

SA.860 (MIDDLE EAST STUDIES)

SA.860.702. States & Societies of the Middle East and North Africa. 4 Credits.

Reviews the integration of the Middle East and North Africa in a Western-dominated world-system. Examines the effect of the legacy of imperialism on the political economy of colonized societies, focusing on the pathologies developed by post-colonial states in the Middle East and Africa. Discusses state failures, rentier-state pathologies and authoritarian states and weak states in the context of regional states and societies. Case studies include discussions of Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/resources/administrative-offices/how-access-course-syllabi-and-evaluations)

SA.860.707. The Israel-Palestine Conflict. 4 Credits.

SA.860.708. Political Leadership in the Middle East. 4 Credits.

Change in the Middle East has often been attributed to charismatic and powerful leaders, whose influence has been magnified by crisis, wars, and authoritarian traditions. This course combines biography with politics to ask whether, how, and in which circumstances, individual leaders have changed the course of modern Middle Eastern history. Special attention is paid to the interaction of leaders and mass movements, and leadership dynamics in the unfolding "Arab Spring." [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/courses/middle_east_studies.html#MES860708)

SA.860.719. Washington, Israel and the Arabs. 4 Credits.

Explores history of the Arab-Israel conflict and its evolution. Looks at the trajectory of Arab-Israeli diplomacy, its practice and history. Examines the role of outside powers, with case studies selectively chosen: the Egypt-Israel and Jordan-Israel peace treaties, the aborted Syria peace track and the Israel-Palestine process, from Madrid and Oslo to the present. Examines the role of unilateralism and impact of recent regional Arab upheaval on Israel-Palestine. Discusses the achievements and limitations of diplomatic settlements with implications for the future. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.726. U.S. Foreign Policy and Relations with the Arab World. 4 Credits.

Arab commentators have called the United States both a liberator and an imperialist power in the Middle East – its values and freedoms coveted and demonized, its culture admired and reviled, its government blamed for failed revolutions and successful ones – a schizophrenic relationship at worst – an intimate source of opposition and inspiration at best. As ISIS attempts to capture the Middle East, a refugee crisis grows, and democratic hopes hang on by a thread, the U.S. witnesses a burgeoning generation of young Arab rights activists, especially women, willing to risk their lives for freedom and social equality. But what consequences can truly be attributed to U.S. interventions, or lack thereof, and what kind of outcomes are to be expected? This course will explore U.S.-Arab relations through the history and culture of the modern Middle East - from the Imperial and Cold War eras to the Six Day War to the Arab uprisings, with visiting U.S. ambassadors to discuss current events. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.727. Europe and the Middle East. 4 Credits.

This course aims to study the multifaceted and complex relationship between Europe/the European Union and the states of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Starting with the history of European colonialism in the Middle East, the course will examine the post-colonial policies of single European states towards the region, together with the declarations, policies and practices of the European Community, and later European Union, from the 1970s onwards. Suggesting a widely overlooked degree of interconnectedness between Europe and the Middle East, special attention will be paid to Europe-Middle East relations in the realms of trade, migration and border control, security cooperation and democracy promotion. The conceptualisation of the policies of the EU and of single MENA states, together with questions pertaining to power relations, interdependence and leverage in Europe-Middle East relations will also be discussed

SA.860.728. International Politics in the Middle East. 2 Credits.

This course will focus on a number of concepts and key issues in international relations in the specific context of the Middle East. While being attentive to the historical dimension of the international relations of the Middle East and the foreign policies of external powers towards the region, issues to be examined on the basis of concrete case studies in (or from) the Middle East include borders and regional order, interests and identity politics, conflicts and wars, terrorism and political violence, the prominent "clash of civilizations" thesis, the conundrum of political reforms, and the issue of energy resources. Students are expected to produce and present research papers on specific case studies pertaining to the international relations of the Middle East, which will be discussed in class. A prerequisite for this course is a sound background in International Relations theory and a good background in Middle East history and politics. Please note that this is a two-credit course, which can be taken as an extra two-credit course, or coupled with another two-credit course in DC.

