national identity in Jordan', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol.14 (2008), pp.85-116 **[OL]**

Nur Köprülü, 'The interplay of Palestinian and Jordanian identities in re/making the state and nation formation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan' in Kenneth Christie and Mohammad Masad, eds, *State Formation and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

Mansoor Moaddel, 'Religion and the state: the singularity of the Jordanian religious experience', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 15/4 (2002), pp.527-568 **[OL]**

Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001), chapter 3 on **[M]**

Karen Culcasi, 'Warm nationalism: mapping and imagining the Jordanian nation', *Political Geography*, vol.54 (2016), pp.7-20 **[OL]**

B.3   Professing religious identity: the case of Palestine

On Islam in politics, probably the best place to begin is the Eickelman/Piscatori volume, which covers the range of ways in which religion comes in to politics, not specific to 'political Islam' or the Middle East. Ayubi, though dated, is still a good text that works through the beliefs and movements in a systematic way. It sets up many arguments that subsequent authors have followed; the final chapter (10) gives you a good sense of its approach. This can be complemented with Ismail, which explores the different types of Islamism principally in Egypt. Zubaida links Islam back to nationalism. Mandaville's book serves both as a useful introduction (particularly chapter 2 for a helpful starting point on history and concepts), and has useful framing and themes in chapter 6 for the case study around which this lecture revolves. The final section of May's article is on the Palestine case, and is a useful corrective to some of the more simplistic readings of Hamas's social role.

 Peter Mandaville, *Global Political Islam* (London: Routledge, 2007), especially chapters 2 and 6

 Nazih N. Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991), chapter 10

* Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), especially chapter 3.

Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London: IB Tauris, 2003). **[OL]**, chapter 3.

Sami Zubaida, 'Islam and nationalism: continuities and contradictions', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 10/4 (2004), pp.407–20 **[OL]**

Case study – religion in the politics of Palestinian identity

* Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), especially chapter 7

Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000)

J. F. Legrain, 'Hamas: legitimate heir of Palestinian nationalism?', in John Esposito, ed., *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

Glenn E. Robinson, 'Hamas as social movement', in Quintan Wiktorowicz, ed., *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Samantha May, 'Political piety: the politicization of *Zakat*', *Middle East Critique*, vol.22/2 (2013), pp.149-64.

B.4   Blaming sectarian identity: the case of Yemen

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, explanations for prolonged violence in the Middle East have come to centre on the rivalry that is purported to exist between those of different sectarian affiliations. These explanations are presented at both the region-wide level, such as in accounts of a "Shi'a crescent", or at the sub-national level, such as in analysis of Sunni *vs* Shi'a in Iraq, or Alawite *vs* Sunni in Syria, or Sunni *vs* Zaydi Shi'a in Yemen. While it is certainly worth critically interrogating essentialist claims of sectarian conflict, it is also necessary to take on board how many of the actors themselves have organised politically into forms that are bound specifically to one sect, and use a language of avowal and denigration that bolster a sense of sectarian identity.

This topic builds upon the discussion of sectarian identity in Iraq and Syria, as studied in POL4 last year, and students are advised to look back on those reading lists first. The first section of reading listed below, while sometimes about a particular country, makes general arguments about the causes and character of sectarianism in the Middle East. It's useful first to think about how sectarianism is differently charted and explained within the wider politics of the Middle East: for this, a series of short articles or chapters have been recommended due to their different approaches. Makdisi, with Lebanon as his case study, links sectarianism to the trajectory of a particular form of nationalism (for greater detail, see the author's book *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 2000 – especially the epilogue). To explain the rise of sectarianism, Nasr (see chapter 6) focuses on renewed political agency from Shia movements, while Matthiesen (especially chapter 2) concentrates on the push from Sunni political authorities. Salloukh and Norton both connect sectarianism to geopolitical rivalry, but in subtly different ways. Byman provides a broad regional survey. Zelin and Smyth provide an account of the terms used to denigrate opponents in sectarian terms, but don't contextualise it in the broader vocabulary of struggle. Hashemi/Postel (pp.1-14) by contrast look to the limits of sectarianism as a political explanation.

The more developed pieces are those on Yemen. The books by Day and Hill give broad narratives of modern Yemeni history. The central explanations for the conflict, in which the role of sect is contextualised, are those provided by Clausen and Transfeld. It is key also to look to Yemen's role in regional conflict; and Juneau (for Iran) and the pair of short articles on Saudi Araba provide that.

Ussama Makdisi, 'The modernity of sectarianism in Lebanon', *Middle East Report*, 200 (1996), at: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer200/modernity-sectarianism-lebanon

* Fanar Haddad, *Understanding 'Sectarianism': Sunni-Shi'a Relations in the Modern Arab World* (London: Hurst, 2020), especially chapter 4.

Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam will Shape its Future* (New York: W.W. Norton & co., 2006), chapter 6.

Bassel F. Salloukh, 'Sectarianism and the search for new political orders in the Arab World', *Middle East Institute*, web article (July 2015), at: http://www.mei.edu/content/map/sectarianism-and-search-new-political-orders-arab-world

Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that Wasn't* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), chapter 2.

Augustus Richard Norton, 'The geopolitics of the Sunni-Shi'i rift' in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity After the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Daniel Byman, 'Sectarianism afflicts the new Middle East', *Survival*, vol. 56/1 (2014), pp.79-100 **[OL]**

* Aaron Zelin and Phillip Smyth, 'The vocabulary of sectarianism', *Foreign Policy* magazine blog (29 January 2014) **[OL]**, at: http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2014/01/29/the_vocabulary_of_sectarianism

Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel, 'The sectarianization thesis', in Hashemi/Postel, eds., *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East* (London: Hurst, 2017), pp.1-22.

Case study – Yemen: sectarian identities within a complex conflict

Stephen W. Day, *Regionalism and Rebellion in Yemen: a Troubled National Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), especially chapter 8

Ginny Hill, *Yemen Endures: Civil War, Saudi Adventurism and the Future of Arabia* (Hurst, 2017)

* Maria-Louise Clausen, 'Competing for control over the state: the case of Yemen', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, vol.29/3 (2018), pp.560-578

* Mareike Transfeld, 'Political bargaining and violent conflict: shifting elite alliances as the decisive factor in Yemen's transformation', *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 21/1 (2016), pp.150-169

Thomas Juneau, 'How war in Yemen transformed the Iran-Houthi partnership', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1954353

Sebastian Sons and Toby Matthiesen, 'The Yemen war in Saudi media' (2016), Muftah.org, via: https://muftah.org/yemen-war-saudi-media/#.WTe_AGjyuUl

Lara Aryani, 'Saudi Arabia and the War of Legitimacy in Yemen', *Jadaliyya*, 2 May 2015, at: http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/21538/saudi-arabia-and-the-war-of-legitimacy-in-yemen

B.5   Locating minorities' identities: the case of the Kurds

The lecture looks at how Middle Eastern politics grapples with the mismatch between the territorial unit and the dispersed populations that relate to that unit, through understanding the position of those frequently considered ethnic and religious minorities. This is in order to approach how citizenship is defined, framed and evaluated within these countries, which in turn ties back to

themes of state formation, nationalism, religion and democracy. A broad survey of ten Middle Eastern minorities is in the Zabad volume. On citizenship, particularly in relation to minority rights, the articles by Butenschon (chapter 1) and Davis (chapter 3) in the 2000 collection, and Ben-Dor's introduction to the 1999 collection are well worth reading for their general approach.

The main theme in the lecture connects debates on citizenship to the situation of minorities. It does so through looking at the Kurds in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran: the very different trajectories in these groups' political and economic status over the course of the past hundred years illustrates broader themes of national identity, social strategies and political vulnerabilities. The best way in is through the collection of articles in the Bozarslan edited volume: all of chapters 10-17 and 32-36 are directly relevant, but 12, 14, 16 and 17 are good introductions to each of the four main countries. The other articles listed are all specific discussions of particular events or processes that speak to how Kurdish identity is reinforced or problematised within the context of national or transnational politics.

Ibrahim Zabad, *Middle Eastern Minorities: The Impact of the Arab Spring* (London: Routledge, 2017)

Ofra Bengio and Gabriel Ben-Dor, ed., *Minorities and the State in the Arab World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999)

Nils Butenschon, Uri Davis and Manuel Hassassian, eds., *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000)

Kirsten Schulze, Martin Stokes and Colm Campbell, *Nationalism, Minorities and Diasporas: Identities and Rights in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 1996)

Case studies – the Kurds as minorities

* Hamit Bozarslan, Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadirgi, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021)

* Joost Jongerden 'Governing Kurdistan: self-administration in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq and the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria', *Ethnopolitics*, vol. 18/1 (2019), pp.61-75

Dylan O'Driscoll and Bahar Baser, 'Independence referendums and nationalist rhetoric: the Kurdistan Region of Iraq', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 40/11 (2019), pp.2016-2034

Güneş Tezcür and Mehmet Gurses, 'Ethnic exclusion and mobilization: the Kurdish conflict in Turkey', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 49/2 (2017), pp.213-234

William Gourlay, 'Oppression, solidarity, resistance: the forging of Kurdish identity in Turkey', *Ethnopolitics*, vol. 17/2 (2018), pp.130-146

Bayram Sinkaya, 'The Kurdish question in Iran and its effects on Iran-Turkey relations', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 45/5 (2018), pp.840-859

Michael Gunter, 'The Kurdish Spring', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34/3 (2013), pp.441-457

* Shahram Akbarzadeh et al., 'The Iranian Kurds' transnational links: impacts on mobilization and political ambitions', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 43/12 (2020), pp.2275-229

B.6   Flexible class identities: the case of Egypt

The Ehteshami/Murphy article provides the starting point for the lecture, which covers a wide range of topics: it is their characterisation of the Middle Eastern state as a corporatist one that is useful as a framing device. The first three texts listed cover labour movements, but it is useful to complement these texts with those on economic liberalisation: Heydemann's introduction to his edited collection gives an advanced account of the interaction of politics and economic decision-making, with the articles spanning across six Middle Eastern countries.

The case for this lecture is Egypt, which is the subject of a number of the most influential texts that look at the politics of economic liberalisation. Although these texts are dated, they are worth revisiting. Kienle (the final chapter summarises the argument) draws out well how authoritarian government serves the process of economic reform, and in so doing works as a critique of the supposed relationship between political and economic liberalisation. Mitchell (especially chapter 9) looks at the costs and conceits of the project of 'development' that Egypt has undergone.

These 'classics' should be read in conjunction with the more recent literature on economic governance and its opponents in Egypt. Abdelrahman brings together well economic discontent and political protest; Marfleet gives an updated version of a similar argument. Marshall looks at the significance of economic interests for the Egyptian military; Roll and Springborg provides political and historical context to this theme. Joya and Stacher provide interesting different critical accounts of the level of control exercised by the Egyptian government over domestic 'reforms'.

Anoush Ehteshami and Emma Murphy, 'Transformation of the corporatist state in the Middle East', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 17/4 (1996), pp.753-772 **[OL]**

Joel Beinin, *Workers and Peasants in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) **[OL]**

Ellis Jay Goldberg, ed., *The Social History of Labor in the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996)

Zachery Lockman, *Workers and Working Classes in the Middle East: Struggles, Histories, and Historiographies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

Eva Rana Bellin, *Stalled Democracy: Capital, Labour, and the Paradox of State-Sponsored Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), or her 'The politics of profit in Tunisia: utility of the rentier paradigm?', *World Development*, vol. 22/3 (March 1994), pp.427-436 **[OL]**

* Steven Heydemann, eds., *Networks of Privilege: the Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

M. Riad El-Ghonemy, *Affluence and Poverty in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1998).

Case study – Egypt

* Eberhard Kienle, *A Grand Delusion: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), chapter 8 [*OL*]

* Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), chapter 9.

