Freshman Seminar: Everyday Political Life in the Authoritarian Middle East

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Political Science 44N
Class: 9:30 - 11:00 am Tuesday and Thursday
Office Hours: 11:15 am - 1:15 pm Thursday (Encina 408W)

Introduction

This seminar examines the everyday political lives of individuals living under the authoritarian governments of the Middle East. We will examine how individuals respond to state policy, use informal channels to influence politics, challenge various forms of repression, and organize Islamic political opposition. Readings examine political life in six Middle Eastern countries: Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. This is a seminar and students will be expected to meaningfully participate in class discussions.

Review Papers

Students will be asked to submit three short papers in the form of book reviews over the course of the quarter. These are 3-5 page analytic pieces that are to critically respond to the assigned reading. Students who have written review papers for a particular week will be asked to lead the discussion. Review papers are due on Tuesdays at the start of class.
Final Project

Each student will submit a final project which (a) discusses political life under authoritarianism in a Middle Eastern country other than Egypt or (b) compares some aspect of authoritarianism or life under authoritarianism in two or more Middle Eastern countries. Students with a special interest in non-Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes may contact me about other potential projects including comparisons with countries outside of the region. Students must provide a brief outline of the paper along with a bibliography by the end of week 8. Papers should be no more than 15 pages long. In the final week of class, students will present the basic findings from their project in a short (10 - 15 minute) presentation.

Evaluation

30 percent: Class participation
10 percent: Book Review I
10 percent: Book Review II
10 percent: Book Review III
40 percent: Final paper and presentation

Agenda of Topics and Readings

The following books are for purchase:

University Press.


We will also be reading the following article:


The agenda of topics and readings is as follows:

Week 1: Discussion of Syllabus; “The Politics of Deliberation”
Week 2: *Remaking the Modern*
Week 3: *Avenues of Participation*
Week 4: *Mobilizing Islam*
Week 5: *Political Life in Cairo’s New Quarters*
Week 6: *Street Politics*
Week 7: *Republic of Fear*
Week 8: *Ambiguities of Domination*
Week 9: *An Enchanted Modern*
Week 10: Student Presentations