PSC 365: The Politics of the Middle East and North Africa

Fall 2017, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1:45 pm
Instructor: Dr. Tina Kempin Reuter, Associate Professor, Department of Government; Director, Institute for Human Rights

Course Description
The Middle Eastern and Northern African (MENA) cultural, political, economic, and social space has been the focus of international attention and scrutiny in both public political discourse and in media coverage. The region is perceived as a bastion of authoritarianism, a hotbed of ethnic and religious conflict, and a region engulfed in political violence and social struggles. Why does authoritarianism persist in the Middle East? How have the popular uprisings in the Arab world transformed the area? Why have Islamists become prominent opposition forces? And why do some Middle Eastern Countries suffer from high levels of political violence why others are spared? What accounts for the region's economic underdevelopment despite vast natural resources?

This course will answer these questions by examining relevant political theories of comparative and international politics and applying them to the MENA region. Through the analysis of different case studies, we will explore the impact of authoritarian rule, uprisings, religious extremism, and violence and war and discuss calls for change to the political, economic, and social environment of the Middle East caught in the juxtaposition of secular modernism and religious revival in the area.

For questions, please contact Dr. Tina Kempin Reuter at tkreuter@uab.edu