SA.860.730. Great Powers of the Middle East and North Africa. 4 Credits.

How have Great Powers shaped the history and politics of states in the Middle East and North Africa? For over a century, Great Powers have been extensively involved in the region: they established colonies, protectorates, and mandates during colonial period; afterward, they employed military force to constrain and shape regimes. Focusing primarily on Great Britain, France, and the United States, this course examines the causes and consequences of foreign military intervention from colonial conquest through the post-colonial period. Students will critically assess claims that link Great Power actions to current-day conditions in the region through evaluating contemporary scholarship and analyzing the history of selected cases. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.735. History and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa. 4 Credits.

The course aims at introducing students to the history, politics and 'trans-Mediterranean relations' of North Africa and the Mediterranean Middle East (MENA). Starting with the exploration of the emergence of the modern state system in the region, the course will examine the post-colonial politics of the MENA countries. In this context, a number of key issues will be addressed, such as state-society relations, authoritarianism and reform, the role of the military, regional dynamics, conflicts, the strategic importance of the region, political Islam, and democracy and human rights. Particular attention will be paid to the relations of the MENA states to their European neighbour(s), including to the European Union as a whole, in the realms of trade, migration, and democracy promotion. The course will conclude with a discussion of the recent Arab uprisings and their implications for the politics and international relations of the MENA region.

SA.860.753. Media Wars. 4 Credits.

Is social media making our politics more extreme? How does the circulation of "fake news" differ from propaganda efforts of the pre-digital age? Does it affect our politics in the long-term? How are states using media today not only to inform their own citizens, but as a weapon in larger geo-political contests? Are algorithms racists, and what does that say about the future we are building? This course will take a critical look at the production, circulation, and consumption of media in the contemporary world. We'll particularly focus on the development of technology, surveillance, cyberwar, militarized media, social movements, and the social life of algorithms. We will explore cases through the Americas, Europe, Middle East, and Africa. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.755. The Iranian Revolution at 40. 4 Credits.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 marked a watershed moment in world politics. Coined "the last great revolution," the mass movements of the late 1970s led to the toppling of the U.S.' greatest ally in the region, Mohammad Reza Shah, and the birth of the first modern Islamic Republic. In essence, the events of 1979 in Iran shifted the global geo-political terrain, which have had profound repercussions to this day. In this course, we will consider the factors that led to the Revolution and study how the political struggles after the fall of the Shah played out. We will delve into the dynamic political formations of the Islamic Republic and the emergence of the regime's political economy in both the war and post-war years. We will study the impact of the Iran-Iraq war on Iranian domestic and foreign relations and will read and discuss the suppression of opposition groups in the 1980s, looking at how oppositional politics reemerged from the prisons after the ceasefire with Iraq in 1988. We will cover the women's movement, the labor movement, the teacher's movement, and the student movement, in an effort to more fully understand state-society relations in contemporary Iran. Along this vein, we will carefully examine social developments in urban and non-urban centers of the country. Throughout the course, we focus on how the Iranian Revolution has been framed in the past four decades, especially in the west, and what this framing either elucidates or obfuscates in regards to politics, social organization, citizenship, identity, nationalism, and religion. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.761. Energy Markets in the Middle East and Central Asia. 4 Credits.

The course covers in details the energy markets of the major producers of natural gas and oil in the Arab-Persian Gulf [Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, UAE, etc.] and in the Central Asian states [Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, etc.]. The class will also discuss the strategic implications of the rise of the Far Eastern consumers as well as the decline of demand from the Western countries. The class is taught by two instructors with long experience in the energy markets and politics of these regions. The instructors will engage the students extensively and will cap the course with a simulation of a International Energy Forum meeting of consumers and producers. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.765. The Politics of Disaster in the Middle East and Beyond. 4 Credits.

