



**AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT**

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**FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS  
FALL 2024-2025

Economics 223  
Course Syllabus

## I General Course Information

**Course Number:** ECON 223

**Course Title:** Economics of the Middle East

**Number of Credits:** 3 credits

**Course Level:** Undergraduate and graduate

**Course Format:** Lectures

**Pre-requisite Courses:** ECON 217 or ECON 227, ECON 211 and ECON 212

**Meeting Schedule:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

**Meeting Location:** Nicely Hall Room 325

## II Course Coordinator

**Name:** Nadine Yamout

**Office Location:** Ada Dodge Hall Room 237

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 am - 11:00 am or by appointment

**Extension:** +961 1 350000 Ext 4070

**Email:** [ny40@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ny40@aub.edu.lb)

You should feel free to contact me about any academic matter. I strongly encourage you, for efficiency reasons, that you make any enquiries about the subject material at lectures, during office hours or via the online discussion forum on Moodle. Email correspondence on administrative matters will generally be answered within 24 hours.

## III Course Description

This course examines the economic structures, issues, and policies of the Middle East, focusing on historical and contemporary factors affecting human development, economic performance, and political economy. Key topics include the impact of historical events on economic development, the roles of international trade, natural resources, and foreign direct investment, and the effects of human resources, gender disparities, and income inequality on economic growth. Additionally, the course explores environmental challenges such as water scarcity,

air pollution, and the consequences of global warming, as well as government spending on urban infrastructure, energy subsidies, and military expenditures. Through this comprehensive framework, students will gain insights into the complex economic dynamics of the Middle East and the interplay between policy choices and macroeconomic outcomes.

## IV Course Learning Outcomes

The course learning outcomes are what you will be able to do by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items. Upon the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- CLO1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary economic factors shaping the Middle East;
- CLO2. Analyze the roles of international trade, natural resources, and foreign direct investment in the economic development of Middle Eastern countries;
- CLO3. Evaluate the impact of human resources, gender gaps, and income inequality on economic growth and development in the region;
- CLO4. Assess the environmental challenges and their economic implications for Middle Eastern countries, including water scarcity, air pollution, and global warming;
- CLO5. Critically examine government spending patterns, including urban infrastructure, energy subsidies, and military expenditures, and their influence on economic outcomes.

## V Program Learning Outcomes Addressed

The course addresses the following program learning outcomes:

- PLO1. Analyze foundational economic theories, considering their historical context, evolution, and practical applications.
- PLO4. Source and analyze economic data using appropriate statistical, mathematical, and econometric techniques.
- PLO6. Communicate complex economic data and concepts in a manner that is accessible to a diverse audience.
- PLO7. Develop well-informed perspectives on economic policies while critically evaluating their implications across social, cultural, and institutional boundaries.

## VI Course Resources and References

The website for this course is on AUB Moodle at: <https://lms.aub.edu.lb/>

The textbook for this course is *The Economics of the Middle East: A Comparative Approach*, by James E. Rauch ISBN 978-0190879198. (JR)

The course will also draw on various journal articles and working papers. I will post copies of these articles and all other course material on Moodle.

## VII Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Learning Activities	Alignment with CLOs
1	Tues. 27/08/2024 Thurs. 29/08/2024	Introduction		CLO1
2	Tues. 03/09/2024 Thurs. 05/09/2024	Historical Perspective		CLO1
3	Tues. 10/09/2024 Thurs. 12/09/2024	Trade, Natural Resources and FDI		CLO1, CLO2
4	Tues. 17/09/2024 Thurs. 19/09/2024	Human Resources		CLO1, CLO3
5	Tues. 24/09/2024 Thurs. 26/09/2024	Gender Gaps		CLO1, CLO3
6	Tues. 01/10/2024 Thurs. 03/10/2024	Income Inequality, Poverty, Migration		CLO1, CLO3
7	Tues. 08/10/2024 Thurs. 10/10/2024	Environmental Challenges		CLO1, CLO4
8	Tues. 15/10/2024 Thurs. 17/10/2024	Midterm Exam	60 minutes exam	CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4
9	Tues. 22/10/2024 Thurs. 24/10/2024	Government: Infrastructure, Subsidies		CLO1, CLO5
10	Tues. 29/10/2024 Thurs. 31/10/2024	Political Economy		CLO1, CLO5
11	Tues. 05/11/2024 Thurs. 07/11/2024	Some Proposals for Policy		CLO1, CLO2
12	Tues. 12/11/2024 Thurs. 14/11/2024	Policy Consulting Presentations	In-class presentations	CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5
13	Tues. 19/11/2024 Thurs. 21/11/2024	Policy Consulting Presentations	In-class presentations	CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5
14	Tues. 26/11/2024 Thurs. 28/11/2024	Policy Consulting Presentations	In-class presentations	CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5

