

POLS 390: Jordan in its Regional Context Syllabus

Credits: 3 credit hours

Program Location: Amideast/Jordan

Term and Year:

Name of Instructor:

Course Hours:

Aims and Objectives of the Course:

- Understanding the historical regional and international dynamics in which Jordan was emerged as a state and as a society.
- Understanding the development of Jordanian political system and its major institutions and powers.
- Exploring Jordanian foreign policy, regionally and internationally.
- Studying the impact of major regional and international events on Jordanian politics.
- Understanding contemporary issues in Jordan in light of the Arab Spring
- Familiarize students with the key conflicts and diplomatic processes in the contemporary Middle East.
- Provide students with basic analytical tools for understanding and interpreting the dynamics driving conflict and its resolution in the region;
- Assist students to engage in informed discussion and debate about the Middle East, its conflicts, and conflict resolution.

Course Description:

This course explores internal, regional and international dynamics that shaped Jordanian politics in general. It will delve into different Jordanian internal and external affairs.

The course examines the events that shape the political system in Jordan, and in interplay with the entire region, in light of the Arab Spring (2010 onward). Its focus tackles questions related to political institutions and their development in a Middle Eastern context. It also intends to answer how and why political institutions take the form that they do, and how and when they endure noteworthy change. In addition, the course examines how social identities and political/religious and cultural groups influence Jordanian internal politics. This course explores conflict and diplomacy in the contemporary Middle East through an in-depth examination and discussion of case studies from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and how these cases influenced Jordan's internal and external policies. Throughout the course, students will be given selected contemporary and comparative examples that help demonstrate the peculiarity of Jordan as the longest surviving political model in the Arab world. The course will be run in an interactive fashion and include discussions, lectures, and seminars.

Learning outcomes for the course

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

- Understand the dynamics that govern the relation between Jordanian internal and external policies and the region.
- Identify different political players (internal, regional, international) that are shaping political life in Jordan. since the Arab Spring.

Knowledge

This course is designed to assist students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge about:

- The nature of contemporary Jordanian political life.
- Major contemporary Middle Eastern affairs and their impact on Jordan.
- The role of major international players in the region.

Skills

This course is designed to assist students in acquiring or enhancing the following skills:

- Interpreting Jordanian & Middle Eastern events from an international angle.
- Relating contemporary issues to the right political context in Arab countries and in Jordan.
- Critical assessment of different Jordanian policies.
- Critically analyzing the news and interpretations in Western media in light of better knowledge of political actors, beliefs and agents in Jordan and the region.

Attitudes

This course is designed to encourage development of the following attitudes:

- Readiness to challenging stereotypes in light of new knowledge.
- Appreciation of face-to-face encounters with otherwise unfamiliar people.
- Solid understanding of contemporary affairs and crises in Arab countries.
- Challenge predispositions in academia and the media regarding contemporary issues in Arab countries and particularly Jordan.
- Awareness of strategic interests of different players.

Required Readings:

Essential

- Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System.
- Strategic Report.

Additional

- Hassan Abu Hanieh and Mohammad Abu Rumman, *The 'Islamic State' Organization: The Sunni Crisis and The Struggle of Global Jihadism*(Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015)
- Marc Lynch, *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East* (Public Affairs Press, 2016)
- Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, ninth edition (St. Martin's Press, 2017)

Assessment Overview

Description	Weight	Due Date
Essay / Policy Paper	20%	
Midterm Exam	20%	
Attendance & class participation	15%	
Class Presentation	15%	
Final Exam	30%	

Essay / Policy Paper (20%): *(more explanation will be offered during classes)*

Students will prepare either an academic essay or a policy paper of 3,000 – 3,500 words on one of the main Jordanian affairs, crisis or conflicts in the region that Jordan is part of, the student can pick any topic discussed during the semester or any other topic relevant to the course. The policy paper will be prepared for the United Nations Secretary-General, The U.S. State Department, Jordanian Gov, NGOs, A regional Player and should:

1. Identify the main actors related to the topic and their core interests;
2. Recommend realistic and effective initiatives, to be undertaken by the (recipient) UN and/or member states, to restore peace, stability, development, interests... and address the threats, loss... this issue poses to international peace and security;
3. Identify and respond to key objections to the proposed policy recommendations.

The policy brief should be prefaced by a 500-word Executive Summary, which is part of the total word count. Students are allowed to conduct this exercise in groups of two-three each. Essay / Policy briefs is due no later than **5pm Amman time on LMS**. These must conform to the MLA format using 12-point font, with a cover page indicating name of class, instructor, authors and date.

Midterm Exam (20%):

A set exam in the class will take place in week seven covering the topics & readings already covered.

Attendance and class participation (15%):

Students are required to attend all classes and to be active and engaged in the discussions by asking questions and to speak up their own minds, thoughts, analysis & concerns about the topics covered. The author(s) of each policy brief will present (**Class Presentation 15%**) their work to the class on week thirteen. The purpose of such paper and presentation is to familiarize students with official political reporting and correspondence.

Final Exam (30%):

A final take-home exam consisted of four questions that may reflect any of the material covered during the semester; students are required to answer two of their choice with 750-1,000 word essays for each question. Papers are due no later than **5pm Amman time on the LMS**, the questions will be available to students a week ahead.

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.

