Overview

This course will evaluate the current relations between Iran and the region, while exploring questions of identity, resources, interests and strategy. The Islamic Republic's geo-strategic aims as they developed over the past thirty five years reflect the complexity of the Iranian identity that incorporates nationalism, Shi'i sectarianism and universal Islamic aspirations. Accordingly, the importance of the Iranian nuclear project is linked to the country's revolutionary agenda but also its desire for regional hegemony. The nuclear negotiations with the five world powers demonstrate the dynamism of this regime and the centrality of Iran in an unstable region. The aim of this course is to understand the unique elements of the Iranian model, but also the potential for flexibility and change, in order to assess Iran's regional policy. Iran will also serve as case-study to discuss regime stability under authoritarian countries and the place of rationalism and irrationalism in decision-making in these regimes, in both the national and geo-strategic levels.

Topics and Reading material:

1. Iranian nationalism and the Islamic Revolution

Samih Farsoun and Mehrdad Mashayekhi (eds.), Iran: Political Culture in the Islamic Republic (Routledge, 2005), 1-29.

2. Political Authority:


3. Foreign policy and Rohani’s presidency:


4. **Regime Stability:**

5. **Iran and the Arab Spring:**
Elisheva Machlis, “Iran’s Spin on the Arab Spring”, *Iran Pulse* 46 (Nov 13, 2011).

6. **The Nuclear Issue:**

7. **Competition between Iran and Saudi Arabic:**
Shahram Chubin and Charles Trip, “Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations and Regional Order”, *Adelphi Series*, (June 8, 2005).

8. **The Pragmatism of the Gulf Countries:**

9. **Iran and Turkey:**

10. **Revolutionary Guards-Hizbullah-Syria Axis:**

11. The Question of Resources:
Suzanne Maloney, "The Revolutionary Economy", *The Iran Primer*

12. The Threat of the Jihad Movement: