

Online Academic Summer School 2020
SOAS University of London

The Middle East in Global Politics
Course Handbook

Mode of Attendance: Full-time, Online

Duration: 2 weeks

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. It is informed by critical engagement with international relations scholarship.

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. Students then take a closer look at key actors in regional politics, in light of central themes in international relations, such as hegemony and resistance, transnationalism, conflict and cooperation, identity and foreign policy. The course closes by addressing the regional and international dimensions of the recent Arab Uprisings.

Course Activities

Students will participate in various ‘e-tivities’ that enhance their knowledge of the course content and hone their analytical and communication skills. An e-tivity is a framework for online, active and interactive learning following a format that states clearly to the students its ‘Purpose’, the ‘Task’ at hand, the contribution or ‘Response’ type, and the ‘Outcome’ (See G. Salmon, *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning*, New York and London: Routledge Falmer, 2002.)

The course e-tivities are designed to foster rapport within the virtual classroom. They will involve the evaluation of multimedia sources including Wikipedia entries, with attention to the differences between academic and public audiences.

Programme Schedule and Key Topics:

1. Introduction: What is the Middle East?
2. European Empire and Resistance
3. Decolonisation and the Cold War
4. American Empire and Resistance

5. The Gulf in Global Politics
6. The Question of Palestine
7. Turkey and Iran in Global Politics
8. Egypt in the Arab Uprisings

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- demonstrate familiarity and critical engagement with themes in international relations and foreign policy analysis relevant to Middle East regional and international politics;
- demonstrate a good grasp of the history of the region since the colonial period and 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 oral and written contributions

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

Assessment

The course is assessed by two online assessments ('e-tivities') comprising together 30% of the final grade, and a 2,500 word essay making up the final 70%. The e-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to students as a means of monitoring and encouraging progress, promoting improvement before the final essay.

On successful completion of the assessments, students will receive a transcript confirming the credit awarded. Students that do not require credit are strongly encouraged to take part in the e-tivities, but are not required to complete the assessments.

Introductory Readings and Sources

There are no prerequisites for this course but students are asked to familiarise themselves with these two websites: [Middle East Report Online](#) and [Jadaliyya e-zine](#). They provide useful and up to date analyses of current affairs in the region. The following is a sample of useful first texts for students preparing for the course:

- Chalcraft, J. *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Cleveland, W. and M. Bunton. *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 6th edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 2016.
- Fawcett, L. *International Relations of the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 6th edition, 2019.
- Halliday, F. *Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics, and Ideology*, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hinnebusch, R. *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014.
- Said, E. *Orientalism*, Pantheon Books, 1978.

For learned societies focused on the Middle East, see the Middle East Studies Association homepage at <http://mesana.org>, and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies homepage at <http://brismes.ac.uk>.

Course Convenor

Reem Abou-El-Fadl is Senior Lecturer in Comparative Politics of the Middle East at the SOAS Department of Politics and International Studies. She teaches courses on the Comparative Politics and International Relations of the Middle East, and is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. She previously taught at Durham University and St Edmund Hall, University of Oxford. Her book *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War* was published in 2019 by Cambridge University Press. She is also editor of *Revolutionary Egypt: Connecting Domestic and International Struggles* (Routledge, 2015), and co-editor of the Egypt page at *Jadaliyya*, the academic e-zine of the Arab Studies Institute. Her SOAS profile is [here](#) and you can follow her on twitter [here](#).

For more information on the research projects, degree courses, and events at the SOAS Department of Politics and International Studies, please click [here](#). You can follow the Department on twitter [here](#).

In the meantime, please do get in touch if you have any questions. We look forward to meeting you online soon.