Beyond being in class on time, expectations of student engagement that are accounted for in this portion of the grade include both quality and quantity: full involvement in in-class exercises, class discussions, active listening and asking questions, and proactively seeking additional help during office hours if needed. Throughout the semester, there are a number and variety of program activities that are mandatory for all students. They are announced in advance and reminders are sent. Failure to attend mandatory program activities therefore reflects negatively on students' attendance and engagement grade.

Attendance Policy: Please see the terms of the attendance policy as noted in the LMS for this course.

Course Schedule

Week One:

Introduction: The Formation of the Contemporary Middle East and Jordan.

This class will cover the history & dynamics of the region in response to major events during the twentieth century especially those with direct effect on Jordan. As a result, coverage of main political characteristics of the region will be provided.

Readings:

- Introduction & Ch.1 Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Introduction & Ch.1 AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System.

Week Two:

The Political System in Jordan

This class will explain how the Jordanian entity evolved and how internal and external (regional & international) events shaped its political character and system. Coverage of different branches & political powers will be explored in details. All major events & turning points of the developments of Jordan will be discussed.

Readings:

- Ch.2 Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch. 2&3 AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System.

Week Three:

Jordan and the Arab – Israeli Conflict

This class will focus on the role of Jordan in the Arab – Israeli conflict and how the Palestinian issue influenced the politics of Jordan whether internally or regionally. Jordanian involvements in this conflict and its consequences on regional and international levels will be explored.

Readings:

- Ch.3,4,&5. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch. 5&7. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, ninth edition (St. Martin's Press, 2017)

Week Four:

The Cold War and its Aftermath.

This class will focus on the shifts & transitions in the international system in the early 1990s and regional events companied that era such as the second Gulf war and its regional consequences especially those with huge impact on Jordan.

Readings:

- Ch.8. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch. 4. AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System.

Week Five: (Essay / Policy paper Due date)

Jordan and the Peace Process

This topic considered as one of the major turning points in the region and for Jordan; comprehensive coverage of all related internal, regional and international dynamics will be explored. The political & economical impacts of the peace treaty on Jordan will be assessed here.

Readings:

- Ch.8&9. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch. 9&10. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, ninth edition (St. Martin's Press, 2017)

Week Six:

Jordan Under King Abdullah II

Since his succession to the Jordanian throne a lot of developments took place in Jordan due to his leadership style; all these characteristics, developments, major policies & initiatives and their consequences will be explored.

Reading:

- Ch. 10&11. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.

Week Seven:

Mid Term Exam (in class)

Week Eight:

Fall Break

Week Nine:

Jordan and the Global War on Terror

The focus of this class will be on the huge impact of the events of 9/11 and its consequences especially regarding what the U.S. called it “Global War on Terror”. One of the major U.S. strategy of such war was to invade a neighboring country to Jordan, Iraq. Jordan’s reaction to such events & a coverage of all kinds of policies and engagements Jordan pursued internally, regionally & internationally will be provided.

Readings:

- Ch. 10&11. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch.1 Hassan Abu Hanieh and Mohammad Abu Rumman, *The ‘Islamic State’ Organization: The Sunni Crisis and The Struggle of Global Jihadism*(Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2015)

Week Ten:

The Arab Spring and its aftermath

For this topic, a deep & comprehensive coverage will take place regarding issues related to the Arab Spring especially those with direct influence on Jordan such as the Syrian crisis and its impact on Jordan. More importantly, the class will delve into Jordanian domestic politics during this period of time and what kinds of political demands and reforms took place as a result.

Readings:

- Ch.12. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch. 1&4. Marc Lynch, *The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East* (Public Affairs Press, 2016)

Week Eleven:

The Foreign Policy of Small States (Jordan and regional players)

This class will explore the paradigm of small states foreign policies exemplifying the Jordanian foreign policy in recent historical context. It will cover and analyze different characteristics of such policies and the extent to which it can be predicted.

Readings:

- Strategic Report.
- Ch.11. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System. (p. 96-100)

Week Twelve:

U.S. – Jordanian Relations

This class will critically study the strategic relations between Jordan & the U.S., a brief historical coverage will take place then more detailed analyses to contemporary issues concerning both countries such the peace process & the stability of the region, not to mention the indispensable U.S. support to Jordan.

Readings:

- Strategic Report.
- Ch.11. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System. (p.p 96-100)

Week Thirteen:

Class Presentation

Students on this day will deliver their presentations regarding their research topic / policy paper/ essay which has to be regarding issues related to Jordan & the region after consultation with the course instructor in which a discussion and a dialogue among students will follow each presentation.

Week Fourteen:

Jordan's challenges & Future Insights

After such comprehensive coverage to different political affairs concerning Jordan and its regional context, this class will critically discuss the challenges Jordan & the region are facing in light of current regional & international context such as instability of the region, rising regional & international powers, changes to U.S. priorities regionally & globally and of course changes to internal dynamics in Jordan.

Readings:

- Strategic Report.
- Ch.12&Conclusion. Tahbob, Nasser (2017). Jordan Under the Hashemites.
- Ch.5. AlMashagbeh, Amin (2019). Jordanian Political System.

Week Fifteen:

Final Exam

Week Sixteen:

Course reflection activity

An out class activity such a visit to one of the main political land marks in Amman such as the Jordanian parliament or the Museum of Political life, to be arranged with Amideast & the students to reflect on what the students learned during the course.