

Arab World: International Relations, Security and Governance

Code: 41715

ECTS Credits: 10

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
International Relations, Security and Development	OP	1

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

No specific prerequisites

Objectives and Contextualisation

The Arab World, Security and Governance module aims to provide students with a deep understanding of the dynamics, trends and key events in the international politics of North Africa and Western Asia (Maghreb and Mashreq). Through this course, students will have the opportunity to explore how different International Relations approaches are applied to this region and in what way.

A distinctive feature of this course is its focus on the dialectical interaction between global and local dynamics in the formation of states and societies in the region. Special attention is paid to long-term development

patterns, contemporary state formation processes, and ongoing sociopolitical and economic transformations in the region. This involves situating local actors and dynamics within the broader context of global capitalism and the modern international system.

Through a combination of readings, class discussions and case analysis, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the political, social and economic complexities in the Arab world. This module seeks to provide an enriching and critical vision of the region, equipping students with the necessary tools to analyze and understand the challenges and opportunities present in North Africa and Western Asia.

OBJECTIVES

- Analyze the state of area and regional studies from the discipline of international relations
- Analyze how the study of the region has been approached from the discipline of International Relations and from area studies
- Analyze the research agenda on the region: content, evolution, strengths and weaknesses, etc. Presentsome examples to illustrate this agenda
- Understand the historical processes of modern state formation in the region and analyze the legacies of colonialism and imperialism in the political, social and economic configuration of the region
- Identify and analyze the local, regional and global actors involved in international relations in the area, understanding their characteristics, functions and roles in shaping political dynamics and security in the region
- Debate the factors considered essential for understanding the region

Learning Outcomes

1. CA18 (Competence) To assess the social, economic and environmental impact of the foreign policies of relevant actors on the Middle East and North Africa, as well as alterations in the international structure and processes.
2. CA19 (Competence) To base participation in political and academic debates on evidence and the literature that exists on area studies and international relations in the Middle East.
3. KA16 (Knowledge) To identify the actors who have an impact on the dynamics of cooperation and conflict in the Arab world and the rest of the Middle East and North Africa region, understanding their characteristics, functions and roles in shaping political dynamics and security in the region.
4. KA17 (Knowledge) To recognise the theoretical frameworks and approaches for analysing international relations, security and development in the Arab world.
5. KA18 (Knowledge) To describe the impact of trends and changes in the international system on the Arab world and, where relevant, the Middle East and North Africa region.
6. KA19 (Knowledge) To explain the evolution of a conflict in the Arab world and, more broadly, in the Middle East and North Africa region, having identified the key actors and processes.
7. SA21 (Skill) To compare the dynamics of cooperation and conflict in both the Arab world and Middle East and North Africa region in different periods and geographical contexts.
8. SA22 (Skill) To critically analyse the political systems, social structures and foreign policies in place in countries in the Arab world and the rest of the Middle East and North Africa.

Content

Block I. Introduction to International Relations in Western Asia and North Africa This block will address the specificity of the Arab World region from the perspective of Social Sciences, and more specifically International Relations. It will analyze how historical, cultural, religious and socioeconomic factors have shaped the political and social dynamics of the region. Furthermore, it will examine how regional dynamics in the Western Asia and North Africa (WANA) region influence the international system and vice versa. The theoretical approach of the Sociology of Power will be presented to understand the tensions in the region and how they manifest in political and social contexts. Additionally, other theoretical approaches such as political economy or feminist

perspectives on the Middle East and North Africa will be examined. Among others, the following issues will be addressed:

- The specificity of the region from the perspective of Social Sciences.
- International Relations and Arab studies in the WANA region
- Tensions in the region and the theoretical proposal of the sociology of power.
- Political Economy in Western Asia and North Africa

Block II. Politics, Societies and Development in the region This block will present a structural and systemic vision of the different states in the region. We will address the formation of current states and political systems in the region, as well as the role of discourses, ideas and ideologies in the region. It will analyze how political, religious and cultural discourses influence the configuration of individual and collective identities, as well as political and social dynamics. The relationship between population and popular mobilizations will be explored, analyzing how social movements and protests have emerged in response to different political and socioeconomic challenges.

