The “Middle East” is undergoing historic political change. Yet many outside the region lack adequate context with which to understand the nature and meaning of these changes. This course provides an introduction to the comparative and international politics of the Middle East, a trans-continental region stretching from Morocco in the West to Iran and Pakistan and Afghanistan in the East. It begins with a brief overview of the historical dynamics that shaped the political organization of the region, including the political legacy of Islam. Then, it provides an overview of the governance and institutions of the states in the region, focusing on state institutions and politics of countries in Arab North Africa, the Levant, the Arab Gulf, Turkey, and Iran, and touching briefly on East Africa and Central Asia. Finally, it examines broad trends in social issues, political economy, and international politics of the region, including a brief introduction to the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts and the likely outcomes of the present wave of political change sweeping the region.