

**Course title:** The Arab World today: tradition and diversity

**Language of instruction:** English

**Professor:** Albert Garrido

**Professor's contact and office hours:** albert.garrido@upf.edu

**Course contact hours:** 45

**Recommended credit:** 6 ECTS credits

**Course prerequisites:** There are no pre-requisites for the course.

**Language requirements:** Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent: Cambridge Certificate).

**Course focus and approach:** The course is developed as an overview of the Arab world in the present from four essential factors: states and politics, tradition and influence of religion, social structure and heritage and cultural development.

**Course description:** The course is an approach to the reality of the Arab world, a human space very diversified that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf with about 450 million inhabitants, often distorted by topics and prejudices. The approach is carried out in three directions: politics, new social actors and the Arab world relationship with the western world (with a historical overview). Special emphasis is placed on the role played by young people, on the situation of women and on the permanent tension between tradition and modernity. Finally, the objective is to establish what image the Arab world projects towards the outside and what perception has the West of the Arab world.

**Learning objectives:**

Provide updated information about the Arab world.

Explain sociocultural diversity in the Arab world, often presented as a monolithic block.

Provide students with elements of analysis.

At the end of the course, students should be able to interpret what is happening in the Arab world in its essential features.

**Course workload:** Presentation in class by teams of two of a topic chosen from a list that will be announced on the third day of the course (10-15 minutes). The formation of the teams will be carried out by the students without the intervention of the professor.

Essay (600 words) about a topic of free choice. It must be delivered in print at the day of the final exam.

Midterm exam on October 26.

Final exam on November 30.

**Teaching methodology:**

All classes are structured in three blocks:

A presentation (team of two) about a monographic subject.

A debate of the presentation's subject.

A theoretical part about a program's epigraph with a PowerPoint and audiovisual material.

**Assessment criteria:**

Presentation	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Essay	20%
Final exam	25%
Participation	10%

**Contingency plan for streaming**

For a student in preventive isolation:

If a student has the presentation pending, he/she must write a summary of it (400-500 words) and send it to me by email. The grade will be equal to 20% of the final grade, just like the presentation.

If a student cannot attend the midterm exam, he/she will receive by email the questions at the time set for the start, and must send the answers at the time set for the end. The system will be the same if a student cannot attend the final exam, with the addition that together with the answers he/she must send the essay. The value of the marks for the final grade will be the same as for students who take the exam in person: 25% and 25%, respectively.

If a student's absence is prolonged in excess, 10% of class participation will be distributed among the other sections that give the final grade according the following scheme:

Presentation or resume	20%
Midterm exam	30%
Essay	20%
Final exam	30%

**Contingency plan for online classes**

When changing from classroom sessions to online classes, pending presentations will be made up of summaries of the assigned topics (400/500 words) that must be sent to me by email on the date established for each presentation. The value of the grade of these summaries in the final grade will be the same as that of the presentations.

If the midterm exam or the final exam cannot be done in classroom, the students will receive the questions by email at the time set for the start of the exam and they must send me the answers at the time set to finish the exam. On the day of the final exam, they will send me also the essay.

If it is possible, the online classes will begin with a video on a current topic that should provoke a debate among the students.

The assessment criteria will be as follows:

Presentation or resume	20%
Midterm exam	25%
Essay	20%
Final exam	25%
Participation or debate	10%

### BaPIS absence policy

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy **does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences**. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Only absences for medical reasons will be considered justified absences. The student is deemed responsible to provide the necessary documentation. Other emergency situations will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the BaPIS.

3

The Instructor, the Academic Director and the Study Abroad Office should be informed by email without any delay.

#### Classroom norms:

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one hour session.

#### Weekly schedule:

##### Week 1. First day:

Course description:

Syllabus, assessment (final grade calculation) and readings

General scheme and sources

##### Introduction and general ideas.

Who is Arab?

