Mode of Attendance: Full-time
Duration: 3 weeks
Course hours: 150 hours, of which 50 will be contact hours.
SOAS Accredited: This course is worth 15 UK credits

Programme Description
What do we mean by the Middle East – east of where, and why? How should we go about studying the political aspirations and agency of almost half a billion people? To what extent are their fates tied to great power politics, and how can we account for phenomena of cooperation and solidarity in their regional affairs? Can we draw a clear line between the local and the global in Middle East politics?

This course will help students deliberate all these questions, by placing the modern Middle East in its global context, without losing sight of local and regional dynamics, cultures, and political traditions. We will explore histories of empire and decolonisation, alongside themes of hegemony and resistance, conflict and cooperation, identity and foreign policy. The course is informed by critical engagement with theories of international relations.

The course begins with an exploration of the different historical phases of interaction between Middle East states and the international system. These are divided into the colonial, decolonisation, and post-Cold War periods. Lectures and tutorials will cover the early settler colonies, Britain’s informal empire in the Gulf, and the Anglo-French mandates, as well as the emergence of Turkey and Israel, and the challenge represented by the pan-Arabist revolutionary states, followed by discussion of the Middle East’s place in the post-Cold War unipolar era. We will discuss each of these phases in tandem with relevant paradigms from international relations theory used to study the Middle East in its international context. The course then moves to tackle key themes in international relations, such as foreign intervention and international political economy, before taking a closer look at key actors in regional foreign policy making. It closes by addressing contemporary challenges that have arisen since the Arab uprisings. Over the three weeks, course activities, debates, and fieldtrips will enhance both the teaching and learning experience.

Additional Activities: The unique and vibrant cultural landscape of London provides the perfect setting for the activities that complement this course. In recent years, these have included a guided tour of the Mosaic Rooms Gallery and QnA with the Director, a guided tour of the British Museum’s Islamic Art Gallery and QnA with its lead Curator, film screenings followed by discussion, and seminars delivered by human rights practitioners and democracy activists from the Middle East. Last year a new digital learning element was introduced, in which students collaborated on editing and evaluating Wikipedia entries on
topics covered in the course. The activities are designed to enhance learning outcomes, and to foster rapport within the classroom, forming some of the highlights of the course. Activities' precise times and venues are confirmed in the month prior to the start of the course.

Programme Schedule

I. PART ONE: KEY APPROACHES AND HISTORICAL PHASES

1. Introduction: What is the Middle East?
2. Empire and the Middle East State System
3. Postcolonialism and Critical Political Economy
4. Decolonisation and the Cold War
5. Anticolonial Resistance

II. PART TWO: KEY THEMES AND ACTORS

6. American Empire in the Middle East
7. International Political Economy in the Middle East
8. Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism
9. Egypt in Global Politics
10. The Gulf in Global Politics
11. Israel/Palestine in Historical Context
12. Israel/Palestine after the Oslo Accords
13. Turkey in Global Politics
14. Iran in Global Politics

III. PART THREE: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

15. Origins of the Arab Uprisings
16. Fortunes of the Arab Uprisings (1): Egypt
17. Fortunes of the Arab Uprisings (2): Yemen
18. Fortunes of the Arab Uprisings (3): Syria
19. Fortunes of the Arab Uprisings (4): Tunisia

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:
- demonstrate familiarity and critical engagement with the theories of international relations and foreign policy analysis relevant to themes in Middle East regional and international politics;
- demonstrate a strong grasp of the history of the region since its emergence as a modern state system at the turn of the last century;
- demonstrate familiarity with the relevant theoretical debates and empirical cases pertaining to issues of Middle East regional and international politics;
- marshal empirical evidence in argument-driven presentations in class
- edit and evaluate Wikipedia entries on a topic relevant to the module.

We hope students will be inspired to continue with further study or interest in the Middle East on completion of the course.

Assessment:

Assessment will be in the form of a 2500 word essay to be handed in two weeks after the end of the course.
If you have opted to study for credit, you will be required to complete all course assessments. Should you complete the assessments with success, you will receive a transcript confirming your marks and credits. If you have not chosen to study for credit, you will be exempt from any course assignments and not receive a mark.

**Course Convenor: Dr Reem Abou-El-Fadl**

Reem is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Politics of the Middle East at SOAS University of London, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She previously taught at Durham University and St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford.

Her research examines nationalism and foreign policy in Turkey and Egypt, and the politics of solidarity and nationalism in Egypt, comparing the Nasser and Sadat periods. She is the author of *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2019) and editor of *Revolutionary Egypt: Connecting Domestic and International Struggles* (Routledge, 2015). She is also co-editor of the Egypt page at Jadaliyya, the academic e-zine of the Arab Studies Institute. Her work has appeared in the *Journal of World History*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, and the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*.

**Reading Selections**


Useful journals for up-to-date articles include:

- *British Journal of Middle East Studies*
- *International Journal of Middle East Studies*
- *Arab Studies Journal*
- *Review of Middle East Studies*
- *Journal of Palestine Studies*
- *Middle Eastern Studies*
- *Middle East Journal*

For Middle East politics, the following electronic resources are useful:
- Jadaliyya e-zine: http://www.jadaliyya.com/
- Middle East Report: http://www.merip.org/
- Middle East Studies Association homepage: http://mesana.org
- British Society for Middle Eastern Studies homepage: http://brisms.ac.uk