This course examines the politics of natural and man-made disasters, including war, forced migration, drought, famine, earthquakes, tsunamis, storms, and epidemics. Focusing on the Middle East, it also presents comparative cases from Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and North America. In doing so, the class will examine the unique ways that different types of disasters interact with governance structures; social and economic inequalities; medical infrastructure; gender; race and ethnicity; and political cleavages. Throughout the course, students will learn basic elements of research design and methods in addition to welcoming experienced disaster response and analysis practitioners to class. Finally, the Politics of Disaster in the Middle East and Beyond addresses some of the philosophical aspects of working in and studying disaster-affected contexts, bringing an ethical sensibility to policy-relevant analysis. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.774. Twin Pillars Of The Gulf. 4 Credits.**SA.860.775. Ethnographic Research Methods. 4 Credits.**

This course teaches students how to do field research. We will explore various field methods, including participant-observation, formal and informal interviews, network mapping, and ethnographic photography and video. In addition to weekly readings, students will immerse themselves in the actual doing of fieldwork by carrying out a mini field project during the semester in DC. Examples of field sites students can explore for their projects can include: courts, community organizations, religious institutions, activist networks, newsrooms, political institutions. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.779. Military Organizations in the Middle East and North Africa. 4 Credits.

This course familiarizes students with politics, economics, strategies, and cultures of military organizations in the MENA region. Each week has a thematic and a geographic focus. Students will be asked to evaluate theories of military behavior through deep readings of individual or paired cases. Topics include military cohesion and fragmentation, coup proofing, political economy, and state-building, gender based and sexual violence, military discipline, civilian targeting, militias, and rebel governance. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.860.782[C]

SA.860.780. Political Violence. 2 Credits.

This class will function predominantly as a discussion seminar that uses the case of the Lebanese Civil War to examine the causes, duration, and dynamics of civil war as well as the debates surrounding foreign intervention and peacebuilding. Themes include: ethnic violence; economic explanations for civil war; civilian targeting; intra-rebellion dynamics; sexual and gender-based violence; election violence; occupation; peacekeeping; and the Responsibility to Protect. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.781. States, Revolutionaries & Terrorism. 4 Credits.

Looks at the evolution of terrorism as a tool of political expression and conquest of power. Surveys doctrines and actions of anarchists, Russian Nihilists, Social Revolutionaries, as well as nationalists and fascist movements. Reviews Leninist and Maoist models of political subversion and their avatars in the national liberation movements and urban guerillas of the 1960s and 1970s. Draws on cases from the Middle East and North Africa, including Irgun, Lehi, EOKA, FLN, Fatah, PFLP, ANO and ASALA. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.782. Military Organizations in the Middle East and North Africa. 2 Credits.

This course will examine the diverse roles state and non-state military organizations play in MENA politics, economics, and society. Each week will use an organizational case study as a window into core themes such as military involvement in state economies, militia politics, or combatant discipline in war. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.783. The Middle East, Emerging Markets, and Global Transformation. 2 Credits.

Amid a global transformation driven by the rise of emerging markets, rapid urbanization, unprecedented technological and physical connectivity, and growing global middle classes, where does the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region fit into these powerful drivers of the future? This course will “locate” several MENA countries, cities, and companies in the broader emerging markets debate, with a particular emphasis on the leading private sector companies and business leaders shaping the region, as well as the region’s inter-connectivity with Asia and Africa. The course will urge students to “disrupt” traditional geo-political paradigmatic thinking in favor of a more geo-commercial look at the region. The course will also take a deep dive into the hub city of Dubai as an emerging “Hong Kong of South Asia”, and “Miami of Africa”, and explore the role of hub cities more broadly. Course lectures and guest speakers will focus on high growth, consumer-facing sectors in the region, including aviation, telecommunications, media, retail, food, banking and technology start-ups. Students will emerge from the course with a broad understanding of the geo-commercial “location” of the MENA region globally and a familiarity with the leading commercial enterprises and actors. Guest speakers will be senior practitioners from the private and public sectors with broad regional experience, as well as entrepreneurs and thought leaders. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.784. Behavioral Sociology of Conflict. 4 Credits.