* Maha Abdelrahman, *Egypt's Long Revolution: Protest Movements and Uprisings* (London: Routledge, 2014), chapters 3 and 6. [*OL - ebook*]

Philip Marfleet, *Egypt: Contested Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), chapter 10 and afterword

Shana Marshall, 'The Egyptian armed forces and the remaking of an economic empire', Carnegie paper (2015), at:
http://carnegieendowment.org/files/egyptian_armed_forces.pdf [*OL*]

Stephan Roll, 'Managing change: how Egypt's military leadership shaped the transformation', *Mediterranean Politics*, 21/1 (2016), pp.23-43. [*OL*]

Robert Springborg, 'The rewards of failure: persisting military rule in Egypt', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44/4 (2017), pp.478-496. [*OL*]

Angela Joya, 'Neoliberalism, the State and economic policy outcomes in the Post-Arab Uprisings: The case of Egypt', *Mediterranean Politics*, 22/3 (2017), pp.339-361. [*OL*]

Joshua Stacher, 'Egypt running on empty', *MERIP online*, 8th March 2016, at:
http://www.merip.org/mero/mero030816 [*OL*]

B.7   Asserting gender identities: the cases of Iran and Tunisia

The main focus in the lecture is on gender politics and the role of women in politics. Section 2 of Keddie provides a starting point, though the Joseph/Slyomovics collection will be more relevant (especially the articles by Graham-Brown, Jospeh and Kandiyoti). The Chatty/Rabo volume (chapters 1, 6 and 9) and the Doumato/Posusney collection are also useful for the general overview. On the 2011 protest movements, a variety of the short articles in the special issue of the *Journal of International Women's Studies* will be useful: see especially Sika and Khodary (on Egypt) and Salime (on Morocco). The attention to women in political parties and state-sponsored programmes of empowerment provides particular interest: see Clark/Schwedler, Hatem, Browers and Joseph for different takes. Al-Ali (perhaps especially chapter 6) and Mahmood (chapter 2 for the descriptive basis, chapter 5 for the most relevant arguments) look at the interplay of religion and gender: both are about Egypt, but they have wider resonance. Al-Rasheed (perhaps especially the introduction) speaks to how women figure within Saudi Arabia's religious nationalism. Massad is an innovative exploration of thinking about sexuality in the Arab world: chapter 3 tends to draw the most attention.

The case studies are a comparative account of Tunisia and Iran. In both countries, reform of gender relations has been a central feature of government policy over recent decades, and has had a high profile in international discussion. In both cases, however, our focus is on how women position themselves within these settings. For Tunisia, we are looking at state empowerment and the consequences of the 2011 revolution for women. Murphy's article sets up the background. Charrad explores the changing role of women in state policy. Marks looks at the effect of the revolution. On this, see also the piece by Zlitni and Touati in the *Journal of International Women's Studies*, referenced earlier. For Iran, the introductory collection by Povey and Rostami-Povey provides a helpful range of information and arguments. Sedghi and Paidar both provide rich and complementary accounts of women's political agency: Sedghi is the historical narrative, Paidar's is thematically organised, and although it's now quite old, is still very much worth reading: see

especially chapter 6. While recognising that gender politics in Iran is multifaceted, the focus is then on the 2022-23 protest movement, and three recent articles are recommended, all of them attempting to set the protests in the context of longer-term processes of activism.

Nikkie Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

* Suad Joseph and Susan Slyomovics, eds., *Women and Power in the Middle East* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 2001)

Dawn Chatty and Annika Rabo, *Organizing Women: Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East* (Oxford: Berg, 1997)

* Janine Astrid Clark and Jillian Schwedler, 'Who opened the window? Women's activism in Islamist parties', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 35/3 (April 2003), pp.293-312 **[*OL*]**

Journal of International Women's Studies, vol. 13/5 (2012), special issue: 'Arab Women – Arab Spring', via: http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol13/iss5/ **[*OL*]**

Mervat Hatem, 'Toward the development of post-Islamist and post-nationalist feminist discourses in the Middle East', in Judith E. Tucker, *Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) **[*OL*]**

Michaelle Browers, 'The centrality and marginalization of women in the political discourse of Arab Nationalists and Islamists', *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, vol. 2/2 (June 2006), pp.8-34 **[*OL*]**, at:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_middle_east_womens_studies/v002/2.2browers.pdf

Suad Joseph, 'Elite strategies for state building: women, family, religion and the state in Iraq and Lebanon', in Deniz Kandiyoti, *Women, Islam and the State* (London: Macmillan, 1991) **[*M*]**

Nadje Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender, and the State in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) [*OL*]

Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) [*OL*]

Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A Most Masculine State: Gender, Politics and Religion in Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) [*OL*]

Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Marsha Pripstein Posusney, eds., *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy and Society* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003)

Joseph Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)

Case studies – gender relations in Tunisia and Iran

* Mounira Charrad, 'Policy shifts: state, Islam and gender in Tunisia, 1930s-1990s', in *Social Politics*, vol 4/2 (1997), pp.284-319 **[*OL*]**

Emma Murphy, 'Women in Tunisia: between state feminism and economic reform', in Eleanor Abdella Doumato and Marsha Pripstein Posusney, eds., *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy and Society* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003)**,** pp.169-94. **[*M*]**

* Monica Marks, 'Women's rights before and after the revolution', in Nouri Gana, ed., *The Making of the Tunisian Revolution: Contexts, Architects, Prospects* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp.224-251 **[OL]**

Aitemad Muhanna, 'Islamic and secular women's activism and discourses in post-Uprising Tunisia', in Maha El Said, Lena Meari and Nicola Pratt, eds., *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

* Tara Povey and Elaheh Rostami-Povey, eds., *Women, Power and Politics in 21st Century Iran* (London: Routledge, 2013)

Hamideh Sedghi, *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Pardis Asadi Zeidabadi and Nadia Aghtaie, 'The perspectives of Iranian Feminists and Women Activists on Gender Equality in Iran', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2023), at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2023.2225895

* Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, 'Iran's uprisings for 'Women, Life, Freedom': Over-determination, crisis, and the lineages of revolt', *Politics* (2023), at: https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957231159351

Mostafa Khalili, 'From "Green Movement" to "Woman, Life, Freedom": Continuity and Change in the Evolution of the Protest Movement in Iran', *Protest*, vol. 3 (2023), pp.133-140, at: https://brill.com/downloadpdf/journals/prot/3/1/article-p133_010.xml

B.8   Transforming identities: the case of Israel

The final lecture draws together the themes on identity politics from the series, and asks specifically about the malleability or resilience of identity, and the usefulness of the concepts of identity for understanding Middle Eastern politics. The case study is from Israel. Zionism and pan-Arabism are products of the late nineteenth century, and the lecture will compare their trajectories. Smith's short article, as a framing piece, explores the extent to which Zionism is a form of nationalism. Out of the reading listed, Halpern and Avineri represent the orthodox account of the development of Zionism, whilst Sternhall and Kimmerling (especially chapters 3 and 7) provide the critical account. Pappe (see especially chapters 1 and 11) traces the rise of 'post-Zionism' in the 1990s, and its rapid decline from 2000 to be replaced with what he calls 'neo-Zionism'. Liebman/Don-Yehiya trace the multiple forms of Zionism. Shohat shows, critically, how a unified category of the 'Mizrahi' was created over time out of diverse populations.

Case study – nationalism in Israel

Anthony Smith, 'Zionism and diaspora nationalism', *Israel Affairs*, vol. 2/2 (1995), pp.1-19 [OL]

* Ilan Pappe, *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge* (London: Verso, 2014) (chapter 1 on **[M]**)

* Baruch Kimmerling, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) (chapter 7 on **[M]**)

* Ella Shohat, 'The invention of the Mizrahim' [1999], in On the Arab-Jew, Palestine and Other Displacements: Selected Writings (London: Pluto Press, 2017), pp.102-21.

Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1969)

Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981)

Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998)

Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983)

* David Newman, 'From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut: the impact of Gush Emunim and the settlement movement on Israeli politics and society', *Israel Studies*, vol. 10/3 (2005), pp.192-224 [**OL**]

Suggested supervision questions

- Is national identity to be understood in the Middle East principally as a foreign imposition, a form of loyalty or a frame of political contestation?
- Are nationalism and religion opposing or complementary forces in Arab politics?
- Is 'sectarianism' a fake category in understanding Middle Eastern politics?
- Is the Middle East a hostile place for ethnic and religious minorities?
- What forms does political empowerment take for women in the Middle East?

4. The Middle East in Global Politics

Lectures (Glen Rangwala): Lent weeks 1-8, Wednesdays @ 10am. ARB SG2

The paper takes a turn in Lent term. The Michaelmas lectures lead on major themes in the study of Middle Eastern politics. The Lent teaching, by contrast, leads on arguments – developing contentious approaches to understanding regional affairs, often in tension with the standard literature on the topics. You are encouraged to engage critically with much of the literature listed here, and indeed with the approach of the lecture/seminar.

The lecture series on the Middle East in Global Politics begins by discussing how the Middle East is usually studied in international relations with an emphasis placed on power politics and inter-state competition, with attention given principally to crisis events that happen within the region. This series starts with this traditional literature, but moves quickly on to two approaches that are often overlooked when understanding the place of the Middle East in global politics. First, it develops an understanding of the Middle East's politics that looks to the importance of transnational factors. The issues explored include regional and global economic change, diasporas and refugee movements, and the politics of transnational religious movements. Here it looks to the importance of individuals and groups from and across the Middle East – usually those who do not represent the state – in shaping regional affairs. Secondly, it looks to how the Middle East itself shapes global politics. It interrogates the 'crisis perspective' on the Middle East through exploring how political agents and advocacy groups around the world present the Middle East as a problem region, with issues that need to be solved by external pressure or intervention. Through this prism, it looks at how conceptions of the Middle East shape political sensibilities in other parts of the world.

C.1   Agency, actors and histories in the International Relations of the Middle East

The opening lecture sets up the discipline of the 'international relations of the Middle East', but also interrogates its contours. It looks to how this literature interacts with the histories of the international politics of the region, histories in which external actors and conflicts often take centre stage. Reading for this lecture is organised as follows: the sorts of introductory textbooks and histories that have standardly structured the subject – these are list (a), and some critical interventions in list (b).

(a) Some standard approaches

Louise Fawcett, ed., *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn, 2013)

Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2nd edn, 2014)

Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Michael Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)

Fred Lawson, *Constructing International Relations in the Arab World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006)

Mehran Kamrava, ed., *International Politics of the Persian Gulf* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011)

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 2004)

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chapter 4

* Rashid Khalidi, *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010)

Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and his Rivals, 1958-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971)

Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

Bassel Salloukh, 'The Arab uprisings and the geopolitics of the Middle East', *The International Spectator*, vol. 48/2 (2013), pp.32-46

(b) Critical interventions

* Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, various editions, [1978]), especially chapter 3, part IV, 'The latest phase', pp.284-328; and the 1995 afterword

Waleed Hazbun, 'The Middle East through the lens of critical geopolitics: globalization, terrorism, and the Iraq War', *Is There a Middle East? The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, edited by Michael E. Bonine, Abbas Amanat and Michael Ezekiel Gasper (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012)

Karen Culcasi, 'Constructing and naturalizing the Middle East', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (October 2010), pp. 583-597

Fred Halliday, '"Orientalism" and its critics', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20/2 (1993), pp.145-163

Efraim Karsh, 'Cold War, post-Cold-War: does it make a difference for the Middle East?,' *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23/3 (1997), pp. 271-91

C.2   The international politics of Middle Eastern oil in a post-carbon age

The next two lectures are broadly on how global economic change affects the Middle East, and the Middle East as a driver of global economic change. The central themes in the first revolve around the politics of oil, and sets out debates around the role of oil production in the international relations of the region. It turns its attention then more speculatively to the post-oil era: how will the Middle East adapt, who will manage that adaptation, and with what political effects?

(a) Overviews

* Clement Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Melani Cammett, Ishac Diwan, Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, 4th edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2008/ revd 2015) – earlier editions, which are perhaps more widely available in Cambridge libraries, were by Richards & Waterbury.

