

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: State and Society in the Middle East

Course Number and Section

POLISCI

3397G 550

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the political, social, and economic institutions of the modern Middle East. We will examine key themes such as political systems (i.e., regime-types), social and political systems, economic structures, and state-society relations. We will also assess the role of key actors such as governments, non-governmental groups, and individual citizens. In this sense, the course will provide a comparative approach to the domestic and regional politics of the Middle East. We will begin by outlining general approaches and challenges to understanding the region so that we have the tools to ask relevant questions such as: What explains the persistence of authoritarianism in the region? Why did the Arab Spring produce mass protests (and changes) in some countries, but not others? How does religion influence and shape government and society in the countries of the Middle East? These questions will be explored in weekly seminars by surveying the political, social, and economic institutions of various countries in the region.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Identify and understand the geographical and historical place of the modern Middle East;

Demonstrate knowledge of the political, social, and economic institutions of countries in the Middle East;

Develop an understanding of the relationship between religion and politics and how these two ideas impact society in the Middle East;

Ask questions and evaluate possible solutions by using core concepts, theories, and methods related to studying the politics of the Middle East;

Synthesize and evaluate information from scholarly literature and engage with the ideas and arguments from the literature;

Develop the ability to critically assess ideas and information and to clearly communicate your knowledge in written and oral form; and

Improve organizational, time management, research, and analytical skills through independent and group work.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

The required readings (articles and book chapters) will be made available on the course website through OWL.

There is no cost for any of the learning material used for this course.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance and Participation	Ongoing	25
Presentation	TBD	15
Map Quiz	01/30/2026	5
Simulation	02/13/2026	15
Research Paper I	03/06/2026	20
Research Paper II	04/03/2026	20

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Huron Brief Course Outline

For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook's publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].