This course combines approached from social psychology and social history to examine stratification and conflict within and between groups. Challenging the assumption of rationality in human behavior, it explores the role of drives, cognitive biases, culture, religion, beliefs and identity systems in social phenomena. After a theoretical overview, it looks specifically at the evolution of identity systems and the manifestation of identity-based conflict during the period of modernization and globalization, and explains xenophobic responses to the emergence of a global, modern identity. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.790. Powers of the Middle East: The Gulf States. 2 Credits.

This course attempts to provide students with an understanding of the socio-political structures of the smaller Arab States of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE and Oman. These states have much in common, in terms of political systems and economic base, but with very important idiosyncratic natures, which may explain the relationship they have with each other, their powerful neighbor-Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the world. All of these states are very dependent on foreign labor and hydrocarbon resources and deal with their dependency in different manners. Some, like Bahrain, are already seeing a decline in their resources and all of them are striving to establish post-oil/gas economies. The class will discuss in detail the particularities of each of the countries. It will seek to explain how the differences in culture and society mold their different approach to international affairs and to their economic development. The class will also discuss the prospects of these states in light of the great tensions between each other and with their large neighbors, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. It will also look at the role of these states in the strategic interests of the US, China and Russia, as well as of those of other strong economies like the EU, Japan and Korea. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.791. Powers of the Middle East: Iran. 2 Credits.

More than three decades have passed since a mass political movement toppled Iran’s monarchy and scuttled a set of assumptions about religion, modernity, and political development. The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran dramatically transformed the nation’s internal politics, economy, and society, and its impact echoed well beyond Iran’s borders to reconfigure the geostrategic balance in the Middle East. Over the course of the next 33 years, Iran’s revolutionary theocracy has been at the center of what former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has described as “the arc of crisis” that spans North Africa to South Asia. As the heavyweight power in a crucial region, with unique religious and cultural sway, situated at the crux of global energy resources and transportation routes, Iran would inevitably rank high on the American security agenda irrespective of its leadership. That importance is magnified by the persistence of antagonism between Tehran and Washington as well as by the Islamic Republic’s contentious role in the region. Once again, Iran once again finds itself in history’s spotlight, thanks to negotiations over Tehran’s nuclear ambitions that have yielded the first sign of diplomatic progress in a decade-long impasse. What happens next in Iran’s always compelling narrative will have dramatic repercussions not only for its 70 million citizens, but for its neighbors, the world economy, and American interests in the Middle East. This course is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding the forces shaping Iran’s domestic political evolution and its international relations. The course will examine six key critical junctures in post-revolutionary Iranian history, integrating a discussion of political dynamics, economic forces, and international policies and challenges. Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios

SA.860.792. Powers of the Middle East: Egypt, From Revolution to Revolution. 2 Credits.

The course will survey political and economic developments in Egypt from 1952 to the aftermath of the 2011 revolution. The new chapter in Egyptian history that opened on the 23rd of July 1952, when a group of military officers overthrew the monarchy, saw not only political change but changes in economic structures and policies, the social order, and Egypt's foreign policy. From 1952, Egypt witnessed several reversals of policies as well as continuations of structures under its successive presidents Nasser, Sadat, Mubarak, Morsi and finally Sisi. This course will delve into these changes looking at the basis of the political order, its mode of political organization, economic outlook, social and foreign policies with a focus on both the common themes running through these different regimes as well as their divergences. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.793. Islam and Politics: Religion and Power in World Affairs. 2 Credits.

