DESCRIPTION:
This interdisciplinary course provides an in-depth introduction to the international politics of the Middle East. The engagement with crucial empirical understandings of the region including transnational ideologies (e.g. pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism), international conflicts (e.g. the conflict in Israel/Palestine), and the relation between globalisation and regional politics as well as contentious politics constitutes the introduction of the course. In the wake of the so called “Arab Spring”, the “refugee crisis” in 2015 and the rise of ISIS, the Europe’s neighbouring region became a central topic in various forms. These substantial changes and conflicts do not only re-shape the political map of the Middle East, but also influence the political situation, public discourse, and policy-making process in Europe and on a global scale. The spillover of Middle-East conflicts beyond the region’s borders challenges traditional thinking about core matters of European security and social cohesion. However, in many of these discourses the long history, including colonial history, of relations between the Middle East and Europe is neglected. The course will thus shed light on the different historical connections between Europe and the Middle East. Drawing on this historical background, the course will examine and contextualize what is labelled the “Arab Spring” the “refugee crisis” and recent developments with regard to Islamic radicalism and Jihadi-Salafism. The course will also critically engage with concepts such as identity politics, sectarianism, and Islamic fundamentalism, which often appear as explanations for conflicts. The last part of the course will be dedicated to analyzing the impact of the conflict situation in the Middle East and transnational dynamics on European politics and society. In this context, we will focus on two strategic interfaces: (1) forced migration from conflict areas and (2) terrorism and radicalization, as two threads connecting the events in the Middle East with the social and political reality in Europe. We will also examine the systemic impact of these topics on the current political discourse and through one excursion where we will meet groups/representatives from refugee communities/ diaspora activists.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nora Jasmin Ragab

PREREQUISITES: No prerequisite

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Lecture, discussion, student presentations, course-related trip.

ADDITIONAL COST: None

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze structural causes of conflict escalation in regional and global conflicts
- Understand and analyze present and past relations between the Middle East and Europe
- Identify historical continuities and (post-)colonial dynamics shaping international relations between the two neighboring regions
- Analyze the influence of (1) forced migration, and (2) terrorism and radicalization as two separate phenomena on the political discourse and strategic policy making in Europe today
- Critical understanding of key concepts often used to explain conflicts
- Understand differences between actors, ideological backgrounds and histories
- Contextualize the term “crisis” in a more global perspective
REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation – 10 %
- Class Presentation – 15 %
- Midterm exam – 25 %
- Research essay - 25 %
- Final Exam – 25 %

COURSE PARTICIPATION

The development of a meaningful discussion depends on students' active participation in class and on their critical reflection on the reading materials. Each session will be structured around a distinct topic, which will be addressed with the help of one or more texts posted on Moodle beforehand. Students will be expected to prepare for class by reading and reflecting upon the assigned texts, and to participate in class discussions, showing that they have understood and critically evaluated the authors’ arguments. The IES rubric for participation will be uploaded to moodle.

CLASS PRESENTATION

Each session will be introduced by two students with a 15 minute presentation on key concepts, central arguments and open questions of the readings assigned in the respective course session. This will be in form of a joint presentations by two students, but each student will need to identify their contribution to the presentation. These presentations will provide the possibility to focus on central aspects and open questions students have. In the first session, students will be assigned for one presentation (to be held in session 2-17).

MID-TERM EXAM

The midterm exam (4-6 questions) has the dual purpose of testing students’ knowledge of facts, and evaluating their ability to critically analyze and contextualize historical events and political trends. It will focus on material covered in the first half of the course (90 minutes, week 6 /midterms week).

RESEARCH ESSAY

Students will write a research essay (ca. 2,000 words) which is due in session 19. In their essay, students develop a coherent argument with the support of textual sources to be cited according to MLA or Chicago standards. Students will be required to schedule a time to discuss their topic with the instructor before session 5.

Final Exam

The final exam (4-6 questions) focuses on material covered in the second half of the semester. Students should, however, also be able to integrate ideas discussed in the first half of the semester in their answers on the final (90 minutes, last week /finals week).

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance and punctuality in all courses and field studies are mandatory. Absences can only be excused for valid reasons. Unexcused absences can affect students’ grades. Students who miss 25% or more of all class sessions will fail the course. Missed exams cannot be taken at another time except in case of documented illness. Late submission of term papers and other work will result in grade reduction unless an extension due to illness or an emergency is approved. Please consult the IES Berlin Academics Manual on Moodle for additional details.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Academic Integrity Code. Assigned papers need to be properly and amply footnoted where appropriate, with all sources attributed, including images. Suspicious papers may be checked with plagiarism-detecting software.

CONTENT:

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<td>Session 1: Introduction</td>
<td>No readings assigned</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Introduction: Middle East identity politics and the construction of a region</td>
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<th>Religious extremism and sectarian disputes: Where did ISIS come from?</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>See also public lecture by F. Gerges <a href="https://lecture2go.uni-hamburg.de/l2go/-/get/v/19455">https://lecture2go.uni-hamburg.de/l2go/-/get/v/19455</a></td>
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<th>The Middle East in European Politics – The case of the ‘Arab Spring’</th>
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<td>Demmelhuber, Thomas. 2018. &quot;The challenges of a changing Southern neighbourhood.&quot; In The</td>
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| Week 5 | **Session 9**  
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Session 10**  
History of Relations and discourses between Europe and the Middle East II | Dis:Orient Workshop |
| **Week 6** | **Mid-term exam** (90 minutes in class) |
| **Week 7** | **Session 11**  
Panel discussion with political activists from Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia |
| **Session 12**  
See also Public Lecture by Dawn Chatty The Syrian Humanitarian Disaster: Sustainability of Containment in the Conflict Region [https://lecture2go.uni-hamburg.de/l2go/-/get/v/19312](https://lecture2go.uni-hamburg.de/l2go/-/get/v/19312) |
| Student presentation |
| Week 8 | **Session 13**  
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Session 14**  
| **Week 9** | **Session 15**  
| **Session 16**  
Long, Katy. 2014. Rethinking ‘Durable’ Solutions. | Student presentation |
| Week 10 | **Session 17**  
Research essay due |  
Week 11 | **Session 18**  
Contexts of Fundamentalism:  
Excursion where we meet groups/representatives from refugee communities/ diaspora activists. |  
Week 12 | **Session 21**  
Europe and the new Middle East:  
**Session 22**  
Final discussion, exam preparation |  
Week 13 | **Final Exam** (90 minutes in class) |  
**EXCURSIONS**  
Visit at one of the think tanks that consult the German government/EU on ME such as the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) with an office in Berlin and a focus on jihadism in Germany; or the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).  
**REQUIRED READINGS:**  


RECOMMENDED READINGS:
• Bellin, E. (2012). Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring. Comparative Politics, 44(2), 127-149.