The Mediterranean and the Arab World

Master's Degree in International Relations



UNIVERSIDAD NEBRIJA

GUÍA DOCENTE

TEACHING GUIDE

Course: The Mediterranean and the Arab World

Title: Master's Degree in International Relations

Academic Year: 2025-2026

Type: Compulsory

Language: English

Modality: Classroom attendance

ECTS: 3

Semester: 2nd.

Teacher: Dr. Sonia Sánchez Díaz

1. COMPETENCIAS Y RESULTADOS DE APRENDIZAJE

1. COMPETENCES AND LEARNING RESULTS

1.1. Competences

Basic competences

CB1. Students must possess and understand the knowledge in an area of study that builds on the foundation of general secondary education and is typically at a level that, while supported by advanced textbooks, also includes some aspects that involve knowledge from the forefront of their field of study.

CB2. Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and possess the skills typically demonstrated through the development and defense of arguments and the resolution of problems within their area of study.

CB3. Students must be able to communicate their conclusions—and the knowledge and ultimate reasons that support them—to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous manner.

General competences

CG1. The student must acquire up-to-date knowledge of international political, economic, and social relations.

CG2. The student must be able to systematically understand complex concepts, relevant information, its context, and how to apply it to specific situations, taking into account how it affects the different actors and agents in each situation.

CG3. The student must master advanced techniques that will allow them to obtain and analyze information, evaluate its relevance and validity, synthesize it, and adapt it to the context.

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CG4. The student must be able to understand and deal with complex situations and arguments systematically and creatively, with critical judgment, with incomplete information, taking risks, making decisions, and communicating them to any type of audience.

CG5. The student must be able to communicate correctly both orally and in writing, both in Spanish and in a second language, using the most up-to-date technology.

CG6. The student must be able to act autonomously in evaluating sociopolitical events as well as foresee possible scenarios for the development of events.

CG7. The student must be able to perform different roles within a team.

CG8. The student must be able to recognize the need for change and must have the necessary skills to manage it.

CG9. The student must be able to act autonomously within a framework of responsible freedom.

CG10. The student must be able to add value to the organization through their creativity and participation.

Specific Competences

CE58. Ability to gain an in-depth understanding of current dynamics in international relations from the perspective of the European Union's interlocutors.

CE59. Ability to understand the European Union's foreign policy decision-making process following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon.

CE60. Ability to understand current tensions in international relations.

CE61. Ability to understand the key international events that have shaped the current international status quo.

CE62. Ability to understand the global economy from a geopolitical perspective.

CE63. Ability to develop strategic thinking regarding international relations, taking into account current geopolitical interests.

CE64. Ability to grasp the growing role of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) in the new world order.

CE65. Ability to understand the integration process in Latin America and its incorporation into the international arena.

CE66. Ability to analyze the role of non-state actors in various geopolitical areas.

CE67. Ability to understand the evolution and future of U.S.–Latin American relations.

CE68. Ability to analyze the evolution of political Islam and the challenges of democratic development in the Arab world.

CE69. Ability to understand the specific issues within the Mediterranean context, as well as the relations between the EU and countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

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CE70. Ability to analyze potential future geopolitical scenarios through the lens of international relations strategy and foresight.

CE71. Ability to understand the evolution of China as an emerging power and its asymmetric strategy for international advancement.

CE72. Ability to understand the evolution of India as an emerging power and its international strategy.

CE73. Ability to analyze and interpret current international conflicts and alliances from multicultural perspectives.

2. CONTENTS

2.1. Requisites

Students must have completed the modules on Advanced Analysis of the International Order and Global Economy

2.2. Contents description

This course will analyze international relations in the Mediterranean and North Africa. It will also examine key questions and debates concerning Islam as an influential factor in international relations. Topics to be covered include Islam as a cultural and political identity, repression and resistance in the Islamic world, the Palestinian conflict, and fundamentalism in international politics. Additionally, the relationship between religion and politics within the context of regional politics will be addressed.

2.3. Detailed content

Module 1 · State Authority and Regime Survival in the MENA
Module 2 · Political Economy: Rent, Reform, and Development
Module 3 · Identity, Religion, and Political Mobilisation
Module 4 · External Powers and Regional Order
Module 5 · Crisis, Conflict, and Fragile State

2.4. Educational activities

Theory: Lectures and seminars. Contemporary theories in the study and analysis of International Relations, their concepts, foundations, and methodological tools, as well as the main trends in interpretation and the most influential schools of thought, will be explained.

Practical Work: Case study-based learning. Individual

Work: Student group work.
The student will create and present an original group project for the course that shows an example of advanced application of the methods and techniques developed in the course.

3. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

3.1. Grading procedure

Final grades will be expressed numerically the following way: 0 -

4,9 Fail (Suspenso) (SS)
5,0 - 6,9 Pass (Aprobado) (AP)
7,0 - 8,9 Notable (NT)

9,0 - 10 Excelent (Sobresaliente) (SB)

Honours' mention can be granted to students with grades equal or superior to 9,0.

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3.2. Evaluation criteria

Ordinary call

Activity	Rate
Attendance, participation, daily work	20%
Individual or collective assignments	30%
Final exam	50%

Extraordinary call

Activity	Porcentaje
Individual or collective assignments delivered at the ordinary call	30%
Final exam	70%

It is up to the teacher to receive and assess again the assignments in case these were not delivered originally or the students wants to improve the grade obtained at the ordinary call.

3.3. Restrictions

Minimal grade at the exam

In order to be weighed with the other grades, it is necessary to tet at least 5 at the final exam.

Attendance

Any student missing over 25% of the clases with no justification could be deprived of the right to take the exam at the ordinary call

Quality of writing

Special attention will be paid to both presentation and content in written assignments and projects, as well as exams, particularly to grammar and spelling. Failure to meet the minimum acceptable standards may result in points being deducted from the assignment.

3.4. Warning about plagiarism

Antonio de Nebrija University does not tolerate plagiarism or copying under any circumstances. Plagiarism is considered the reproduction of paragraphs from texts other than the student's own work (from the Internet, books, articles, fellow students' work, etc.), when the original source is not cited. The use of quotations cannot be indiscriminate. Plagiarism is a crime.

If this type of practice is detected, it will be considered a Serious Offense and the sanction provided for in the Student Regulations may be applied.

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4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foundational Texts and Course Textbook

Bengio, Ofra. (2014). The Kurds in a volatile Middle East. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Mideast Security and Policy Studies, 130.

Bill, James A., & Springborg, Robert. (2000). Politics in the Middle East. Addison Wesley Longman.

Coulson, N. J. (1964). A history of Islamic law. Edinburgh University Press.

Dalacoura, Katerina. (1998). Islam, liberalism and human rights. I.B. Tauris.

Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (2007). Globalization and geopolitics in the Middle East: Old games, new rules (ch. 5 and ch. 6). Routledge.

Esposito, John L. (1998). Islam and politics. Syracuse University Press.

Gelvin, James L. (2011). The modern Middle East: A history. Oxford University Press.

Halliday, Fred. (2000). Nation and religion in the Middle East. Saqi Books.

Halliday, Fred. (2005). The Middle East in international relations. Cambridge University Press.

Hinnebusch, Raymond. (2003). The international politics of the Middle East. Manchester University Press.

Hourani, Albert. (1992). A history of the Arab peoples. Harvard University Press.

Ismael, Tareq Y., & Ismael, Jacqueline S. (2011). Government and politics of the contemporary Middle East: Continuity and change. Routledge.

Kepel, Gilles. (2004). Jihad: The trail of political Islam. I.B. Tauris.

Kepel, Gilles. (2005). The roots of radical Islam. Saqi Books.

Kepel, Gilles. (2018). Salir del caos: Las crisis en el Mediterráneo y Oriente Medio. Alianza Editorial.

Lesh, David. (2008). The Arab-Israeli conflict: A history. Oxford University Press.

Lewis, Bernard. (2000). Las identidades múltiples de Oriente Medio. Siglo XXI de España Editores.

Luciani, Giacomo. (Ed.). (1990). The Arab state. University of California Press.

MacQueen, Benjamin. (2018). An introduction to Middle East politics. Sage.

McHugo, John. (2015). Una breve historia de los árabes. Turner Publications.

Said, Edward W. (1978). Orientalism (pp. 1–28, “Introduction”). Pantheon Books.

Sidahmed, Abdel Salam, & Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. (Eds.). (1996). Islamic fundamentalism. Westview Press.

Sivan, Emmanuel. (1990). Radical Islam: Medieval theology and modern politics (rev. ed.). Yale University Press.

Watt, Montgomery W. (1968). Islamic political thought. Edinburgh University Press.

Political Economy and Rentier State Theory

Acemoglu, Daron, & Robinson, James A. (2012). Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty. Crown Publishers.

Beblawi, Hazem, & Luciani, Giacomo. (Eds.). (1987). The rentier state. Croom Helm.

Cammett, Melani, Diwan, Ishac, Richards, Alan, & Waterbury, John. (2015). A political economy of the Middle East (4th ed.). Westview Press.

Henry, Clement M., & Springborg, Robert. (2010). Globalization and the politics of development in the Middle East (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

North, Douglas C. (1990). Institutions, institutional change and economic performance. Cambridge University Press.

Owen, Roger. (2012). The rise and fall of Arab presidents for life. Harvard University Press.

Ross, Michael L. (2012). The oil curse: How petroleum wealth shapes the development of nations. Princeton University Press.

State, Regime, and Authority

Anderson, Lisa. (1987). The state in the Middle East and North Africa. Comparative Politics, 20(1), 1–18.

Brownlee, Jason. (2007). Authoritarianism in an age of democratization. Cambridge University Press.