Islamic ideas and actors play an important part in global politics today. Their impact on political change, international security, and economic and social trends has shaped international relations in recent years. The rise of Islamist activism has been central to this development. This course will examine the role that Islamism plays in politics in Muslim countries; trace the origins and development of its formative ideas; introduce the key forces that represent it; and analyze its development and conception of politics and international relations. The Course will introduce the foundational ideas of Islamism, examine the life and works of key thinkers and leaders, and trace the development of leading movements and ideological trends in the context of political and international developments of the past three decades. It will trace the evolution of Islamist thinking from the colonial era through periods of state formation to current debates over future of the Muslim world. The course will discuss continuity and change in Islamist thinking, and the different paths the Islamist discourse has evolved along. The course will rely on theoretical literature and analyses of Islamist movements along with examination of case studies of relations between states and Islamic movements to provide students with both intimate knowledge of the subject and a framework of analysis for understanding Islamic activism in the context of comparative politics and global affairs. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.795. Arab Political Thought in the Age of Modernity. 2 Credits.

For centuries, the Arab world had been isolated from political and economic developments in Europe and reassured of the worldly successes of Islam by Ottoman victories. Modernity visited the Arab world at the hands of a young French officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, with dreams of building an Empire in the East. This first shock was followed by growing Western military and economic presence in the Middle East, and shook the foundations of the Arabs' political order. For the Arab world, the crisis of modernity had a dual manifestation: the discovery of European technological, material and military superiority, and at the same time the challenge to the very foundations of the political order in the world of Islam, as a result of modernization efforts by rulers and foreign occupiers. The gap grew between the Islamic worldview and concepts of politics, law, economics and the reality in which Muslims lived. This course will look at Arab responses to the crisis of modernity from attempts by rulers to modernize their countries and their militaries, the calls for religious and political reform by intellectuals, the birth of the question of nationalism, the rise and fall of Arab nationalism and the Islamist response. Readings will examine the underlying themes related to the view and relationship with the West, attempts at modernization, and definitions of identity and nationalism. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)
Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.860.718[C]

SA.860.796. The New Turkey (2-credit). 2 Credits.

[Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)
Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.710.740[C]

SA.860.797. Powers of the Middle East: Saudi Arabia. 2 Credits.

This course attempts to provide students with a good understanding of the socio-political structures of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been remarkable for its political stability in the past 80 years. It has weathered the cold war, the Arab Spring and numerous economic world crisis. On the other hand, it is presently faced with a daunting environment. The country is incurring large budget deficits due to the low oil prices of the past 3 years. It is de facto at war with Iran through proxies in Syria and Yemen, even to a lesser instance in Iraq. It is party to a major dispute with Qatar, one of its most stable neighbors. It is also faced with the coming of age of a large population of young people, who want to take over the reins of the economy and political power. The course will try to address in some detail the current political transition and the structure of the economy and will seek to obtain the students' views on the risks and potential of the challenges presently faced by Saudi Arabia. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.798. Energy, Business & Politics in the Arab Gulf. 4 Credits.

The course will focus on the Arab States of the Arab/Persian Gulf. It will study the oil and gas industry there, how it funds the States and how the money is funneled on to the societal actors to maintain political stability. It will evaluate the modernization and development plans put forth by the leaderships of the Gulf, such as Vision 2030 in Saudi Arabia. The class will analyze the rift between Qatar and the other members of the GCC. It will also discuss the issues related to the massive reliance on imported labor in the entire region. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)
Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.860.761[C] OR SA.860.790[C]

SA.860.799. Autocracy & Contentious Politics. 2 Credits.

Authoritarian regimes wield a variety of tools to suppress dissent and maintain compliance. Yet resistance, including institutional challenges, peaceful protest, and violent rebellion, occurs periodically within most autocratic regimes. This course examines conflict between states and societal actors, raising a number of questions: how do regimes seek to maintain order? What conditions facilitate popular protest? What triggers violent rebellion? How do identities such as gender, religion, and region affect contentious politics? Course readings will include studies of North Africa before, during, and after the Arab Spring, providing a regional context in which to examine these questions. Students will also have the opportunity to investigate other cases in readings and assignments. [Click here to see evaluations, syllabi, and faculty bios](http://bit.ly/1bebp5s)

SA.860.817. Current Issues of the Middle East: Israel and the Arabs. 2 Credits.

Prerequisite(s): Students may not register for this class if they have already received credit for SA.860.719[C]