

SYLLABUS_TUTORIAL	
Title of the course: Regional Comparative Studies: Middle East and Israel	
Course lecturer: Boris Havel	
E-mail: boris.havel@fpzg.hr	
Study program: Graduate study, Political Science	
Year of study: 5th, second term (Summer term)	
ECTS: 7	
Course description and course objectives:	Among area-studies, the Middle East has often been one of the most challenging due to complexity of its political processes and political actors, which differ profoundly from processes and actors in the Western world and its liberal democracies. A main feature of the Middle Eastern political processes, including inter-state alliances and hostilities, in recent decades has been sectarian identity, primarily within the Muslim community. Sunni-Shia division was the first, deepest and the longest-lasting major division within the Ummah. Following the Second Gulf War of 2003, Sunni-Shia conflicts erupted in Iraq, and evolved into a main cause of conflict even in other countries such as Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. The two communities lived side by side for centuries throughout the Middle East, and part of their interaction has always been burdened by some form of distrust or clash. Due to Shia political passivism and minority status within the Ummah, however, physical attacks and persecutions were rarely widespread and lasting, especially by the Shia toward the Sunnis and non-Muslims, including Jews. Sectarian violence which erupted in 21st century, following the US-led coalition's intervention against the regime in Iraq, was to a great degree without precedent in the previous Sunni-Shia common history. As the Sunni-Shia divide grew into a main fault line of many if not most contemporary Middle Eastern conflicts, its understanding, we may argue, appears unavoidable in any comprehensive political analysis of the Middle East. While Sunni political theories, conducts and ambitions have long been part of Middle Eastern studies, the Shia community has often been neglected by Western scholars. Shia Muslims have well-articulated political visions, but those visions were traditionally not pursued by violent or even activist means, but rather through prayer, contemplation and messianic expectations, in accordance with the teachings and examples set by most of the first twelve Imams. Political passivism anchored in messianic expectations made the Shia community more difficult to understand from a Western point of view, and also, arguably, less relevant. The course objectives are to introduce students to the role of the Shia community in a wider Middle Eastern context, with an emphasis on Shia attitude to the State of Israel. Contemporary Shia political positions will be analyzed based on: • origins of the Sunni-Shia division, • political, historical and theological meaning of Fitnah and Bid'ah, • lives of the Twelve Shia Imams, • Sunni-Shia relations in history, including Abbasid, Ottoman and British colonial period, • Shia revival of the 20th and 21st Century, • historical and contemporary Shia view of Jews and Israel.
Course enrolment requirements and entry competences:	No enrolment requirements.

Learning outcomes (at the level of the course):	Upon completing the course (tutorial), the student will be introduced to the primary sources of early Islamic history and Sunni-Shia divide, invoked by Sunni and Shia actors of contemporary Sunni-Shia relations in the Middle East. The student will also be acquainted with main themes and topics of the Shia history, identity and political ambitions, and will be able to • describe politics and history of the Middle East related to Sunni-Shia relations, • identify main Sunni and Shia political goals, • describe the rise of contemporary Shia political activism and the reasons for its apparent absence in previous history, • specify sources of modern Shia revival, with the emphasis on Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1978 and US-led Coalition's invasion of Iraq 2003, • describe current Iranian-inspired Shia attitude to Jews and the State of Israel, • define key events in contemporary Sunni-Shia interaction, with an emphasis on events related to the State of Israel, • list the most important Shia and Sunni actors, and their similarities and differences.
Course content (weekly class schedule):	1) Introduction to contemporary Middle Eastern processes involving Shia community with an emphasis on Shia attitudes to the State of Israel 2) Fitnah and the Sunni-Shia division, lives of the Twelve Imams 3) Traditional Shia attitude to politics and government 4) Islamic Revolution in Iran 1979 5) Invasion of Iraq 2003 and the Arab Shia revival 6) Current Sunni and Shia political and theological positions to each other 7) Shia "Axis of Resistance" in contemporary Middle East
Required reading:	1) Ajami, Fouad. (1992) <i>The Vanished Imam: Musa Al Sadr And the Shia of Lebanon</i>. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (selected pages) 2) Maghen, Ze'ev. (2023) <i>Reading Revolutionary Iran: The Worldview of the Islamic Republic's Religio-Political Elite</i>. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter (selected pages) 3) Momen, Moojan. (1985) <i>An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism</i>. New Haven and London: Yale University Press (selected pages) 4) Nasr, Vali. (2007) <i>The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future</i>. New York: W. W. Norton & Company (selected pages) 5) Tabari. (1987-1997) <i>The History of al-Tabari (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)</i>. New York: State University of New York Press (selected pages) 6) Tabatabai, Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. (1975) <i>Shi'ite Islam. Translated and Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr</i>. New York: State University of New York Press (selected pages)
Student participation and requirements:	Participation is obligatory. Students are expected to prepare a short presentation on each topic of the course, based on discussion and reading. All required texts will be provided.
Grading and evaluating student work in class and at the final exam:	Grade is based on 5 presentations (10% each) and a final exam consisting of multiple-choice and short essay/answer questions (50%)
Grading scale:	Grades: 0-59% F, 60-69% 2, 70-79% 3, 80-89% 4, 90-100% 5