Sociology of the Middle East
INT/SOC 483U

Instructor: Tugrul Keskin
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Cell Phone: 202-378-8606
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(PLEASE include “Sociology of Middle East” in the subject line)

Course Description and Objective:
The subject of this course is the social, political and economic underpinnings of the modern Middle East. According to Edward Said (Orientalism, 1978), the term ‘Middle East’ is a fabricated concept, created in the Western mind and within Western academia, however, today, this “imagined” place has experienced a series of both socio-political and economic crises, which have heightened the Western consciousness of the region more than that of any other region of the world.

This course seeks to explain the transformation of society, politics and economy in the modern Middle East. It is divided into three sections; the goal of the first section is to critically analyze Middle Eastern society and culture in the context of nationalism, and the concepts of tradition/modernity, ethnicity, religion and gender/sexuality. Section two,
on the State and politics, examines the formation and structure of the nation-state and actors such as the military, political parties and religious groups, bureaucracy, ethnic and religious conflicts and wars, and the consequences of colonialism and imperialism. The last section looks at economic development – or under-development in the region, as the source of major current social and political changes and phenomena. In this context, global capitalism or Neoliberalism acts as an engine of modernity and bureaucracy in the region, and “modern” and “rational” forms of economic structure replace old and traditional values, political structures, tribal and ethnic differences with new political and social structures based on the individualization and consumerism of life. American Political Scientist, Robert Putnam describes this process as ‘bowling alone.’ Today, global corporations such McDonalds, KFC, Al-Jazeera, CNN, Citigroup, Exxon-Mobil, Wal-Mart, IBM, BP, and Toyota Motor invest in the Middle Eastern market, which has also significantly changed the social and political landscape of the Middle East. In this course, we attempt to understand these changes based upon sociological observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society/Culture</th>
<th>State/Politics</th>
<th>Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>Nation-state</td>
<td>Capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition/Modernity</td>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>Socialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Colonialism/Imperialism</td>
<td>Welfare State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Ethnic/religious Conflicts/Wars</td>
<td>Neoliberalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender/sexuality</td>
<td>Political actors</td>
<td>Industrialization</td>
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</table>

Course Philosophy: The goal of this course is to enable students to write a theoretically guided and empirically rooted research paper. I expect you to be familiar with state formation and structures, the relationship between the state, society and the military, ethnic nationalism, and the idioms, theories, and socio-cultural underpinnings of the Middle East. The success of this course depends on your continued and sustained reading and participation.

The course will be based on a four-dimensional method of learning, and this includes inquiry and critical thinking; communication; the diversity of human experience; and ethics and social responsibility. First, I would like you to critically analyze what you learn in this class or have learned so far through the media and education, because in today’s world, truth is a relative concept. Throughout human history, critical thinking is
the one of the most important factors that has contributed to human development. In order to become active, self-motivated, empowered learners and future leaders, you will need to have the ability to think critically, and therefore your criticism, feedback and suggestions are necessary. Second, I would like you to enhance your writing and oral communication skills in this course. Therefore, it is important to clearly elaborate your arguments in the class discussion as well as in the written assignments.

Third, we are each part of the human mosaic, and all have different experiences based on our social, political and economic differences. We can all learn from and respect each other and benefit from our diversity. Please try to learn from and understand those with different perspectives than you. Lastly, we need to learn that we are all part of this intellectual community and larger society, and all have social and ethical responsibilities to our family, community, classmates, and humanity. We live in a globalized world and therefore, we need to be aware of events in our community, and the world today. In order to enhance our knowledge, we must critically examine our social, political and economic environment in order to apply this knowledge to our experience.

**Required Books:**


Other Readings will be posted on blackboard and you will find them under the course documents.

**Recommended:**

6. Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents by Charles Smith
Documentaries and Movies:

- **30 Days as a Muslim**, a 2006 film by Morgan Spurlock  
- **Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet** 2005 a film by Michael Schwarz  
- **Why We Fight** - A Film By Eugene Jarecki  
- On Orientalism-Edward Said  
  [http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=403](http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=403)
- The Power of Nightmares: Part I: Baby It’s Cold Outside  
  [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm)
- The Power of Nightmares: Part II: The Phantom Victory  
  [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm)
- The Power of Nightmares: Part III: The Shadows in the Cave  
  [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm)
- **Talking to Iran**  
  [http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/312/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/312/index.html)
- The Birth Of Israel (2008)  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8hE6WN9xRU&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8hE6WN9xRU&feature=related)
- **West Bank Story** 2005 Directed by Ari Sandel  
- Education City (Qatar)  
- **Inside Egypt**  
- **Jobs for Jordan**  

**Recommended Movies:**

- Lion of the Desert (1981)  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPC5ZJi5Pn4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPC5ZJi5Pn4)
Course Requirements

To prevent confusion later, please read the following information carefully:

Weekly Take-home Quizzes: The Take-home Quizzes will include an open book essay that will determine what you have learned in class each week. I will ask you two questions regarding the same week’s class subject and discussion. The Take-home Quiz should be at least two pages long and single-spaced. Font size should be Times New Roman, 12 point. The due date for each exam is Sunday by 12:00 midnight. Criteria: If your paper is less than two pages, or late, you will lose 2 points.

