

Syllabus

Title of the Course:	Academic Freedom in the MENA Region	Course Breakdown:	2 h. per week online teaching 180 h. total workload
Name of the Instructors:	Dr. Mabruk Derbesh Dr. Teoman Aktan Dr. Nahed Ghazzoul	Weekly class time:	Wednesdays 12 pm (EST) / 6 pm (CET)
Language:	English	ECTS:	3 ECTS / 6 ECTS
Hosted by:	Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research, The Institute of Political Sciences at Bremen University	Certificate issued by:	Bremen University and NSSR

This Seminar is funded by the New University in In Exile Consortium based at the New School and is hosted by the Department of Anthropology and Cultural Research and the Institute for Political Science at Bremen University.

Description of the course

Since the Arab Spring began in early 2010s, countless academics in the Middle East and North Africa (the MENA region) have been fired from their faculty positions in direct response to ideas expressed in their writing or teaching. In the most extreme cases, their lives have been threatened, and they have been forced to flee. This seminar will provide an introduction to the concept of “academic freedom,” put simply, the ability of faculty members and students to engage in intellectual debate without fear of censorship or retaliation.

Many countries in the MENA region have known autocratic regimes throughout their modern existence. Examining case studies from the region, participants of the seminar will reflect on how academic freedom has been conceptualized, and how it functions in post-transitional societies today. The co-leaders of the seminar will use an interdisciplinary approach to demonstrate how restrictions on academic freedom have been a symptom of, as well as a result of, political upheavals. Participants will develop an understanding of how and why governments have targeted the academy, putting restrictions on academic freedom as a means to manage political dissent.

Learning Aims

- An understanding of what the concept of academic freedom entails conceptually and politically,
- The geopolitical issues related to education, religion and culture as it pertains to academic freedom,
- The situation of academia and academics in the MENA region and their struggles.

Upon the successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the concept of academic freedom as it relates to political transitions,
- Develop critical views of the concept of academic freedom and how it is both understood and manipulated, and
- Develop awareness of how governments have targeted the academy in their quest to manage political dissent.

Course evaluation

Learners are required to attend the sessions and to contribute to the discussions in the online class according to their ability. Learners will be given a choice between taking the 3 ECTS (Lighter workload) or the 6 ECTS format (Heavier workload).

The 3 ECTS option will consist of two assignments:

- Assignment 1 (Two position papers: 25% each, and 700 - 1000 words)
- Assignment 2 (Presentation: 50%)

The 6 ECTS option will consist of three assignments:

- Assignment 1 (Two position papers: 25% for both)
- Assignment 2 (Presentation: 25%)
- Final Assignment 3 (Essay: 50 %, and 4000 - 5000 words)

Deadlines and rules

- Position papers are due on Tuesdays, at 10am, a day before each seminar. Grades will be deducted for late submissions.
- The final paper and other papers must be handed in an electronic form and as hard copy for students on campus. Late submission of the electronic copy of the paper will result in a reduction of the grade as specified by the general rules of the program.

- In order to pass the course, a learner must pass all the assignments of the chosen version (3 ECTS /6 ECTS workload), i.e. failed partial grades cannot be compensated for by other grades.

Outline of the Course Schedule

Week 1	focus on position papers	Introduction into the concept of academic freedom and its history in East and West (Part 1).
Week 2		Introduction into the concept of academic freedom and its history in East and West (Part 2).
Week 3		Women's role in academia, the 10th century Islamic World.
Week 4		Gender issues and academic freedom in Iran.
Week 5		The tale of quadr-cases: Iran, Syria, Libya and Palestine – (in 5 lectures) Iran: Cultural revolution and its impact on universities' autonomy in Iran. (submitting presentation topics)
Week 6		The tale of quadr-cases: Islamization of knowledge and teaching systems in Iran - (Part 2).
Week 7	Learners' presentations	The tale of quadr-cases: Education system in Syria and the impact of the 2011 events on academic freedom. (Part 3)
Week 8		The tale quadr-cases: Libya (Part 4)
Week 9		The tale of quadr-cases: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and academic freedom. (Part 5)
Week 10	Focus on the long essay	Academic freedom and the strategy of "fed democracy".
Week 11		Post-colonial terms of governance in relation to academia.
Week 12		Academic freedom as a universal ethical practice or a cultural concept.

Week 13	Review and recapture of the essence of academic freedom and its intertwining relationship with culture and politics.
Week 14	Discussion and review of the course and feedback on assignments.

Suggested reading List

Week 1 and 2:

- Abcarian, G., (1969) "Ideology and Alienation: Conservative Images of the Liberal Academic Establishment", Educational Theory.
- Aby, Stephen, Kuhn, James, (2000) Academic Freedom: A Guide to the Literature, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Altbach, Philip G., (2007) "Academic Freedom in a Global Context: 21st Century Challenges", NEA 2007 Almanac of Higher Education, Washington: National Education Association.
- American Association of University Professors, (1990) Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities.
- Karran, T. (2009) "Academic Freedom in Europe: Reviewing UNESCO's Recommendation", British Journal of Educational Studies, (in press).

