

PSC 682.M001/MES 430.M001  
**SOCIAL THEORY & THE MIDDLE EAST**  
Spring 2006

Prof. Mehrzad Boroujerdi  
Class Time: M 9:30-12:15  
Classroom: HL 201  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The aim of the course is to probe the following question: To what extent are Western social science theories and the narrative of Western modernity appropriate for the study of non-Western societies? To answer this question, we will examine a wide range of historiographical traditions, theoretical paradigms, and methodological debates that have thus far shaped the field of Middle Eastern Studies. Afterwards, we will examine such topics as fundamentalism, secularism, modernity, patrimonialism, authoritarianism, and transition to democracy.

**COURSE PHILOSOPHY:**

You should consider this seminar a collective exercise in critical thinking. My role is to steer class discussion and engender an informal participatory class environment where we can all search collectively for a broader understanding of the subject matter at hand. The readings will introduce you to some of the more important scholarship on the subject, and they will form the springboard for class discussions. Please keep in mind that the present structure of the course reflects my interests. However, I welcome a broadening of aims and interests. Also, please take note of the fact that this syllabus represents *anticipated* scheduling of lectures/readings/assignments; changes may be made to suit the actual composition and competencies of the class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Participation: In addition to being physically present, I expect you to be mentally present as well! As such, you should complete all assigned readings *before* each class meeting so that you are familiar with the concepts, facts, theories, and controversies with which we are dealing. Furthermore, you can engage in discussion through the course page in Blackboard (<http://Blackbord.syr.edu>) and the course listserv ([psc682@listserv.syr.edu](mailto:psc682@listserv.syr.edu)). You and I will use this mediums to (a) post interesting or informative e-mails about the subject matter of the course; (b) share your reflections on the films we have seen; and (c) respond to points and issues raised by the instructors or your peers.

Oral Presentations: To ensure class participation and to spread out the work a bit, each student is required to make at least one oral presentation in class concerning one of the topics listed in the syllabus in which they are interested. The presenters will provide a critical summary of the assigned or suggested readings pertaining to their chosen topic. They are expected to answer such questions as: (a) what is the author's *thesis*?; (b) what is the major point s/he is trying to make?; (c) what are the major *assumptions* the author makes (and expects readers to accept) in arguing that thesis?; (d) what are some *useful concepts* s/he presents?; (e) how does the reading *relate to previous readings*?; (f) what are the major *strengths and weaknesses* of the work?; (g) what *questions* have come to mind in light of past readings?; and (h) what are the *implications for research practice* if the author's thesis and

underlying assumptions are valid or true? Each presentation should last 20 to 30 minutes and should be accompanied by a class handout of 2-3 single-spaced pages. In order to make this a worthwhile exercise, each presenter is expected to post their comments over the class listserv at least two days before their scheduled presentations. You will sign up for the presentations during our first class meeting.

Reflection/Research paper or Journal of Notes: You can choose one of the following two options:

- (a) Write one major reflection/research paper, 20-25 double spaced pages long, focusing on a particular paradigm (i.e. Orientalist, Weberian), concept (i.e., Oriental city), or problem/issue (i.e., Islamic revivalism, durable authoritarianism) examined in class. This paper, which should have a theoretical rather than a descriptive focus, is due on *May 1*.
- (b) Turn in a "journal of notes" (a reading log with critical commentary and opinion) on some of the reading assignments for this course that you have found the most interesting. In at least seven entries (each of which must be 3-4 double spaced pages), you are expected to analyze, compare, and contrast works read in the seminar by entertaining the set of questions (a through h) mentioned above under "Oral Presentations." The deadline for turning in your journal of notes is *May 1*.

Undergraduate students enrolled in the course under the MES 430 designation are expected to maintain the same attendance record, fulfill the same presentation requirements, and do the same amount of readings as the graduate students. However, their writing assignments will be somewhat less demanding. Instead of writing a 20-25 page paper, these students will be expected to turn in a 13-16 page paper or, alternatively, if they decide to do the "journal of notes" assignment, instead of writing 3-4 pages on each topic, they will be asked to write 1-2 pages.

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498 and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodations and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retroactively and must be requested in advance.

#### **GRADING CRITERIA**

Quality and degree of participation in class and listserv discussions	20%
Oral presentations with handouts	30%
Final Paper or Journal of Notes	50%

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (books available at Orange Student Bookstore)

- Leonard Binder, Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
- Course Reader - collection of required course readings which you should purchase from Campus Copy Center in the Marshall Square Mall. The reader number is 1097.

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*The future is under no obligation to mimic the past.*

-- David Hume

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**READINGS ASSIGNMENTS**

**Jan. 23: Introduction - The Nature and Structure of the Course**

- Talking about the logistics, trajectory, expectations, and goals of the course.