(b) The politics of oil and post-oil

Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power* (New York: Free Press, updated edn, 2008).

* Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2011), chapters 6, 8 and the conclusion

Toby Craig Jones, 'America, oil, and war in the Middle East', *Journal of American History*, Vol. 99/1 (June 2012), pp.208-218

David Wight, *Oil Money: Middle East Petrodollars and the Transformation of US Empire, 1967-1988* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), especially chapter 5

Helen Thompson, *Disorder: Hard Times in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), chapters 2 and 3.

Rüdiger Graf, 'Making use of the 'oil weapon': Western industrialized countries and Arab petropolitics in 1973–1974', *Diplomatic History*, vol. 36/1 (January 2012), pp.185–208

'Histories of oil and urban modernity in the Middle East', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 33/1 (2013) – introduction by Nelida Fuccaro, pp.1-6

 * IRENA, Report of the Global Commission on the Geopolitics of the Energy Transformation (2019), at: https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8588274/file/8588275.pdf

Mari Luomi, 'Gulf of interest: why oil still dominates Middle Eastern climate politics', *Journal of Arabian Studies*, vol. 1/2 (2011), pp.249-266

'Roundtable: climate change in the Middle East and north Africa'*, International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 51/4 (2019), pp.621-632

 * Jim Krane, 'Climate action versus inaction: balancing the costs for Gulf energy exporters', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 47/1 (2020), pp.117-135

C.3   The Middle East in the Global Economy

It has been common to characterise Middle Eastern states as subordinate actors in the global economy, within hierarchical conceptions of the international economic order. This approach is reflected in many of the texts which present Middle Eastern states as undertaking delayed, partial and painful economic reforms to fit in with a prevailing model of economic liberalisation.

This lecture, while starting with this literature, and connecting back to the previous lecture, looks at how one group of Middle Eastern states – those with continuing large incomes from natural resource exports – have through economic diversification become major investors overseas. This has created new forms of global economic leverage, but also resistance and criticism, most often in dismissive claims that Middle Eastern states are buying influence on the global stage (eg

'sportswashing'). The lecture will set out new ways of understanding a changing global economic order in which the abundance of natural resources within the region creates new roles for Middle Eastern agents within a globalized economic order.

(a) Middle Eastern states as subordinate actors

Raymond Hinnebusch, 'The Middle East in the world hierarchy: imperialism and resistance', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 14 (2011), via: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233578647_The_Middle_East_in_the_world_hierarchy_Imperialism_and_resistance **[*OL*]**

Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *Globalization and Geopolitics in the Middle East: Old Games, New Rules* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), Introduction and chapter 6

* Koenraad Bogaert, 'Contextualizing the Arab Revolts: the politics behind three decades of neoliberalism in the Arab World', *Middle East Critique*, vol.22/3 (2013), pp.213-234.

Steven Heydemann, eds., *Networks of Privilege: the Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), the introduction by Heydemann

(b) Middle Eastern states as agents of change

* Adam Hanieh, *Money, Markets, and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), especially chapter 2

Rory Miller, *Desert Kingdoms to Global Powers: The Rise of the Arab Gulf* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, 'The GCC States and the shifting balance of global power', Georgetown CIRS Occasional Paper No.6 (2010), at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/124456/No_6_KristianCoatesUlrichsenOccasionalPaper.pdf

Juergen Braunstein, 'Domestic Sources of Twenty-first-century Geopolitics: Domestic Politics and Sovereign Wealth Funds in GCC Economies', *New Political Economy*, vol. 24/2 (2019), pp.197-217

* Daniel Moshashai, Andrew Leber & James Savage, 'Saudi Arabia plans for its economic future: Vision 2030, the National Transformation Plan and Saudi fiscal reform', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 47/3 (2020), pp.381-401

* Karen E. Young, 'Sovereign risk: Gulf sovereign wealth funds as engines of growth and political resource', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.47/1 (2020), pp.96-116

Alexis Montambault Trudelle, 'The Public Investment Fund and Salman's state: the political drivers of sovereign wealth management in Saudi Arabia', *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 30/2 (2023), pp.747-771

C.4   Transnational religio-political movements

Transnational religious movements are not new to the Middle East, or indeed any part of the world. The lecture explores their development and their contemporary political significance, looking

at and comparing the roles of transnational Islamic, Jewish and Christian movements in shaping the region and as contestants in its politics. The central question that the lecture will explore is how the Middle East figures within larger global debates about religion and the place of religiosity and religious identity within politics.

* Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (London: Hurst, 2004[2002])

* Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (London: Routledge, 2001), especially chapters 4 and 5 (or the same author's *Global Political Islam* (2007), chapters 8-9).

Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (IB Tauris, 2011/2008), chapters 7 and 8

Toby Matthiesen, *Sectarian Gulf: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Spring that Wasn't* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), chapter 2.

Augustus Richard Norton, 'The geopolitics of the Sunni-Shi'i rift' in Elizabeth Monier, ed., *Regional Insecurity after the Arab Uprisings: Narratives of Security and Threat* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

Olivier Roy, *Jihad and Death: The Global Appeal of Islamic State* (London: Hurst, 2017), esp chapters 7-8

Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad, Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (London: Hurst, 2005), esp chapter 3

Peter Layton, 'Bringing the transnational into 'new wars'': the case of the Islamic State', *International Review of Social Research*, vol.5/3 (2015), pp.191-201

* Yaacov Yadgar, *Israel's Jewish Identity Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), especially chapter 3

Dov Waxman, *Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict over Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), chapters 1 and 7

Theodore Sasson, 'Mass mobilization to direct engagement: American Jews' changing relationship to Israel', *Israel Studies*, vol.15/2 (2010), pp.173-196

Bosmat Yefet, 'The Coptic diaspora and the status of the Coptic minority in Egypt', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol.43/7 (2017), pp.1205-21

C.5   Interventionism: Brokers, Managers, Advocates

This lecture turns back to understanding how external powers engage with the Middle East, and particularly how issues in the politics of the Middle East mobilise actors and debates outside the region. In looking at the politics of intervention, the focus is not so much on how and why outside powers intervene in the region but on how debates about intervening in the Middle East come to

take on political significance in other regions of the world. In particular, it looks to three themes: how 'democracy promotion' comes to take on a framing role in engagements with the Middle East; why and how the politics of gender and sexuality in the Middle East comes to be a focus for external attention, and how the Israel-Palestine conflict comes to take a role in setting wider political alignments around the world, and the consequences of this.

* Sean L. Yom, *From Resilience to Revolution: How Foreign Interventions Destabilize the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), chapter 1

* Karim Makdisi, 'Intervention and the Arab Uprisings: from transformation to maintenance of regional order', in R.A. Boserup et al, *New Conflict Dynamics: Between Regional Autonomy and Intervention in the Middle East and North Africa* (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017), pp.93-106, at:
https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/830699/2017_DIIS_New_Conflict_Dynamics_in_the_Middle_East_and_North_Africa_web.pdf

* Sheila Carapico, *Political Aid and Arab Activism: Democracy Promotion, Justice and Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), introduction and chapter 4

Paul Salem, 'The Middle East's troubled relationship with the liberal international order', *The International Spectator*, vol. 53/1 (2018)

Katerina Dalacoura, 'The 2011 uprisings in the Arab Middle East: political change and geopolitical implications', *International Affairs*, vol. 88/1 (2012), pp.63-79

Bassel Salloukh, 'The Arab uprisings and the geopolitics of the Middle East', *The International Spectator*, vol. 48/2 (2013), pp.32-46

Ariel I. Ahram & Ellen Lust, 'The decline and fall of the Arab state', *Survival*, 58/2 (April/May 2016), pp.7-34

Marc Lynch, 'Proxy war and the new structure of Middle East regional politics', in James Gelvin, ed., *The Contemporary Middle East in an Age of Upheaval* (2021), pp.238-252, at:
https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=6521326

Jessica Leigh Doyle, 'Civil society as ideology in the Middle East: a critical perspective', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.43/3 (2015), pp.403-422

Daniel Neep, 'Dilemmas of democratization in the Middle East: the "forward strategy of freedom"', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 11/3 (2004), pp.73-84

Thomas Carothers, 'The democracy crusade myth', *The National Interest*, vol.90 (2007)

* Lila Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2013), chapter 3, pp.81-112: 'Authorizing moral crusades'

Sunaina Maira, '"Good" and "Bad" Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and U. S. Orientalisms', *Feminist Studies*, vol.35/3, (2009), pp.631-656

William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 3rd edn, 2005)

John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy* (London: Allen Lane, 2007)

Jonathan Rynhold, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), especially chapters 2 and 3

* Paul Chamberlin, 'The struggle against oppression everywhere: the global politics of Palestinian Liberation', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.47/1 (2011), pp.25-41

Michael R. Fischbach, *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019)

Lori Allen, 'What's in a link? Transnational solidarities across Palestine and their intersectional possibilities', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol.117/1 (2018)

Ben Freeman, 'The Qatar Lobby in Washington' (2020) and 'The Emirati Lobby: How the UAE Wins in Washington' (2019), both via: https://www.internationalpolicy.org/ben-freeman

C.6   Mobile populations

Populations in the Middle East have a very high level of geographical mobility, compared to those in most other parts of the world; almost all Middle East countries have large diasporas which continue to identify actively with their country of origin. It looks to the varied conditions under which these diasporas have formed, and concomitantly their different contemporary characteristics. The central theme in this lecture, in turning back to the Middle East, is how these geographically dispersed populations engage with their homelands, and the political significance of this engagement. It also looks to their roles and predicaments within the countries of residence.

* Gerasimos Tsourapas, 'Theorizing state-diaspora relations in the Middle East: Authoritarian emigration states in comparative perspective', *Mediterranean Politics*, vol.25/2 (2020), pp.135-59

Laurie Brand, *Citizens Abroad: Emigration and the State in the Middle East and North Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Dana M. Moss, *The Arab Spring Abroad: Diaspora Activism against Authoritarian Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), especially chapter 7

Philippe Fargues and Alessandra Venturini, eds., *Migration from North Africa and the Middle East: skilled migrants, development and globalisation* (London: IB Tauris, 2015)

* Wendy Pearlman, 'Competing for Lebanon's diaspora: transnationalism and domestic struggles in a weak state', *International Migration Review*, vol.48/1 (2014), pp.34-75.

* Marcus Michaelsen, 'Exit and voice in a digital age: Iran's exiled activists and the authoritarian state', *Globalizations*, vol.15/2 (2018), pp.248-64

Alice Alunni, 'Long-distance nationalism and belonging in the Libyan diaspora', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.26/2 (2019), pp.242-258

Bahar Baser, 'Homeland Calling: Kurdish Diaspora and State-building in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the Post-Saddam Era', *Middle East Critique*, vol.27/1 (2018), pp.77-94

* Dawn Chatty, *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), especially chapter 1

Derek Lutterbeck, 'Across the desert, across the sea: migrant smuggling into and from Libya', in Peter Seeberg and Zaid Eyadat, eds., *Migration, Security and Citizenship in the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave, 2013)

François Heisbourg, 'The strategic implications of the Syrian refugee crisis', *Survival*, vol. 57/6 (Nov 2015), pp.7-20

Philippe Fargues, 'International migration and the nation state in Arab countries', *Middle East Law and Governance*, vol.5 (2013), pp.5-35.

C.7   The politics of perpetual crisis: the construction of the Middle East as a 'problem' region

The last two lectures are an attempt to pull some of the threads throughout the course together, and their focus may be more heavily focused on themes that have risen to significance by early 2022 in Middle Eastern politics. This penultimate lecture is aimed at the intellectual construction of the Middle East as a region renowned for 'crises' – refugee crises, security crises, environmental crises and oil crises (among others) – and particularly on the multiple effects that this construction has on the policy of other states have towards the region, and on the region itself.