Week 3:

- Bunting-Smith, Mary, Graham, Patricia A., Wasserman, Elga R., (1970) "Academic Freedom and Incentive for Women", Educational Record.
- Muslim women scientists: Lecture Notes

Week 4:

- Nashat, G. (1980). Women in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iranian Studies, 13(1/4), 165-194.
- Hoodfar, H., & Sadr, S. (2010). Islamic Politics and Women's Quest for Gender Equality in Iran. Third World Quarterly, 31(6), 885-903.
- Bahramitash, R. (2003). Revolution, Islamization, and Women's Employment in Iran. The Brown Journal of World Affairs, 9(2), 229-241.
- Farhi, F. (2001). Religious Intellectuals, the "Woman Question", and the Struggle for the Creation of a Democratic Public Sphere in Iran. International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, 15(2), 315-339.
- Rezai-Rashti, G., & Moghadam, V. (2011). Women and higher education in Iran: What are the implications for employment and the "marriage market"? International Review of Education/Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft/Revue Internationale De L'Education, 57(3/4), 419-441.

- Rostami-Povey, E. (Ed.), Povey, T. (2012). *Women, Power and Politics in 21st Century Iran*. London: Routledge.

Week 5:

- Cultural engineering under authoritarian regimes: Islamization of universities in postrevolutionary Iran. S Golkar. *Digest of Middle East Studies* 21 (1), 1-23, 2012.
- Razavi, R. (2009). *The Cultural Revolution in Iran, with Close Regard to the Universities, and Its Impact on the Student Movement*. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(1), 1-17.
- Fallahi, M. (1993). *Foundations of education in iran and education after the cultural revolution of 1980* (Order No. 9325676). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (304059684).
- Sobhe, K. (1982). *Education in Revolution: Is Iran Duplicating the Chinese Cultural Revolution?* *Comparative Education*, 18(3), 271-280.

Week 6:

- Paivandi S. (2012). *The meaning of the Islamization of the school in Iran*, in M. Ahmed, *Education in West Asia*, London: Bloomsbury, pp. 102-79.
- D. Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Week 7:

- Al Hessian, Mohammed; Bengtsson, Stephanie; Kohlenberger, Judith.(2016) "Understanding the Syrian educational system in a context of crisis". Vienna Institute of Demography Working Papers, No. 09/2016. This Version is available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/156317>
- Derbesh, M. (2020) *The impact of political change on the state of academia including academic freedom in the Arab World: Libya as a case study*. *Global Society Journal*: Vol. 33, No. 4, doi: 10.1080/13600826.2019.1667753: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13600826.2019.1667753>.
- Masud, Muhammad (2018). "Authoritarian Claims to Legitimacy: Syria's Education under the Regime of Bashar al-Assad." *Mediterranean Studies* , Vol. 26, (1). Published by: Penn State University Press, (2018), pp. 80-111.

Week 8:

- Derbesh, M. (2020) *The impact of political change on the state of academia including academic freedom in the Arab World: Libya as a case study*. *Global Society Journal*: Vol. 33, No. 4, doi: 10.1080/13600826.2019.1667753: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13600826.2019.1667753>.

Week 9:

- Abdulhadi, Rabab. (2018) How and Why the Israel Lobby Is Suppressing Free Speech and Academic Freedom on College Campuses. “*The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs; Washington*” Vol. 37, Iss. 3, (May 2018): 29.
- Atshan, Sa'ed (2019). “Complicity, Dissent, and the Palestinian Intellectual”. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Vol. 21,(3), Article 6. Purdue: Purdue University Press.

Week 10:

- Paterson, L., (2003) “The Survival of the Democratic Intellect: Academic Values in Scotland and England”, *Higher Education Quarterly*.
- Renaut, A., (2006) “The role of universities in developing a democratic European culture”, in Sanz, Buria, Bergan, Sjur, (eds.) *The Heritage of European Universities*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Ericson, E. E., (1978) “What the Radicals Did for Academic Freedom”, *Journal of General Education*, Kimball, Roger, (1998).
- *Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*, New York: Harper and Row End.

Week 11:

- Ayers, Brian S., (1996) *The Effects of Social Ideology on Academic Freedom*, (Report No. HE030444), Greensboro, NC: National Center for Higher Education.
- Areen, J. (April 01, 2009). Government as educator: A new understanding of first amendment protection of academic freedom and governance. *Georgetown Law Journal*.
- Costandia, Samia, Allam Hamdanb , Bahaaeddin Alareenib,c and Ahlam Hassand (2018). “Educational governance and challenges to universities in the Arabian Gulf region”, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Vol. 51, (1), pp. 70–86.
- Karran, T. (2009). Academic freedom: In justification of a universal ideal. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(3), 263–283.
- Hassan, Salah D. (2019). “Education under Siege: Attacks on Scholars and Scholarship in Turbulent Times”. *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies*. Vol. 4, No. 1 (May 2019), pp. 142-146 (5 pages). Published by: Indiana University Press
- Khondker , Habibul Haque. (2019). “The impact of the Arab Spring on democracy and development in the MENA region”, *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 13, (9). Can be accessed on the following link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/soc4.12726>

Week 12:

- Åkerlind, Gerlese S., Kayrooz, Carole, (2003) “Understanding Academic Freedom: The Views of Social Scientists”, *Higher Research and Development*.
- Allport, Carolyn, (2003) *Report On Academic Freedom In Asia-Pacific*, President,

National Tertiary Education Union of Australia, (available at:
http://www.eiie.org/hiednet/english/Downloads/2003_hied_Dakar_paperNTEU.pdf).

- Lieberwitz, Risa L., (2007) “Linking Professional Academic Freedom, Free Speech, and Racial and Gender Equality”, Loyola Law Review
- Verbitskaya, L., (1996). “Academic Freedom and University Autonomy: A Variety of Concepts”, Higher Education Policy.

Week 13: Lecture notes.

- Review and recapture of the essence of academic freedom and its intertwining relationship with culture and politics.

Week 14: Lecture notes.

- Discussion