Crisis in the Middle East
PS 199
Fall 2014
Priscilla Southwell

Office Hours: 1:30-3 UH (940 PLC)
Class Hours: 10-11:15 UH

This course centers on political crises in the contemporary Middle East and provides an overview of the geography, politics, history, cultures, economies, religions of the region. Particular attention will be given to the war in Syria, post-Arab Spring developments, and Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Learning Outcomes:
The goal is to provide students with the historical background and theoretical tools to answer the following core questions:

1) Why does authoritarianism persist in the Middle East?
2) What explains the rise and spread of popular uprisings in the Arab world since 2010?
3) Why have Islamists become prominent opposition forces in and across some countries?
4) Why do some Middle Eastern countries experience high levels of political violence while others are spared?
5) What explains the region’s persistent economic underdevelopment?
6) Would the adoption of Western-style political institutions improve governance and stability in the region?

Current events:
Students are expected to follow day-to-day regional events and analysis throughout the term. Regional events covered on the Middle East page of the BBC will be discussed in lecture and discussions sections, so consult daily: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/default.stm. We will also discuss stories from The New York Times and al-Jazeera English:

Assignments:

Map & Information Quiz (20%) Note: Can be re-taken.
Three Exams (20% each)
Section Attendance & Participation (20%)
Readings:


Course Schedule and Outline:

Sept. 30- Oct. 2  Introduction and Recent Developments

Oct. 7-9        Historical and Geographic Context
Map and Information Quiz will be given on Oct. 9th

Oct. 14-16      The Economies of the Middle East & the Politics of Oil

Oct. 21-23      The Political and Religious Context
FIRST EXAM on Oct. 23 (and Re-take of Map & Information Quiz)

Oct. 28-30      Class, Gender & Ethnicity

Nov. 4-6        Israeli-Palestinian Relations and Current Peace Talks

Nov. 11-13      The Arab Uprisings: Mobilizations in Tunisia and Egypt; Transnational Diffusion; Stalled Uprisings and Counterrevolutions
SECOND EXAM on Nov. 13

Nov. 18-20      The War in Syria and Beyond

Nov. 25         America and the Middle East

Dec. 2-4        Trends and Prospects
THIRD EXAM on Dec. 4