* Waleed Hazbun, 'US policy and the geopolitics of insecurity in the Arab world", *Geopolitics*, vol.15/2 (2010), pp.239-262

Philip Marfleet and Adam Hanieh, 'Migration and "crisis" in the Middle East and North Africa region', in Anna Lindley, ed., *Crisis and Migration: Critical Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp.24-45

* Simon Mabon, 'Existential threats and regulating life: securitization in the contemporary Middle East', *Global Discourse*, vol.8/1 (2018), pp.42-58

* Pinar Bilgin, 'Whose "Middle East"? Geopolitical inventions and the practices of security', *International Relations*, vol.18/1 (2004), pp.25-41

Jacob Mundy, 'The Middle East is violence: on the limits of comparative approaches to the study of armed conflict', *Civil Wars*, vol.21/4 (2019)

Adam Hoffman, 'The securitization of the coronavirus crisis in the Middle East', in *The COVID-19 Pandemic in the Middle East and North Africa*, POMEPS Studies 39 (2020), pp.10-14.

Crystal Ennis and Bessma Momani, 'Shaping the Middle East in the midst of the Arab Uprisings: Turkish and Saudi foreign policy strategies', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 34/6 (2013), pp.1127-1144

Nabeel Khoury, 'The Arab Cold War revisited: the regional impact of the Arab uprising', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 20/2 (2013), pp.73-87

Ziya Öniş, 'Turkey and the Arab revolutions: boundaries of regional power influence in a turbulent Middle East', *Mediterranean Politics*, vol. 19/2 (2014), pp.203-219

C.8 The Middle East in the Global Political Imaginary

This final lecture goes in a number of directions, picking up themes from previous lectures, to act as an overall conclusion to the paper. Its central themes though are (i) the place of the Middle East within the politics of the rest of the world – that is, why and how an understanding of the Middle East comes to shape global politics; (ii) how people in the Middle East engage with global politics through which to reshape their own circumstances, beliefs and aspirations; and (iii) how historical experiences, memories and practices of commemoration inform the engagement with global politics.

(a) The Middle East in Global Imaginaries

Lisa Anderson, '"They defeated us all": international interests, local politics and contested sovereignty in Libya', *Middle East Journal*, vol.71/2 (2017), pp.229-247

Ussama Makdisi, '"Anti-Americanism" in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History', *The Journal of American History*, vol. 89/2 (2002), pp.538–57

Ayla Göl, 'Imagining the Middle East: the state, nationalism and regional international society', *Global Discourse*, vol.5/3 (2015), pp.379-394

Kamran Matin, 'International Relations in the Making of Political Islam: Interrogating Khomeini's "Islamic Government"', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol.16/4 (2013), pp. 455–82

Latife Reda, 'Origins of the Islamic Republic's Strategic Approaches to Power and Regional Politics: The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Khomeini's Discourse', *Middle East Critique*, vol. 25/2 (2016), pp.181–203

Mark L. Haas, *The Clash of Ideologies: Middle Eastern Politics and American Security* (Oxford University Press, 2012), chapter 5

Sami Baroudi, 'Arab intellectuals and the Bush administration's campaign for democracy: the case of the Greater Middle East Initiative', *The Middle East Journal*, vol.61/3 (2007), pp.390-418

Elizabeth Monier, 'The Arabness of Middle East regionalism: the Arab Spring and competition for discursive hegemony between Egypt, Iran and Turkey', *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 20/4 (2014), pp.421-34.

Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, al-Jazeera and Middle East Politics Today* (Columbia UP, 2006)

(b) Global imaginaries in the politics of the Middle East

Şuhnaz Yilmaz and İpek K. Yosmaoglu, 'Fighting the spectres of the past: dilemmas of Ottoman legacy in the Balkans and the Middle East', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.44/5 (2008), pp.677-693, at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40262610

Nora Fisher Onar 'Echoes of a universalism lost: rival representations of the Ottomans in today's Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.45/2 (2009), pp.229-241, at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200802697290

Umut Uzer, 'Conservative narrative: contemporary Neo-Ottomanist approaches in Turkish Politics', *Middle East Critique*, vol.29/3 (2020), pp.275-290, at: https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2020.1770444

Lucia Volk, 'When memory repeats itself: the politics of heritage in post-civil war Lebanon', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol.40/2 (2008), pp.291-314, at: doi:10.1017/S0020743808080550

Eli Amarilyo, 'History, Memory and Commemoration: The Iraqi Revolution of 1920 and the Process of Nation Building in Iraq', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.51/1 (2015), pp.72-92, DOI: 10.1080/00263206.2014.934816

Rochelle Davis, 'The politics of commemoration among Palestinians', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.47/1 (2017), pp.69-85, DOI: 10.1525/jps.2017.47.1.69

Suggested supervision questions

- What explains the frequency and intensity of external military and political intervention in Middle Eastern states?
- Will the politics of the Middle East be transformed in a post-carbon future?
- Are diasporas increasingly important actors in the politics of Middle Eastern states?
- Where does the Middle Eastern state fit in to contemporary political movements of transnational religious identity?
- Have the Arab uprisings from 2010 reinforced or disrupted international relationships of power in the Middle East?
- How do historical memories inform the actions taken in struggles for power in the Middle East?

5. The mini-subjects

A.   Language Politics in the Contemporary Maghreb

Seminar (Kaoutar Ghilani): Thursday 1st February, 2pm-3.30pm. ARB SG2.

Language has been an omnipresent subject of contention in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) since the countries' independence in the 1950s and 1960s. The combination of multilingualism and diglossia in a postcolonial context has rendered legislation on languages an arena for competing identities and interests and a domain of ideological confrontation on nationalism, decolonisation, neocolonialism, modernity, tradition, and globalisation. While debates on language in the public space articulated around the competition between Standard Arabic and French in the early post-independence period, these became more complex with the quest for recognition of Tamazight (Berber) as an official language, the increased visibility of Darija (vernacular Arabic), and the growing interest in English in the region.

This seminar takes the case of language politics as an entry point to understanding the complexities of postcolonial societies in the Maghreb. By examining the debates on language within the three countries' public spheres, the seminar analyses language in its political complexity, both as a vehicle of identity and an instrument of access to symbolic and material resources.

During the seminar, we will look at the stakes behind language politics in the region while attempting to answer the following question: "Why is language such a vibrant topic in the Maghreb?" For this, we will consider the cases of language at school (taught languages and teaching languages), the quest and experience of language recognition by the state, the foreign policy dimension of Maghrebi language politics, and the place of language in nation-building processes in times of political turmoil.

Reading list:

*Benrabah, Mohamed. *Language Conflict in Algeria: From Colonialism to Post-Independence*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2013.

Bentahar, Ziad. "'Ytnahaw ga'!': Algeria's Cultural Revolution and the Role of Language in the Early Stages of the Spring 2019 Hirak." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 33, no. 3 (2020): 1-18.

*Boutieri, Charis. *Learning in Morocco: Language Politics and the Abandoned Educational Dream*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.

*Daoud, Mohamed. "The Sociolinguistic Situation in Tunisia: Language Rivalry or Accommodation?" *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2011, no. 211 (2011): 9-33.

Ghilani, Kaoutar. " 'The Legitimate' after the Uprisings: Justice, Equity, and Language Politics in Morocco." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2020), DOI: 10.1080/13530194.2020.1863772.

Iddins, Annemarie. "Debating Darija: Telquel and Language Politics in Modern Morocco." *Media, Culture & Society* 37, no. 2 (2015): 288-301.

Jacob, Camille. "English as a Decolonial Language: Academic Frames, Popular Discourses & Language Practices in Algeria." *The Journal of North African Studies* 25, no. 6 (2020): 1013-1032.

Kabel, Ahmed. "The Neoliberal Linguistic Consensus: Neoliberal Multilingualism and Linguistic Governmentality in Morocco." *The Journal of North African Studies* (2021): DOI: 10.1080/13629387.2021.1932481

*Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce. *Amazigh Politics in the Wake of the Arab Spring*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2022.

Salomone, Rosemary. "Adieu to French." In *The Rise of English: Global Politics and the Power of Language*. New York: Oxford Academic, 2022; online edition, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190625610.003.0007.

Smail, Gareth. "Debating Arabic: Governmentality and Language Controversy in Algeria." *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics* 33, no. 1 (2018): 32-71.

Press and Think-Tank Articles:

El Atti, Basma. "Morocco to teach science subjects in English instead of French." *The New Arab*, October 25, 2022. https://www.newarab.com/news/english-become-moroccos-first-foreign-language-ministry

Eljechtimi, Ahmed. "Moroccan lawmakers vote to bolster French in education system." *Reuters*, July 23, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-morocco-education-law-idUSKCN1UI04D

Lakhal, Malek. "Despite France's Efforts, Is French Language In Tunisia On Its Way Out?" *Nawaat*, March 26, 2019. https://nawaat.org/2019/03/26/despite-frances-efforts-is-french-language-in-tunisia-on-its-way-out/

Saad Allah, Abu Bakr Khaled. "The Politics of Language in Algerian Education." *Sada – Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. July 20, 2023. https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90230

Suggested Supervision Question:

- Is the local/global dichotomy sufficient to explain language tensions in the Maghreb?

B.   China and the Politics of Development in the Middle East

Seminar (Maha Abdelrahman): Thursday 8th February, 2pm-3.30pm. ARB SG2.

This seminar takes the case of China's growing cooperation with Middle East countries and its investments in the region as a lens to discuss the changing politics of development in the 21st century and to examine the rising narratives and projects of South-South cooperation. Academic research on the relationship between China and the Middle East has largely focused on the question of oil and its implications for economic growth in China. The large number of ME countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, however, will be used to light a torch on China's growing relationship to the region across a range of fields and sectors, including business and commercial activities, entertainment and construction. Similarly, the last decade has witnessed increasing investments by Chinese big tech companies such as Huawei, Alibaba and Tencent in digital development in the Middle East. Investments in smart cities, data centres and digital solutions will also be discussed against a fast-expanding global data regimes.

Despite the fast-evolving role of China in various sectors and the significance they hold for new patterns of social and economic development in the region, there is lack of research which interrogates such relations and patterns. The seminar will discuss these new patterns within a global landscape of the US-China growing rivalries and a changing world of new donors and rising powers.

Required Readings

Anderson, P. (2020). "Not a Silk Road: trading networks between China and the Middle East as a dynamic interaction of competing Eurasian geographies." *Global Networks* 20 (4): 708-724.

El Bernoussi, Z. "Developing the Halal Market: China's Opportunity to Strengthen MENA Ties and Address Uighur/Hui issues," in *Rethinking Halal: Genealogy, Current Trends, and New Interpretation*, Ayang Utriza Yakin and Louis-Léon Christians (eds,) Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2021.

Murphy, D.C. 2022 'Belt and Road and China's Relations with the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa' in Murphy, *China's Rise in the Global South: The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order*. Stanford University Press.

Suggested Readings:

Al-Sulayman, F. (2022). *Rethinking State Capitalism in the Gulf States: Insights from the China-focused Literature.*

Anderson, J. (ed) (2018) *The Red Star and the Crescent: China and the Middle East* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Behbahani, H. (2020). China's foreign policy in the Arab World, 1955-75: Three case studies. Routledge. 214.

Dorsey, J. (2017) China and the Middle East: Venturing into the Maelstrom, *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 11(1): 1-14

Fulton, J. (2022) Routledge Handbook on China–Middle East Relations

Kamel, M (2018) China's Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for the Middle East, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 31:1, 76-95, DOI: 10.1080/09557571.2018.1480592

Murphy, D.C., 2022. China's Rise in the Global South: The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order. Stanford University Press.

Olimat, M (2012) China and The Middle East: from Silk Road to Arab Spring. London: Routledge

Rasheed, A. (2022) The Narrative of the Rise of China and Authoritarianism in the Global South: The Case of Egypt, The International Spectator, 57:2, 68-84, DOI: 10.1080/03932729.2021.2009641

Sun, Degang, and Yahia Zoubir. 'China's response to the revolts in the Arab World: A Case of pragmatic diplomacy'. *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 1 (2014): 2–20.

Simpfendorfer, Ben. *The New Silk Road: How a rising Arab world is turning away from the West and Rediscovering China*. Springer, 2011.

