



## **MA(DLB)0585 – Modern West Asian Political Thought**

**[Cross Elective] Spring 2026**

### **Course Information**

Course Duration: Spring 2026

Location: TBA

Prerequisites: None

Equivalent Courses: NA

Exclusive Courses: NA

### **Instructor Information**

Instructor: Prof. Priyanka Chandra

Email: [priyanka@jgu.edu.in](mailto:priyanka@jgu.edu.in)

Office Hours: by appointment via email

### **1. Course Description**

This course introduces the rich history of West Asian political thought. Through an exploration of intellectual debates, political histories, social movements and the ideologies and politics they shape, students will get a chance to closely study a region that is highly contested and mostly misrepresented. It will familiarise students with the patterns of thought and action by studying streams of ideas, thinkers and ideologues engaged in intellectual debates on subjects including political Islam(s), nationalisms, secular and religious feminisms etc., beginning with the fundamental question: “Why West Asia and not the Middle East?”.

## 2. Course Intended Learning Objectives(Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Knowledge of major strands of political thought in modern West Asia.</li></ul>	Lecturing, discussions and interaction	Reading, writing, class discussions, critical engagement, class presentation, general awareness (current news), engagement with additional/suggested course materials, class participation (for all points throughout the semester)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Knowledge of major political actors, organisations and ideologues.</li></ul>	Lecturing, discussions and interaction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understanding of the role of ideological and civil society movements.</li></ul>	Lecturing, discussions and interaction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understanding contemporary debates on democratisation in the region.</li></ul>	Lecturing, discussions and interaction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A comprehensive view of diverse political cultures and how they shape contemporary West Asian politics.</li></ul>	Lecturing, discussions and interaction	

## 3. Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

Final Term Exam	30%
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Mid Term Exam	40%
Class Presentation	20%
Class Participation	10%

## Grade Definition

Grading and Comments			
Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Comments
O	80 and above	8	<b>Outstanding:</b> Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79	7.5	<b>Excellent:</b> Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74	7	<b>Very Good:</b> Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 -69	6	<b>Good:</b> Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64	5	<b>Fair:</b> Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59	4	<b>Acceptable:</b> Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54	3	<b>Marginal:</b> Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49	2	<b>Pass 1:</b> Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter.
P2	40 - 44	1	<b>Pass 2:</b> Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.

F	Below 40	0	<b>Fail:</b> Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course.
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#### 4. Academic Integrity

Classes will be held for three hours on a weekly basis and familiarity with the texts is a prerequisite for keeping up with them. You are required to read in preparation for each class in order to engage with the material and your colleagues. Class participation amounts to 15 percent of the grade. You are expected to actively participate in class discussions in a lively and informed manner. Attendance is not graded but you should be compliant with the university attendance policies, and mindful of not missing too many classes as it may impact your participation grade.

Keeping up with news and current developments in world politics will help in your class participation as well as overall comprehension. Further, it is a good idea to take notes by hand as long form writing has been shown to be more efficacious in committing things to memory.

Use of phones/laptops is not allowed with the exception of accessing reading material when instructed.

#### Plagiarism Rules

Any idea, sentence or paragraph you quote from a web source must be credited with the original source. Borrowing and paraphrasing ideas also amounts to plagiarism. If you paraphrase or directly quote from a web source in the exam, tutorials or essays, the source must be explicitly mentioned. Plagiarising content is prohibited, be it from scholarly sources (i.e. books and journal articles) or from the Internet. The department and the university have strict rules about plagiarism and consequences will have to be borne by students involved in plagiarism. This is an issue of academic integrity on which no compromise will be made.

#### 5. Keyword Syllabus

West Asia/Middle East, orientalism, political islam, gender, Zionism, modernsim, post colonialism, Arab world, Iran.

#### 6. Course Material

In addition to some basic textbook readings listed below, readings will be given each week according to specific themes.

Berboglu, Berch (ed.). 2019. *The Palgrave Handbook of Social Movements, Revolution and Social Transformation*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Esposito, John and Emad El-Din Shahin (eds.) (2013), *Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Hourani, Albert (1983), *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kamrava, Mehran (2005), *The Modern Middle East*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Sharabi, Hisham (1992), *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## 7. Session Plan

Session (with Date)	General Topic	Readings	Approach/Pedagogy
Week 1	Introduction		Lecture and class discussion
Week 2	West Asia or Middle East?	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 3	Orientalism and Its Discontents	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 4	Early Philosophy and Islamic Modernism	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 5	Anti-colonialisms & Nationalisms	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 6	Zionism	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 7	Palestine	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 8	Politics of revival	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 9	Islamic Revolution and Islamic Socialism	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 10	On State and Democracy	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 11	Feminisms and Women's Movements	TBA	Lecture and class discussion

Week 12	<u>Violent Movements</u>	TBA	Lecture and class discussion
Week 13	<u>Civil Society, Revolution and the Arab Uprisings</u>	TBA	Lecture and class discussion