



INSTITUT
BARCELONA
ESTUDIS
INTERNACIONALS

SUMMER SCHOOL IN GLOBAL POLITICS, DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY 2017

Syria and the complexity of a multi-dimensional conflict

Instructor: Dr. Lurdes Vidal (IEMED - IBEI)

Date: June 28 - 29

Time: 2.30 pm - 4.30 pm

Room: 24.133 Fred Halliday - Mercè Rodoreda Building 24 (Floor 1)

Syria revolution erupted in 2011 following Arab Spring uprisings in neighboring countries. The initial peaceful revolutionary movement was harshly repressed from the beginning and the revolutionary movement quickly suffered a militarisation process that ended up in a long and highly lethal war. The Syrian conflict has witnessed over the last 6 years a growing trend of sectarianism and the emergence of radical militias in both sides and Jihadi-inspired groups such as ISIS. They have further complicated the conflict and operated thanks to and favouring foreign intervention. Syria is a local conflict that has gradually absorbed regional tensions (both historical and recently-created) and global rivalries playing simultaneously on the Syrian ground. Therefore, its effects will have implications not only for Syrians and Middle-Easterners, but also for the international community as a whole.

In this course we will study drivers, origins, actors - domestic and external - and consequences of a conflict that has been considered the biggest humanitarian tragedy since the II World War.

Session 1. Internal dynamics of the Syrian conflict

Syria: the challenges of demography and geography. The features of Syrian authoritarianism: Assadism and Baassism. Motivations and drivers of the Syrian uprising.

Domestic actors of the opposition in the Syrian conflict: from grassroots opposition to exiled representatives. The structure of Syrian repression and the evolution towards the militarization of the revolt. Who is who in the fight?

Sharro, Karl. "He provided them with bananas", Syria Deeply, February 2013
<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/community/2013/02/21/he-provided-them-with-bananas>

Hinnebusch, Raymond. "Authoritarian Upgrading and the Arab Uprising: Syria in Comparative Perspective", March 2012
<https://brismes2012.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/raymond-hinnebusch-syria-authoritarian-upgrading.pdf>

Serwer, D.; Preston, K. & Youhana, R. "Internal Politics and the Evolution of the Conflict in Syria" in IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2016
http://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2016/IEMed_MedYearBook2016_Internal%20Politics%20Syria_Serwer_Preston_Youhana.pdf

Session 2. Regional and international dynamics of the Syrian conflict

Syria as a multi-dimensional conflict. The crisis of the post-colonial Arab state model. Sectarianism, factionalisation and conflict. Jihadism, ISIS and their local-global agendas. Regional alliances and rivalries at play in the Syrian context. Global actors and their role in Syria. The failure of diplomacy and mediation in the Syrian war. Consequences of Syria: migration, refugees, displacement and the human toll. Global derivations of the Syrian war: the humanitarian paradigm at stake.

Koray, Bahgat "The State of the Arab State: Stocktaking and Reorientation", in IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook 2015
http://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2015/IEMed%20Yearbook%202015_StateArabState_BahgatKorany.pdf

Pierini, Marc. "In search of an EU role in the Syria war". Carnegie endowment for International Peace, August 2016
http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_284_Pierini_Syria_Final.pdf

Soler, Eduard. "Liquid alliances in the Middle East". CIDOB, March 2017
https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/notes_internacionals/n_1_169/liquid_alliances_in_the_middle_east

Additional Readings

Álvarez-Ossorio, Ignacio. Siria contemporánea. Síntesis. Madrid, 2009.

Burgat, François; Paoli, Bruno. Pas de printemps pour la Syrie. Les clés pour comprendre les acteurs et les défis de la crise (2011-2013), Paris: La Découverte, 2013.

Espinosa, J. & García-Prieto, M. Siria, el país de las almas rotas. De la revolución al califato de ISIS. Debate, Barcelona, 2016

Filiu, Jean-Pierre. From Deep State to Islamic State: The Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihadi Legacy. Oxford University Press, 2015

Heydemann, Steven. Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Social Conflict 1946-1970, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Hinnebusch, Raymond, ed. After the Arab Uprisings. Between Democratization, Counter-Revolution and States Failure. Routledge, 2016

Kamrava, Mehran, ed. Fragile politics. Weak states in the Greater Middle East. Hurst, 2016

Lynch, Marc The New Arab Wars. Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East. Public Affairs, 2016

Yassin-Kassab, Robin & Al-Shami, Leila; Burning Country. Syrians in Revolution and War. Ed. Pluto Press, 2016

Ziadeh, Radwan Power and Policy in Syria: Intelligence Services, Foreign Relations and Democracy in the Modern Middle East. I.B.Tauris, 2011