

dueMansoor Moaddel  
Professor of Sociology  
University of Maryland-College Park  
Researching the Middle East  
SOCY 480, Section 0101  
Fall 2020  
Tuesday-Thursday 3:30 –4:45 PM

**Office:** Online  
**Office Hour:** by appointment  
**Email:** [moaddel@umd.edu](mailto:moaddel@umd.edu)  
**Mobile:** 734-657-1128

### **Course Objectives**

This course introduces students to the people of the Middle East and North Africa, focusing on their values and belief systems. The course begins with an overview of some of the key concepts and steps in social-scientific research. This overview furnishes an analytical framework to serve as a mental map that enables students to navigate meaningfully through diverse events, institutions, and people. Calling this mental map *people and their issues*, it predicates on the idea that one way to understand the people of any society is to understand the type of issues they face and how they resolve these issues. The pertinent issues that will be discussed in this class are: individual autonomy versus patrimonial domination, gender equality versus gender hierarchization and male supremacy, secular politics versus religious government, national versus religious identity, the West as an epitome of progress versus the West as a decadent culture, and religious fundamentalism versus liberal nationalism.

The course then proceeds in two parts. The first part presents a broad overview of the political and social history of the region. It conceptualizes the region's contemporary history in terms of a succession of cultural episodes, including Islamic modernism, different forms of nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism. It argues that these cultural episodes are different resolutions of the same set of issues. In the second part, the course focuses on people's value orientations toward expressive individualism, gender equality, form of government, secular politics, identity, and religion. The course then measures these constructs. In this part, students will be introduced to different components of survey research and cross-national comparative data on the value orientations of the adult citizens (age 18 or older) from seven countries in the region: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey. The values survey data available at [www.mevs.org](http://www.mevs.org). This class will discuss how to analyze these data by focusing on the on the variable measures of these constructs. The final part of this class will be in-class presentations of students' research project.

### **Student Research Project**

Each student is expected to select one country for empirical research from the list of the countries provided below. Each student will then start his/her research project by designing a plan to investigate the emergence of different cultural episodes in the selected country. The progress of each project should roughly parallel the content of the lectures each week. Each

student will collect data on the nature of the historical events that trigger the cultural episodes in the selected country in the contemporary period. Each student will then use the data from the same country that is available at [www.mevs.org](http://www.mevs.org) in order to analyze and discuss people's orientations toward national identity, expressive individualism, gender equality, secular politics, liberal values, and religious fundamentalism, using SPSS.

In addition to making an in-class presentation at the end of the semester, students are expected to provide a bi-weekly written progress report and one final written report.

### **List of Countries**

The comparative cross-national survey data that will be used in this class covers Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey. For a copy of the data in SPSS readable format and the questionnaire, see <https://mevs.org/data/survey-summary/1004>.

### **Reading List**

The recommended articles in this syllabus are available on line. The following book will be used in this course.

Moaddel, Mansoor, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Moaddel, Mansoor, *The Clash of Values: Islamic Fundamentalism versus Liberal Nationalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020.

### **Assignments**

Final grades are determined by the following:

- Student Research Project– 25% of your grade
- Mid-term Exam – 20% of your grade
- Final Exam – 20% of your grade
- Chapter summaries from *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, & Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*
- 15%; a total of three, 5% each
- Data analysis assignments
- 15%; a total of three, 5% each
- In-class Participation – 5% of your grade

Note: 10% off if late assignment within three days, no assignment is accepted after three days. Students' specific situations will be considered.

### **Grading:**

For all assignments and the final grade, grading will be done on the basis of percentages, which will then be converted into symbols according to the following schema: >96%=A+; 91%-96%=A; 89%-90%=A-; 87%-88%=B+; 81%-86%=B; 79%-80%=B-; 77%-78%=C+; 71%-76%=C; 69%-70%=C-; 68%-60%=D; <60%=F.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Students are expected to gain familiarity with the history of the Middle East and North Africa in the contemporary period, features of the social transformation the region experienced in this period, and how this transformation generated a succession of cultural episodes. They are also expected to understand and analyze the major issues that were debated in these cultural

episodes, including those related to expressive individualism, the social status of women and gender equality, secular politics, basis of identity, liberal nationalism, and religious fundamentalism. Students must be able to understand and analyze the measures of these constructs, using the survey data on the Middle Eastern and North African countries that are available at [www.mevs.org](http://www.mevs.org). Finally, students must be able to comprehend key concepts and steps in social-scientific process in the study of human values in the Middle East and North Africa.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### **Week 1 September 1 & 3:** (Introduction: Steps in Social-Scientific Research

- A. Wonder, conceptualization, theory, operationalization, hypotheses, observation, analysis, and assessment
- B. Criteria of causation
- C. Description versus explanation
- D. Research strategy: comparative historical versus cross-national survey
- E. The contemporary history of the Middle East and North Africa as a succession of different cultural episodes: Islamic modernism, nationalism, fundamentalism, and the rise of liberal values in post-Arab Spring

