

Government and Politics of the Middle East
GOVT 332
Midterm Study Sheet

Part I: Terms and Concepts

You should be able to (1) define these terms in one or two sentences and (2) state their significance (i.e. what makes them important? what do they help us understand? how are they related to other material in the course?). On the exam, you would define a term, then, write “sig.” and proceed to state what this term is significant. It’s a way of making you analyze rather than memorize. There can be more than one significance for each term, naturally.

For instance, “Theologocentrism” is defined as a school of thought that attributes all observable phenomena to matters in religious text. Sig: it is significant because it is the way many interpret events in the Middle East, by attributing their motive to religion (or you can say it is one manifestation of the lack of separation between Islam and what Muslims do. And so on).

1. The problem of studying the “Other”
2. Fundamental Attribution Error
3. Colonialism and the Problematic of Geographical Boundaries

4. Arabs and the West (Khalidi): Western attitudes influenced by 6 factors. What are they? Significance?
5. Orientalism (literal definition and political definition)
6. Assumptions of Orientalism
7. Methods of Orientalism
8. Theologocentrism
9. Philologism
10. Middle East Exceptionalism

11. Islam
12. Sources of authority (Sunni Islam)
13. Muhammad
14. Ali
15. Rightly Guided Caliphs (what do they represent?)
16. Qur’an
17. Hadith
18. Sunni vs. Shi’a (define term and origin of split)
19. Umawiyun/Abbasids (define terms and state differences in organization and inclusiveness)

20. Balfour Declaration
21. Hussein-McMahon Correspondence
22. Sykes-Picot

23. Why was the resistance to colonialism moderate in Arab countries during the interwar period?

24. What did Linz mean when he defined Authoritarianism as “*Political systems with limited, not responsible, political pluralism?*”
25. How does authoritarian rule affect State-Opposition dynamics?

Part II: Essay Themes

For all themes, **make sure you draft an outline when preparing for the exam.** You should be sufficiently familiar with the readings so as to cite authors and arguments when applicable. Good essays will engage the readings and the class material in comparative ways that reflect a close reading of the text and serious engagement with lecture materials. Keep in mind these are themes: the actual exam will address the theme but might put the essay question differently to help you answer the question. So, **DO READ** the questions carefully during the exam.

1. Orientalism: What is “orientalism?” Why is it significant? What are its assumptions? Where do they come from? How were they developed? Where do we witness them? What is the relationship between orientalist assumptions and methodologies? And what is the relationship between orientalist methodologies and orientalist findings?
2. Middle East History: What are the significant stages in Middle East history (since the inception of Islam)? Discuss these stages and their relevance/significance in general and to Middle East history and the contemporary period. Discuss the modern period (European imperialism and colonialism) and analyze its relevance to the region as well. (you need not address current events, just up to Colonial times/rule)