Weekly Presentations: Each week, three or four students will be assigned a weekly topic from the readings. These students will summarize the readings and prepare an outline and 4-6 questions for class, in order to come prepared to lead the class discussion. Each student must also always read the course materials before they attend class, and I expect them to participate actively in the class discussion. I strongly recommend that you present in earlier weeks rather than later in the semester, because you may not find the right time available to present, and will then lose presentation points. Presentation dates are available on a first-come first-served basis. The timeline for weekly presentations will be provided in the first week of the class. After we have filled in student names and finalized the weekly presentation schedule, it will be posted to blackboard.

Newspaper Articles: During the semester, you can bring 6 newspaper articles related with our class subjects. You cannot bring more than one article in the same week. You will have to summarize these articles in class and will find the recommended newspapers listed on blackboard, under the external links section. Newspaper articles sent by email will not be accepted. Please bring to class the first page of the printed, hard-copy of the article.

Final Paper: You will choose a transnational corporation, such as CitiBank, Exxon-Mobil, McDonalds, or others and will examine the social and economic policies of this
company towards and within a Middle Eastern country. For example, Intel’s policies within Israel, Exxon in Iraq, or Coca Cola in Turkey. How does the company get involved in the civil society, domestic politics, democratization, or privatization process within this country? Alternatively, you can write a book review directly related with this subject, as approved by me. In both cases I must approve your topic and plan ahead of time.

The final paper proposals are due as MS Word attachments emailed to me by Sunday, October 16th. The final paper or book review is a short empirical or theoretical paper of at least 10 pages (Font should be Times New Roman, 12 point), doubled spaced, on a focused topic that relates directly to this course. The last day to submit your final paper is December 5th.

Criteria: If your final paper proposal is late you will loose 2 points, if your final paper is late you will loose 5 points. Therefore, you should be careful about timing. You will also present your final paper in the last week of class. The presentation is worth 4 out of 20 points.

Format: ASA citation and bibliography format will be followed. All work should adhere to the guidelines published by the American Sociological Association (ASA) at http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/topnav/sociology_depts/quick_style_guide
This is not a definitive source, but is a Quick Guide provided by ASA.

Attendance: Regular attendance is one of the important parameters to successful completion of the course requirements.

Participation: Each student must read course material before they attend class and I expect them to participate the class discussion.

Grades: Your grade for this course will be based on your performance on the following components, shown with their dates and respective weights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 The Take-home Quizzes</td>
<td>Every Sunday</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper Articles</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Presentation</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The grading system in this class is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tugrul Keskin - Sociology of Middle East
Fall 2011 – Monday and Wednesday 14:00-15:50 / NH 47

B _______ 85
B- _______ 80-84
C+ _______ 76-79
C _______ 75
C- _______ 70-74
D+ _______ 66-69
D _______ 65
D- _______ 60-64
F _______ (Failure)

**Disabilities:** Please let me know if you have any disabilities relevant to your involvement in this class, so that I can make appropriate adjustments. Contact Disability Resource Center at Portland State University 435 Smith Memorial Student Union, 1825 SW Broadway Portland, OR 97201 - Phone: (503) 725-4150 - Fax: (503) 725-4103 - TTY or Relay: (503) 725-6504. Email: drc@pdx.edu, if you think you may have a class related disability for which you need counseling and certification. Disability Resource Center and I keep all matters related to disabilities in strict confidence. 

**PSU Student Code of Conduct:** I will enforce the Student Code of Conduct strictly in this course. Be familiar with it. Unless specifically stated otherwise, you should complete any work for this course without assistance from others. Cheating, plagiarism, falsifications and attempts at any of these acts in connection with any work for this course are violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

(2) **All forms of academic dishonesty, cheating, and fraud, including but not limited to:**
(a) plagiarism, which includes, but is not limited to, word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (b) The buying and selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (c) Performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons; (d) Unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information; and (e) Falsification of research data.
[http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode](http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conductcode)

**Additional Remarks:** If you have difficulty with the course, please schedule a time to discuss your concerns with me, to help you get back on track.

