



Tel Aviv University International

Iran and Regional Politics

Spring Semester 2020

Time/Day TBD

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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:

Wilfried Buchta, "Who Rules Iran: The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic", *The Washington Institute* (2000).

3. Foreign policy and Rohani's presidency:

Suzan Mallony, "Why Rouhani Won -- and why Khamenei Let Him", *Foreign Affairs* (June 16, 2013).

Nazila Fathi, "The Rouhani Paradox", *Foreign Policy* (June 13, 2014).

4. Regime Stability:

Alem, Yasmin. "Duality by Design: The Iranian Electoral System", *International Foundation for Electoral Systems* (2011).

5. Iran and the Arab Spring:

Elisheva Machlis, "Iran's Spin on the Arab Spring", *Iran Pulse* 46 (Nov 13, 2011).

Charles Kurzman, "The Arab Spring: Ideals of the Iranian Green Movement, Methods of the Iranian Revolution", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2012.

6. The Nuclear Issue:

Gawdat Baghat, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Islamic Republic of Iran", *Iranian Studies*, 2006.

7. Competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia:

Shahram Chubin and Charles Trip, "Iran-Saudi Arabia Relations and Regional Order", *Adelphi Series*, (June 8, 2005).

K Barzegar, "Iran and the Shiite Crescent: Myths and Realities", *Brown J. World Affairs*, 2008.

8. The Pragmatism of the Gulf Countries:

Christopher M. Davidson, *After the Sheikhs: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies* (Oxford University Press, 2013), ebook, 155-190.

Stephanie Cronin and Nur Masalha, "The Islamic Republic of Iran and the GCC States: from Revolution to Realpolitik?", *Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalisation in the Gulf States: LSE*, 17 (Aug., 2011).

9. Iran and Turkey:

F. Stephen Larrabee, Alireza Nader, *Turkish-Iranian Relations in a Changing Middle East RAND* (2013).

10. Revolutionary Guards-Hizbullah-Syria Axis:

Ali Alfoneh, "The Revolutionary Guards' Role in Iranian Politics", *Middle East Quarterly*, 2008.

“The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps”, *RAND* (2009).

11. The Question of Resources:

Suzanne Maloney, "The Revolutionary Economy", *The Iran Primer*

J Barnes, AM Jaffe, “The Persian Gulf and the Geopolitics of Oil”, *Survival* (2006).

12. The Threat of the Jihad Movement:

Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (2007), 145-166.

Hassan Mneimneh, “The Jihadist International: Al Qaeda’s Advance in the Levant”, *American Enterprise Institute* (May 1, 2009).

Evaluation:

Attendance and participation – 10%

Midterm exam – 20% (20 Nov.)

Final exam – 70% (five days after the end of term)

TAU International Course Guidelines

Rules and Respectful Behavior

- No cell phones or laptops permitted in class unless approved by instructor for use
- Tardiness to class is not permitted
- As our courses bring together students from many different styles of learning and from a wide variety of home institutions, we ask that students remain respectful to and patient with fellow classmates at all time as some students may be more familiar with certain course material or procedures than others.

Learning Accommodations

In accordance to University guidelines, students with learning disabilities or accommodation requests must submit official documentation from their home country / university (translated into English by notary if not already in English) to TAU International (tauiacademic@tauex.tau.ac.il) in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs they have. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs they may have. TAU International and its faculty cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU but certainly does the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible that are needed.

In-class Exams

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note below if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

TAU International Absence Policy

Attendance is **mandatory** in all of the courses. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified absences from classes will be accepted (for example: emergency matter or illness, both of which will require an official doctor's note sent to the faculty **on the day of the absence**). Such cases of absence should be reported to your lecturer immediately and again, a doctor's note is required. Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence. Please note that according to TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during the semester is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU.

Students are responsible for reading and adhering to the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#) at all times.