Waisbich, L. T., & Mawdsley, E. (2022). South-South Cooperation. In *The Routledge Handbook of Global Development* (pp. 82-92). Routledge.

Supervision question

➢ What does the 'South-South' cooperation narrative mean in terms of China-Middle East relations?

C.   The Gaza Strip in the Palestine-Israel conflict

Seminar (Glen Rangwala): Thursday 15th February, 2pm-3.30pm. Room SG2.

This option is on explaining how the Gaza Strip has become the focus of much of the violence in the region. The intense destruction and conflict on both sides of the border since 7 October 2023 will come under focus in this seminar, while also placing it in the longer term process of how Gaza has persistently been a flashpoint. The reading list below will be updated with additional suggestions made in the seminar for resources and articles.

The starting point for thinking through this option is how the Gaza Strip is a small scrap of land – about 7 miles wide at its thickest, 25 miles long. It has no natural resources on land, few historic or religious sites of importance, and is of very limited geostrategic significance. And yet it repeatedly serves as the focal point of major periods of violence within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and drawing in international attention: the Gaza Strip was the focus of cross-border 'dramatic' violence in 2021, 2018, 2014, 2008-09 and 2004. The events from October 2023 are the latest and potentially most destructive in that series. In the past, the overt conflict has had a specific duration, ending with a ceasefire of some sort between Israel and Hamas, with brokerage usually involving the United States and Egypt.

This seminar will explore these recurring dynamics, from outbreak to the tragic public spectacle and on to de-escalation. It will work through the varied conflicting explanations of these aspects, including how and why these periods of violence each seem to be brought to indecisive conclusions, and then ask whether something has fundamentally changed in 2023. POL12 students with strong opinions on the Israel-Palestine conflict are very welcome to participate, as are those who remain mystified by its persistence. The reading list contains works that are highly partisan (on both sides) and it is worthwhile to be alert to this as you read.

(a) Background reading - see also the list on religious identity in Palestine, with reading list B.3

Ilan Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

James L. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Beverley Milton-Edwards, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A People's War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)

Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (London: Allen Lane, 2000)

William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 3rd edn, 2005)

Elie Podeh, *Chances for Peace: Missed Opportunities in the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015)

Nathan Thrall, 'The only language they understand', in *The Only Language They Understand: Forcing Compromise in Israel and Palestine* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2017), pp.5-74.

Wendy Pearlman, 'Spoiling inside and out: internal political contestation and the Middle East peace process', *International Security*, vol. 33/3 (2009), pp.79-109

(b) The multiple wars in / around / under the Gaza Strip

* Jean-Pierre Filiu, 'The twelve wars on Gaza', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol.44/1 (2014), pp.52-60

M. Christine Boyer, 'Planning ruination', in Michael Sorkin and Deen Sharp, eds., *Open Gaza: Architectures of Hope* (American University in Cairo Press, 2020), pp.120-140, via: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=6508943

Tareq Baconi, *Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), particularly chapters 3 and 4

Beverley Milton-Edwards, 'The ascendance of political Islam: Hamas and consolidation in the Gaza Strip', *Third World Quarterly*, vol.29/8 (2008), pp.1585-1599

* Shlomo Hasson, 'Gaza enclave: victim, enemy, rival', *Geopolitics*, vol.15/2 (2010), pp.385-405

Bruce Stanley, 'The city-logic of resistance: subverting urbicide in the Middle East city', *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol.12/3 (2017), pp.10-24,

Ron J. Smith, 'Isolation through humanitarianism: subaltern geopolitics of the siege on Gaza', *Antipode*, vol.48/3 (2016), pp.75-769

Sultan Barakat, Sansom Milton and Ghassan Elkahlout, 'Reconstruction under siege: the Gaza Strip since 2007', *Disasters*, vol.44/3 (2020), pp.477-498

* Moran Yarchi and Ami Ayalon, 'Fighting over the image: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip 2018-19', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, on-line only (2020)

Lisa Bhungalia, 'In/mobilities in a "hostile territory": managing the red line', *Geopolitics*, vol.17/2 (2012), pp.256-275

Nicole J. Watkins and Alena M. James, 'Digging into Israel: the sophisticated tunneling network of Hamas', *Journal of Strategic Security* , vol.9/1 (2016), pp.84-103

Suggested supervision question:

➤ Why do the ceasefires over Gaza break down so frequently?
➤ Are the conflicts over the Gaza Strip best understood through the frame of local or global politics?

6. Examination
a. Mock exam paper

The mock paper below is arranged as follows: (i) there are four questions from series 1 and three questions from each of series 2 and 3 of the paper; (ii) there is a 'wildcard' question, that can be answered usually from a number of standpoints; (iii) there is one question on each of the mini-subjects, of which you can answer a maximum of one. The paper is undivided. This arrangement of questions in the mock paper (4-3-3-1-1) will be kept for the 2024 exam paper.

POL12: The Politics of the Middle East
Candidates should answer three questions.

1. Were Middle Eastern states created by European imperial powers?
2. What factors and/or forces have been most relevant in the reestablishment of authoritarianism in the Arab region since 2011?
3. How are state security forces, particularly the military institution, an impediment to democratization in the Arab region?
4. What are the main threats to regime survival in the Middle East a decade on from the 2011 mass uprisings?
5. Is there a tension between national identity and religious identity in the Arab Middle East?
6. How is citizenship in Middle Eastern states gendered?
7. Why are religious and/or ethnic minorities in the Middle East so often a focus of persecution or hostility?
8. To what extent are key decisions about the politics of the Middle East taken by agents from outside that region?
9. Does the end of the oil era bring stability or instability to the Middle East?
10. When do diasporas become powerful actors in Middle Eastern politics?
11. What features of Middle Eastern politics have been most significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
12. EITHER: What are debates on language in the Maghreb symptoms of?
    OR: What are the political consequences of China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Middle East?
    OR: Is the persistence of conflict over Gaza best explained through the incompatible ideologies of both sides?

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b. Past exam papers and reports

The past seven exam papers are below. The paper has been taught each year since 2014-15 except 2020-21. These past papers had significantly differently content from this year's version, both across the topics of the questions and in the mini-subjects, which change most years. While the new mock paper, above, remains the most definitive guide to the structure of the 2024 exam paper, the questions in the past papers may also be helpful for revision practice.

2023.
1. To what extent do the ways in which Middle Eastern states became independent explain their political structures today?
2. How do governments in the Middle East use patrimonial networks to ensure their resilience?
3. To what extent have changes to the security market been significant to authoritarian survival in the Middle East since 2011?
4. Have international efforts to democratise the Middle East ever been serious?
5. Has the 'Arabness' of many Middle Eastern countries lost its political salience?
6. Do Middle Eastern countries with large religious or ethnic minorities face ongoing struggles with a sense of national identity?
7. Do political movements espousing gender equality in the Middle East always need to take sides in debates about the place in politics of religion?
8. How realistic are the plans of the oil-exporting states of the Middle East for adapting to the climate crisis?
9. Why is the Middle East treated as a 'problem region' in global affairs?
10. Are Middle Eastern diasporas important resources for the region's governments?
11. What, if anything, is exceptional about the politics of the Middle East?
12. EITHER: Is economic development with Chinese characteristics a viable prospect for Middle Eastern states?

OR: Why have Palestinian fatalities in the Israel-Palestine conflict been overwhelmingly concentrated in the Gaza Strip over recent decades?

2022.
1. How did the periods of rule in the Middle East by European imperial powers shape the forms of nationalism within the region?
2. Have authoritarian governments in the Middle East, under which no mass uprisings have taken place since 2010, managed effectively to legitimise their rule to their citizens?
3. How have military and security institutions in the Arab Middle East adapted since 2011 to face the domestic challenges to ruling regimes?
4. Does authoritarianism in the Middle East serve the interests of external powers?
5. What explains the 'sectarian turn' in the politics of the Middle East?
6. When do women's movements in the Middle East become politically significant actors?
7. Has 'post-nationalism' been a diminishing political force in the Middle East? Answer in respect of EITHER post-Zionism in Israel OR the Kurds in one or more of Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq.
8. How have oil-producing states in the Middle East shaped global responses to the climate crisis?
9. Do Middle Eastern diasporas contribute to liberalising their countries of origin? Compare the influences of two different diasporas.
10. How does the common conception of the Middle East as a zone of crisis shape political action in and towards the region?
11. Have Islamic political movements in the Middle East become discredited through the association of 'jihadism' with terrorism?
12. EITHER: Is a return to democracy possible in Turkey, given the trends of the last two decades?

OR: Why does the Gaza Strip keep serving as the flashpoint in the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israeli government?

OR: What is missed from characterisations of Lebanon as a 'failed state'?

2020.
1. Is the state in the Middle East a creation of European colonialism?
2. Why have elections rarely been an adequate basis for meaningful popular political participation in the Arab Middle East?
3. Do the ongoing programmes of economic liberalisation in many of the oil-rich states of the Middle East help ameliorate the negative effects of rentierism?
4. Do the main impediments to gender equality in Arab Middle East states come from their governments or from their societies?
5. What has prevented external powers compelling the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to find a mutually acceptable solution to their conflict?
6. Why have frameworks of regional cooperation been largely ineffective in addressing prolonged hostilities? Answer with respect to EITHER the conflict in Libya OR the approach of the Gulf Cooperation Council to Qatar.
7. Is there a new Cold War in the Middle East between the United States and Russia?
8. Is Islamism losing its relevance in the contemporary Middle East? Discuss with reference to at least one example.
9. Do the ideas of Islamism rely upon the presence of conflict to have political appeal?
10. What has been the political legacy in the Middle East of the rise and fall of the self-styled Islamic State movement?
11. To what extent is Turkish politics exceptional in the context of the Middle East? Answer with respect to national politics, foreign policy or both.
12. Whose interests does the conflict in Yemen serve?
13. Can 'quiet encroachments of the ordinary' change political outcomes in the Middle East?

2019.
1. Is the propensity towards unaccountable government in the Middle East a colonial legacy?
2. Is all politics in the Middle East closely connected with issues of identity?
3. How significant has activism by Middle Eastern women been in reforming gender relations within their societies?
4. How have minorities in Middle Eastern states responded to the prospect of persecution or discrimination?
5. Why have attempts to negotiate a solution to the Israeli - Palestinian conflict failed?
6. Do members of the Gulf Cooperation Council need a common enemy in order to work together?
7. To what extent and why have all recent US military interventions in the Middle East been unsuccessful?
8. Have projects of Islamic revivalism necessarily involved confrontation with prevailing power structures?
9. Does contemporary jihadism originate in the writings of Islamist political thinkers?
10. What are the political consequences of the high levels of economic inequality between Middle Eastern states?
11. Do Iraq's experiences since 2003 demonstrate that democracy without a functioning state has no value?

12. What does the study of the politics of everyday life reveal about authoritarianism in the Middle East?
13. What general lessons should we draw from the 2010-11 Arab Uprisings for the study of social movements?

2018.

1. Is the legacy of European rule in the Middle East more one of ideas than of institutions?
2. What, if anything, remains of Arab nationalism?
3. Why are there so few liberal market economies in the Middle East?
4. How has authoritarianism within the Middle East shaped the context for struggles for gender equality?
5. Does international political involvement in the conflict between Israel and its neighbours restrain local animosities or exacerbate them?
6. What explains the breakdown in relations between many of the states of the Arabian Peninsula from 2015?
7. Does it make any sense to characterise US relations with Middle Eastern states as a form of imperialism?
8. Do groups like al-Qa'ida and the self-styled Islamic State draw upon an older strain of militant Islam to mobilise their supporters?
9. Is modern Shi'a Islamism inextricably bound up with the ideas and policies of the Iranian government?
10. Do the North African states share a distinctive form of politics with the other parts of the Middle East?
11. **EITHER (a)**: Does Turkey's policy on the Syrian war represent a fundamental discontinuity with its earlier approach to foreign affairs?
    OR (b): Is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan a new type of leader for Turkey?
12. What social or political processes have driven the 'sectarianisation' of conflict within the Middle East?
13. What effect has the refugee crisis since *c.*2015 had on the politics of the Middle East?
14. Have parties with their origins in political Islam had a distinctive effect when they have taken a role in governance within the Arab Middle East?

2017.

1. To what extent are the varying characteristics of Middle Eastern states today attributable to the different circumstances of their creation?
2. Does the plurality of identities within most Middle Eastern states serve as an impediment to democratisation?
3. What are the political consequences of the state's domination of the economy in most Middle Eastern countries?
4. What explains the vulnerability of many ethnic and religious minorities within the Middle East to persecution?
5. Are Middle Eastern states distinctively 'masculine'?
6. To what extent can state legislation deliver the shari'a?
7. Has the ambiguity of the Qur'an been more an asset or a liability for Muslim politics?
8. What factors explain the impetus for projects of reform of Islamic law in Muslim states, and what explains their success or failure?
9. Why does the Israeli-Palestinian conflict draw so much political attention from outside the Middle East?

10. What explains the stridency of expressions of mutual hostility across the Persian Gulf over recent years?
11. To what extent do Middle Eastern states look to the United States for regional leadership, and what are the prospects for change in this regard?
12. Does competition or cooperation prevail in relations between Arab states today?
13. Is today's sectarianism in the Middle East no more than an uninhibited expression of pre-existing divisions?
14. In what ways, if any, is the current Turkish regime fundamentally different from its predecessors since 1923?
15. Is the self-styled 'Islamic State' group the intellectual and political legacy of the Muslim Brotherhood?

2016.
1. What consequences did the unresolved legacies of colonialism have for the politics of the modern Middle East?
2. Is political Islam to be understood as a response to the failure of nationalist projects in the Arab Middle East?
3. Have the Arab uprisings from 2010 set back the course of democratisation in most of the region?
4. How useful is the concept of rentierism for explaining the political characteristics of oil-rich Middle Eastern states?
5. What explains the different approaches taken by Middle Eastern states in upholding or challenging discrimination? Answer with respect to EITHER the politics of gender OR the status of ethno-religious minorities.
6. Can the shari'ah be codified? What might be lost, or gained, in the process?
7. What explains the diversity of approaches to the implementation of the idea of an Islamic state, in the contemporary period or the past?
8. To what extent, and in what way, do Islamic institutions check the power of the state?
9. In what respects do the understandings of the past held differently by Palestinians and Israelis serve to perpetuate the conflict between them?
10. Does hostility across the Persian Gulf come primarily from domestic politics or geostrategic ambitions? Answer with respect to one or more countries.
11. In accounting for the reasons for the close involvement of major external powers in the Middle East, what if anything do explanations that focus solely on the role of oil interests miss?
12. How is the mass movement of refugees from, within and through the Middle East reshaping the politics of the region?
13. EITHER: Was Erdoğan's authoritarian turn inevitable?
    OR: What accounts for the failure of the Kurdish peace process, and what is the effect of this failure on Turkish foreign policy?
14. Are the reasons for the prominence of sectarian divisions in the Syrian conflict from 2011 similar to those in the Iraq conflict after 2003?

2015.
1. To what extent did France and Britain create the modern Middle East?
2. Does the Middle East show any sign of taking a 'post-Islamist' turn?
3. Does democratisation imperil ethnic and religious minorities in Arab countries?

4. Do Arab countries share common themes in their gender politics?
5. How should calls for the application of shari'ah in the Muslim World today be understood?
6. How do Islamic institutions mediate between the Muslim and the state?
7. Do Islam and authoritarianism go hand in hand?
8. *How does domestic US politics affect the Arab-Israeli conflict? Answer with respect to either the origins of the 1967 war in the Middle East, or the Oslo process from 1993.*
9. Has the security system in the Persian Gulf region moved decisively under the control of local states?
10. Do the Arab Uprisings from 2010 demonstrate that the idea of an 'Arab states system' is still useful?
11. Why has the programme of economic liberalisation faltered in many Middle Eastern countries?
12. Was Iran's 'Green Movement' opposing a leader or a system?
13. Have the processes of state-building and nation-building taken very different paths in the Middle East? Answer with respect to *either* the Palestinians *or* the Kurds.
14. *What lessons can be drawn for other contexts from Turkey's political trajectory about either (a) how to reconcile Islam and modern politics, or (b) the role of a strong state as an obstacle or a boon to democracy?*
15. Have the experiences of Iraq since 2003 and Syria since 2011 demonstrated that there is a 'Shi'a crescent' after all?

Examiner's report 2023

The quality of scripts for this paper remains high, with the large majority of students writing accurate essays that drew upon a good range of literature and examples. This year it was especially encouraging to see that the essays were mostly well-focused; there were only a relatively small number of essays that were weighted towards providing general background information instead of providing an answer, or which seemed to be missing the point of the question.

This generally high standard is demonstrated by the marks awarded, in which 6 of the 26 scripts were given marks of 70+ by the examiners, and a further 12 scripts had marks in the 65-69 range. Out of the 8 remaining scripts, 6 were in the range of 60 to 64, with only 2 scripts below 60, both with marks of 58. There was no apparent variation between the different tracks and Triposes; out of the 6 students with marks of 70+, three were on the HSPS Politics single track, one was on the joint track with Sociology, one was in the History & Politics Tripos and one was in the Asian & Middle Eastern Studies Tripos.

Each question was taken by at least one student. By far the most popular question was the one on the mini-subject, in which 19 students answered either the question on the Gaza Strip in the Israel-Palestine conflict or the one on China's role in the Middle East. Out of the other questions, the ones on the legacy of the mode of independence (q.1) and on Middle Eastern diasporas (q.10) were the most popular, each drawing 10 answers.

There were few common problems across the scripts. A few scripts included a detailed account of a specific case, often with a good focus on relevant material, but didn't relate the case-based material to more general arguments. Others gave lots of short examples, again usually accurately, but resulting in a somewhat superficial argument. These essays generally ended up with marks in the mid-60s. A few essays to the questions that asked 'why' (qq.9 and 12b) gave answers that did not

appreciate that this was requiring a causal explanation, but instead answered the question as if it had been asking 'how'. Two scripts contained unfinished last essays, which was somewhat surprising to see in a 5-hour open book exam; one of the scripts, that otherwise contained two fairly high-quality answers, fell below 60 in its final mark because of this.

Overall, the standard of writing and analysis remains encouragingly high on this paper, and its students are generally fluent and knowledgeable across a wide range of subjects concerning the modern Middle East.

Examiner's report 2022

The exam was taken by 24 students, of whom 5 received a mark in the 70-79 range, 14 received a mark in the 60-69 range, and 5 received a mark in the 50-59 range. Students taking it came from the Triposes in HSPS, History and Politics, and Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, and it was pleasing to see that there was at least one student in each of those Triposes who received a mark of 70+. Each script was each double-marked according to the same standards, irrespective of Tripos.

In terms of the spread of answers, most students (19) took one of the 'mini-subjects' in q.12, with the question on why the Gaza Strip serves a persistent flashpoint being the most popular of the three options. The next most popular question was q.10, on the conception of the Middle East as a zone of crisis, which drew 11 answers; as this was a new topic for the paper, it was pleasing to see the high level of engagement with the issues. In addition, q.5 on sectarianism was also popular, drawing 8 answers. Most of the other questions drew a fair number of answers too, so there was a quite good distribution across the paper; the only exception was q.7, on post-nationalism, which drew no answers.

The most successful answers this year adopted a clear focus at the start within the scope of the question, explained that focus, and sustained it through a detailed, critical evaluation throughout the scope of the essay. This year however there were a lot of long essays that gave long descriptive or narrative accounts, either not making an argument, or arguing about something that didn't really respond to the question. It can be presumed (not least due to their length) that at least some of these accounts were prepared beforehand and simply transplanted into the submitted essay, given that the exam was taken in an 'open book' format. Although using prepared material was not prohibited, and candidates were not penalised for this, it may have had the unintended effect of making some essays drift away from relevance to what the question was asking.

There were a small number of cases in which the essay did not seem to be responding to the question at all. This was particularly the case with q.1, which asked about how "periods of rule in the Middle East by European imperial powers" shaped nationalism, but which led to essays that discussed at length the development of nationalism under the Ottoman Empire; and with q.2, which asked about "authoritarian governments … under which no mass uprisings have taken place since 2010", but which produced two answers that heavily used the case of Egypt, which experienced a mass uprising in 2011. In both cases, it was difficult to see this as an honest mistake, since the question was clear, and the individual essays could not be judged to have "concentrate[d] on the subject matter of the question", the requirement for a mark of 50 or higher. It cannot be emphasised enough that a single essay of this sort, which wholly disregards the

question, can have a disproportionately large effect in bringing down the overall mark for a paper, and indeed the overall class of a student.

On the more positive side, it was encouraging to see that there was a lot of critical engagement with advanced academic literature in the essays this year, more so than before. A good number of the most successful essays brought out a theme or theory out from a text, and used it often fairly centrally in the development of the argument, but were also able to show its limitations or provide another critical twist. There were fewer essays this year than usual that were commentaries on current events, perhaps reflecting the lower extent to which the Middle East has been featuring in UK news headlines, and the result was more reflective, analytical essays which often tried to take in a broader scope of recent history or made a more sustained effort at comparison.

Examiner's report 2020

The examination for the Politics of the Middle East paper was taken remotely this year on account of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in an open-book format. Most students chose to type their essays. It was taken by 25 students, from a range of Triposes: History & Politics, and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and three different tracks of HSPS. The same standards were applied across all students.

The quality this year was high. 6 students received average marks of 70 or above, including (as it happens) at least one student in each of the three Triposes. Only 2 students received marks lower than 60, in both cases receiving marks in the high 50s. The large majority of answers this year drew well upon the literature and were factually accurate, which in part follows from the open-book format. What was impressive this year was how many of the essays were able to make well-focused arguments through both developing critical accounts of the literature and staying engaged with empirical detail. There was on the whole a good balance between evidence and argument, and between broad themes and case-based specificity.

A few essays had extended descriptive sections at the expense of argument. Often this was done by asserting at the start a contentious judgement – that, for instance, in response to q.12 that Turkish politics used to be exceptionally secular but is no longer – and then using the rest of the essay to fill this in with detail. This approach often failed to engage with the issues with a sufficient sense of complexity and awareness of different judgements. A somewhat larger number of essays answered the essay question only somewhat indirectly, and this was probably the largest problem for responses to questions 4 (on obstacles to gender equality) and 5 (on the Israel-Palestine conflict) in particular. It was striking that a number of answers to question 4 did not address at all what the obstacles to gender equality are in the Middle East.

Finally, it should be noted that a number of third essays in a script were less well-developed than the other two – in that they were both significantly shorter and more abruptly argued than the preceding two essays – and this sometimes had a disproportionately negative effect on the overall mark. Presumably this was due to a shortage of time, prompted perhaps by the novel examination format. In a few cases, it brought the overall mark below 70. This was disappointing to see, as a more equal distribution of time between the essays could have resulted in a higher mark.

The most popular questions were on the origins of the Middle Eastern state (question 1, 11 answers), on the Israel-Palestine conflict (question 5, 10 answers) and on regional cooperation

(question 6, 9 answers). The least popular questions were on economic liberalisation (question 3, 2 answers), on US-Russian rivalry in the Middle East (question 7, 1 answer), and on the legacy of the self-styled Islamic State movement (question 10, no answers).

This paper will not be running in 2020-21, but may be in back in future years.

Examiner's report 2019
There were 19 candidates who took this paper by examination, and 16 by long essay. Out of the candidates taking the paper by examination, five candidates received first class marks, one candidate received a 2.2, and the other candidates received marks of 2.1.

