

Amideast Education Abroad Programs

ANTH/MENA/HIST/POLS 321: Labor and Migration in the Middle East

Credit Hours: 3 credit hours

Program Location:

Term and Year:

Name of Instructor:

Course Hours:

Office Hours:

Contact Information:

Course Description

This multidisciplinary course brings together the fields of anthropology, political economy, labor and migration studies, incorporating macro-level analytical tools of political economy and detailed ethnographic accounts. Throughout the course the themes of labor and migration are interwoven, providing a historical analysis along with specific examples of how the region has changed over time.

The first half of the course focuses on questions of political economy and labor beginning with the post-colonial experience leading up to the Arab Spring. There is macro level analysis and theoretical perspectives related to neocolonialism, neoliberalism, rentier states, and national economies. There are also specific ethnographic examples from Egypt, Morocco, and Syria.

The second half of the course shifts to an emphasis on migration in and out of the Middle East and intraregional migration. Ethnographic examples focus on the Arab Gulf with a focus on the kafala system in Bahrain and United Arab Emirates and then in Jordan and Palestine/Israel. The section ends with a focus on forced migration with examples of the Nakba in Palestine and wars in Iraq and Syria.

By utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, with particular focus on political economy, labor and migration, the course will provide a strong foundation to understand and analyze the region.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Introduce key concepts for the study of labor, migration, and socio-economic class.
- Introduce the Middle East with focus on political economy, labor, and migration during the second half of the twentieth century until the present.
- Survey trends and themes across the region along with country specific ethnographic accounts.
- Provide historical context focused on political economy and labor that had long term impact on the region leading up to the Arab Spring.
- Practice close-reading, analytical writing, and active contributor to class discussions.

Course Requirements

The course will be split between a discussion-based seminar and lectures. Most important to the course is to critically engage the reading each week and be able to discuss and show further analysis with the weekly response writing assignment.

Attendance and Engagement:

Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and come prepared to participate fully in class activities. Students are further expected to be on time for all classes. Arriving late for class is disrespectful of both the instructor and fellow students.

Please refer to the official Amideast Attendance Policy posted in the online course and on the Absence request site on the Student Portal.

Reading:

Each week students will be assigned approximately 75 pages of reading from 2-4 academic articles and/or chapters from books. Students will need to read the text closely, highlight, and annotate the readings. This is particularly important in order to be able to engage with classmates and to be able to fulfill the required writing for the course.

Writing:

Each week students will write a response essay of approximately 750 words that interacts with, challenges, questions, and makes connections to the readings. The essays are not summaries of the reading. The focus should be on personal synthesis and ideas, but the paper should remain closely tied to the assigned texts. Most importantly, students should explore ideas, inspirations, criticisms, and questions that arise from interactions with the texts.

Class Discussion:

To ensure that students are prepared for discussion in class, close reading and analytical writing will be done prior to the class. Students should come to class prepared with questions and perspectives on the reading. Active participation is a crucial part of the course. Students must attend class regularly and provide positive contributions to class discussion.

Assessment Overview

Description	Weight	Due Date
Midterm Exam (covering the first 6 weeks of the course)	20%	
Final Exam (covering weeks 7-14; not cumulative)	20%	
Weekly Essays and Class Engagement	60%	Continuous

Course Schedule

Week 1: Defining the Middle East: political economy, labor, and migration

- Beinin, Joel. *A Critical Political Economy of the Middle East and North Africa*. Stanford University Press. Chapter: Introduction (1-24)
- Hanieh, Adam. *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Haymarket Books. Chapter 2: Framing the Region: Imperialism and the Middle East. (19-46)
- Richards, Alan, John Waterbury, Melani Cammett, and Ishac Diwan. Regional Economic Integration and labor Migration (385-406). *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Updated 2013 edition). Westview Press 2014.

Week 2: Neoliberalism and its impacts in the Middle East

Bayat, Asef. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. Stanford University Press, 2013. Chapter: Introduction- The Art of Presence (1-26)

Beinin, Joel. *Workers and Thieves: Labor Movements and Popular Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt*. Stanford University Press. 2016. Chapter 2: The Washington Consensus (39-60)

Hanieh, Adam. *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Haymarket Books, 2013. Chapter 3: Mapping the Neoliberal Experience (47–74)

Week 3: Making of the working class and its pursuits (Egypt)

Bayat, Asef. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. Stanford University Press, 2013. Ch. 3: The Poor and the Perpetual Pursuit of Life Chances (66–96).

Shehata, Samer. *Shop Floor Culture and Politics in Egypt*. SUNY Press, 2010. Chapter: Introduction (1-18), Chapter 2 Plastic Sandals, Tea, and Time: Shop Floor culture and the Production of Class in Egypt (19-56)

Barsoum, Ghada. A Generation without Work Contracts. In *Young Generation Awakening: Economics, Society, and Policy on the Eve of the Arab Spring*. Eds. Edward Sayre and Tarek Yousef. Oxford University Press. (169-187).

