Course title: The Mediterranean and the Middle East: Politics and International Relations

Language of instruction: English

Professors: Lurdes Vidal (lvidal@iemed.org)  
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Eduard Soler i Lecha (esoler@cidob.org)

Professor’s contact and office hours: Offices 40.225
Course contact hours: To be arranged with the instructors
Recommended credit: 3 US credits-6 ECTS credits
Course prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course
Language requirements: None

Course focus and approach: The course offers multidisciplinary approach to the study of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, focusing on its politics and international relations. From Political Science, International Relations, Area Studies, History and Sociology disciplines, the course analyses contemporary political structures and dynamics in the region, at domestic, regional and international levels.

Course description: The course is divided in two sections. The first one introduces the students to domestic sociopolitical realities of the region. This section presents the geography of the Mediterranean and the Middle East region; Islamic and contemporary history; political regimes in place in the region; Political Islam; and cultural trends in the 21st Century. The second section explores the international relations of the Mediterranean and the Middle East by focusing on what International Relations Theory has said about the region, on the regional order and subregional orders (in the Maghreb and the Gulf), on contemporary conflicts in the area (the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Gulf Wars, the war in Syria…), on geopolitics of energy and, finally, on the impact and role of foreign actors over the politics of the region (namely, the United States and the European Union).

Learning objectives: The course has two main objectives. First, it aims at introducing students to the sociopolitical reality of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. It does so by systematically and critically examining the contemporary history, politics, society, religion and international relations of the region. Secondly, the course will provide the students with specific analytical tools -mainly from Political Science and International Relations disciplines- which will aid them in properly analyzing sociopolitical realities beyond the ones covered by the course.

Course workload: The course will entail attendance to a series of lectures and seminars, as well as some in-class short activities related to readings and assignments proposed by the instructors.
Teaching methodology: The course comprises twenty-four sessions and two seminars. The teaching of the course would combine traditional lectures, several in-class short activities (primary sources analysis, discussions, etc.), and a series of seminars aimed at deepening in certain topics while helping students to develop their abilities and skills.

Assessment criteria: Students will be assessed through different items: a series of practical seminars requiring oral and written tasks (30%)—for further details check the Seminars’ Guide-, class participation (20%), and a final research paper (50%). The topic of the paper will be chosen with the assistance of the professor, and it will range between 4,500-5,000 words. Further indications will be given by the instructors at the beginning of the course.

Written and oral assignments at practical seminars: 30%
Final research paper: 50%
Class participation: 20%

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Penalization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Up to two (2) absences</td>
<td>No penalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three (3) absences</td>
<td>1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four (4) absences</td>
<td>2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10 point scale)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five (5) absences or more</td>
<td>The student receives an INCOMPLETE (“NO PRESENTAT”) for the course</td>
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The PEHE/HESP attendance policy does not distinguish between justified or unjustified absences. The student is deemed responsible to manage his/her absences.

Emergency situations (hospitalization, family emergency...) will be analyzed on a case by case basis by the Academic Director of the HESP.

Classroom norms:

- No food or drink is permitted in class
- No mobile phones or other electronic devices are permitted in class with the only exception of laptops (only when used for class purposes)
- Students will have a ten-minute break after the first hour of each session
Weekly schedule

INITIAL SESSION: INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
(Date: Tu, Jan. 10th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)
Presentation of the course syllabus, methods, requirements, assessment criteria, and readings.  
The definitions and the limits of the Arab World, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Basic introduction to the religious and ethnic diversity of this region and to different definitions of regional order.

Required readings for class discussion:
  The Middle East, Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 1-71.

WEEK 1: HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD: RELIGION, SOCIETY AND POLITICS  
(Date: Thu, Jan. 12th & Tu, Jan. 17th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h) 
The fundamentals of Islam: origins, geography and doctrinal divisions. The history of Islam, Islamic thought and law. Political dynamics in Islamic history: from the early days to the Ottoman Empire. The principles of Islamic polity: Islam as a religious principle or as a basis for power and legitimacy. Tension between political unity and fragmentation.