For Academic calendar of Portland State University:
[http://www.pdx.edu/registration/calendar#2011-2012](http://www.pdx.edu/registration/calendar#2011-2012)
Course Timeline

First Week
September 26 – 30

Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands
Chapter 1 From the Collapse to Liberation
Chapter 2 Founding the Republic and the Cultural Revolution (1923-1946)
Chapter 3 Democracy at Work and at Risk (1946-1960)

Take Home Quiz – 1
Tuesday - October 4

Second Week
October 3 - 7

Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands
Chapter 4 The Second Republic (1961-1080)
Chapter 5 Third Republic (1980-)
Chapter 6 Governance, Change and Risk

The Sociology of Islam
Chapter 2 Islam and Moral Economy
Chapter 3 Has Modernity Ruptured Islamic Political Tradition

Take Home Quiz - 2
Sunday - October 9

Third Week
October 10 - 14

Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics
Chapter 1 Oil Wealth and Economic Growth in Iran
Chapter 2 The Urban Provincial Periphery in Iran: Revolution and War in Ramhormoz
Chapter 3 Nimble Fingers No Longer! Women’s Employment in Iran
Chapter 4 Women, Religion and Political Agency in Iran
Chapter 5 Who Will Catch Me If I Fall? Health and the Infrastructure of Risk for Urban Young Iranians
Chapter 6 From Punishment to Harm Reduction: Resecularization of Addiction in Contemporary Iran

The Sociology of Islam
Chapter 4 Neo-Liberalism and ‘Third Way’ Islamic Activism
Chapter 5 From Islamism to Post-Islamism

Documentary: Talking to Iran
http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/312/index.html

Final Paper Proposal
Sunday - October 16

Take Home Quiz - 3
Sunday – October 16

Fourth Week October 17 - 21

*Contemporary Iran: Economy, Society, Politics*
Chapter 7 Iran’s New Scientific Community
Chapter 8 Constitutional Implications of Current Political Debates in Iran
Chapter 9 New Conservative Politics and Electoral Behavior in Iran
Chapter 10 Ethnicity and Religious Minority Politics in Iran
Chapter 11 Iran’s Regional Policies Since the End of the Cold War
Chapter 12 Iran’s Persian Gulf Policy in the Post-Saddam Era

*The Sociology of Islam*
Chapter 6 The Multicultural Ummah
Chapter 7 The Power Struggle in the Religious Field of Islam

*A Short Movie: West Bank Story* 2005 Directed by Ari Sandel
http://www.westbankstory.com/

Take Home Quiz – 4
Sunday – October 23

Fifth Week October 24 - 28

*The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*
Chapter 1 Social and Political Integration: Alternative Visions of the Future
Chapter 2 Arab Society: Basic Characteristic Features
Chapter 3 Arab Identity: E Pluribus Unum (Out of many one)
Chapter 4 The Continuity of Old Cleavages: Tribe, Village, City

*The Sociology of Islam*
Chapter 8 Yusuf Al-Qaradawi and Chandra Muzaffer
Chapter 9 Civil Islam, Means and End of Liberal Piety

*Documentary: Why We Fight, 2005 a film by Eugene Jarecki*
http://www.sonyclassics.com/whywefight/

Take Home Quiz – 5
Sunday – October 30

Sixth Week October 31 – November 4

*The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*
Chapter 5 Social Classes: Beyond the Mosaic Model
Chapter 6 The Arab Family and the Challenge of Change
Chapter 7 Religion in Society

*The Sociology of Islam*
Chapter 10 Indigenous and Immigrant Faces of Islam in Poland
Chapter 11 Muslim Converts and Islamophobia in Britain
Chapter 12 Islam in Brazil

Documentary: Education City (Qatar)
http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/420/index.html

**Take Home Quiz – 6**
**Sunday – November 6**

**Seventh Week**
November 7 - 11

*The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*
Chapter 8 Arab Politics: Its Social Context
Chapter 9 National Character and Value Orientations
Chapter 10 Creative Expression: Society and Literary Orientations
Chapter 11 Arab Thought: Problems of Renewal, Modernity and Transformation

*The Sociology of Islam*
Chapter 13 Italian Secularism Revisited
Chapter 14 Tradition and Response

*Documentary: Inside Egypt*
http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/314/index.html

**Take Home Quiz – 7**
**Sunday - November 13**

**Eighth Week**
November 14 - 18

*The Sociology of Islam*
Chapter 15 Religion-State Relations in Malaysia
Chapter 16 The Islamist Movement in Syria
Chapter 17 Many Hijabs
Chapter 18 Pluralistic and Informal Welfare Regime
Chapter 19 What They Say About the Treatment of Expatriate Workers in the UAE

**Ninth Week**
November 21 - 25 (No School November 25 and 26)

**No Class**

**Tenth Week**
November 28 – December 2
A History of Modern Israel
Chapter 1 Zionism and security
Chapter 2 The Hebrew Republic
Chapter 3 New immigrants and first election
Chapter 4 The Politics of Piety
Chapter 6 The Rise of the Right
Chapter 10 The End of ideology
Chapter 11 The Killing of a prime minister
Chapter 12 The Magician and the bulldozer

BBC Documentary: The Birth Of Israel (2008)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8hE6WN9xRU&feature=related

Take Home Quiz – 8
Sunday – December 4

The last day to submit your final paper is Monday December 5th