This class will mostly address two burning issues in contemporary politics: the civil war in Syria and the political situation in Egypt. I expect you to work hard in this class. I do not intend to lecture most of the time. Instead, we will engage in active learning. By that, I mean discussions, small group work, and student presentations.

This class does not have any required books. Most required readings are available through the library web site. Do the readings before the listed class, and please bring a copy of the readings to class. The exams are focused on the readings and our class discussion of those readings.

My goals are to get you to think, to consider different perspectives, and to take ownership of your education. I want you to learn a lot about the situations in Egypt and Syria as well as the US foreign policy angle on each issue. I also want to help you figure out where to find useful information on international political issues.

The class is heavily focused on readings and analyzing them together. The exams will focus on the readings.

Most of the time I do not want to fight your technology but rather I want to integrate it into our learning. Sometimes I will ask you to turn off your wireless. One technology exception: no texting or messaging in class. Be considerate.

Do not plagiarize or cheat. All students who enroll in this course are assumed to have read the Academic Misconduct section of the Student Conduct Code regarding such matters as plagiarism and cheating on examinations. If you need help with proper citations, ask.

I welcome FEEDBACK at any time. Let me know what works and what does not. Please contact me if you need any academic accommodations.

You may find it helpful to start a twitter account and start following people who write and comment about Egypt and Syria. I will suggest some accounts if you like. I am also on twitter @djpressman

I do not accept late assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Mid-term exam (25%) – In-class on October 23. Format: Multiple choice, short answer, and IDs.

Final exam (45%) – Tuesday, December 9, 2014 from 10:30-12:30. 1) Take-home essays that cover the entire course. 2) In class: Multiple choice, short answer, and IDs.

Paper (17%) – You will write a 1000-1250 word essay. I will hand out topics 1-2 weeks in advance. That paper is due by the start of class on November 18. It is NOT a research paper.
Speakers (3% total; 1% per speaker) – You must attend three speakers during the semester. The topic must be related to the international politics or the Middle East. Please submit your form to me after you have attended all three speakers. The form is on HuskyCT. Though I will mention some speakers in class, you are responsible for seeking out speaking events. The last day to hand in the form is Thursday, December 4 (last day of class).

In-class work and exercises (10%)

**Calendar**

Aug 26 - Introduction

Aug 28 - Asad’s Syria


Sept 2 – Syria: The Uprising


Sept 4 – The protests


Sept 9 – Syrian Refugees

An excellent map: http://tinyurl.com/n2yjg5a
Check out this web site: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php
See also: http://www.rescue.org/where/middle_east/irc-jordan


Sept 11 – Sectarianism


Sept 16 – Factions

15. Charles Lister, Dynamic Stalemate: Surveying Syria’s Military Landscape (Brookings Doha Center, May 2014). (20 pp.)


Sept 18 – ISIS/Islamic State


17. TBD

Sept 23 – Borders

18. F. Gregory Gause III, ”Is this the end of Sykes-Picot?” Washington Post (Monkey Cage), May 20, 2014.


Sept 25 – We will not have class.
Sept 30 – Syria: External Military Intervention


Oct 2 – Third-Party Intervention in Civil Wars


Oct 7 – More on civil wars and on regime survival


Oct 9 – Syria’s Wider Impact & Arab Cold War

26. F. Gregory Gause III, Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War (Brookings Doha Center, July 2014). (27 pp.)


Country by country section may be helpful background:
http://www.mei.edu/content/regional-implications-syria-crisis

Oct 14 - US Policy Toward Syria


Oct 16 – US Policy, part II

Oct 21 – TBD (#31)

Oct 23 - **Mid-term exam in class** (The main focus is the readings and our discussion of them. What was the main thesis or theses? What approach and method did the author use to prove her or his point? Also, be able to compare and contrast authors.)

Oct 28 - Egypt – Introduction


Oct 30 - Egypt – The Revolution


Nov 4 – The Egyptian Military


Nov 6 - Islamism in Egypt


40. Nasser Abourahme, “Past the end, not yet at the beginning: On the revolutionary disjuncture in Egypt,” *City* 17:4, August 2013, 426-432. [a hard article to grasp]
Nov 11 – Democracy


Nov 13 – Protest & Social Movements


Nov 18 – Women in Egypt [Paper Due at start of class]

45. Nadia Taher, “We are not women, we are Egyptians,” *City* 16:3, June 2012, pp. 369-376.


Nov 20 – US Policy toward Egypt


Dec 2 – Egypt and Syria in the Future


Dec 4 - TBD

Tuesday, Dec 9 - 10:30-12:30 - Final Exam