There were some very good scripts. Many candidates were good at developing their own arguments, and providing evidence for the claims they were making. We were impressed by the range of examples in many exam scripts. The stronger scripts took time to justify their choice of factors/cases. Some questions were more popular than others, with ten candidates answering a question on the Gulf Cooperation Council (Q6) and ten candidates answering a question on the state and democracy in Iraq (Q11). All other questions were attempted by at least two candidates, except Q4, which was not chosen by any candidate.

Weaker answers received low 2.1 or 2.2 scores. Often these did not develop a clear argument, or did not use examples to support the main points being made. Sometimes these answers were imprecise or contained material that was superfluous or incorrect. Weaker answers showed an over-reliance on sweeping claims about the international environment (US does or does not want to engage, Russia as a spoiler), taken as self-evident, while avoiding engagement with domestic or regional factors.

The best scripts were notable for their ability to use examples effectively, for their range of references and for their ability to provide critical reflection on aspects of the politics of the Middle East.

Examiner's report 2018
POL12 this year featured 23 students who took the paper by examination and 8 who took it by long essays. Six students overall received a mark of 70 or above, and only one (taking the paper by long essays) received a mark lower than 59. That leaves 24 who received a mark in the 60-69 range, 14 of whom were in the 65-69 range. Put differently, almost two-thirds of students (20/31) received an overall mark of 65 or above.

This mark distribution reflects how essays and exams were generally of a quite high standard this year, more so than in previous years. The large majority of students wrote accurate, well-focused essays that engaged suitably with the academic literature and constructed a coherent argument.

With the assessed essays, the best essays were those which brought out a range of themes and theories, and demonstrated good knowledge of broader debates about the politics of the Middle East – but which then found a way to focus their essays on a particular situation, era or contrast. The less successful essays either kept too narrowly to specific descriptive accounts without framing it within a broader conception of what the question was asking; or, for other essays, didn't find a clear focus for the discussion, for example by not conveying a clear enough idea of what the question was asking. In 2018-19, the questions will be phrased more broadly than they were this year, so the first issue is less likely to arise, but the second issue becomes even more pertinent to consider.

For the exams, it was striking that students wrote with greater authority, subtlety and sense of judgement when they were addressing events and processes in the twentieth century than when they were writing about contemporary issues. This no doubt reflects the academic literature, for which there is an accumulated sense of debate for issues that are now older. But it does entail that students who choose to write about contemporary affairs – as we hope they do – should be looking more to develop a more rounded, multi-faceted appreciation of current debates, rather than accepting any one interpretation as valid. It was striking how students who wrote about imperial legacies and the force of Arab nationalism drew upon multiple sources, ideas, interpretations and theories, and formulated their own distinctive judgements on the back of them; while those who wrote about post-2015 refugees in the Middle East simply regurgitated the substance of two or three articles.

In terms of subject matter of exam answers, the most popular questions were on the drivers of sectarianism (q.12, 10 responses), the legacy of European rule (q.1, 9 responses) and Gulf crises (q.6, 8 responses). It was disappointing that only one student took the question on gender struggles, although that student did it well: very few other exam essays brought in issues related explicitly to the politics of gender.

Those points aside, most students taking this paper by examination this year have a well-developed sense of how to write a good essay – and equally the pitfalls to avoid. Few students wrote descriptive narratives instead of structured arguments, for example. And the best scripts were able to develop critical insights into influential academic texts while not losing sight of the need to develop a coherent, sustained argument of their own. The large majority of scripts were able to relate general arguments well to specific national and regional contexts. Many of the more common problems in previous years weren't apparent in this set of scripts, and future students may want to look back at earlier examiners' reports to have a sense of the ways in which their less illustrious predecessors have sometimes struggled with the POL12 exam.

Examiners' report 2017
This year's paper had 36 students. Six of the exam candidates received an average mark of 70+ from both examiners, 23 received an average mark in the 60-69 range, and seven received an average mark in the 50-59 range. No-one received an overall mark lower than 52.

There was a fairly heavy bunching of answers in response to the questions on sectarianism (21 answers), the creation of states in the Middle East (17 answers) and international attention on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (16 answers). The questions about pluralism in democratisation, US regional leadership and the legacies of the Muslim Brotherhood each drew 7-10 responses, and all remaining questions received 5 or fewer responses. For a course that is taught broadly about the region, and which is designed to stimulate a range of new interests among its students, this bunching was surprising and somewhat disappointing for the examiners.

The relatively low number of firsts – lower as a proportion than in previous years – was primarily a consequence of a large number of candidates not structuring their essays around answering the question. The better answers devised an essay framework that was centrally about the question, and deployed suitable empirical material as part of the process of reasoning towards a conclusion.

By contrast, too many students wrote long narratives or explanations that were not directly relevant to the question.

An example is question 1, for which many students wrote a general history of the formation of states in the Middle East, without attention to differences in the circumstances of their creation (which is the starting point for the question) and often with only a few words in the conclusion about how this does or does not explain their varying characteristics today (which is the central issue at stake in it). It would have been much better to think first about what those relevant 'varying characteristics' today are, and then to structure an essay around how state-formation can or cannot explain them.

In general, there were too many students who resorted to long historical narratives which didn't have an underlying argument. These generally began with something along the lines of 'To understand Topic X, we must first appreciate the historical background…', thus beginning a simple chronologically-plotted account which in many cases accounted for over half the essay. The Israeli-Palestinian question (q.9), for instance, drew a number of general histories of the conflict, going back to the 19th Century, even though the question was about the international attention paid to it. These essays were mostly taken as unfocused, and therefore not eligible to receive a mark higher than 59 according to the marking criteria.

It was also rather curious to see many students seem to have learned lots of data – such as percentages who affirmed something in an opinion poll, or where a particular country stands in some league tables (which, incidentally, are of dubious intellectual value). In a number of essays, the structure seemed to have been designed to take us to this factoid, even though its relevance to the question was marginal at best. This is a poor trade-off: the deployment of knowledge only contributes to the essay if it is relevant to the question.

The sectarianism question generally drew essays that were relevant to answering the question, but a number of students took it to demand a critique of 'primordialism' rather than explore whether any sectarian identity existed before the current conflicts in Syria and Iraq. A false contrast was created between those who see an unchanging division from the schism in the 7th Century to the present (a perspective that was readily dismissed) and those who look solely at elite manipulation during the current conflicts.

As always, the best essays didn't stick to some narrow formula for essay writing, but tackled the topic in a focused and often innovative way – aware of the arguments in the literature, but able to think independently of them. Many also put to good use specific and detailed examples of places, periods or political movements. The examiners weren't reluctant to give marks of 80+ to such essays. They would have happily given more if a greater number of students had been willing to be more adventurous in their essays.

Examiners' report 2016
34 students took this paper, and the quality was generally encouraging. Six students received average marks of 70 or more, and a further ten students received average marks of 65-69. Five students were in the 55-59 range, but no-one was below it. All the questions on the exam paper were taken by at least two students. The most popular questions were on sectarianism (q.14, 20 answers) and the politics of the Persian Gulf (q.10, 10 answers).

The best essays, as always, retained a close focus on the question while demonstrating awareness of a broad range of relevant arguments. The less successful answers, by contrast, were let down by the mismatch between the topic of the question and their actual discussion. An example of this is the question on how Israelis' and Palestinians' understandings of the past served to perpetuate the conflict (q.9). This was a difficult question, but those candidates who thought seriously about what sorts of arguments could be made for how the historical understandings of the participants informed their conflictual actions were rewarded with some of the highest marks awarded for single essays this year. By contrast, those who provided simple descriptive narratives of the modern history of the conflict without regard for what the question was asking received some of the lowest marks. A number of students answered the question as if it were asking 'to what extent do…', weighing its influence up against other factors, but the question was 'in what ways do..', which requires a different sort of answer. It has to be assumed that the two students who just wrote about how territorial ambitions perpetuate the conflict, the subject of the supervision question during the year, didn't know anything about the conflict aside from their own supervision essays, and were marked down accordingly.

This year most students demonstrated good knowledge of the range of arguments made by relevant authors. The question on the codification of the shari'ah (q.6) prompted most students who answered that question to reflect closely and carefully on the extent to which arguments from authors such as Vikor and Hallaq worked, identifying what they could be seen to have missed, and comparing their approaches. Some questions, such as this, can be usefully answered through engaging in careful critical analysis of key texts, as it leads to a nuanced answer to the exam question.

Other questions prompted essays which combined textual analysis with the deployment of detailed empirical examples. The question on the usefulness of the concept of rentierism (q.4) required an explanation of that concept, which most students taking the question were able to provide; the distinguishing factor from there was how closely the conceptual account could be made to fit with examples. In this, a pleasing number of students were able to convey substantive information accurately about a range of cases, from Algeria to Kuwait, in order to interrogate the concept.

There were two specific issues that problematised a number of essays this year. The first was that three questions specifically asked for a comparative understanding: qq.5 and 7, which asked candidates to explain the diversity of approaches to discrimination and the implementation of the idea of an Islamic state respectively; and q.14, which asked for a comparison between the reasons for sectarian polarisation in Syria and Iraq. Many students answering these questions were able to make comparisons, but a significant minority only discussed one case at length, typically Tunisia for the sub-question on gender discrimination, and Iraq for the question on sectarianism. Clearly comparison between cases is not possible if candidates only know about and discuss one case.

The second issue comes from candidates avoiding key terms in the question. The question on the effect of the 'unresolved legacies of colonialism' (q.1) does require answers that impute meaning to that term: there isn't a single answer to what those 'unresolved legacies' might be, but essays which just wrote generally on the effects of colonialism in the region were missing a trick. Similarly, those

who wrote on 'Islamic institutions' (q.8) without providing a clear understanding of what was meant by that term retained a level of ambiguity that hindered their clarity.

One pleasing aspect of this year's scripts was the extent to which students were able to relate established debates to contemporary events. An example of this was the ways in which the question on hostility across the Persian Gulf (q.10) was answered by using contending approaches to understanding Iranian foreign policy in order to discuss the Vienna deal of July 2015. The number of students who used recent examples, and did so usually well, provides encouragement to the course's aspiration that a historically and theoretically grounded approach can usefully inform our understanding of the contemporary Middle East.

Examiners' report 2015
This was the first year of the Middle East paper, and it drew a good number of students. 26 students took the exam, and a further 2 students took the paper by long essay.

In general, the quality of exam scripts and long essays was high: there were quite a few scripts demonstrating an outstanding level of understanding, and two thoroughly researched and innovative long essays. Three scripts were judged by the both examiners to fall below the 2.1 standard, but there were none below the 2.2 level.

The best scripts and long essays for this paper drew upon detailed knowledge to make their arguments, whilst recognising and evaluating critically contrasting arguments. The very best ranged across material from the different reading lists within the same essay, demonstrating independent thinking and well-structured writing intentions.

The most significant limitations were as follows. First, quite a few exam essays did not demonstrate a good understanding of key concepts in the questions (eg 'post-Islamist', 'Arab states system'): this indicates a limited extent of careful reading. Secondly, a few students adopted a strategy of giving a straightforward answer to the question in the opening section of the essay, and filling the rest of the essay with factual information to back up their starting assertion. Even if the information is entirely correct, this is an approach that cannot reach a 2.1 standard: it's not making an argument. It'd be much better to recognise different real or plausible potential answers, and evaluate between them. Thirdly, there was a surprisingly large number of basic factual inaccuracies, often quite trivial in form (such as in stating the years of particular events), but which cumulatively within the same script led to a sense of carelessness.

In general, most students showed they could combine broader thematic analysis with attention to the politics of particular places. It was good to see that the empirical material drawn upon by students ranged across the region, from detailed discussions of the place of Islam in Morocco through to engaging accounts of gender politics in Oman. There was useful attention to the particularities of politics in Iran, Turkey and Israel, alongside the more 'standard' reference points in Middle Eastern studies (Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq). It was particularly encouraging to read close, critical engagement with the two case studies of Turkey and the 'new sectarianism'. One pleasing aspect of the exam scripts was that all the questions were attempted by at least one student, and no

question received more than ten responses: one hopes that this reflects the diversity of interests and approaches that the course was intending to stimulate.

