Everyday Life in the Authoritarian Middle East

GOVT 4000.01, Fall 2008
Wednesdays 10:10-12:05, Stimson Hall 206
http://blackboard.cornell.edu

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Office Hours: Wed 2-4 in White 218
or by appointment

Overview: This seminar explores the everyday political lives of individuals living under the authoritarian governments of the contemporary Middle East. We will examine how individuals interact with the state through formal and informal channels, respond to state policies and various forms of repression, and organize political opposition. We will also assess how recent technological changes affect societies and established authorities. Throughout, we will seek to account for variation across countries and within countries over time.

Attendance: Attendance in seminar is essential for success in the class. You are responsible for completing all of the assigned readings and coming to seminar prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised for the week.

Requirements:

- Class participation (30%): You must attend and actively participate in class each week. Be sure to read the assigned texts before class. Your participation grade will depend more on the quality than on the quantity of your contributions to the discussions.

- Two short papers (15% each): Each student is expected to write a short paper (not to exceed 1500 words, which should be 3-5 double-spaced pages) and help guide discussion for two sessions. The paper is an individual assignment that students will write alone. It can either compare across the readings or evaluate the relationship between theory and research design in the main reading for the week. In addition, the 2-3 students assigned to a particular week should coordinate and e-mail the class a list of discussion questions by 7 p.m. the day before class.

- Research project (40%): Each student will write a research paper on a topic to be agreed upon with the instructor. The project will be developed in stages. First, you will be required to turn in a short proposal that sketches your research question, your tentative answer (hypotheses, if appropriate), and what kinds of evidence you will collect to evaluate your argument. This will be due October 10th at 5 p.m., just before Fall Break. Second, you will be required to turn in a draft of a section of the paper – probably 8-10 pages in length – by November 14th at 5 p.m. Finally, the finished project is due by December 11th at 9 a.m.

Extensions on assignments and incompletes will be granted only because of circumstances beyond the student's control, e.g. serious illness or family emergencies. A non-refundable airline ticket does not constitute "a circumstance beyond the student's control."

Cornell University policies and regulations: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, which is available at: http://www.cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity. A Cornell tutorial called "Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism" can be found at: http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm

The members of the teaching staff observe all university policies addressing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual preference, or religious discrimination and all forms of harassment. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with pertinent policies and to bring any concerns related to them and other Cornell University policies and regulations to the attention of the instructor.

Readings: This course relies heavily on eight recently-published books, which are available for purchase in paperback in the Cornell Bookstore, Kraftees, and on-line. At least two of the books are available free online. They are also on reserve in Uris Library. All others readings will be available on the GOVT 3344 Blackboard site. The books are:

- Brown, Donna Lee, and Evelyn A. Early, eds. 2002. *Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East: Second Edition*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Deeb, Lara. 2006. *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Ghannam, Farha. 2002. *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
  Available online at: http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft109nb0bn/
- Matar, Hisham. 2006. *In the Country of Men*. New York, NY: The Dial Press.
- Shadid, Anthony. 2005. *Night Draws Near: Iraq's People in the Shadow of America's War*. New York, NY: Picador
- Singerman, Diane. 1995. *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky. 2002. *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. New York: Columbia University Press.
  Available online via NetLibrary (Safari for Mac browser not supported), linked at:
  http://catalog.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?BBID=6094951&DB=local

COURSE SCHEDULE AND OUTLINE

Aside from the books listed above, all items will be available via Blackboard.

September 3: Introduction and course overview

- Bowen & Early, chap 30-31 (pp. 322-348)

September 10: Cults of personality and the making of nations

- Wedeen, all
- Kamyar Abdi. 2008. "From pan-Arabism to Saddam Hussein's cult of personality: Ancient Mesopotamia and Iraqi national ideology." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8, 3:3-36.

September 17: Authoritarianism and transgression

- Matar, all
- Bowen & Early, chap 33 (pp. 360-365)

September 24: The appeal of Islam(ists)

- Wickham, all
- Bowen & Early, chap 21 (pp. 227-239)

October 1: Who speaks for Islam?

