

George Mason University
School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Spring 2012

The Arab Spring and Social Change
CONF 695 Section 008

Class Time: Tuesdays at 7:20 – 10:00PM

Location: GMU Arlington Campus, Truland Building, Room 648

Instructor: Rawhi Afaghani (202) 730-5721 rafaghan@gmu.edu

Office Hours: After class and by appointment

Course Description

Recent political unrest in the Arab world led to the fall of robust and powerful regimes. Calls for freedom, democracy and political reforms engulfed the region in a sea of protests that forced Tunisia's President Zine Eddine Ben Ali to flee, toppled the regime of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, and led to the death of Moammar Gadhafi in Libya. Demands for change led to both peaceful protests and armed confrontations in Libya, Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain and across the Arab world. Social movements are often caused by the convergence of social, economic and political oppression and hardship. Indeed, this has been the case in the Arab world, where government corruption, elite self-interest, and economic inequalities are evident. The Arab Spring uprisings were born through a collective drive, but unlike contemporary social movements, they lacked a political framework and key leading figures. In some cases, such as in Tunisia and Egypt, peaceful protests led to a relatively peaceful political change. However, thus far the outcome of the Arab Spring in other cases, such as in Syria, Libya and Yemen, might suggest the start of several cyclical conflicts.

This course will examine recent and real-time events and will allow students to bridge components of theory and practice. The class will examine the Arab Spring uprisings mainly in Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen and will enable students to review other cases through interactive discussions and course assignments. The course will provide context for understanding the conditions that led to civil unrest and will explore the new power structure in the Arab world. The students will conduct conflict mapping of each case to understand the nature and conditions for possible conflict resolution in each country. Additionally, the course will examine the role of social media in empowering people to organize in an era of fast developing digital communication.

The cases of the Arab Spring vary widely, and the students will consider common questions to create a usable frame of reference: Why have people organized? How have people organized into new political groups and organizations or joined existing ones? What is the outcome in each case? And, what will the future bring in each country? Through an in-depth examination of each case study, students will then explore possible intervention plans. By the conclusion of the course, students will have a strong grasp of the social and political conditions that led to the Arab Spring, they will have a broad understanding of current dynamics and possible outcomes, and they will have familiarized themselves with appropriate conflict intervention plans that can be used to address the civil unrest in the context of these case studies.

Reading Assignments and Resources

Required books

Three books are available for sale in the bookstore. These are:

Beinin, Joel, and Frédéric Vairel, eds. *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011.

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011.

Recommended books

Beaumont, Peter. *Summer of Unrest: Revolution Road*. Vintage Digital, 2011.

Bowker, Robert. *Egypt and the Politics of Change in the Arab Middle East*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2010.

Filiu, Jean-Pierre. *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.

Kawczynski, Daniel. *Seeking Gaddafi*. Biteback Limited, 2011.

Sardar, Sheheryar, and Adeel Shah. *Sandstorm: a leaderless revolution in the digital age*. Edited by Benish Shah. Global Executive Board, 2011.

Wright, Robin. *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World*. Simon and Schuster, 2011.

All other readings will be available on Blackboard or through another online source, as indicated on the syllabus.

Additional complementary resources will be posted on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Grading

Grades will be calculated according to the following weights:

Midterm Exam 25%

Final Paper 50%

Class participation 25%

PLEASE NOTE: Only in an extreme situation will the instructor consider a late submission permissible. Grades of Incomplete will not be given except in cases of documented medical emergency.

Mid-term Essay (25%)

The mid-term essay will be short take-home essay assignment and will challenge you to integrate and reflect on what you have learned thus far in the semester. If you attend class, participate in discussion, do the required reading and think critically about the material, you will do well on this exercise. This essay will be due on **March 20**.

Final Paper (50%)

Students will write analytical research paper (20 pages minimum, 30 pages maximum, double-spaced) in which each student will select an Arab country that is witnessing or witnessed civil unrest in the context of the Arab Spring and offer original analysis using a theoretical framework learned in the class or by using other familiar conflict theories. Additionally, each student will propose an intervention plan to de-escalate violence, terminate conflict or prevent future conflict in that country. Students will be expected to present on their final papers for feedback. Students are encouraged to choose a theme or problem early in the semester to allow ample time for integrative thinking on the subject. The final paper is due on the last day of class.

