

# PO398-15 Politics and Culture in the Middle East

**24/25**

**Department**

Politics & International Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Nicola Pratt

**Credit value**

15

**Module duration**

10 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

This module explores the relationship between politics and culture in the Middle East. The module is based on a broad definition of politics that seeks to understand the exercise of power beyond formal political institutions, focusing on the politics of race and coloniality, gender, nationalism, heteronormativity, sexuality and popular culture. Whilst the module is concerned with the Middle East and North Africa, a large number of readings focus on Egypt, as the most populous and one of the most significant geopolitical actors in the region, which, therefore, has attracted the lion's share of scholarly attention.

You will be briefly introduced to different approaches to understanding the relationship between politics and culture, drawing on postcolonial studies, cultural studies, anthropology, gender studies and queer studies. In particular, the module focuses on the complex relationship between resistance and power, the ongoing legacies of colonialism and the intersections of gender, nation, sexuality and class.

### Module aims

- To explore the different ways in which politics and culture are interrelated in the Middle East,

with a focus on the ongoing legacies of colonialism.

- To introduce the notion of culture in the study of politics and how it can be conceptualized in non-essentialist ways in the study of the Middle East.
- To demonstrate the importance of race, gender, sexuality and class in understanding politics in the Middle East and relations between the Middle East and the West.

-To provide an introduction to some scholarly debates in postcolonial studies, feminist studies and queer studies and how they are relevant to the politics of the Middle East.

## **Outline syllabus**

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Weekly topics (indicative)

1. Representation: understanding the relationship between culture, power and politics
2. Imagining the Middle East
3. Gender and Nationalism
4. Women's Rights and women's activism in postcolonial states
5. Heteronormativity and the Nation
6. Reading Week
7. The Politics of Sex and Race in Israel-Palestine
8. Studying Class and Masculinities through Subcultures
9. (Popular) Culture and Resistance: the Case of the Arab Uprisings
10. Revision and Essay Writing Advice

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- - Demonstrate significant knowledge of the ways in which politics and culture intersect in the Middle East and North Africa.
- -Use relevant theories from cultural studies, postcolonial studies and anthropology (amongst others) to analyse contemporary political dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa.
- - Demonstrate an understanding of how race, gender, sexuality and class intersect and are constitutive of political processes and dynamics in the politics and International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa.
- -Critically assess the notion of culture as a site of resistance and domination.

## **Indicative reading list**

- Roger Owen (2004), *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Middle East*
- Nicola Pratt (2007), *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World*
- John Chalcraft (2016) *Popular Politics in the Making of the Middle East*
- Andrew Hammond (2007). *Popular Culture in the Arab World: Arts, Politics, and the Media.*

New York: The American University in Cairo Press.

- John Storey (2015) Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction
- John Street (1997) Politics and Popular Culture. Cambridge: Polity Press.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

## Research element

Independent research for essay writing

## Interdisciplinary

Engages with theories from anthropology, cultural studies, postcolonial studies, feminist studies, queer studies

## International

Introduces students to the Middle East and North Africa region

## Subject specific skills

- knowledge of the ways in which politics and culture intersect in the Middle East.
  - knowledge of relevant theories from cultural studies, postcolonial studies, feminist studies, queer studies and anthropology (amongst others)
  - application of theories to analyse the relationship between politics and culture
- understanding of how race, gender, sexuality and class intersect and are constitutive of political processes and dynamics in the politics and International Relations of the Middle East.

## Transferable skills

communication (verbal and written), analytical, time management, critical thinking

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Private study	132 hours (88%)
Total	150 hours

## Private study description

Students are expected to spend 8-10 hours per week reading the core readings and preparing the relevant seminar questions for each week's seminar class. Students are expected to spend around 40 hours researching and writing assessments.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

### Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
3000 word essay	100%	
Essay questions to be released in week 5		

## Feedback on assessment

Written feedback via feedback forms and verbal feedback in person.

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## Availability

## Courses

This module is Optional for:

- UECA-4 Undergraduate Economics 4 Year Variants
  - Year 4 of LM1H Economics, Politics & International Studies with Study Abroad
  - Year 4 of LM1H Economics, Politics & International Studies with Study Abroad
- UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 3 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 3 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
- UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
  - Year 3 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
  - Year 4 of VM14 History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 4 of UPHA-V7MM Undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (with

Intercalated year)

- Year 3 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-M162 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods
- Year 4 of UPOA-M167 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list C for:

- UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
  - Year 3 of VM11 History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)