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 2: CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
(Date: Thu, Jan. 19th & Tu, Jan. 24th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h) 
An overview of the impact of enlightenment and colonialism, the decline and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of nationalism and the search for ideology. The origins of contemporary Middle Eastern and Mediterranean states and the emergence of a post-colonial state model. The impact of the creation of Israel and the link between internal and external dynamics.

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 3: POLITICAL REGIMES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
(Date: Thu, Jan. 26th & Tu, Jan. 31st; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)
Is there a democracy deficit in the Mediterranean and the Middle East? Is the robustness of authoritarianism a peculiarity of Arab political regimes? Why is authoritarianism so resilient in this region? Which kind of political regimes and why some are politically more open than others? Does partial liberalization result into democratic transitions?

Required readings for class discussion:

**WEEK 4: POLITICAL ISLAM: INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS, EVOLUTION AND CONTEMPORARY GROUPS**  
(Date: Thu, Feb. 2nd & Tu, Feb. 7th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)
Which are the intellectual origins of political Islam? Which are the political goals of these movements? How has political Islam evolved over and adapt to different national contexts and different regime strategies? Which kind of Islamist groups exist? Dilemmas over political Islam and democracy. Is there a real post-Islamist approach towards society and politics? Islam, Modernity, Globalisation and Transnational Islam.

Required readings for class discussion:

**WEEK 5: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRENDS IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN THE REGION**  
(Date: Thu, Feb. 9th & Tu, Feb. 14th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)
Are there shared economic and social challenges in the Mediterranean and the Middle East? Which are the main deficits in terms of human development? The issue of gender in analyzing the region. Ethnicity and minorities: the question of identity. *Al Jeel*: generational cleavages in the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Required readings for class discussion:
WEEK 6: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND THE MENA REGION  
(Date: Thu, Feb. 16th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)  

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 7: REGIONAL ORDER AND SUBORDERS: THE MAGHREB AND THE GULF  
(Date: Tu, Feb. 21st & Thu, Feb. 23rd; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)  
Features of the regional order: primary institutions and secondary institutions. Alliances and regionalism in the Middle East. The role of superpowers and regional powers in fostering the regional order. The concept of sub-regional order. Actors and dynamics in the Maghreb sub-regional order. Actors and dynamics in the Gulf sub-regional order.

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 8: CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS IN THE REGION  
(Date: Tu, Feb. 28th & Thu, Mar. 2nd; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)  

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 9: GEOPOLITICS OF ENERGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST
(Date: Tu, Mar. 7th & Thu, Mar. 9th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)
The impact of energy in the consolidation of the state system in the Middle East. Rentier states and their foreign policy. Oil and gas and the international relations of the region. The OPEC as a foreign policy instrument. Energy and conflicts in the region.

Required readings for class discussion:

WEEK 10: FOREIGN ACTORS AND THE REGION
(Date: Tu, Mar. 14th & Thu, Mar. 16th; Time: 17:30h-19:30h)

Required readings for class discussion:

Last revision: June 2016
Required readings: Course reading pack prepared by the instructors.


Recommended bibliography:


BURGAT, François (2003), Face to face to political islam, London : IB Tauris


CHARFI, Mohamed (2001), Islam y Libertad. El malentendido histórico, Granada: Almed

CHERIF-FERJANI, Mohamed (2005), Le politique et le religieux dans le champ islamique, Paris: Fayard.


FLORY, Maurice; KORANY, Bahgat; MANTRAN, Robert; CAMAU, Michel; AGATE, Pierre (1990), Les régimes politiques arabes, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.


KHALIDI, R. (2004), Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America’s Perilous Path in the Middle East, Boston: Beacon Press.
KHALIDI, R. (2009), Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East, Boston: Beacon Press.


MARTÍN MUÑOZ, Gema (1999), El Estado Árabe, crisis de legitimidad y contestación islamista, Barcelona: Bellaterra.


RICHARD, Alan et al. (2013), A political economy of the Middle East, Westview Press.


ROY, Olivier (1998), The Failure of Political Islam, Harvard University Press.


ZUBAIDA, Sami (2009), Islam, the People and the State: Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East, London: I.B. Tauris.