Arab Spring in Context: Religion, Media, and Geopolitics
Fall 2015
Course Syllabus

Course #: RELS: RELS:3834 (aka 032:134)
Time & Location: 2:00P - 3:15P TTh E215 CB; location may change, see https://isis6.uiowa.edu/isis/
Final Exam Schedule: http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/ (Students should plan to remain in Iowa City through the final examination week and are responsible for knowing their final exam schedule)

Instructor: Ahmed Souaiaia
Office Hours: 12- 3:00pm W and by appointment
Office: 404 Gilmore Hall
Email: ahmed-souaiaia@uiowa.edu
Websites: http://icon.uiowa.edu

About the Course:

The most dramatic and transformative events of the century may well be the uprisings that started in 2011 in Tunisia. These social movements ushered in a new era in the Arab world. It is too early to know the extent of the changes brought about by the so-called Arab Spring. However, the fact that it happened in of itself is significant. In fact, the Arab Spring may have inspired a wave of protest movements across the globe. In Europe, huge anti-austerity protests took place in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greek. In Great Britain and the United States, Occupy movements set tent camps in thousands of cities protesting in the name of the 99% of the population. Israel social justice protesters occupied parks in Tel Aviv. Some peaceful protests turned into civil wars and others slowly vanished.

All these events bring to focus issues and concepts of rebellion, revolution, dissent, and governance. We are privileged to be living in a time when fundamental social changes are sweeping the world and, unlike in the past, we now have the tools to access information and multitudes of perspectives even when we cannot be on the ground. We are able to see how the news is made as it is made. We will rely on these new tools of communication and resources to try to understand social change, protest movements, media coverage, writing history, and making history. Students will learn to decipher information and distinguish between facts and opinions in order to acquire a sound understanding of local and global events.

Students will examine archived news stories and commentaries and analyze information about related events that are still underway. Students are expected to read about current events every day and come to class prepared to discuss them. We will guide students in collecting and analyzing data and help them learn about objective, subjective, and biased reporting and writing. Ultimately, students will learn to objectively analyze events and the narratives about such events. This knowledge will enable students to not only explain the outcome of events but develop skills and tools to predict possible outcomes of ongoing events. Students will develop a healthy understanding of the role of religion in politics, and the function of class, group, and national interests in shaping national and international policies.

Textbooks:

Required Textbooks:

1. Reading Packet and Multimedia (available online (ICON site).
2. The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation is Changing the Middle East; by Juan Cole (Author); Kindle Price; $11.89; Hardcover price $18.48; Hardcover: 368 pages; Publisher: Simon & Schuster (July 1, 2014); ISBN-10: 1451690398.
3. Other texts about the Arab Spring can be found here: http://arabspring.ahmedsouaiaia.com/books/books-as

**Students’ Assessment & Grading:**

Students’ final assessment is neither based solely on the assigned readings nor exclusively on the in-class lectures. Rather, it will be based on all activities associated with the course. The reading materials are intended to provide an adequate background for the lectures whereby one complements the other. Subsequently, quizzes and tests’ questions will be more or less equally distributed between the reading assignments and the lecture materials. It is imperative that students do the assigned readings before attending lectures and discussion sections. Generally, if a student does not attend 50% of lectures and does not read the assigned materials, they will fail the course.

Students’ final grades are based on the accumulative grades in quizzes, tests, reactions to reading materials, and group projects according to the following distributions:

- **Quizzes:** Short quizzes covering the lectures and the reading assignments (weekly if necessary). About 30% of final GPA.
- **Weekly media reviews and class presentations.** 20%
- **Research notes:** There will be two research notes, the first due on the Wednesday during midterm week, the second due on Thursday during the last week of instructions. Details and scope of the notes will be provided in class. 15% + 15% = 30%
- **Participation:** 20%

The Instructor (and Teaching Assistants) of this course will evaluate each student's work fairly and without bias and will assign grades based on valid academic criteria. Fairness to students also implies reasonably consistent grading among courses of the same level, other things being equal. For this course, the grades distribution—based on the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences historical data—will be roughly as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course’s Level</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ final grade will reflect the plus/minus grading. You can follow your progress by checking your grades on ICON: grades will update after each test/quiz/paper...

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Rules**

Students must consult the University Handbook on academic integrity and plagiarism. For quick reference, I provide these simple rules:

1. A student could be considered in violation of academic integrity if he or she,

   - represents the work of others as his or her own,
obtains assistance in any academic work from another individual in a situation in which the student is expected to perform independently,
gives assistance to another individual in a situation in which that individual is expected to perform independently, and
offers false data in support of findings and conclusions.

2. By submitting work for evaluation or to meet a requirement, a student is providing assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought and study, produced without assistance, and stated in that student's own words, except as quotation marks, references, or footnotes acknowledge the use of other sources. Submission of work part of which may have been used previously must first be approved by the instructor.

3. By submitting a paper, a student is agreeing that he or she have read the above guidelines and agree to the terms and conditions as stated.

4. Unless explicitly designated as a “group project,” students should not work collaboratively with other persons (students or otherwise) on any graded assignment.

Reminders and Resources:

For each semester hour credit in this course, students are expected to spend 2 hours per week preparing for class sessions (e.g., three-credit-hour course requires 6 hours per week for preparation.

A tentative schedule and assignments will be made available online, but changes may occur; students must check regularly for updates that will be reflected in the online version.

The University of Iowa relies on email system to disseminate information and reach students regarding academic matters; it is the student’s responsibility to establish an email account and check his/her email regularly for updates relevant to this course.

Please contact me during my office hours if you are one who has a disability which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

The Writing Center is available to any U of Iowa student, faculty, or staff for help with any kind of writing, academic, personal, or professional. All writers can use feedback on their writing and someone to act as a sounding board for their ideas. Three programs are available: the Enrollment (twice a week program), the Evening and Friday appointment program, and E-mail tutoring through the web site at http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/ Tutors help you with any aspect of writing--from brainstorming an assignment to comma placement.

Please be advised of the university policy on plagiarism and cheating, as any such act will be dealt with as outlined therein.

Students who wish to complain about the course, the Teaching Assistants, and/or the Instructor may follow the College’s policy as summarized below:
The student should to resolve the matter with the person of concern first.

- If the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should discuss the matter further with the course supervisor (A. Souaiaia), the departmental executive officer, another faculty member designated to receive complaints if available.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the student may submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, 120 Schaeffer Hall (335-2633). (Graduate students should be directed to the offices of the Graduate College, 205 Gilmore Hall, 335-2137.)

**Disability Statement:**

"I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require seating modifications or testing accommodations or accommodations of other class requirements, so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me during my office hours."

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**Addendum**

- **Department Office:** 314 Gilmore
- **Telephone:** 319-335-2164
- **Department Director (DEO):** Diana Fritz Cates
- **DEO Office:** 316 Gilmore Hall
- **DEO e-mail:** diana-cates@uiowa.edu
- **DEO Telephone:** 319-335-2162

**Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Electronic Communication**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences ([Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook)).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

**Academic Honesty**

All CLAS students have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/): "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic
misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies

The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.