**Jan. 30: What Can Comparative Historiography Teach Us?**

- Richard M. Eaton, "Islamic History as Global History," in Islamic and European Expansion: The Forging of a Global Order, ed. Michael Adas (Philadelphia, Pa: Temple University Press, 1993), 1-36.
- Nikki R. Keddie, "Material Culture, Technology, and Geography: Toward a Holistic Comparative Study of the Middle East." In Juan R.I. Cole (ed.), Comparing Muslim Societies: Knowledge and the State in a World Civilization (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 31-62.
- Essays on "Middle East Exceptionalism" by Peter Gran, Robert Vitalis, and Leonard Binder in Arab Studies Journal vol. VI, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 6-59.
- Charles Issawi, "Europe, the Middle East and the Shift in Power: Reflections on a Theme by Marshall Hodgson," Comparative Studies in Society and History vol. 22, no. 4 (October 1980): 487-504.

*Further Readings:*

- Halil Inalcik, "Some Remarks on the Study of History in Islamic Countries," Middle East Journal vol. 7, no. 4 (Autumn 1953): 451-455.
- Edmund Burke, III, "Orientalism and World History: Representing Middle Eastern Nationalism and Islamism in the Twentieth Century," Theory and Society vol. 27, no. 4 (August 1998): 489-507.
- Barbara Freyer Stowasser, Religion and Political Development: Some Comparative Ideas on Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli, Occasional Paper Series (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1983), pp. 1-25.

**Feb. 6: The Contributions and Shortcomings of Area Studies**

- Mark C. Kennedy, "Dilemmas in Middle Eastern Social Sciences: Contours of the Problem of the Relevance of Western Paradigms as Guides to Research, Policy and

Practice.” In. Earl L. Sullivan and Jacqueline S. Ismael (eds.), The Contemporary Study of the Arab World (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1991), pp. 65-80.

- James A. Bill, “The Study of Middle East Politics, 1946-1996: A Stocktaking.” Middle East Journal, vol. 50, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 501-512.
- Lisa Anderson, “Politics in the Middle East: Opportunities and Limits in the Quest for Theory.” In Mark Tessler, Jodi Nachtwey and Anne Banda (eds.), Area Studies and Social Science: Strategies for Understanding Middle East Politics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 1-10.
- Timothy Mitchell, “Deterritorialization and the Crisis of Social Science.” In Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu and Frederick Weaver (eds.), Localizing Knowledge in a Globalizing World: Recasting the Area Studies Debate (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), pp. 148-170.
- Binder, pp. 24-84.

*Further Readings:*

- Lisa Anderson, "Policy-Making and Theory Building: American Political Science and the Islamic Middle East." In Hisham Sharabi (ed.), Theory, Politics and the Arab World (NY: Routledge, 1990), pp. 52-80.
- James Piscatori, “Quincy Wright’s Contribution to Middle Eastern Studies,” Middle East Journal vol. 29, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 33-46.

**Feb. 13: Orientalism**

- Said, entire book (skim if needed)
- Video: “*Edward Said on Orientalism*” (VC 8109) [40 min.]

**Feb. 20: Orientalism and Its Critics**

- Binder, pp. 85-127.
- Sadik Jalal al-'Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," Khamsin no. 8 (1981): 5-26.
- Bernard Lewis, “The Question of Orientalism.” In Bernard Lewis, Islam and the West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 99-118.
- Fred Halliday, “‘Orientalism’ and Its Critics,” British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies vol. 20, no. 2 (1993): 145-163.

*Further Readings:*

- Aijaz Ahmad, "*Orientalism* and After: Ambivalence and Cosmopolitan Location in the Work of Edward Said," In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 159-219.
- Amal Rassam and Ross Chambers, “Comments on Orientalism: Two Reviews,” Comparative Studies in Society and History vol. 22, no. 4 (Oct. 1980): 505-512.
- Bryan S. Turner, Marx and the End of Orientalism (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).
- Ernest Gellner, "In Defense of Orientalism: Review of Bryan S. Turner’s *Marx and the end of Orientalism*," Sociology vol. 14, no. 2 (1980): 295-300.