- State Formation and Political Systems in the Region
- Ideology, Identity and Symbolic Politics
- Capital as Power and the Political Economic Structures in Arab States
- A diverse 'Arab' world: identities, communities, minorities and sectarianism in governance

Block III. Foreign Policy, Security and Regional Conflicts This block will examine how global geopolitical and economic dynamics influence the region, considering factors such as military power, economic interests and strategic alliances. The impact of great powers in the region will be studied, as well as the foreign policies of the main states in the region, considering their interests, priorities and strategies at the international level. Special attention will also be paid to oil and gas resources in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, analyzing how energy resources influence international relations and regional dynamics. It will examine the intervention of great powers in regional conflicts, whether through direct military intervention, support for local actors or political and economic influence. Specific cases of armed conflict in the Maghreb and Mashreq will be studied, analyzing the causes, dynamics and consequences of these conflicts.

- Powers, fractures and global transformations: the impact on the Middle East and North Africa.
- Western Sahara
- The conflictual complex and the case of Lebanon. A disputed country on the edge of the precipice
- Palestine and the state of Israel: the persistence of settler colonialism
- Syria and Iraq: foreign interventions and civil conflict (domestic agency)

Block IV. Mediterranean Classroom: External Conferences This block will be carried out in coordination with the European Institute of the Mediterranean which supports MURISD in organizing three conferences by international experts on various topics in the region. The conference program is updated every academic year.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
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Type: Directed			
Classroom lectures and seminars	50	2	
Readings and reading notes	50	2	
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Type: Supervised			
Readings and preparation of different exercises	75	3	
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During the module, a blended methodology combining lectures and reverse pedagogy is used in order to encourage more active and participatory learning. Through the master classes, the lecturer transmits fundamental knowledge and provides an overview of the content. With reverse pedagogy, on the other hand, students are responsible for doing compulsory reading prior to the sessions, in order to be able to actively participate in class activities and discussions.

In order to develop the knowledge acquired, students have the opportunity to carry out practical exercises related to their theoretical content. These exercises allow students to apply the concepts learned and develop practical skills relevant to the module. In addition, autonomous learning is promoted, as students are required to prepare short oral questions based on the compulsory readings, in which they must show their understanding of the content and their ability to express themselves coherently and accurately.

Finally, to assess students' progress and understanding, a two-part exam is administered. The first part is a test which tests the theoretical knowledge acquired. The second part consists of a topic-type question, in which students must answer in an argued and analytical way, demonstrating their ability to relate and apply the concepts studied in the module.

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.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Class paarticipation	10%	15	0.6	CA19, KA16, KA18, KA19, SA21, SA22
Exam	40%	2	0.08	CA18, CA19, KA16, KA17, KA18, KA19, SA21, SA22
Oral questions	10%	20.5	0.82	CA18, CA19, KA16, KA17, KA18, KA19, SA21, SA22
Realization of Practical exercises	40%	37.5	1.5	CA18, CA19, KA16, KA17, KA18, KA19, SA21, SA22

The evaluation of the module will be carried out considering the following criteria:

1. Elaboration of 4 exercises corresponding to each of the blocks, following the instructions provided on the virtual campus at the beginning of the module. These exercises must be handed in on the date and in the way as informed by the professor responsible for each block. Each exercise will have a weight of 10% in the final mark, which represents a total of 40%.
2. Formulation of 4 questions related to two sessions of the Aula Mediterrània cycle organised by the IEMed. Students need to select two of the three sessions available and pose 2 questions for each of the two sessions based on the reading corresponding to each session, as well as other complementary readings. Each question will be worth 2,5% (10% in total) of the final mark. Questions must be submitted to the virtual campus before the corresponding session.
3. Final exam which will consist of a quiz which will account for 20% of the final mark and the development of a topic question which will contribute the remaining 20%. This section of the exam will assess the overall understanding of the content of the module and the student's capacity for analysis and argumentation. Overall, the final exam will account for 40% of the total module mark.
4. Active participation in classroom activities will amount to 10% of the final grade. In case of missing a class, students must notify in advance and provide a valid justification, whenever possible.

It is important to note that attendance, participation and meeting the established deadlines are fundamental aspects for the evaluation process in this module.

Bibliography

At least one compulsory text will be required for each lesson and posted beforehand on the virtual campus.

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Software

No specific software

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	afternoon