- Bowen & Early, chap 22, 29 (pp. 246-256, 300-305)
- Lindsay Wise. 2003. "'Words from the heart': New forms of Islamic preaching in Egypt." M.Phil Thesis in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford. pp. 5-108. http://users.ox.ac.uk/~metheses/Wise.html
- Lindsay Wise. 2006. "Amr Khaled vs Yusuf Al Qaradawi: The Danish cartoon controversy and the clash of two Islamic TV titans." *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 16. http://www.tbsjournal.com/Wise.htm
- Selections from *Don't be Sad* TBD.
- Online sources TBD.
- Lawrence Rosen. 2008. "Protecting the Prophet: understanding Muslim reactions to the Danish cartoon controversy." In *Varieties of Muslim Experience*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. pp. 105-120.

October 8: Engineering modernity

- Ghannam, all
- Bowen & Early, chap 15 (pp. 159-168)
- Mandana E. Limbert. 2001. "The senses of water in an Omani town." *Social Text* 68 19, 3:35-55.

October 10: Initial project proposal due

October 15: Reproducing the family

- Singerman, pp. 1-131
- Bowen & Early, chaps 4-5, 10-11 (pp. 53-77, 111-127).
- Quintan Wiktorowicz and Suha Taji Farouki. 2000. "Islamic non-governmental organizations and Muslim politics: a case from Jordan." *Third World Quarterly* 21, 4:685-699.
  http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993373

October 22: Networks

- Singerman, pp. 132-272
- Reading(s) on *wasta* TBD
- Lisa Wedeen. 2007. "The politics of deliberation: qāt chews as public spheres in Yemen." *Public Culture* 19, 1:59-84.
- Suad Joseph. 1993. "Connectivity and patriarchy among urban working-class Arab families in Lebanon." *Ethos* 21, 4:452-484.
- Online sources TBD.

October 29: Music, videos, & satellite television – shaping or following the Arab street?

- Videos TBD
- Walter Armbrust. 2005. "What would Sayyid Qutb say? Some reflections on video clips." *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 14:18-29.
  http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring05/armbrust.html
- Abdelwahab Elmessiri. 2005. "Ruby and the chequred heart." *Al-Ahram* 734, March 17-23.
  http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/734/feature.htm
- Patricia Kubala. 2005. "The other face of the video clip: Sami Yusuf and the call for al-Fann al-Hadif." *Transnational Broadcasting Studies* 14:38-47.
  http://www.tbsjournal.com/Archives/Spring05/kubala.html
- Joel Gordon. 2003. "Singing the pulse of the Egyptian-Arab street: Shaaban Abd al-Rahim and the geo-pop-politics of fast food." *Popular Music* 22, 1:73-88.
- Fouad Ajami. 2001. "What the Muslim world is watching." *The New York Times*, November 18.
- al-Jazeera English
  http://english.aljazeera.net/watch_now/
  http://www.youtube.com/user/AlJazeeraEnglish

November 5: Public piety

- Deeb, all
- Bowen & Early, chap 14, 24, 27-28 (pp. 151-154, 262-265, 276-299)
- Arlene Elowe MacLeod. 1992. "Hegemonic relations and gender resistance: the new veiling as accommodating protest in Cairo." *Signs* 17, 3:533-557.

- David Siddhartha Patel. 2008. “Concealing to reveal: the changing informational role of Islamic dress.” Unpublished manuscript.

November 12: Iraq under late Baathism and the invasion

- Shadid, pp. 1-185
- Additional reading TBD.
- David Siddhartha Patel. “The rise of local social orders in Iraq” and “Ayatollahs on the Pareto frontier.” Unpublished manuscripts.

November 15: Draft paper section due by 5:00 p.m.

November 19: Iraq under occupation

- Shadid, pp. 186-485
- Nir Rosen. 2006. “Anatomy of a civil war.” *Boston Review*. November/December.

November 26: No organized class. Watch *The Yacoubian Building* by December 3rd.

December 3: Discussion of *The Yacoubian Building.*

- Bowen & Early, chap 26 (pp. 274-175)

December 11: Final paper due by 9:00 a.m.