UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

2021/2022

Middle East International Relations

Code: 104477
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2503778 International Relations	OT	4	0

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

Contact

Name: Ferran Izquierdo Brichs

Email: Ferran.Izquierdo@uab.cat

Use of Languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)

Some groups entirely in English: No

Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes

Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Other comments on languages

Readings in English will be required

Teachers

Ferran Izquierdo Brichs

Prerequisites

No specific prerequisites

Objectives and Contextualisation

The main objective of this course is to enable students to understand and analyse the current reality in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.
Students who successfully complete the course will be able to understand the main political, social, economic and ideological issues in the region. Apply a theoretical framework for the analysis of these issues and their evolution. And apply a historical and critical perspective to understand the present.

Competences

- Analyse international society and its structure and understand its importance for real-life problems and professional practice.
- Analyse the behaviour of international actors, both state and non-state.
- Analyse the structure and operation of international institutions and organisations (political, economic, military and security, environmental, development and emergency aid) both in the universal and regional spheres, with particular emphasis on the European Union, from either real or simulated cases.
- Apply quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in research processes.
- Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.

- Identify the main theories of international relations and their different fields (international theory, conflicts and security, international politics, etc.) to apply them in professional practice.
- Learn and analyse the impacts of the globalisation process on domestic political systems and on the behaviour of the political actors and the public.
- Make changes to methods and processes in the area of knowledge in order to provide innovative responses to society's needs and demands.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Take account of social, economic and environmental impacts when operating within one's own area of knowledge.
- Use different tools for analysing the contemporary international system and its functional and regional or geographical subsystems.
- Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse the functioning of decision-making in real and simulated case studies in the different areas of economic governance in the European Union.
2. Analyse the historical and comparative roles of the different actors in the large regional areas.
3. Analyse the indicators of sustainability of academic and professional activities in the areas of knowledge, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions.
4. Analyse the operation of international regional and functional subsystems, their structure and dynamics and the probable evolutionary trends.
5. Analyse the policies and responses to the impacts of globalisation, identifying differences and similarities in each of the states of the regional subsystems studied.
6. Apply analytical tools of behaviour of actors in each of the regional subsystems (Middle East Latin America, Eastern Asia) and the operational subsystems (European Union, economic governance) studied in the subjects.
7. Apply quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in research processes.
8. Be familiar with the basic bibliography on historical evolution of regional and governmental systems in the countries of reference for the subject.
9. Critically evaluate the impacts of globalisation in different areas: security, environment, human rights, migrations and peace.
10. Demonstrate knowledge of theoretical trends and classical and recent analytical approaches to international relations.
11. Describe the characteristics of each of the regional subsystems studied, signs of historical and comparative change and continuity and the role played by the different national and non-national actors in each subsystem.
12. Describe the international order: anarchy versus order, national society and transnational society.
13. Describe the main elements that characterise international global society (1945-2000).
14. Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
15. Identify the main international institutions and organisations in each regional subsystem (Middle East, Eastern Asia, Latin America) and analyse for them the roles and actions, in line with the subject.
16. Identify the social, economic and environmental implications of academic and professional activities within the area of your own knowledge.
17. Make a brief comparison of national and/or regional cases within the same international and/or regional framework.
18. Make a critical comparison of the evolution of the large regional areas that are covered in the subject.
19. Make adequate use of the theory and concepts of international relations (Hobbesian, Grotian and Kantian thought).
20. Make comparisons between the evolution of governmental systems within a supranational regional area.
21. Propose new experience-based methods or alternative solutions.

22. Propose new ways to measure success or failure when implementing ground-breaking proposals or ideas.
23. Propose viable projects and actions that promote social, economic and environmental benefits.
24. Propose ways to evaluate projects and actions for improving sustainability.
25. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
26. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
27. Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
28. Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
29. Weigh up the risks and opportunities of one's own ideas for improvement and proposals made by others.

Content

International Relations of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

1. Society, Daily Life and Non-Development (subject presentation)

What are the main concerns of people everywhere? Food, housing, work, health, education. Freedoms, democracy, corruption, the ability to decide about one's own life. And then there is security.
These are the concerns of people's daily lives, in addition to the specific concerns of 50 percent of the population, which are women.
Often, when we look at different regions and societies, we find it hard to believe that the essential concerns of the vast majority of people are very similar to our own. We then adopt prejudiced views that distort our gaze. When we look at the East, these prejudices lead us to what Edward Said called Orientalism.
For these societies, and for us, these concerns raise some issues to consider, such as that when people are able to demand improvements in our lives, our demands or proposals are directly related to these concerns. And that if we are moved by issues unrelated to the improvement of our living conditions (understood in a broad sense that includes material conditions but also freedoms, rights, etc.), it means that we are at the service of the interests of some elites who can manipulate us.
Finally, it is worth remembering one piece of evidence: the living conditions of people all over the world are very unequal, and are related to development and to the position that these societies and social classes occupy in the world-system. And this position is linked to history, and in the case of the MENA region to colonisation and modern global capitalism.

Issues to be addressed:

Everyday life (people's demands). From the Arab Spring of 2011 to the independences.
- Independence (and improvement of living conditions). (Gateway to state-building and rentierism).
- Bread revolts (Food, work, education, health). (Repression, co-optation, transitional concessions) (Algerian war). (Demobilisation and rise of neo-patrimonialism and repression).
- Revolts of 2011 (Freedoms and democracy. Bring down the regime. Anti-corruption, anti-neo-patrimonialism, anti neo-liberal policies. To have a future, work, education, health, security...).
- Women and their living conditions.

Non-Development and Frozen Modernity
- The non-development of the South: Muhammad Ali in Egypt versus the construction of Israel.
- Galtung, the world system and the complicity of the elites of the Periphery.
- A New International Economic Order?
- The IMF's Structural Adjustment Plans and the implementation of neoliberal dogma.

2. Transformation and immobility (subject presentation)

Processes of social and political transformation are linked to social mobilisation or changes in basic resources

for the accumulation of power for the elites.

In the region of North Africa and the Middle East we find some key moments of mobilisation, such as the struggles for independence and anti-colonialism, the bread riots or the "Spring" of 2011, which have provoked transformations or shifts with important consequences.

Changes in the resources of power accumulation, such as the creation of independent states, oil and gas, or access to foreign debt, have also provoked important transformations.

Long periods of stasis are linked to elites' competition for power accumulation, the consolidation of power regimes and their interest in retaining the resources, relationships and structures that allow them to accumulate power in different forms.

This initial theme will serve to introduce the region, the major dynamics of transformation and stasis, and the theoretical perspective of the Sociology of Power from which the analysis is made.

Issues to be addressed:

The Sociology of Power.

Dynamics of transformation.
- Mobilisations: Independences and the construction of regimes.
- Resources: State, Oil and Debt (rentierism).

Dynamics of immobilism.
- Demobilisation and consolidation of regimes.
- IMF and neo-liberalism. Rise of Arab neo-patrimonialism.
- Repression and war.
- Cooptation.

3. Social mobilisation

The contemporary history of the Arab world shows three major waves of social mobilisation: the struggle for independence and against colonial control; the bread riots; and the Arab Spring of 2011. At the same time we find social mobilisations that have had their own dynamics, for example because of the persistence of colonialism, such as in Israel or in Western Sahara. And obviously many more local and specific mobilisations.

In order to make the analysis, from the Theory of Social Movements and from the Sociology of Power, we distinguish three main phases in social mobilisation: A) Generation of awareness and creation of networks. B) Mobilisation. C) Completion of mobilisation.

In order to understand the MENA region, it is necessary to begin with the struggle for independence and against colonialism. Later in the course we will look at the waves of the bread riots and the Arab Spring.

Issues to be addressed:

Analysis of social movements
- Guidelines for analysing social mobilisation.

Independences
- Independence struggles are not only political struggles to claim sovereignty, they are also struggles for improvements in living conditions that lead to demands on the new post-independence rulers. They were revolutionary struggles, with the will to change colonial regimes and to achieve important transformations in living conditions. This must be taken into account in order to be able to analyse the new states and new regimes.
- We will look at the cases of Morocco (documentary on Ben Barka), Algeria (remember "The Battle of Algiers"), Egypt and Iran.

The "bread riots
- Later in the course, after analysing the evolution of rentier regimes, the problem of foreign debt and the IMF's neo-liberal policies, we will look at the bread riots, a reaction to these policies and the crisis of rentier regimes, with the cases of Algeria and Jordan.
- The bread riots have a more reactive mobilisation, of protests in reaction against major losses in their living

conditions. Some Islamist movements and parties achieved important moments of leadership of these protests, but they did not have a specific goal of regime change. Where circumstances led to threats to the regime, the reaction was brutal and no major victories were achieved, but on the contrary, as in Algeria.

