The Political Economy of the Middle East & North Africa
ECO-726-01
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
524 W 59th St, New York, NY 10019
Fall 2021

Instructor: Dr. Corinna Mullin
Days & Times: Tuesday 6-8:00 pm
Location: New Bldg 1.92
Office Hours: Tuesdays 5-6:pm and by appointment
Email: cmullin@jjay.cuny.edu

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the political economy of the Middle East and North Africa in the 20th and 21st centuries. The course is divided into three units: approaches, historical foundations, and critical themes. The first unit begins by critically assessing some of the underlying assumptions that traditionally frame the study of the region, positing political economy as an alternative to both orientalist as well as post-modern approaches. The second unit includes a discussion of the colonial era and the region’s unequal incorporation into the global capitalist economy through debt, unequal trade as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control. Although the class will also consider pre-colonial economic dynamics, it will focus more specifically on the legacies of colonialism in shaping state institutions, class formation as well as direct colonial control.

Though the syllabus is structured around themes, the course will enable students to develop their empirical knowledge by focusing in on case studies from several Middle Eastern and North African states. The course also supports students to cultivate the methodological and theoretical skills necessary to critically assess and analyze information pertaining to the region. Through critical reading, lectures, informed discussions, as well as in the writing of reading reflections and essays, students are encouraged to develop both their understanding of the major trends in the political economy of the Middle Eastern and North Africa and their skills of political analysis more generally.

On completion of the course students will have a broad understanding of the political economy of the region as well as the ability to analyze and critically process new information on the region.
Students will also have developed their capacity to construct reasoned arguments and to communicate their ideas coherently, both orally and in writing.

Course Learning Objectives:

Through discussion and assignments, you will be encouraged to make connections between the theories and concepts discussed in class and current political economy themes relevant to the Middle East and North Africa.

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate ability to critically reflect upon the relationship between knowledge and power in how the “Middle East” is represented as geographic and political-economic space in the U.S./Europe.
- Identify and engage the major concepts, approaches and debates in the study of the political economy of the region.
- Apply key theories to relevant case studies from the Middle East and North Africa.
- Write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debate, and form and express strong arguments.

Course Expectations

Electronic devices

- Please turn off cell phones. In other words, sending/receiving text messages, using a mobile phone, or surfing the Internet during class meetings is disrespectful and disruptive to the learning environment.
- In light of current research, laptops are NOT allowed in class (exceptions are made for students with documented learning disability). This includes for the purposes of referring to course readings for class discussion. If you are not able to bring hard copies of course readings to class, bring your reading notes to class.
- Written consent from the instructor is required for electronic recording of class.

Attendance and Participation

- Because of the nature of this course, which is designed to create a context in which trust, honesty, and true collaboration are possible, it is vital that each of you are present, both physically and intellectually, during each class session and that you are on time. Your attendance and punctuality are viewed as a sign of respect for your professor and classmates; they are important criteria for building rapport and understanding between all of us as a community of learners.
- ***If for some reason you need to miss a class, you are responsible for all of the material presented during that class meeting. Please arrange to get class notes and any other important information you may have missed. By the following class, you are expected to turn in a 2-3-page reflection on the readings in lieu of being present to discuss them.
- ***If possible, please let me know ahead of time if you will be absent; if this is not possible, please send an email before the next class explaining your absence.
- Come prepared with discussion questions or questions of clarification, highlighting particularly interesting, surprising, difficult or contentious passages as well as new concepts from the texts. Also try to draw connections between different texts from that particular groups of readings or from previous readings.
Bring your readings to class, we will use them.

**Building a Respectful Classroom Community**

- An environment of respect among students and the instructor is essential to the learning process. For this to happen, we will each need to work hard to remain respectfully tentative about others’ opinions and questions (and critically self-reflective of our own), realizing that we all come with various areas of expertise and have unique perspectives on the world.
- As we construct knowledge together about the many dimensions framing this class, you will be asked to reflect critically on the readings for the course, to participate in in-class activities, and to enter into dialogue with your peers. All students will be expected to respect the diversity of opinions and challenge each other with the spirit of intellectual growth and engagement. Make sure to focus your critiques on ideas and structures, not individuals. Be willing to be challenged.
- Behavior that interferes with an environment of respect will not be tolerated.

**Critical Engagement with the Readings**

- The assigned readings for each class session are listed on the syllabus and they draw from a wide range of disciplines and writing genres. Students are expected to have read and thoughtfully considered the readings before each class meeting and you MUST have your readings printed off in hard copy for each class meeting. Your ability to engage seriously with the assigned materials will be reflected in your final grade.

**Deadlines**

- Late work will only be accepted in the case of a DOCUMENTED emergency or if circumstances are cleared with the instructor at least 48 hours prior to the due date. Late work submitted without prior approval will result in substantial grade deduction (half a grade per day) and no written comments/feedback by the instructor.

**Readings:**

The readings for the class will come from the course textbook, journal articles, and popular ezines/All additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class.

**Grading:**

The course is set up for you to succeed if you keep up with and complete your work.

