

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

JUNIOR SEMINARS

FALL 2015

POLITICAL SCIENCE 587

Authoritarianism and Democracy in the Middle East

**Professor Shanna Kirschner T/TH 1:30-2:45
Quigley 123**

Why did the Middle East remain so overwhelmingly authoritarian for so long? What explains the uprisings of 2010-2012? Why did some states overthrow authoritarian leaders, while others did not? Why were some transitions violent, while others were largely peaceful? Europe, Latin America, and Africa all contributed to what is known as the Third Wave of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s. Yet the Middle East remained largely populated by authoritarian regimes which neither faced significant pressure to democratize nor undertook substantial liberalization until the winter of 2010-2011, when massive uprisings swept the region. This course examines the record of Middle Eastern regimes before, during, and after the uprisings against the broader literature on authoritarianism and democratization, in order to better understand the pattern of regional governance.



POLITICAL SCIENCE 580

Beyond Reason: The Challenges of Thinking Politically

**Professor Andrew J. Bloeser T/TH 1:30-2:45
Quigley 122**

When we think about making political decisions, we often imagine ourselves making rigorous use of reason, holding aside emotion, intuition, and personal biases. We imagine our use of reason helping us discover the best policy position, political candidate, or political organization to support. But is this really the way we think about our political choices? Is it possible to think about politics in this purely rational way? Is it even desirable? In this course, we draw upon studies from the field of political psychology to examine how citizens think about politics. By extension, we consider what role reason *can* play and what role reason *should* play in political decision-making.