7. Other approaches to understanding Middle Eastern politics

In order to develop a more rounded understanding of Middle Eastern politics, going beyond traditional academic sources is necessary. This section provides a few suggestions of websites, literary fiction and cinema that will help fill out your thinking. Tastes and inclinations vary, and there is no claim to exhaustiveness in the lists below; they do however provide some potential starting points for those beginning to engage with these topics. Suggestions of items to add to any of these lists would always be appreciated.

a. Websites

Aside from the standard Anglo-American news sources, you may want to dip in to some of the following on-line sources:

www.merip.org
- The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) regularly produces short online articles on its website from leading scholars on contemporary problems or issues, alongside its established academic journal, *Middle East Report*. Although it doesn't try to be a systematic source of information, these interventions are worth reading for the new insights and attention they give on particular themes, usually those which are underreported. It tends to have a critical approach to Western policy in the region.

www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/
- Qatar-based al-Jazeera news has a slick English-language news website that has a level of detail in promptly reporting on Middle Eastern politics that others lack. The video and documentary content is also generally of high quality. It has though increasingly come to follow a Western news agenda that limits its distinctiveness.

www.al-monitor.com
- Al-Monitor is a news website, drawing largely upon local journalists in the Middle East to provide more detailed coverage of and commentary on contemporary stories. Quality is variable, but the range of issues and perspectives and the promptness of the reporting makes this source often particularly useful.

www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa.aspx
- The International Crisis Group (ICG) produces well-researched and often quite original reports on contemporary problem-areas. It always makes policy prescriptions, and so the style of writing isn't really appropriate for follow for this paper. Try also not to approach the region simply as an arena for various 'crises'. Nevertheless, the reports on the Middle East are usually well worth reading. The ICG takes a liberal interventionist approach to most issues.

www.project-syndicate.org/world-affairs
- Hosts commentary pieces from journalists, politicians and analysts around the world. It is not specific to the Middle East, but it has articles taken (and translated) from a fairly significant number of Middle Eastern publications.

www.arabist.net
- The consistently engaging and sometimes quite offbeat blog run by Cairo-based Issandr El Amrani.

The entries are mostly on Egyptian politics, but the blog also contains lots of helpful links to other articles on the wider politics of the region.

www.Jadaliyya.com

- This is the e-zine of the Washington-based Arab Studies Institute. At its best, it hosts engaging reflections from scholars on contemporary developments in the Arab world. At its worst, it produces turgid and posturing social theory.

www.arab-reform.net

- The Arab Reform Initiative provides policy analysis that addresses contemporary issues across the Arab region. Its research largely aims to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change and social justice.

www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia

- openDemocracy is a non-profit global media organisation with coverage from a liberal / progressive perspective. Its different projects address issues such as trafficking and slavery, freedom of information and the global economy. Its project on 'North Africa and West Asia' (the Middle East plus Afghanistan, it seems) contains in-depth contributions alongside broad coverage.

www.middleeasteye.net

- A relatively new digital news organisation, founded in 2014, that covers stories from the Middle East, as well as related content from beyond the region. It is a good venue to visit when seeking analytical perspectives on contemporary news stories.

en.eipss-eg.org

- The Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies is an independent research centre founded in Turkey in 2014. It offers solid research and in-depth analysis on a wide range of critical topics, primarily concerning Egypt, its domestic politics as well as foreign policies and relations.

english.alaraby.co.uk

- The 'New Arab', a London-based news website, presents in-depth and informative coverage of events in the Middle East and beyond. Many of its articles features a progressive discourse and counter autocratic and sectarian narratives.

b. **Literary fiction (either in English translation or originally in English)**

For those interested in the modern classics of Middle Eastern literature, attention will readily be drawn to Naguib Mahfouz' monumental *Cairo Trilogy* (1956-57), Ghassan Kanafani's story of Palestinian refugee life, *Men in the Sun* (1962), Emile Habibi's darkly comic *Secret Life of Saeed, The Pessoptimist* (1974), Amos Oz' mysterious tales of memory and disillusion in Israel, *My Michael* (1968) and *A Perfect Peace* (1982), and Elias Khoury's fractured story of Beirut during the Lebanese civil war, *Little Mountain* (1977). The list below is not of such 'classics', but of more recent and perhaps idiosyncratic works that bring out themes, debates or struggles in contemporary political life in the region.

- Hassan Blasim, *The Iraqi Christ* (2013). As a series of short – some very short – stories, this is a great starting point for thinking about how literary responses to war can inform one's understanding of politics. Some of the stories are shockingly macabre.

- Jokha al-Harthi, *Celestial Bodies* (2018). A beguiling account of an Omani family, bringing out well the disruptions, jealousies and miscomprehensions that surround the transformation of life amidst the country's new wealth over the past 50 years.

- Basma Abdel Aziz, *The Queue* (2016). A jarring but engaging account of living under the uncomprehending and often incomprehensible demands of a malign authoritarian regime. Set in a barely disguised Egypt.

- Kanan Makiya, *The Rope* (2016). A rather lightly fictionalised account of the experience of a Shi'a militiaman in Najaf, through which to tell the account of the early years of the US occupation of Iraq. Makiya uses the narrator to ventriloquise his own political views, but still the novel has its value.

- Abdo Khal, *Throwing Sparks* (2009). A powerful sustained account of living in the shadow of ruthless personalised (but also, illuminatingly, anonymous) authority, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- Orly Castel-Bloom, *Human Parts* (2002). Perhaps the most realistic of Castel-Bloom's works, it engages with how Israelis understand and respond to 'violence'. The early *Dolly City* (1992), set in a lightly fictionalised Tel Aviv, portrayed as gruesome and nihilistic, may also be of interest.

- Susan Abulhawa, *The Blue Between Sky and Water* (2015). Of the many Palestinians in exile who write stories about returning to Palestine, this is perhaps the best contemporary example: an American-born girl returning to live in the Gaza Strip with her family, and so opening up the character of the place.

- Khairy Shalaby, *The Lodging House* (2003). Set within the Egyptian urban underclass, seen through the eyes of a student drop-out, the book engages with the multiple stories and struggles that rarely capture wider attention. The later novel, *The Time-Travels of the Man who Sold Pickles and Sweets*, is uproarious funny, albeit less obviously politically relevant.

- Hanan al-Shaykh, *I Sweep the Sun off Rooftops* (1998). Perhaps the most widely read female Arab author in English, this is a diverse collection of 17 stories set around the region and in diasporas. The novels are more popular and may also be of interest.

- Elif Shafak, *The Architect's Apprentice* (2014). Although it's set in 16th Century Istanbul, and so doesn't quite match the objective of engaging you with contemporary politics, the novel brings out a resilient sense of the diversity, social divisions and self-conceptions of the Ottoman Empire, for those drawn to sweeping historical epics.

- Alaa al-Aswany, *The Yacoubian Building* (2002). One of the most highly regarded novels of recent years, it is the story of the residents of one apartment bloc in central Cairo, drawing in the many sides of the modern city.

- Halim Barakat, *The Crane* (2008). Fictionalised nostalgia for village life in mid-century Syria, coupled with reflections on later dislocation and marginalisation. Short and graceful, if rather sentimental.

c. Films

These are listed with a few suggestions per country. The films listed are not necessarily the best representatives of national cinematic traditions, but are on here because of the ways in which they link up with political themes in the course (and because subtitled versions are readily available). *This list is rather old, and suggestions for updates would be appreciated!*

Egypt: *Terrorism and Kebab* (1992) engages comically with themes of corruption, bureaucracy and inadvertent violence. *The Yacoubian Building* (2006) is a film of the book mentioned above.

Iran: *Offside* (2006) is a comic take on Iran's gender restrictions. *Secret Ballot* (2001) is an engaging and surreal if slowly-paced story of an election day that explores the ways in which different understandings of Iran's politics are brought out. *Persepolis* (2007), based on the graphic novel of Marjane Satrapi, was widely acclaimed; quite a bit of it is about life in exile, rather than Iran itself.

Palestine: *Divine Intervention* (2002) is a dark comedy set mostly in Nazareth; as a series of sketches, it works like a short story collection. *The Time that Remains* (2009), also directed by Elia Suleiman, charts an eventful life across four episodes.

Syria: *The Night* (1993), a complex epic spanning three generations of a family from the Golan Heights.

Israel: *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) revolves around an Israeli soldier's memories of the Lebanon war. *Lemon Tree* (2008) uses the struggle between two neighbours – the family of an Israeli defence minister and a Palestinian widow – to illustrate how interpersonal and political connections interact.

Turkey: *Breath* (2009) is an anti-war film about a unit of Turkish soldiers based in the southeast. *On the Way to School* (2008) is a documentary about a young Turkish teacher who struggles to communicate with his Kurdish pupils.

d. Music

Thanks to Liv Robinson (2021-22) for compiling this list

Cheikha Rimitti and Cheb Khaled – 'The Mystic Revelation of Rai' – the coming together of two stars of Rai, a popular form of Algerian folk music commonly surrounding subjects of colonial occupation and societal inequalities or issues. Rimitti, one of the first female Rai singers to perform publicly and Khaled, the best-selling Rai musician of all time.

Rachid Taha – 'Tekitoi', 'Rachid Taha Live' or 'Diwan 2' – a fantastic blend of The Clash-esq Rock and Rai by French-Algerian musician and activist Rachid Taha.

Rachid Taha, Cheb Khaled, Faudel – '123 Soleils' – Surely one of the best albums ever made, a collaboration between three Algerian and French-Algerian Rai singers, alongside a wide range of talented players. It showcases some of the best of their work, including a performance of the Algerian folk song 'Abdel Kader'. There is also a brilliant concert film of the entire event also titled '123 Soleils'.

Umm Kulthum – 'Amal Hayate - Aroh Le Men' - described as the 'fourth pyramid' of Egypt, one of the most influential singers throughout the entire Arabic world, an utterly spectacular voice accompanied by an amazing orchestra.

Youssra El Hawary – 'No'oum Nasyeen' – album rich with political satire, jazz and folk from Egyptian accordion player Youssra El Hawary.

Hasna El Becharia – 'Smaa Smaa' – a brilliant example of Gnawa, a musical style associated with groups in many north African nations, said to have originated from mystical cults amongst the descendants of slaves brought to North Africa from the South-Saharan region. Apart from singing, El Becharia is also plays guitar, oud and the Guembri on this album.

Various Artists – 'Festival au Desert' – a festival with an unbeatable line up of musicians, showcasing especially Tuareg forms of music as well as music from the wider North and West African region.

Omar Souleyman – 'Wenu Wenu' – This album takes the Dabke, a style of line-dance music popular in Syria and other Middle Eastern countries at celebrations and reworks it into an electronic style resulting in songs which almost aggressively push you to dance.

Derya Yıldırım & Grup Şimşek – 'The Trip' – a psychedelic mixture of Anatolian folk music, rock and pop music.

Nass el Ghiwane – 'Essadma' - referred to as Morocco's answer to the Rolling Stones, and one of the most famous bands in the region, the music of Nass el Ghiwane represents a wide range of blend of influences and instruments, encompassing both Sufi poetry and banjos.

Rana Farhan – 'I Return (Baz Amadam)' – a brilliant engaging album, blending jazz and blues with the classical Persian Poetry of Rumi.

Fairuz – 'Emany Satea' – known as the 'soul of Lebanon' and potentially the highest selling Middle Eastern artist of all time, the appeal of her music in spans across social divisions in Lebanon and throughout the world.

Googoosh – '40 Golden Hits of Googoosh' - one of the most popular pop singers and icons in pre-revolutionary Iran. Even after the revolution, despite a ban on performing, her influence was still felt through the wide circulation of bootlegged performances, and she continues to perform globally to this day.

Natacha Atlas – 'Best Of' – A Belgian-Egyptian singer with an otherworldly voice who brings to each album a fantastic blend of Arabic influences, hip-hop, jazz and reggae.