Globalisation in the Middle East

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Schedule of topics:
The course is intended to challenge your assumptions, nourish your thirst for knowledge, get you thinking in new and innovative ways about the Middle East. Each two-hour session is split into two lectures (40 mins each), followed by a discussion (15 mins) and a break. The first lecture will provide a broad introduction to the topic while the second hour will post a narrower argument based on original ideas and cutting-edge research.

Week 1: The Middle East and Globalisation
The aim of the session is to consider ‘what’ and ‘where’ the Middle East is and its diversity in ethnic and religious terms, as well as types of state and economy. The lecture then looks to the recent history of the Middle East and discusses the major trends and determinants.

Week 2: The Israel-Palestine conflict – the past and the present
The aim of this session is to analyse the relationship between Israel and Palestinians and consider the various attempts at and prospects for peace. We consider the rise and fall of the Oslo peace process, the emergence of Hamas and the growth of right wing parties in Israel to a position of dominance. Finally, we focus on the recent attempts at ‘unilateral state building’, undertaken by the Palestinian Authority.

Week 3: The Israel-Palestine conflict – the present and the future
This week we look at the contemporary dynamics in the Israel-Palestine conflict, the background to Trump’s ‘Deal of the Century’ and pontificate on what the future holds for the peoples of the region, and what this might mean in terms of how we see the bigger questions in international relations.

Week 4: Oil, Wealth and Power in the Arab Gulf Monarchies
The six states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman form the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). All of these countries are monarchies; most are rich in hydrocarbon resources and some became independent states only in the late 20th Century. Prima facie most members of the GCC are also tied together through a common tendency toward cultural conservatism on the one hand and displays of dramatic, even futuristic, architecture and technological advancement on the other. Moreover, the perpetual fear of Shi’a dominated Iran to the East has been joined by Shi’a leadership in Iraq to the North, while the rise of the Muslim brotherhood – ostensibly offering a potent alternative form of

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political Islam – in North Africa and the Levant have ostensibly left the states of the GCC surrounded and potentially vulnerable. However over recent years policies pursued by two young rulers, the UAE’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed and Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, have shaken the region’s unity. Underlying all of this, however, is concern over stability of the Gulf States’ basic social contract.

**Week 5: Reverberations from the ‘Arab Spring’**

The apparently unprecedented events of 2011 shook the world. The fall of long standing dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya and widespread protests elsewhere – leading, in the case of Syria, to a tragic civil war – dramatically undermined a previously prevalent image of a region stagnating under perpetual autocracy. This lecture challenges the common assumption of an ‘Arab’ Spring and argues that the uprisings were both wider (including non-Arab populations) and particular – each case being different. Instead it views the events through the lens of globalization and considers the future for the region. Finally it postulated on the new shape of power dynamics in the region.

**Week 5: Globalisation and its discontents**

Daesh (or the Islamic State) may be on its way out. But are we safe from a Daesh 2.0? Globalisation, for all its positives in terms of generating wealth, enriching cultures and opening opportunities for international collaboration and mutual advancement also jars against the traditional beliefs and interests of peoples everywhere. Sometimes this friction manifests as violence. In this session we consider the roots of terrorism in the Middle East and assess the future of the issue.

**Recommended readings for continued learning:**


A useful and accessible book for the history of the Middle East:

**Other interesting resources:**

The International Crisis Group, an independent think tank, has high-quality analysis and policy reports, on the Middle East section of its website: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm). They also offer a brilliant database of conflict histories, and maps, on [http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2937&l=1#C2](http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2937&l=1#C2)
- The Middle East & North Africa Programme of Chatham House (Royal Institute
of International Affairs) publishes regular papers and workshop summaries: see http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/research/middle_east/papers.

• Good briefings are given by Middle East Report Online, on http://www.merip.org/mero/mero.html (you can get them sent to you free of charge, as well as finding them on the website).

• The Middle East Studies Program of the CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) in Washington has a wide range of up-to-date studies and data, on http://csis.org/program/middle-east-program.

• There is also the site of the Middle East Policy Council, a think tank in the US, which issues the journal Middle East Policy: www.mepc.org, some of which is free.

• The United States Institute of Peace (USIP), does studies and briefings, as well as organising active programmes in various regions including the Middle East: www.usip.org including an excellent ‘Iran Primer’ http://iranprimer.usip.org/


• The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace produces high quality, often fairly brief, papers and reports on Middle Eastern issues – see http://www.carnegieendowment.org/regions/

• The US State Department has a country information service for the Middle East and North Africa, on: http://www.state.gov/p/nea/ci/

• An excellent site for maps is www.lib.utexas.edu/maps

• The Brookings Institution regularly publishes pretty heavyweight commentary and analysis http://www.brookings.edu/about/centers/doha (the Doha site)

• The US Library of Congress, Research Division, makes available a series of indepth country studies, on: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html

• A useful electronic Journal and Newsletter are published by MERIA (Middle East Review of International Affairs). This includes a proper academic journal, but also news on websites, publications, and research queries: http://meria.idc.ac.il/. (It is worth noting, that since September 2001, editorial policy has become more noticeably pro-Israel and defensive of US policy).

• The web archives of The Washington Quarterly’s recent articles are a treasure trove of good analysis from a variety of perspectives, on issues of current international concern, including the Middle East: go to the region index at: http://www.twq.com/info/archives.cfm.

• The Stimson Center also provides good analysis:

  • http://www.stimson.org/regions (you will be able to navigate to the Middle East section from this webpage)

  • Bitterlemons-International is a very useful website with brief discussion pieces of all aspects of Middle East politics, economy, and international relations: see http://bitterlemons-international.org.

• A useful Middle East-oriented news gateway is that of Al-Bawaba (literally meaning ‘the gateway’: http://www.albawaba.com/

• The public website of an otherwise confidential network of Gulf specialists, Gulf2000 (headed from Columbia University by Gary Sick, formerly a US ambassador to Iran, and the main Middle East specialist on US president Carter’s National Security Council: http://gulf2000.columbia.edu/

• The Gulf Research Center (based in Dubai): you can subscribe to have full access, but non-members also have access to a good deal of information: http://www.grc.ae

• OpenDemocracy has a specific site for the ‘Arab Awakening’: http://www.opendemocracy.net/freeform-tags/arab-revolutions as well as other interesting article on the main site.

• Similarly Project Syndicate hosts high quality blogs and analysis: http://www.project-syndicate.org/middle-east

• And Foreign Policy has a dedicated ‘Middle East Channel’ http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/ but is also worth following the blogs of Professor Stephen Walt http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/ and Professor Mark Lynch http://lynch.foreignpolicy.com/ who often comment on the Middle East.

You are also invited to read any of my publications (almost all of which) are available via academia.edu: https://uottawa.academia.edu/PhilipLeechNgo