Participation (25%)

Participation, which encourages a dynamic learning experience for all students, consists of in-class discussion and student presentations. Students will be expected to come to class with questions for discussion. Students will carry the discussion and engage each other on topics in the assigned readings. Students are also encouraged to participate in the learning process by circulating new ideas and resources through Blackboard. In addition to participating in discussion, each student or a team of students, will make two class presentations based on the summaries of reading materials. Students are encouraged to post their presentations and other resources on Blackboard so that their fellow students can refer back to them as resources.

Expectations

- *Think critically about the material.* Students are encouraged to question the perspectives of the writers, and to engage in *respectful* discussion of the material in class.
- *Be integrative and creative.* Incorporate your knowledge of conflict literature (theory and practice) into your thinking and writing. Integrate and apply your knowledge of other fields and specific locations. Share these ideas and experiences with your classmates. Drawing on classmate's experiences will add depth and interest to everyone's learning experience.
- *Be tolerant and respectful.* This includes tolerance of different perspectives, as well as different learning curves. Share your knowledge with each other, and remember that the course is a mutual learning experience. *(Respect also means using technology respectfully. Please turn off phones, and limit use of computers only to note taking.)*
- *Do the reading.* You will be expected to participate thoughtfully in discussion. This requires that you have familiarity with the texts and that you have taken the time to reflect on them.
- *Be careful with your written work* by using:
 - Correct grammar and spelling
 - Clear organization and expression
 - Appropriate internal and reference list citations, using proper citation
 - A Times New Roman and 12 point font, and one inch margins

In addition, GMU, through its University Writing Center, provides the free services of a writing consultant to comment on and advise you regarding anything you write for any GMU course. Contact the Writing Center at 410-993-1200, wcenter@gmu.edu.

- *Talk to the instructor.* If any of the assignments or the material presented in the readings or in class are unclear or confusing, please let the instructor know so that he can explain or correct. The instructor is also glad to discuss any other concerns along the way.
- *Remember GMU's Honor Code*, which states that "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.**"

This honor code applies fully to this course. Penalties for violating the honor code will be consistent with University policy, including the assignment of a grade of zero for any work that violates the policy.

Class Structure, Assignments and Schedule

I. Introduction.

For the first few class meetings we will look at different analysis concerning the causes and conditions that led to the Arab Spring uprisings. This includes discussions about economic hardship, the rise of Islamists, and the impact of new media on Arab society. We will look at few conflict theories to help us conduct the analysis, and we will utilize conflict mapping methods to help us understand the circumstances that brought about civil unrest in the Arab world.

Week 1: January 24

Student introductions and goals
 Review of class structure and syllabus
 Presentation sign-up
 Thinking about your final project

Week 2: January 31

Understanding the origin of the Arab Spring

Readings:

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp. 1-75.

Peruse the website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12813859> (BBC Arab Uprising Portal) Focus on the following section: "Middle East protests: Country by Country." Look at Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Also, you may take a look at Tunisia, Bahrain, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Burton, John. "Institutional Values and Human Needs." In *Deviance Terrorism and War*, edited by John Burton, 56-84. New York: St. Martin's, 1979. **

Richard E. Rubenstein, Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development - Richard E. Rubenstein. Available at: http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_1/Rubenstein.htm

** Readings marked with two asterisks are available on Blackboard.

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 75-160. (optional)

Week 3: February 7

Understanding the origin of the Arab Spring *continues...*

Readings:

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 2-67.

Tadros, Mariz. "Introduction: The Pulse of the Arab Revolt." *IDS Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (2012): 1-15. **

Fattah, Khaled. "Yemen: A Social Intifada In a Republic of Sheikhs." *Middle East Policy* 18, no. 3 (2011): 79-85.

Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 27, no. 3 (1990): 291-305.**

Gurr, Ted Robert. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970. Chapter 2.**

Week 4: February 14

Mapping the Arab Spring: who, what, when, where, why and how

Readings:

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp. 87-140.

Wehr, Paul. "Conflict Mapping." *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2006. Available at: <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/conflict-mapping>.

Sandole, Dennis J.D. (1998). "A Comprehensive Mapping of Conflict and Conflict Resolution: A Three Pillar Approach." *Peace and Conflict Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, December, pp. 1-30. Available at www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/sandole.

Afaghani, Rawhi. "News Media and Peacebuilding: Uncovering Opportunities That Can Facilitate Cooperation", 2011. <http://hdl.handle.net/1920/6334>. Pp. 170-174.**(optional)

Emadi, Hafizullah. "Requiem for the Baath Party: Struggle for Change and Freedom in Syria." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2011): 62 -79.**(optional)

II. The Arab Spring: An Exceptional Social movement

In this section of the class we will look at the Arab Spring in the context of social movements frameworks, and we will discuss the role of social media in enabling social change. The spontaneous uprisings were/are unique and mainly depended on the strength and willingness of thousands of young people who were united around a common cause – to end oppression and bring political reform. Nonetheless, unlike many contemporary social movements, the Arab Spring uprisings lacked a political vision, framework and key leading figures. Additionally, protestors across the Arab world use social media as an effective platform for shaping public opinion and narrative, while also provided a highly valuable tool to coordinate protests and organize demonstrations.

Week 5: February 21

The Arab Spring: a unique social movement

News in the Arab countries changed form “Could it happen here?” to “It is happening here.”

Readings:

Beinin, Joel, and Frédéric Vairel, eds. *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011. Pp. 1-82.

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 161-247.

Week 6: February 28

The Arab Spring: a unique social movement *continues...*

Readings:

Beinin, Joel, and Frédéric Vairel, eds. *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011. Pp. 83-106, 143-180 and 237-254.

Buechler, Steven M. “New Social Movement Theories.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (July 1, 1995): 441-464.**

Calhoun, Craig. “‘New Social Movements’ of the Early Nineteenth Century.” *Social Science History* 17, no. 3 (October 1, 1993): 385-427.**

Nelson A. Pichardo. “New Social Movements: A Critical Review.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 23 (January 1, 1997): 411-430.**(optional)

Dupont, Cedric, and Florence Passy. “The Arab Spring or How to Explain those Revolutionary Episodes?” *Swiss Political Science Review* 17, no. 4 (2011): 447–451.**(optional)

Week 7: March 6 – Mid-term exams handed out

Social media and the Arab Spring: The new media are empowering people to organize in an era of fast developing digital communication.

Readings: (Several short readings)

Al Sharif, Nabil. “The ‘Arab Spring’ and the future of communications”, no. 3 (May 23, 2011). Available at: <http://www.portland-communications.com/arab-spring-and-future-communications-0>.

Axford, Barrie. “Talk About a Revolution: Social Media and the MENA Uprisings.” *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (October 2011): 681-686.**

Beckett, Charlie. “After Tunisia and Egypt: towards a new typology of media and networked political change | Charlie Beckett”, February 11, 2011. Available at: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2011/02/11/after-tunisia-and-egypt-towards-a-new-typology-of-media-and-networked-political-change/>.

Dunn, Alexandra. “Unplugging a Nation: State Media Strategy during Egypt’s January 25 Uprising.” *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 35 (2011): 15-24.**

Ghannam, Jeffrey. *Social Media in the Arab World: Leading up to the Uprisings of 2011*. Center for International Media Assistance, February 3, 2011. Available at: <http://cima.ned.org/publications/social-media-arab-world-leading-uprisings-2011-0>. (Skim the report)

- Khamis, Sahar, and Katherine Vaughn. "Cyberactivism in the Egyptian Revolution: How Civic Engagement and Citizen Journalism Tilted the Balance." *Arab Media & Society*, no. 13 (2011). Available at: <http://www.arabmediasociety.com/?article=769>.
- Khondker, Habibul Haque. "Role of the New Media in the Arab Spring." *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (October 2011): 675-679.**
- Srinivasan, Ramesh. "London, Egypt and the nature of social media." *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2011. http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-innovations/london-egypt-and-the-complex-role-of-social-media/2011/08/11/gIQAfoud8I_print.html.
- Shirky, Clay. "Political Power of Social Media - Technology, the Public Sphere Sphere, and Political Change, The." *Foreign Affairs* 90 (2011): 28-41.**
- Zhou, Xiaolin, and Barry Wellman. "Egypt: The First Internet Revolt?" *Peace Magazine* 27, no. 3 (September 2011): 6-10.**

Week 8: March 13

SPRING RECESS

III. Power Dynamics in the Context of the Arab Spring.

In this section of the class we will look at the emerging new power structure in the Arab world. The concept of power often brings out strong emotions in people. It is associated with images of control and submission, and images of struggles for liberation against exploitation. In this context we will discuss how regional and external political powers affected the dynamics of the Arab Spring. Additionally, we will examine how the Arab regimes' failures to implement political reforms led to the escalation of the Arab Spring revolutions. In the context of all of this we must consider the issue of terrorism and its potential impact on the dynamics of the Arab Spring. Arab demonstrators demanded freedom and democracy, while at the same time showed no sympathy to terrorist groups such as Al Qaida. Nonetheless, Al Qaida-inspired groups in the Arab world could greatly benefit from civil unrest in the region.

Week 9: March 20 - Mid-term exams due

External and regional power players

Readings:

- Dahl, Robert. "Power as the Control of Behavior." In *Power*, edited by Steven Lukes, 37-58. New York: New York University Press, 1986.**
- Freudenstein, Roland. "The Arab Spring: what's in it for us?" *European View* 10, no. 1 (June 3, 2011): 67-72.**
- Neumann, Franz L. "Approaches to the Study of Political Power." *Political Science Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (June 1, 1950): 161-180.**
- Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp. 243-318.
- Tétreault, Mary Ann. "The Winter of the Arab Spring in the Gulf Monarchies." *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (2011): 629-637.**
- Weber, Max. "Domination By Economic Power and by Authority." In *Power*, edited by Steven Lukes, 28-36. New York: New York University Press, 1986.**

Week 10: March 27

The long-awaited political reforms are no longer sufficient

Readings:

Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "Sectarianism as Counter-Revolution: Saudi Responses to the Arab Spring." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 11, no. 3 (December 1, 2011): 513-526.**

Korpi, Walter. "Conflict, Power and Relative Deprivation." *The American Political Science Review* 68, no. 4 (December 1, 1974): 1569-1578.** (Optional)

Parsons, Talcott. "Power and the Social System." In *Power*, edited by Steven Lukes, 94-143. New York: New York University Press, 1986.**

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp.141-212.

Week 11: April 3

Terrorism and the Arab Springs

Readings:

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 359-381.

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp. 76-86.

Siam, Emad. "The Islamist vs the Islamic in Welfare Outreach." *IDS Bulletin* 43, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 87-93.**

Jones, Clive. "The Tribes that Bind: Yemen and the Paradox of Political Violence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 12 (2011): 902-916.**

IV. Interventions, Outcomes and the Future.

The last section of the class will discuss different intervention plans and will look at possible outcomes. Since the start of the Arab Spring in December of 2010, military interventions were the dominant option for managing conflict. This includes NATO operations in Libya, Saudi troops deployment to Bahrain and the army take-over in Egypt. What kind of intervention plans can be implemented in Syria or Yemen? And, how can the international community help stabilize the situation in the Arab world?

Week 12: April 10

To intervene or not to intervene!

Readings:

Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. "Non-violent Resistance in the Arab World: The Demythologizing of Essentialist Myths about Arab Societies." *The Arab World Geographer* 14, no. 2 (2011): 153–159.**

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 248-319.

Lund, Michael. "A Toolbox for Responding to Conflicts and Building Peace." In *Peacebuilding: a field guide*, edited by Luc Reyhler and Thania Paffenholz, 16-20. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.**

Reyhler, Luc. "From Conflict to Sustainable Peacebuilding: Concepts and Analytical Tools." In *Peacebuilding: a field guide*, edited by Luc Reyhler and Thania Paffenholz, 3-15. Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.**

Week 13: April 17

To intervene or not to intervene! *continues...*

Readings:

Lesch, David W. "The Arab spring – and winter – in Syria." *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23, no. 3 (2011): 421-426.**

Jeong, Ho-Won. *Peace and conflict studies: an introduction*. England: Ashgate, 2000. Chapter 17.**

Mitchell, Christopher. "The Anatomy of De-Escalation." In *Conflict resolution: dynamics, process and structure*, edited by Ho-Won Jeong, 37-58. Ashgate, 1999.**

Rubenstein, Richard E. "Conflict Resolution and the Structural Sources of Conflict." In *Conflict resolution: dynamics, process and structure*, edited by Ho-Won Jeong, 173-197. Ashgate, 1999.**

Week 14: April 24

What is the outcome and what will the future bring?

Readings:

Bellin, Eva. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44, no. 2 (2012): 127-149.**

Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs. *The New Arab Revolt: What Happened, What It Means, and What Comes Next*. Council on Foreign Relations/Foreign Affairs, 2011. Pp. 320-358.

Pollack, Kenneth, et al., *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press, 2011. Pp. 213-242.

Week 15: May 1

Final paper presentations

Week 16: May 8 – final papers due

Final paper presentations continues

Conclusions and reflections