1. Participation and attendance: 20%

2. Reading reflections: (5 @ 2 points each): 10%

Starting with class 2, you are expected to submit 5 reading reflections. These should be short response pieces to ALL the assigned readings/films (no more than the equivalent of one single spaced page) from the syllabus for that week. They should be posted on the Blackboard discussion page BEFORE the class discussion on that set of readings. Your response should answer the following questions:

1. what problem/issue is the author addressing?
2. what evidence does the author present to substantiate his or her argument?
3. is the author persuasive?
4. in what ways does this reading address the themes of the course?
These entries are not graded, but are required. **THE LAST REFLECTION MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 12/7.** Please make sure to read your classmate’s blogposts before coming to class.

3. Presentation and leading class discussion: 10 %

By the end of the first class you must choose one class from the syllabus on which you will present your reading reflection and lead the class discussion on the readings for 15-20 minutes.

4. Final essay scaffolding assignments

The assignments are designed to scaffold your final paper and ensure your success.

a. Idea + Question + Relevance to Class Theme: 5 % **(DUE 10/19)**

You will write 250-500 words about what it is you would like to research, how it is relevant to the class theme, and identify a central question that will guide your research. [we will workshop this in class]

b. Introduction, Outline and Literature Review: 10 % **(DUE 11/9)**

You will provide a draft of your introduction and an outline for your paper. [we will workshop this in class]

5. Final Paper: 40% **(DUE 12/17)**

Your final paper should be 2500-3000 words (not counting references or footnotes);

**Must include at least 8 references, 3 of which must be from course syllabus.**

Use APA style: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/

6. Present the research for your final paper: 5 % **(11/30 & 12/7)**
Course Readings, Schedule, and Assignments

*I may change the syllabus as we move through the semester; all changes will be announced in class and/or on Canvas Announcements

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Unit I: Approaches

Week 1 (08/31): Introductions

- Go through syllabus
- Answer Question: What are the key global political-economic factors that have contributed to Lebanon’s current economic crisis?

Week 2 (09/07): No Class

Week 3 (09/14): Orientalism & Its Discontents

Readings:

- Watch clips from interview with Edward Said on his 1978 book
- Al-‘Azm, Sadik “Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse”

Additional readings:


Week 4 (09/21): The Politics of Development & Underdevelopment
Readings:


Additional Readings:


Unit II: Historical Foundations

Week 5 (09/28): Ottoman Reform, Slavery, Race & European Imperialism

Readings:


Additional readings:


Week 6 (10/05): Primitive accumulation: Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia
Readings:


Week 7 (10/12): Colonialism, Capitalism & State Formation

Readings:

• Video: “Omar H. AlShehabi on Decolonising the Study of the Arab World” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfoWG0OfPOU

Additional Readings:


Week 8 (10/19): Colonial Capitalism, Race & Labor
Due: Idea + Question + Relevance to Class Theme: 5 %

Readings:

• Omar Hesham Al Shehabi (2019), "Policing labour in empire: the modern origins of the Kafala sponsorship system in the Gulf Arab State,” *British Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Additional readings:


**Week 8 (10/26): The Political Economy of Independence: Liberation Struggles, Developmentalism & Delinking**

*Readings:*


**Unit III: Critical Themes**

**Week 9 (11/2): From Developmentalism to the Washington Consensus: Neoliberalism as Counter-Revolution**

*Readings:*

• Adam Hanieh (2010), “Khaleeji-Capital: Class-Formation and Regional Integration in the Middle East,” *Historical Materialism*.


*Additional readings:*


**Week 10 (11/9): The Political Economy of Oil**

*DUE: Introduction, Outline and Literature Review: 10 %*

*Readings:*

• Tim Mitchell (2020), “Ten Propositions on Oil,

*Additional Readings:*


**Week 11 (11/16): Militarized Accumulation and Accumulation by Repression**

*Readings:*


*Additional readings:*


**Week 12 (11/23): Imperialism & The Political Economy of Underdevelopment**


Additional Readings:


Week 13 (11/30): Land Struggles, Gender & Food Sovereignty

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Readings:
• Habib Ayeb and Ray Bush (2019), "Land: Reform and Dispossession from Colonialism to Neoliberalism," in Food Insecurity and Revolution in the Middle East and North Africa: Agrarian Questions in Egypt and Tunisia.
• Nida Abu Awwad, "Gender and Settler Colonialism in Palestinian Agriculture: Structural Transformations," Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer 2016), pp. 540-561

At home:

• Watch the documentary: Fellabin (Habib Ayeb and Ray Bush)- link will be provided.

Week 14 (12/7): Labor: migration, gender and war

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS


ESSAYS DUE: 12/17
Explanation of Grades

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<thead>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, A–</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+, B, B–</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+, C</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C–, D+, D, D–</td>
<td>Poor -- Passing, but too many of these grades can lead to dismissal from the College because of a low grade point average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure -- An F is not erased when the course is taken again and passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Passing -- The P grade is not computed in the grade point average and is authorized only for: 1. Remedial and developmental courses 2. Non-remedial courses for which the P grade is designated in the course description. 3. Courses taken on a Pass/Fail Option</td>
</tr>
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Conversion to letter grades

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>90-92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This explanation of grades comes from the Registrar’s office. If you want to dispute a grade, you must have a clear argument as to why your work falls within a different category. [https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/contentgroups/registrar/Spring_2020_Academic_Calendar.pdf](https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/contentgroups/registrar/Spring_2020_Academic_Calendar.pdf)