Arab and Muslim

The Arab world, a political and cultural space

##### Second day: Arabs in the contemporary history.

From the colonialism to the independences

From the national heroes to the autocracies

The model state-business and kleptocracy

From the Arab Spring to now  
The Iraqi scenario, a special case  
The case of Western Sahara

**Week 2. The idea of state in the Arab world.**

The traditional ideas of political power: tribe, caliphate, emirate  
Ibn Khaldoun's heritage  
Legitimacy and power  
Power and authority  
Republic vs. monarchy after decolonization  
Religious and political community: umma and panarabism

**Week 3. Arab women's status: a permanent debate**

Private and public role  
Autonomy and identity in the public space  
Body's policies: public dress, polygamy, divorce and abortion  
Western feminism, Arab feminism or Muslim feminism?  
From Simone de Beauvoir to Fatima Mernissi  
Women after the Arab Springs  
The cases of Tunisia and Algeria  
Urban women and rural women  
Family codes

**Week 4. A war of images.**

Historical heritage of the Arabs in Europe: Spain and Portugal  
Arab roots in the Spanish language  
How does the West see the Arab world?  
How does the Arab world see the West?  
Edward W. Said's orientalism theory  
Samuel P. Huntington's clash of civilizations theory  
Sami Nair's interculturalism, pluriculturalism and co-development theories

**Week 5. Religion, culture and tradition.**

What is the Islam? Origin, branches and influence  
Islamism, salafism and jihadism  
Spontaneous ideology and ideological program  
Cultural hegemony  
Religion in the public space vs. religion as a private option  
Tension between tradition and modernity  
Minority reformist currents  
Christian world vs. the Muslim world and vice versa: a historical conflict  
Public opinion construction: Walter Lippmann's schema and Zigmunt Bauman's schema  
The jihadism ideology is a new religion?  
Muslim glossary

**Week 6. Al Qaeda and ISIS.**

Classical theories about de holy war (jihad)  
The Quran and the jihad

Wahabism's legacy and Deobandi's legacy  
 Two models for the global terrorism: the culture of a permanent war  
 Al Qaeda: an organization without territory  
 Rise and fall of Islamic State: territory and caliphate  
 Islamic State as an organization for the mobilization of Muslim minorities around the world  
 The second life of ISIS: the organization reborn in Afghanistan

### **Week 7. Religion, terrorism and migrants flow.**

The Arab world seen as a problem for the international security  
 From the wealth of oil lords to the extreme poverty  
 Western countries seen as a permanent guardianship on the Arab world  
 Birth of new Arab-Muslim societies in the European states  
 Tension between the European secular tradition and the Arab tradition  
 Is miscegenation possible as a solution to get out of the crisis?  
 Are all migrants the same?

### **8. Arab world and international relationships.**

Arab League and Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf  
 OPEC  
 The effect of the war in Ukraine on the oil and gas markets  
 Wars in Syria: Russia in the Middle East  
 War in Yemen: Saudi Arabia as hegemonic power in the Arab world  
 No peace no war in Libya  
 Lebanon, a failed state: the clash of cultures  
 Alliance system with United States and European Union  
 Strong states and weak states

### **9. Israel, Palestine and the Arab states.**

The home of war  
 The solution of two states: peace for territories  
 Jerusalem: the God's city in the crisis core  
 United States and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis  
 The momentum in the peace process  
 Is possible the apartheid's new version in the Palestinian territories?

### **10. Fiction and facts about the Arab world.**

From the flying carpet to the present  
 Preconceived ideas and inherited ideas  
 The Arabs as rescuers of the Greco-Latin classical culture  
 Why did the classical period not continue?  
 A different path from the West: a double way  
 What is the voice of the Arab world? Who speaks on its behalf?  
 The Arab world and the global society: a work in progress

**Last revision: May 2022.**

**Required readings:**

Nidell, Margaret K. 2018. 'Understanding Arabs: A Guide for Modern Times'. Boston: Intercultural Press.

**Recommended bibliography:**

Armstrong, Karen. 2000. 'Islam'. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Fisk, Robert and others. 2015. 'Arab Spring Then and Now: From Hope to Despair'. London: The Independent.

Hourari, Albert. 1991. 'A History of the Arab Peoples'. New York: Warner Books Edition.

Lister, Charles R. 2015. 'The Islamic State. A Brief Introduction'. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Pollack, Kenneth M. 'Fight or Flight: America's Choice in the Middle East'.  
(<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/02/16-americas-choice-in-middle-east-pollack>)

Said, Edward W. Multiple editions since 1978. 'Orientalism'. New York: Random House.

Zoepf, Katherine. 2016. 'Excellent Daughters: The Secret Lives of Young Women Who Are Transforming the Arab World'. New York: Penguin Press.