**Feb. 27: The Weberian Approach**

- Wolfgang Schluchter, "Hindrances to Modernity: Max Weber on Islam," in Toby E. Huff and Wolfgang Schluchter (eds.), Max Weber and Islam (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999).
- Ellis Goldberg, "Smashing Idols and the State: The Protestant Ethic and Egyptian Sunni Radicalism" Comparative Studies in Society and History (January 1991).
- Mohammad R. Nafissi, "Reframing Orientalism: Weber and Islam," Economy and Society vol. 27, no. 1 (February 1998): 97-118.
- Halil Inalcik, "Comments on 'Sultanism': Max Weber's Typification of the Ottoman Polity," Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies, no. 1 (1992): 49-72.
- Ernest Gellner, "Tribalism and the State in the Middle East." In Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.), Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 109-126.
- Sami Zubaida, "Is there a Muslim Society? Ernest Gellner's Sociology of Islam," Economy and Society vol. 24, no. 2 (May 1995): 151-188.

*Further Readings:*

- Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, Talcott Parsons (ed.), (New York: Free Press, 1947).
- Vatro Murvar, "Some Tentative Modifications of Weber's Typology: Occidental Versus Oriental City," Social Forces 44 (1966): 381-389.
- Sami Zubaida, "The City and Its 'Other' in Islamic Political Ideas and Movements," Economy and Society 14, no. 3 (August 1985): 313-330.
- James Peacock, *Muslim Puritans* (University of California Press, 1978).
- Wolfgang Schluchter, Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

**Mar. 6: Understanding "Islam," and "Fundamentalism"**

- Talal Asad, The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam, Occasional Paper Series (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986), pp. 1-22.
- Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Islamic Studies and the European Imagination." In Islam and Modernities (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 122-145.
- S. N. Eisenstadt, "Jacobinism in Fundamentalist Movements," Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science vol. 5, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 155-170.
- Sadik J. Al-Azm, "Islamic Fundamentalism Reconsidered: A Critical Outline of Problems, Ideas and Approaches, Part I," South Asia Bulletin [renamed *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*] vol. XIII, nos. 1&2 (1993): 93-121; and "Part II," vol. XIV, no. 1 (1994): 73-98.

*Further Readings:*

- Binder, pp. 293-335.
- Mohammed Arkoun, Rethinking Islam Today, Occasional Papers Series (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1987), pp. 1-25.
- Martin E. Marty and Fred Halliday discussing "Fundamentalism," Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science vol. 4, no. 2 (Winter 1995): 19-58.

- Mona Abaza and Georg Stauth, "Occidental Reason, Orientalism, Islamic Fundamentalism: A Critique," International Sociology vol. 3, no. 4 (December 1988): 343-364.
- Michael Doran, "The Pragmatic Fanaticism of al Qaeda: An Anatomy of Extremism in Middle Eastern Politics," Political Science Quarterly vol. 117, no. 2 (2002): 177-190.
- Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methodological Notes and Preliminary Findings," International Journal of Middle East Studies vol. 12, no. 4 (December 1980): 423-453.

Mar 13: *No Class* (Spring Break)

**Mar. 20: Understanding Secularism**

- Talal Asad, "What Might an Anthropology of Secularism Look Like?" In Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 21-66.
- Bernard Lewis, Secularism in the Middle East (Rehovot, Israel: Chaim Weizmann, 1991), pp. 1-26.
- Said Amir Arjomand, "Constitutions and the Struggle for Political Order: A Study in the Modernization of Political Traditions," Archives Europeennes de Sociologie vol. 33, no. 1 (1992): 39-82.

*Further Readings:*

- Sadik J. Al-Azm, "Is Islam Secularizable?" In Elisabeth Ozdalga and Sune Persson (eds.), Civil Society, Democracy and the Muslim World (Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 1997), pp. 17-22.
- Alexander Flores, "Secularism, Integralism, and Political Islam: The Egyptian Debate." In Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), pp. 83-94.
- Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society, "Is Islam Compatible with Democracy and Human Rights?"  
<http://www.secularislam.org/humanrights/compatible.htm>

**Mar. 27: Apprehending Modernity**

- Roxanne L. Euben, "Premodern, Antimodern or Postmodern? Islamic and Western Critiques of Modernity," Review of Politics vol. 59, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 429-459.
- Abdou Filali-Ansari, "Can Modern Rationality Shape a New Religiosity? Mohamed Abed Jabri and the Paradox of Islam and Modernity." In John Cooper, Ronald Nettler, and Mohamed Mahmoud (eds.), Islam and Modernity: Muslim Intellectuals Respond (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 156-171.
- Stephen Sheehi, "Failure, Modernity, and the Works of Hisham Sharabi: Towards a Post-colonial Critique of Arab Subjectivity," Critique: Journal for Critical Studies of the Middle East no. 10 (Summer 1997): 39-54.

*Further Readings:*

- Hisham Sharabi, “Modernity and Islamic Revival: The Critical Task of Arab Intellectuals,” Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 127-138.
- Isam al Khafaji, Tormented Births: Passages to Modernity in Europe and the Middle East (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).