### Learning and Teaching Approach

The examinable content of the course is defined by the references given in the course schedule and the content of lectures.

#### Lectures:

Our textbook is *The Economics of the Middle East: A Comparative Approach*, by James E. Rauch. We shall cover one or two topics each week (see details below), and complement the material with some examples and applications in class. You are expected to read the relevant sections of the textbook before the lecture.

#### Additional Readings:

In addition to the core textbook, I will provide you with a selection of supplementary readings for each topic we cover. These additional readings will offer diverse perspectives, deeper insights, and current research findings

related to the subject matter. While not mandatory, I strongly recommend that you explore these supplementary materials. Engaging with these resources will not only enhance your comprehension of the material but also foster a more well-rounded understanding of the topics covered.

### **Out-of-Class Study:**

While you may have preferred individual learning strategies, it is important to note that most learning will be achieved outside of class time. Lectures can only provide a structure to assist your study as the lecture time is limited. An “ideal” strategy (on which the provision of the course materials is based) might include:

- reading of the relevant chapter(s) of the textbook before the lecture. This will give you a general idea of the topic area.
- attendance at lectures. Here the context of the topic in the course and the important elements of the topic are identified. The relevance of the topic is also explained.
- organizing study groups to review material and practice applications.

## **VIII Grading Criteria**

<b>Type of Evaluation</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Policy Consulting Project	25%	30 minutes	Multiple weeks (refer to course schedule)
Midterm Exam	30%	60 minutes	Thursday, 17 October 2024
Final Exam	45%	120 minutes	University exam period

### **Policy Consulting Project:**

In this collaborative project, students will form groups of three and will work as consultants to tackle a real-world economic issue faced by a Middle Eastern country. The project involves the creation of a slide deck presentation summarizing the findings. Students will utilize relevant data, case studies, and theoretical frameworks to support their analysis and proposals. The slide deck will be due on 7 November 2024 by 11:59 pm. All group presentations will take place on weeks 12, 13 and 14 of this course (refer to course schedule).

### **Midterm Exam:**

A 60 minutes midterm exam is scheduled for Thursday 17 October 2024 (Week 8) during class time. The exam is worth 30% of your final course grade and will cover material from weeks 1-5. Anything covered in the lectures is examinable.

### **Final Exam:**

A 120 minutes final exam is scheduled during the university exam period. The exam is worth 45% of your final course grade and will cover material from the whole course, although focusing mostly on material since the midterm exam. Anything covered in the lectures is examinable.

## **IX Course Policies**

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is expected for all lectures and absences should be kept to a minimum. Students who miss more than one-fifth of the sessions of any course prior to the withdrawal deadline can be withdrawn from the course by the instructor.

You are highly encouraged to attend the lectures and participate in discussions in class. You must be present during specific lectures for the group presentations.

**Credit Hour Policy**

This course follows AUB Credit Hour Policy for three-credit courses. This course meets twice weekly for 3 academic hours per week.

**Final Examination**

Please note that students are expected to be on-campus and available to take a final examination for any of their courses at anytime during the final examination period. For the current term, the final examination period runs between 03/12/2024 and 14/12/2024. Students and professors will be notified of the final examination schedule being posted on the [Office of the Registrar](#) website as soon as feasible after the change of schedule period (drop and add).