Week 4: Working class life and labor (Morocco)

Cairol, M. Laetitia. *Girls of the Factory: A Year with the Garment Workers of Morocco*. University Press of Florida, 2011. Introduction (1–19) and Ch. 2: Gaining Entrée (45–66).

McMurray, David A. *In and Out of Morocco: Smuggling and Migration in a Frontier Boomtown*. University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Ch. 2: Working Abroad but Dreaming of Home: The Story of Haddou (20–47)

Week 5: Migration and Labor (Syria)

Chalcraft, John. *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon*. Stanford University Press, 2009. Introduction (1–23), Pax Syria (135-178), Instability and Exile (179-220), and Conclusion (221-232).

Week 6: Arab Spring: Labor Movements and Political activism

Hanieh, Adam. *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East*. Haymarket Books. Chapter 7: Crisis and Revolution (145-176)

Beinin, Joel. *Workers and Thieves: Labor Movements and Popular Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt*. Stanford University Press. 2016. Popular Uprisings in 2011 and Beyond. (97-134)

Langohr, Vickie. Labor Movements and Organizations (180-200) *The Arab uprisings explained: New Contentious Politics in the Middle East*. Ed. Marc Lynch.

Week 7: Migration and Labor: Bahrain

AlShehabi, Omar. Histories of Migration to the Gulf. In *Transit States: Labour, Migration, and Citizenship in the Gulf*. Pluto Press, 2014.

Gardner, Andrew. *City of Strangers: Gulf Migration and the Indian Community in Bahrain*. Cornell University press, 2010. Chapter 1- Introduction: Structural violence and transnational Migration in the Gulf States. (1-23) Chapter 3 Foreign labor in Peril: The Indian Transnational proletariat (49-70). Chapter 4 Strategic Transnationalism: The Indian Diasporic Elite (71-95).

Week 8: Migration and Labor: Dubai

Mahdavi, Pardis. *Gridlock: Labor, Migration, and Human Trafficking in Dubai*. Stanford University Press, 2011. Ch. 4: Migration in Context and Ch. 5: Labor Outside the Law (125–148).

Buckley, Michelle. "Locating Neoliberalism in Dubai: Migrant Workers and Class Struggle in the Autocratic City." *Antipode* 45, no. 2 (2013): 256–274.

Week 9: Refugees and labor: Jordan

Sassoon, Joseph. Iraqi refugees in Jordan. In *The Iraqi Refugees: The new Crisis in the Middle East*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd. (33-60).

Lenner, Katharina, and Lewis Turner. "Making Refugees Work? The Politics of Integrating Syrian Refugees into the Labor Market in Jordan." *Middle East Critique* 28, no. 1 (2019): 65–95.

Hartnett, Allison Spencer. *The Effect of Refugee Integration on Migrant labor in Jordan*. Review of Middle East Studies. Cambridge Press. January 15, 2019.

Nassar, Heba. *Intra-Regional labour Mobility in the Arab World*. International Organization for Migration. 2010. Chapter 1: Intra-Regional labour Mobility in the Arab World: An Overview (9-42).

Mencutek, Zeynep Sahin and Ayat Nashwan. Perceptions About the labor market Integration of Refugees: Evidences from Syrian Refugees in Jordan. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*. March 19, 2020.

Week 10: Migration and Labor: Jordan- Sri Lankan Domestic labor

Frantz, Elizabeth. *Exporting Subservience: Sri Lankan Women's Migration for Domestic Work in Jordan*. The London School of Economics and Political Science. Chapter 4 Gifts from Abroad: Domestic Servants and the Political Economy of Jordan (73-95), Chapter 5 The Kafala System: Legal and Administrative Framework (96-120), Chapter 8: Consequences and Contradictions (172-193)

Week 11: Migration and labor: Israel and Palestine

Morton Jerome, Ethan. The Struggle for Palestinian Workers' Rights in Israeli Settlements: The Case of Maan and Zarfati Garage Organizing Settlement Workers. *Jerusalem Quarterly*. Summer 2021.

Kaminer, Matan. Saving the face of the Arabah: Thai migrant workers and the asymmetries of community in an Israeli agricultural settlement. *American Ethnologist*. February 2022.
Hackl, Andreas. Occupied labour: dispossession through incorporation among Palestinian workers in Israel. *Settler Colonial Studies*. Feb 2, 2022

Week 12: Migration in the Middle East

Chatty, Dawn. Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East. University of Oxford. 2010. Dispossession and Displacement within the Contemporary Middle East: An Overview of Theories and Concepts (7-37), Liminality and Belonging: Social Cohesion in Impermanent Landscapes (279-305)

Week 13: The Nakba: Palestine

Chatty, Dawn. *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. University of Oxford. 2010. Palestinian Dispossession and Exodus (180-231)

Film: *Creation and Catastrophe*

Week 14: Forced Migration: Syria and Iraq

Pearlman, Wendy. We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria. Custom House. Excerpts.

(Students will be given different excerpts and will present their section to the rest of the class)