



Faculty of Social Sciences

SIMS47, Middle Eastern Studies: Contemporary Issues in the Middle East, 15 credits

Mellanösternstudier: Samtidsfrågor i Mellanöstern, 15 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by Graduate School Board on 2024-04-18 and was last revised on 2024-04-19. The revised syllabus comes into effect 2024-04-19 and is valid from the autumn semester 2024.

General information

The course is offered as a single subject course in Social Sciences at the second-cycle level and as a mandatory course within the Master's Programme in Politics and Society in the Contemporary Middle East.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

Middle Eastern Studies A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- show a good understanding of the current socio-political issues and challenges in the Middle East;
- demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of diverse forms of collective action and social movements in the Middle East, and their consequences on the state and the societies;
- demonstrate a critical understanding of how relevant social science theories approach issues related to contentious politics;

Competence and skills

- analyze contemporary socio-cultural processes in the Middle East;
- compare contemporary processes in the Middle East in different countries, and assess the importance of historical, cultural, and geographical contexts;
- discuss the key conceptual debates in social movements' theory, revolutions and uprisings;
- demonstrate the ability to make informative and insightful presentations on the complex socio-political processes in the Middle East;

Judgement and approach

- demonstrate the ability to critically discuss political reform and development in the Middle East from different vantage points;
- critically assess the political relevance of current discussions of political Islam, youth, gender, and the role of the military and security forces in the Middle East.

Course content

The course explores the various socio-political processes that have been taking place in the Middle East since the beginning of the 21st century. The objective is to enable the student to learn and critically reflect on the current debates about the role of social movements, media, religion, institutions, the youth, the military, the evolving role of women in societies, and the environment.

Through a critical inquiry embedded in social sciences, this course will unpack the underlying factors and forces, and processes of current events and processes in the Middle East.

The course starts with lectures and seminars on uprisings in the 21st century in the Middle East. Then students are introduced to internal and external actors shaping the Middle East today. Thereafter, students will study the role of external actors in the Middle East, including the United States, Europe, Russia, China, and the BRICS intergovernmental organization, with an emphasis on the state of the South-South relations. The course finishes with a critical discussion of key socio-political processes taking place in the contemporary Middle East.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, group work, and seminars. During seminars, the student takes an active role in leading discussions and engaging in peer-teaching activities.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in seminars. Students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances such as accidents or sudden illness will be offered the opportunity to compensate for or retake compulsory components. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

Assessment

The assessment will be based on three assignments:

- Assignment 1: 4 credits
- Assignment 2: 4 credits
- Assignment 3: 7 credits

The course includes opportunities for assessment at a first examination, a re-sit close to the first examination, and a second re-sit for courses that have ended during that school year. Two further re-examinations on the same course content are offered within a year of the end of the course. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: U=Fail, E=Sufficient, D=Satisfactory, C=Good, B=Very Good, A=Excellent

The grade for a non-passing result is Fail. The student's performance is assessed with reference to the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade of E the student must show acceptable results. For the grade of D the student must show satisfactory results. For the grade of C the student must show good results. For the grade of B the student must show very good results. For the grade of A the student must show excellent results. For the grade of Fail the student must have shown unacceptable results.

The overall grade for the course is based on the following components:

- Assignment 1: 4 credits
- Assignment 2: 4 credits
- Assignment 3: 7 credits

The letter grade for each assessed component is assigned a score where A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, E = 1. The grade for the entire course is calculated by multiplying these scores by the amount of credits awarded to each component; these figures are then summed. It is this sum that determines the final grade for which the following table applies:

E	D	C	B	A
15-22	23-37	38-52	53-67	68-75

For a grade of Pass on the entire course the student must have been awarded at least E on all assessments for which the grading scale A-E+Fail applies. The student must have also participated in all compulsory components. At the start of the course, students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied in the course.

Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course the student must have a Bachelor's degree equivalent to 180 credits.

Oral and written proficiency in English equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) from Swedish upper secondary school is a requirement. International qualifications will be assessed in accordance with national guidelines.

Further information

The course replaces *SIMS49: Middle Eastern Studies: Continuity and Change in the Study of the Middle East*, 15 credits, and cannot be included in the same degree.