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Heydemann, Steven. (2007). Upgrading authoritarianism in the Arab world. Brookings Institution.

Migdal, Joel S. (1988). Strong societies and weak states: State-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World. Princeton University Press.

Schlumberger, Oliver. (Ed.). (2007). Debating Arab authoritarianism: Dynamics and durability in nondemocratic regimes. Stanford University Press.

Tilly, Charles. (1992). Coercion, capital, and European states, AD 990–1992. Blackwell.

Islam, Islamism, and Political Identity

Ayoob, Mohammed. (2008). The many faces of political Islam: Religion and politics in the Muslim world. University of Michigan Press.

Filiu, Jean-Pierre. (2015). From deep state to Islamic State: The Arab counter-revolution and its jihadi legacy. Hurst.

International Crisis Group. (Various years). Reports on political Islam, sectarianism, and Islamist movements. https://www.crisisgroup.org

Roy, Olivier. (1994). The failure of political Islam. Harvard University Press.

Roy, Olivier. (2004). Globalised Islam: The search for a new Ummah. Hurst.

Schwedler, Jillian. (2006). Faith in moderation: Islamist parties in Jordan and Yemen. Cambridge University Press.

Wiktorowicz, Quintan. (Ed.). (2004). Islamic activism: A social movement theory approach. Indiana University Press.

External Actors and International Relations

Allison, Graham T. (1971). Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis. Little, Brown and Company.

Fawcett, Louise. (Ed.). (2016). International relations of the Middle East (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Gerges, Fawaz A. (2013). The new Middle East: Protest and revolution in the Arab world. Cambridge University Press.

Hollis, Rosemary. (2012). No friend of democratization: Europe's role in the genesis of the 'Arab Spring'. International Affairs, 88(1), 81–94.

Khouri, Rami. (2011). Drop the 'Arab Spring' cliché. Agence Global.

Valbjorn, Morten, & Bank, Andre. (2012). The new Arab cold war. Review of International Studies, 38(1), 3–24.

Conflict, Fragility, and Humanitariam Crisis

Cockburn, Patrick. (2015). The rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the new Sunni revolution. Verso.

George, Alan. (2003). Syria: Neither bread nor freedom. Zed Books.

Rosen, Nir. (2010). Aftermath: Following the bloodshed of America's wars in the Muslim world. Nation Books.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). Arab human development report 2016: Youth and the prospects for human development in a changing reality. UNDP. https://arab-hdr.org/report/youth-2016/

Wood, Graeme. (2017). The way of the strangers: Encounters with the Islamic State. Random House.

Policy Analysis and Professional Writing

Allison, Graham, & Zelikow, Philip. (1999). Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (2nd ed.). Longman.

George, Alexander L., & Bennett, Andrew. (2005). Case studies and theory development in the social sciences. MIT Press.

Lasswell, Harold D. (1956). The decision process: Seven categories of functional analysis. University of Maryland Press.

Stone, Deborah. (2012). Policy paradox: The art of political decision making (3rd ed.). W. W. Norton.

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RECOMMENDED ONLINE SOURCES AND MEDIA

Students are expected to follow these sources regularly throughout the course

International Press and Analysis

- Financial Times — www.ft.com
- The Economist — www.economist.com
- New York Times — www.nytimes.com
- Washington Post — www.washingtonpost.com
- BBC — www.bbc.co.uk
- The Guardian — www.theguardian.com

MENA-Specialist Media

- Al-Jazeera English — english.aljazeera.net
- Middle East Eye — www.middleeasteye.net
- Orient XXI — orientxxi.info/en
- Jadaliyya — www.jadaliyya.com
- Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) — www.merip.org
- Foreign Policy (Middle East) — foreignpolicy.com

Israel-Palestine

- Haaretz — www.haaretz.com
- Electronic Intifada — www.electronicintifada.net
- +972 Magazine — www.972mag.com
- Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre — www.jmcc.org
- Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research — www.pcpsr.org
- The Israel Policy Forum — www.israelpolicyforum.org
- The Alternative Information Center — www.alternativenews.org
- The Jerusalem Post — www.jpost.com
- The Forward — www.forward.com
- Y-Net (Yediot Ahranot) — www.ynetnews.com

Arab World Sources

- al-Ahram Weekly (Egypt) — weekly.ahram.org.eg
- Jordan Times — www.jordantimes.com
- L'Orient Le Jour (Lebanon, French) — www.lorientlejour.com

Policy and Research Institutions

- Arab Human Development Report (UNDP) — www.arab-hdr.org
- International Crisis Group — www.crisisgroup.org
- European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) — www.ecfr.eu
- Carnegie Middle East Center — carnegie-mec.org
- Chatham House Middle East Programme — www.chathamhouse.org
- Brookings Doha Center — www.brookings.edu/center/brookings-doha-center
  Dissidents Network — www.CyberDissidents.org