The Arab Spring
- The most recent period of social mobilisation is the so-called Arab Spring, which arguably continues to this day with mobilisations such as those in Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, Lebanon and the Moroccan Rif. The transformations of the regimes towards neo-patrimonialism after the implementation of neo-liberal policies, and the debris of the bread riots and the hardest years of Islamist terrorism, which allow the regimes to combine authoritarianism, repression and co-optation of part of the traditional opposition, lead the Arab youth to explode in the Spring revolts demanding a change of regime. Once again we find a moment of revolutionary struggle, which although it is far from having achieved generalised victories like the independences, it has had and still has revolutionary objectives of regime change.
- We will look at the cases of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Syrian Kurdistan and Yemen.

4. Ideologies and identities

The 2011 Spring showed great ideological plurality, and introduced dynamics of solidarity and identification of a new breadth in the region. It is no coincidence that the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt began with the death and humiliation of two young people with no present and no future at the hands of the police. The response came from the youth who identified with those two young men. After many years and generations of young people in that situation, tensions exploded and spread to all youth (and later to other generations who were no longer so young but who had suffered or were still suffering from the same problems). Women and their demands were added to this identification and solidarity, also becoming a social force that weakened Islamist influence, even helping to bring down the government of Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood.
To understand the ideological and identity tensions in the region, it is necessary to analyse their evolution, from the strength of tribal identification to its weakening as a consequence of economic, demographic, political and urbanisation changes, etc. From Arab identity, then Muslim identity to the current Spring.
These identities, a structural factor in all societies, provided resources and ideologies for the accumulation of power in some elites, from the clientelism of tribal elites, Arab nationalism and its leaders, or Islamism (political Islam) and its leaders. The case of the Spring has been different, as there was no leadership with the will to become elite and continue competing for power, which allowed others to take advantage of the social mobilisation to try to accumulate power, such as Islamists, some military such as Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, leaders of armed groups, etc.

Issues to be addressed:

Diverse identities and factors that drive and weaken them (from tribal solidarity to Arab and Muslim identity).
- The whole world is subject to different identities and solidarities that can gain and lose strength due to many factors. In the case of the MENA region, we can find societies that until the beginning of the 20th century had still strong levels of tribal identity, but colonisation, economic modernity, the creation of new states with new mechanisms of authority and political power, urbanisation processes, etc., weakened them. The strength of the anti-colonial struggle and the assertion of Arab identity helped to reinforcethe level of Arab identity, and subsequently, failures such as the defeat by Israel in June 1967, the rise to power of Saudi Arabia or the breaking of the rentier "pact" and the economic crisis of the states, The level of Muslim identity has also been weakened by the impossibility of responding to the crises of a large part of the youth, the co-optation of parties of political Islam by some regimes, or, on the contrary, the violence of other Islamist groups.

Ideologies :.
- Nationalism and anti-colonialism (pan-Arabism and leftism).
- Political Islam (Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Revolution in Iran).
- Current ideological diversity (liberalism, alternative left, feminism...).

5. Political and power regimes

The configuration of political regimes and power regimes responds to the strength of social mobilisation, the elites that consolidate themselves as dominant and the resources they have at their disposal. Colonial control of the region provoked a long struggle for independence, which in the cases of Palestine and Western Sahara

is still ongoing.

The revolutions for independence left for a number of years mobilised societies with the capacity to demand improvements in living conditions, and elites who had to respond to these demands. Rent-seeking helped consolidate the power of the elites who gained control of the states, which was the gateway to controlling the rents that allowed them to respond to people's demands. Control of resources, especially oil in oil-producing countries and the Suez Canal in Egypt, and access to foreign aid and credit were key to rentierism.

However, the regimes' elites gradually implemented neo-patrimonial dynamics once they consolidated their power and social mobilisation died, coupled with pressure from the international financial institutions (IFIs) with the IMF at the helm to impose increasingly neoliberal policies.

Issues to be addressed:
- Historical and current colonialism: Palestine andthe Sahara.
- Rentierism.
- Neopatrimonialism.

