Course Description
The course is intended to provide a general introduction to contemporary Lebanese politics. It gives a
general overview of the workings of government and the political process both in crisis and non-crisis
situations. The course has a dual focus. One political and historical dealing with the development of
Lebanese state and society, the other addresses specific issues and themes that are of particular relevance
to Lebanon, but are also useful for comparative purposes.

The first part of the course deals briefly with the period that preceded the formation of the state in 1920. It
covers the transition from the Imara to the Qa’imaqamiyyatain and the emergence of the Mutassarriyya in
the second half of the nineteenth century. Part two covers the Mandate period in post-1920 Lebanon. Part
three deals with the post-independence period until the outbreak of war in 1975. Part four is an analytical
account of the war in its various internal and external dimensions until the end of war in 1990. The final part
focuses on the postwar period from 1990 to the present.

The following issues have been at the center of political debate in Lebanon since independence. They will
be covered in the course and they may also serve as possible topics for the term papers.

I. Lebanon’s confessional system: its origins, development, and applications.
II. The nature of Lebanon’s confessional democracy. How does it compare with consensual and
majoritarian democracies?
III. Political modernization and integration in Lebanon. Dimensions of integration in divided societies,
problems, and prospects.
IV. Problems of national identity in Lebanon and in comparison with those of other societies.
V. The National Pact of 1943: its origins, applications, and changing interpretations.
VI. The political process: the executive and legislative branches of government.
VII. The making and unmaking of Lebanon’s political elites and the role of the electoral process.
VIII. Political parties and political leaders in communal and national politics.
X. The war years: the breakdown of the state, communal transformations, and militia-based politics.
XI. The external scene: patterns of external intervention in Lebanon and the role of foreign actors in pre-
and postwar Lebanon. Actors include Middle Eastern countries (Arab and non-Arab) and the major
Powers, notably the United States.
XII. Postwar Lebanon: The Ta’if Agreement and its aftermath, its distorted implementation as well as its
changing interpretations.
XIII. Postwar Reconstruction and the Hariri factor in Lebanese politics and economy since 1992.
IX. The political process and electoral politics in postwar Lebanon.
X. Lebanon’s role and place in regional politics since the launching of the Arab-Israeli peace process in
Madrid in 1991. The war in south Lebanon, the crisis following Israeli withdrawal in May 2000, and
their repercussions on Lebanese politics.
XI. Lebanese-Syrian relations since the end of the war in 1990 and their impact on Lebanese politics,
society, and economy.
XII. The deepening political and economic crises and the debate on fundamental issues such as the Ta’if
Agreement, Syrian hegemony, and the alarming decline of the rule of law.
XIII. Lebanon and the region in the aftermath of three events: America’s war on terrorism after the
September 11 attacks, the collapse of the peace process, and the war in Iraq and its unfolding
repercussions.

Learning Outcomes:
If they complete the course satisfactorily, students are expected to develop the following skills:

- Students should be familiar with the evolution and workings of the Lebanese political system from
  the mid-nineteenth century to the present.
- Students should be able to analyze the major events that have marked Lebanese politics in crisis
  and non-crisis situations.
- Students should have developed critical reasoning of Lebanon’s domestic and foreign policy.
- Students should be able to situate Lebanese politics in the broader context of comparative politics,
  particularly in Lebanon’s regional order.
- Students should be familiar with the major literature on contemporary Lebanese politics and society.
Major Works on Modern Lebanon (listed in alphabetical order)

On pre-20th century Lebanon
Chevallier, Dominique, La Société du Mont Liban à l'époque de la Révolution Industrielle en Europe (1971).
Harik, Iliya F., Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845 (1968).
Khater, Akram Foud, Inventing Home, Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920 (2001)

On the period 1920-1975
Ajami, Fouad, The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon (1986).
Chiha, Michel, Politique Intérieure (1964).

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Ajami, Fouad, The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon (1986).
Chiha, Michel, Politique Intérieure (1964).

On Wartime Lebanon
Boykin, John, Cursed is the Peacemaker. The American Diplomat Versus the Israeli General, Beirut 1982 (2002).
Dawisha, Aided I., Syria and the Lebanese Crisis (1980).
Deeb, Marius, The Lebanese Civil War (1980).
Kassir, Samir, La Guerre du Liban; De la Dissension Nationale au Conflit Régional (1994).
Khalidi, Walid, Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East (1979)

On Postwar Lebanon
Hollis, Rosemary and Nadim Shchehid (eds), Lebanon on Hold. Implications for the Middle East Peace (1996).

Required Readings
The readings for the course are drawn from various sources. Although there is no textbook for the course, a short introductory work by David C. Gordon, The Republic of Lebanon: Nation in Jeopardy (1983) is recommended for general background information.


Required readings dealing with the topics covered in the course are listed in a chronological sequence, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century. They are placed on reserve in Jafet library.

**Part I: Pre-1920 Lebanon**

**Recommended readings:**
Harik, Iliya F., Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845 (1968).

**Part II: Mandate Lebanon, 1920-1943.**

**Recommended readings:**

**Part III: post-independence period.**
- Samir Khalaf, "Changing Forms of Political Patronage" and "Primordial Ties and Politics", in Lebanon's Predicament (1987), pp. 73-101, 102-120.
- Iliya Harik, "Political Elite of Lebanon" in George Lenczowski (ed.), pp. 201-220.

**Recommended readings:**

**Part IV: the war years.**
- Theodor Hanf, Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon (1993), pp. 45-140 (chap. 2) and pp. 261-433 (chap. 6), (optional).
Recommended readings:

- **Part V: postwar Lebanon.**
- "A Survey of Lebanon", The Economist, February 24, 1996. (optional)

Recommended readings:
Habib C. Malik, Between Damascus and Jerusalem, Lebanon and Middle East Peace (1997):

Requirements and Grading

Students are required to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and are expected to participate in class discussions. A failure to keep up with the readings will hamper the effectiveness of the course.

The requirements for the course consist of two exams (midterm and final) and a short term paper dealing with a topic covered in the course. The paper should be focused and analytical and is due in the second week of May 2003.

The grade distribution is as follows: 20% for the midterm exam, 50% for the final exam, 20% for the paper, and 10% for class participation and attendance.

Needless to say, class attendance is mandatory. Any student who misses more than one fifth of the class sessions will be required to withdraw from the course.