

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Middle East Studies & Internship in Amman

Course Title: Arab & Islamic Culture and Economics in the Middle East

Course Code: AM/ECON 340

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Economics / Middle East Studies

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

There are many theories about the labor market and economy in the Middle East; however there are few jobs. Despite openness to successful American and European economies, Middle Eastern economies have seen little success. Aid and training from these strong world economies have not abated the high unemployment rates and rampant poverty. It is within this framework that the course addresses the effect of Arab and Islamic cultures on Middle Eastern economies, labor markets, and business. This course examines these economic theories, and investigates why they are ineffective in achieving growth and contributing to job creation. The course also touches on potential solutions proposed by local governments.

Objectives

During this course, students:

- 1) Describe and evaluate the cultural and religious factors that impact conceptual understandings of Middle Eastern economies and marketplaces.
- 2) Differentiate between cultural and religious impacts on Middle Eastern economies.
- 3) Discuss and debate the challenges faced by Middle Eastern marketplaces and economies.
- 4) Conceptualize the obstacles to economic development in the region and evaluate the feasibility of potential solutions to economic challenges.
- 5) Develop an understanding of the ethnic, religious, economic, political and cultural background of the Arab World.
- 6) Draw relationships between important business actors and political and religious figures of the Middle East.
- 7) Analyze Middle Eastern economies as they relate to external influences and modern economic theories.

Course Requirements

All students are expected to submit all homework, quizzes, tests, papers and projects on the day they are due. Additionally, students are expected to attend all class sessions. Class participation will be considered during grading.

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For homework, the students will prepare a weekly presentation based on the assigned readings. Each student will be assigned a specific topic on which to focus, and will conduct a discussion on this topic with the class. Each week, the student will be required to submit a short paper related to their presentation. Additionally, students will be required to conduct opinion polls or questionnaires in Amman and will present their findings in class. This will allow the students to assess whether or not the class readings on economic practices reflect the reality and ideology of shop owners in Amman.

Small Projects and Presentations

Instructors give students ample time to complete several small class presentations throughout the course, and offer guidance with respect to the sources to be used for these projects. Sources may include the opinions of locals, roommates, language partners, or the students themselves. Students compare and contrast the viewpoints of different individuals regarding class topics and evaluate secondary sources as well. Presentations in front of the class will last approximately 15 minutes including a question and answer period at the end. All students provide a written summary of their presentation to the instructor for each project.

Final Project

Each student selects a final research project topic of interest and presents the final project before their teachers (and language partners and roommates if schedules permit). Each student will submit a written report **between 10 and 15 pages** on A4 sized paper, utilizing examples from the course material to support his or her arguments. In the process of writing the paper, each student will:

- Submit an outline of the main points to be discussed in the report (500 words).
- Submit a first draft of the report for corrections on both content and style (1000 words).
- Edit the first draft in consideration of the instructor's corrections.
- Submit the final draft to the teacher at the appropriate due date.
- Sit down with the instructor individually in the last week of class to discuss individual development in the field of study and comments on the project in general.

Students may reach out to the instructor at any point to request advice or assistance on the project.

Project Component	Due Date to Instructor	Receive Back from Instructor
Outline	Week 5	Week 6
First Draft	Week 12	Week 13
Final Report	Week 14	Week 15

Methods of Evaluation

Category	Grading Weight
Class Attendance and Participation	40%
Homework	20%
Small Projects and Presentations	10%
Final Project and Presentation	30%

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Primary Texts

The primary texts for the course will be articles from a variety of written and digital media sources including online newspapers, news stations, think tanks, and research organizations.

Kuran, Timur. *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East*. Princeton University Press; 2012.

Marsh, Donna. *The Middle East Unveiled*. How To Books; 2010.

Nasr, Vali. *The Rise of Islamic Capitalism*. Free Press (Council on Foreign Relations); 2010.

Owen, Roger. *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914*. I.B. Tauris; 1993.

Rodinson, Maxime. *Islam and Capitalism*. Saqi Essentials; 2007.

Shechter, Relli. *Smoking, Culture, and Economy in the Middle East*. I.B. Tauris; 2006.

Tripp, Charles. *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism*. Cambridge University Press; 2006.

Supplementary Texts

Additionally, students will visit marketplaces and be exposed to guest speakers from various professions who can personally and professionally discuss their experiences with the economic situation in the region.

- Ali, Abbas. *Islamic Perspectives on Management and Organizations*. Elgar Publishing; 2005.
- Barlow, Robin. *Economic Growth in the Middle East, 1950-1972*. International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 14; 1982.
<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/100887/ECON033.pdf?sequence=1>
- Jaffe, Amy. *Political, Economic, Social, Cultural, and Religious Trends in the Middle East and Their Impact on Energy Supply, Security and Pricing*. Rice University James Baker Institute for Public Policy. http://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/Research/a8d62800/TrendsInMiddleEast_MainStudy.pdf
- Noland, Marcus. *Islam, Economic Growth and the Middle East*. Global Dialogue, Vol. 6; 2004.
<http://www.worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=302>

Outline of Course Content

Topic 1 – Culture and Economics (3 weeks)

- Relationship between culture and economics
- Islamic economics and human investment (children, boys, men, women, etc.)
- Understanding economics relationship to technology, culture, production, consumerism, ownership, exchange regimes

Topic 2 – Ethics and Religion (3 weeks)

- Ethics of Islamic economics in comparison to other systems; differentiation between systems
- Impacts of Islam on economics during Ramadan with respect to ownership, inheritance, Islamic customs and charity, Eid
- Role of Islamic principles versus practices with respect to economics

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Topic 3 – Business and Banking (3 weeks)

- Gifting and exchanges in the context of modern Middle Eastern economics
- Offers and orientation of business practices towards consumers
- Islamic banking and differentiation between other types of banks
- Cultural and religious influences from historical traditions of feudalism, slavery, and class systems on the economics of the Middle East
- Case studies: tourism and telecommunications (cultural and religious impacts on marketing)

Topic 4 – Comparative Systems (4 weeks)

- Islamic economic systems in comparison to socialist and capitalist economic systems
- Transition of Middle Eastern economies first from “family” structures to business and companies
- Strengths in culture with respect to land, government, water, foreign interactions, exchange regimes