6. Foreign and intra-regional interference

The first reaction of Nicolas Sarkozy's French government to the 2011 protests in Tunisia was to offer the advice of the French police to suppress the protests. Egypt's reinstatement of authoritarianism under Abdelfatah al-Sisi, ending the short-lived democratic experience, has been supported by Europeans and Americans. Mohammad Bin Salman, the Saudi Arabian strongman and heir to the crown, had a Washington Post journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, tortured, murdered and dismembered, with no visible international repercussions. Palestine and Western Sahara remain colonised, in Palestine under a system of apartheid, and internationally the victims are punished. The survival of dictatorial and authoritarian regimes can only be understood thanks to the support of European and US governments. And beyond that, in a direct way, we must analyse forms of interference inherited from colonisation, such as the partition of Palestine, the coup against Mohammad Mossadeq in Iran in 1953, the attack by France, Britain and Israel on Egypt in 1956, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the previous control and embargo of the country in the 1990s, the attack on Libya in 2011, Russian support for Bashar al-Assad, and many other examples that could be given.

The region's relationship with the outside world has always been difficult, first because of colonialism and the creation of Israel, and then because of the importance of oil and gas to developed economies, to which must be added Cold War tensions until the changes and dissolution of the USSR.

Relations within the region have not been easy either. On the one hand, the borders left by colonialism break up spaces that should be united, creating strong tensions towards reunification, but also border grievances, control of resources, etc., which make relations difficult. On the other hand, the dominant and sometimes hegemonic ideologies (nationalism and political Islam) are supranational, so that some of the political and ideological elites gain legitimacy across borders, and many other national elites lose out because they do not control the strongest ideologies. The proximity, and sometimes solidarity, of Arab societies was demonstrated by the rapid contagion of the Spring across the region, but also by the repressive and annihilating efforts of the strongest regimes against popular revolt

Cases in point:
- The USS Quincy pact between the US and the Saud family (1945).
- Nationalisation of the Suez Canal and attack on Egypt (1956).
- Competition within Arab nationalism, and the struggle to weaken it (the confrontation between Nasser and Baath, and between Nasser and the Sauds).
- The Cold War in the MENA region.
- The 1973 war between Egypt, Syria and Israel and Henry Kissinger's intervention.
- The spread of Wahhabism and support for political Islam.
- The Iraq-Iran war and US and Soviet support for Saddam Hussein (1980-1988). Weapons of Mass Destruction against Iranians and Kurds.
- Invasion of Kuwait and embargo and control of Iraq 1990s.
- The pro-Israeli lobby in the United States.
- US invasion of Kuwait.
- The international and regional response to the Arab Spring.

Methodology

In order to achieve the planned objectives, this course focuses on theoretical and practical classes. The readings and activities suggested by the teaching staff propose an orderly and coordinated development of the subject's contents with the aim of facilitating the assimilation and understanding of the contents.

- Readings
- Lectures
- Written assignment
- Participation in discussions / debates / activities

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Courses	50	2	4, 1, 2, 5, 6, 18, 17, 10, 13, 12, 8, 20, 11, 15, 27, 25, 26, 19, 9
Type: Supervised			
Readings and written work	34	1.36	4, 1, 3, 2, 5, 6, 7, 28, 18, 11, 14, 16, 15, 29, 24, 21, 22, 23, 9
Type: Autonomous			
Readings	45	1.8	4, 1, 2, 5, 6, 18, 17, 10, 13, 12, 8, 20, 11, 15, 19, 9

Assessment

Comments on readings submitted in writing and discussed in the classroom (35%).

Work-article in groups of 3-4 people (35%).

Presentation-explanation of a topic or case study (30%).

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Academic article in groups of 3-4 persons	35	8	0.32	4, 1, 3, 2, 5, 6, 7, 28, 18, 17, 10, 13, 12, 8, 20, 11, 14, 16, 15, 29, 24, 21, 22, 23, 27, 25, 26, 19, 9
Presentation of a topic or case in the classroom	30	5	0.2	28, 10, 27, 25
Written comments on readings and class discussion	35	8	0.32	4, 1, 3, 2, 5, 6, 7, 28, 18, 17, 10, 13, 12, 8, 20, 11, 14, 16, 15, 29, 24, 21, 22, 23, 27, 25, 26, 19, 9

Bibliography

Achcar, G. (2013). *The people want: a radical exploration of the Arab uprising*. Univ of California Press.

Akbarzadeh, S. (Ed.). (2019). *Routledge Handbook of International Relations in the Middle East*. Routledge.

Álvarez-Ossorio, I. (2016). *Siria: revolución, sectarismo y Yihad*. Los Libros de la Catarata,.

Alvarez-Ossorio, Ignacio. (2013). *Sociedad civil y contestacion en Oriente Medio y norte de Africa*. CIDOB,.

Álvarez-Ossorio, I., & Izquierdo-Brichs, F. (2007). *¿Por qué ha fracasado la paz? Claves para entender el conflicto palestino-israelí*.

Ayubi, N. (1996). *El Islam político. Teorías, tradición y rupturas*. Bellaterra.

Ayubi, N. (2000). *Política y sociedad en Oriente Próximo. La hipertrofia del estado árabe*. Bellatera.

Beinin, J. (2001). *Workers and peasants in the modern Middle East*. Cambridge University Press.

Burgat, F. (2006). *El islamismo en tiempos de Al-Qaeda*. Bellaterra.

Feliu, L. (2004). *El jardín secreto. Los defensores de los derechos humanos en Marruecos*. La Catarata.

Feliu, L., & Izquierdo Brichs, F. (2019). *Communist Parties in the Middle East: 100 Years of History*. Routledge.

Feliu, L., Mateo Dieste, J. L., & Izquierdo Brichs, F. (2018). *Un siglo de movilización social en Marruecos*. Bellaterra.

Gillespie, R., & Volpi, F. (2018). *Routledge handbook of Mediterranean politics* (R. Gillespie & F. Volpi, Eds.). Routledge.

Gómez García, L. (2009). *Diccionario de islam e islamismo*. Espasa Calpe.

Gutiérrez de Terán, I., & Álvarez-Ossorio, I. (2011). *Informe sobre las revueltas árabes: Túnez, Egipto, Yemen, Bahréin, Libia y Siria* (I. Gutiérrez de Terán & I. Álvarez-Ossorio, Eds.). Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo,.

Halliday, Fred. (2005). *The Middle East in international relations: power, politics and ideology*. Cambridge. https://cataleg.uab.cat/iii/encore/record/C__Rb1737308__Shalliday,%20fred__P0,4__Orightresult__U__X4?lang=

Hinnebusch, R., & Ehteshami, A. (2002). *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Hourani, A. (1992). *Historia de los pueblos árabes.* Ariel.

Izquierdo-Brichs, F. (2008). *Poder y felicidad. Una propuesta de sociología del poder*. Catarata.

Izquierdo Brichs, F. (2009). *Israel i Palestina: un segle de conflicte*. Eumo.

Izquierdo-Brichs, F. (2009). *Poder y regímenes en el mundo árabe contemporáneo*. Cidob/Barcelona. http://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/monografias/interrogar_la_actualidad/26_poder_y_regimenes_en_el_mund

Izquierdo-Brichs, F. (2013). *El islam político en el Mediterráneo. Radiografía de una evolución*. https://www.cidob.org/es/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/interrogar_la_actualidad/el_islam_politico_en_el_me

Izquierdo Brichs, F. (2013). *Political Regimes in the Arab World*. Routledge.

Izquierdo-Brichs, F., & Etherington, J. (2017). *Poder global. Una mirada desde la Sociología del Poder*. Bellaterra.

Izquierdo-Brichs, F., Etherington, J., & Feliu, L. (2017). *Political Islam in a time of revolt*. Palgrave / Macmillan / Springer.

Martín Muñoz, G. (1999). *El Estado árabe. Crisis de legitimidad y contestación islamista*. Bellaterra.

Owen, R. (1981). *The Middle East in the world economy, 1800-1914*. IB Tauris.

Owen, R. (2004). *State, power and politics in the making of the modern MiddleEast*. Routledge.

Rogan, E. L. (2012). *Los arabes: del Imperio otomano a la actualidad*. Cr̃itica.

Rowe, P. S. (2019). The Routledge handbook of minorities in the Middle East. In P. S. Rowe (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Minorities in the Middle East*.

Roy, O. (2003). *El Islam mundializado. Los musulmanes en la era de la globalización.* Bellaterra.

Said, E. (2004). *Orientalismo.* Debolsillo.

Springborg, R. (2021). Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt. In R. Springborg (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Egypt*.

Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.

Software

No special software