#### Recommended reading:

- Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball, and Kendra L. Koivu. 2009. "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Science," *Comparative Political Studies*, 42, 1 (January): 114-146. <http://cps.sagepub.com/content/42/1/114.full.pdf>
- Bhattacharjee, Anol. 2012. *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices*. Textbooks Collection. Book 3. [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa\\_textbooks/3](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3).
- Cartwright, Nancy. 2002. "From Causation to Explanation and Back," *Causality: Metaphysics and Methods*, Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science, Technical Report 09/03. [http://www.lse.ac.uk/CPNSS/pdf/DP\\_withCover\\_Causality/CTR09-03-C.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/CPNSS/pdf/DP_withCover_Causality/CTR09-03-C.pdf)
- Griffiths, P. E. and R. D. Gray. 1994. "Developmental Systems and Evolutionary Explanation." *The Journal of Philosophy* 91, 6 (June): 277-304. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/2940982.pdf?acceptTC=true>
- J. W. N. Watkins. 1957. "Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 8, 30 (Aug.): 104-117.

### **Week 2 September 8 & 10:** Middle East and North Africa in the Contemporary Period: An Overview

#### Required reading:

- Moaddel, Mansoor, 2005. *Islamic Modernism*, Introduction and Chapter 1.

#### Recommended reading:

- Moaddel, Mansoor, 2013. "Cultural Change as Issues Resolution: Predicting Change in the Middle East." Pp. 87-112 in Beret E. Strong, Lisare Brooks Babin, Michelle Ramsden Zbylut, and Linda Roan, *Sociocultural Systems: The Next Step in Army Cultural*

*Capability*, U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Ft. Belvoir, VA. <file:///C:/Users/moaddel/Downloads/ADA591027.pdf>

**Week 3 September 15 & 17: Islamic Modernism: Egypt, India, and Iran**

Required reading:

Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism*, chapters 2-4.

Recommended reading:

Moaddel, Mansoor, 2001. "Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran," *Theory and Society* 30 (October): 669-731.

**Due: September 20, chapters summary 1**

**Week 4 September 22 & 24: Liberal Nationalism in Egypt and Iran and Arabism and Pan-Arab Nationalism in Syria and Iraq**

Required reading:

Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism*, chapters 5-8.

**Week 5 September 29 & October 1: Islamic Fundamentalism: Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Algeria**

**Due: September 28, chapters summary 2**

Required reading:

Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism*, chapters 9-12.

**Week 6 October 6 & 8: Islamic Fundamentalism (continued) Issues and Perspectives in the Study of Values in the Middle East and North Africa**

**Due: October 5, chapter summary 3**

**MID-TERM EXAM: October 13**

**Week 7 October 13 & 15: Issues and Perspectives in the Study of Values in the Middle East and North Africa: Understanding People's Attitudes and Perceptions through Survey Research (Sampling, Questionnaire Development, and Interviewing Techniques)**

Required reading:

Moaddel, "Introduction: Peoples and Their Issues," *The Clash of Values*

Data: "Comparative Cross-National Study of Religious Fundamentalism, Developmental Idealism, Values, and Morality in the Middle East and North Africa."  
<https://mevs.org/data/survey-summary/1004>.

**Week 8 October 20 & 22:** Understanding People’s Attitudes and Perceptions through Survey Research: Sampling, Questionnaire Development, and Interviewing Techniques

**Week 9 October 27 & 29:** Expressive individualism

Required Reading:

Moaddel, “Expressive Individualism,” *The Clash of Values*, Chapter One

**Due: November 2, Computer assignment 1**

**Week 10 November 3 & 5:** Status of women and gender relations

Moaddel, “The Status of Women and Gender Equality,” *The Clash of Values...*, Chapter Two.

**Week 11 November 10 & 12:** Secular politics, liberal values and national identity

Required Reading:

Moaddel, *The Clash of Values...*, Chapter Three.

**Due: November 11, Computer assignment 2**

**Week 12 November 17 & 19:** Religious fundamentalism & components: disciplinarian deity, literalism, exclusivity, and intolerance

Moaddel, *The Clash of Values...*, Chapter Four

**Due: November 23, Computer assignment 3**

**Week 13 November 24:** Macro-Contextual (Country) Variation in Fundamentalism and Liberal Values

Required reading:

Moaddel, “Macro-Contextual (Country) Variation in Fundamentalism and Liberal Values” & “What Makes a Country More Developed: Liberal values versus Religious Beliefs,” *The Clash of Values*, Chapters Five & Six

**Week 14 December 1 & 3:** The Arab Spring and Trend in Values: Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey

Required Reading:

Moaddel, “The Arab Spring and Trend in Values: Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Turkey,” *The Clash of Values...*, Chapter Six.

**Week 15 December 8 & 10:** Student presentation

**Final Exam: As Scheduled.**