#### Apr. 3: **The Political Culture Paradigm**

- Gabriel Ben-Dor, “Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics,” International Journal of Middle East Studies vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1977): 43-63.
- Michael C. Hudson, “The Political Culture Approach to Arab Democratization: The Case for Bringing It Back In, Carefully;” and Lisa Anderson, “Democracy in the Arab World: A Critique of the Political Culture Approach.” In Rex Bryen, Baghat Korany & Paul Noble (eds.), Political Liberalization & Democratization in the Arab World (Volume. 1, Theoretical Perspectives) (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 61-92.
- Lisa Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science,” American Political Science Review vol. 96, no. 4 (December 2002): 713-728.

#### *Further Readings:*

- Fares al-Braizat, “Muslims and Democracy: An Empirical Critique of Fukuyama’s Culturalist Approach,” International Journal of Comparative Sociology vol. 43, nos. 3-5 (2003): 269-99.
- A. Stepan and G. B. Robertson, “An Arab more than Muslim Electoral Gap,” Journal of Democracy vol. 14, no.3 (July 2003).
- Sami Zubaida, The Search for Authenticity in Middle East Cultures: Religion, Community and Nation, Occasional Paper Series (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 2004), pp. 1-12.

#### Apr. 10: **The Political Economy Paradigm**

- Binder, pp. 206-242.
- Peter Gran, “Political Economy as a Paradigm for the Study of Islamic History,” International Journal of Middle East Studies vol. 11, no. 4 (July 1980): 511-526.
- Rodney Wilson, “The Contribution of Economists to Middle Eastern Studies (1973-1998),” British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies vol. 25, no. 2 (November 1998): 235-246.
- Roger Owen, Imperialism, Globalization and Internationalism: Some Reflections on their Twin Impacts on the Arab Middle East in the Beginnings of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries, Occasional Paper Series (Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 2004), pp. 1-15.

#### *Further Readings:*

- Clement M. Henry and Robert Springborg, Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

#### Apr. 17: **Social Movement Theory**

- Craig Jackson Calhoun, “The Radicalism of Tradition: Community Strength or Venerable Disguise and Borrowed Language?” American Journal of Sociology vol. 88, no. 5 (March 1983): 886-914.

- Misagh Parsa, "Theories of Collective Action and the Iranian Revolution," Sociological Forum vol. 3, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 44-71.
- Charles Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979," American Sociological Review vol. 61, no. 1 (February 1996): 153-170.

*Further Readings:*

- Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).
- Janine Clark, "Social Movement Theory and Patron-Clientelism: Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen," Comparative Political Studies vol. 37, no. 8 (October 2004): 941-968.

**Apr. 24: Durability of Authoritarianism**

- James Bill and Robert Springborg, "Patterns of Patrimonialism in the Middle East." In Bill & Springborg, Politics in the Middle East (NY: HarperCollins, 1994), pp. 136-175.
- M. Steven Fish, "Islam and Authoritarianism," World Politics vol. 55, no. 1 (October 2002): 4-37.
- Rex Brynen, Baghat Korany, and Paul Noble, "Introduction, Theoretical Perspectives on Liberalization and Democratization." In Rex Brynen, Baghat Korany & Paul Noble (eds.), Political Liberalization & Democratization in the Arab World (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 3-27.

*Further Readings:*

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," Journal of Democracy vol. 13, no. 2 (April 2002): 51-65.
- Jason Brownlee, "Low Tide After the Third Wave: Exploring Politics under Authoritarianism," Comparative Politics (July 2002).
- Jason Brownlee, "And Yet They Persist: Explaining Survival and Transition in Neopatrimonial Regimes," Studies in Comparative International Development, (November 2002).
- Lisa Wedeen, Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

**May 1: Transition to a Democracy with Adjectives?      *Papers/Journals Due***

- Binder, pp. 336-359.
- Michael C. Hudson, Farhad Kazemi, Augustus R. Norton, Suad Joseph, Clifford Chanin and Ellis Goldberg debating "Democracy in the Middle East: Why so Little?" Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 81-150.

*Further Readings:*

- Mark Tessler, "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries," Comparative Politics 34 (April 2002): 337-54.
- Vickie Langohr, "Of Islamists and Ballot Boxes: Rethinking the Relationship between Islamists and Electoral Politics," International Journal of Middle East Studies 33 (2001): 591-610.



- Yahya Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate," Middle East Report 183 (July-August 1993): 14-21.
- John Waterbury, "Democracy Without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East." In Ghassan Salamé (ed.), Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 23-47.
- Larry Diamond, "Can the Whole World Become Democratic? Democracy, Development, and International Policies," (Center for the Study of Democracy, University of California, Irvine, 2003). <http://repositories.cdlib.org/csd/03-05/>