**Makeup Policy**

If you experience short-term circumstances beyond your control, such as illness, injury or misadventure which do not enable you to sit for the exams please let me know. You would need to present a valid medical excuse from AUBMC or the AUB infirmary. Any other excuse is NOT valid. If no valid excuse is presented, you will receive a grade of zero on the missed exam.

Note that there will be no makeup midterm exam. If you miss the midterm exam AND have a valid excuse, the final course grade will be based on your grades in the assignments, group presentation and final exam.

**Group Work**

I strongly recommend that students form study groups with other people. One of the main reasons why I included the project as part of the course assessments is precisely the fact that you get to work on economics problems with other people, you discuss with them, and learn from the intuition of others.

**Policy on Personal Computers/Tablet:**

You are welcome to bring your own laptop or tablet to class. The use of such devices should be restricted to taking notes and to course-related activities.

## X University Rules and Regulations:

**General Academic Information**

- [Undergraduate Academic Information](#)

**University - Course Withdrawal Policy**

A student can withdraw from only one required course per semester. Students who wish to withdraw from more than one required course in any given semester must petition the appropriate faculty committee for permission to do so.

Check Withdrawal Information from [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogue.

**Academic Integrity (cheating and plagiarism)**

Please refer to [AUB Student Code of Conduct](#), in particular section 1.1, which concerns academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Please be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.

**Accessibility Statement to Acknowledge the Unique Learning Needs of Students with Disabilities**

AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a diagnosed disability (including learning disability, mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please contact the [Accessible Education Office](#) as soon as possible in order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth learning process: [accessibility@aub.edu.lb](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb); +961-1-350000, x3151; West Hall, 338.

**Non-Discrimination and Title IX Statement**

In line with its commitment to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment, AUB policies protect you from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment. Protected characteristics include: race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic identity, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, alienage or citizenship status, and political affiliation.

The policies are applicable to all the AUB Community including: officers, faculty, staff, academic appointees, students (including medical interns and residents), visiting students, alumni, trainees, visitors, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, located on campus and at AUB Medical Center, Advancing Research Enabling Communities Center (AREC), or any other facility or program affiliated with the University. The AUB community also includes the dependents and domestic employees of faculty and staff dwelling on campus and at AREC.

If you think you have experienced discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment, we encourage you to inform the Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, [titleix@aub.edu.lb](mailto:titleix@aub.edu.lb), report to a Title IX deputy at your faculty or at any other faculty ([www.aub.edu.lb/titleix](http://www.aub.edu.lb/titleix)), or report online ([www.aub.ethicspoint.com](http://www.aub.ethicspoint.com)). Reports may be submitted anonymously or not. Please know that the University will maintain the confidentiality of the complaint and privacy of the persons involved to the greatest extent possible, consistent with its goal of conducting a thorough and complete investigation and to the extent permitted by law.

You need to also know that the University has designated academic and administrative department/unit heads, managerial level staff, academic advisors, protection officers, and residence hall staff/monitors, as responsible employees or mandatory reporters, and may designate others at its discretion. These individuals are obligated to report actual or suspected discrimination or discriminatory harassing conduct to the Equity/Title IX Coordinator, unless they are a confidential resource. The following have been designated as confidential resources: on campus counselors in the Counseling Center of the Office of Student Affairs and AUB Medical Center counselors, and healthcare providers at the University Health Services (UHS) and at the AUB Medical Center. Confidential resources are not required to report actual or suspected discrimination or harassment to appropriate university officials, except in cases of suspected abuse of a minor, in the event of an external investigation or prosecution, or in the event of imminent danger to the reporting party or others.

## XI AUB Grading System

<https://www.aub.edu.lb/Registrar/Pages/academic-information.aspx>

### Numeric Course Grade to Letter Course Grade

Starting with Numeric Course Grade /100	Corresponding Course Letter Grade
< 60	F
60	D
61-62	D+
63-65	C-
66-68	C
69-71	C+
72-74	B-
75-78	B
79-82	B+
83-86	A-
87-92	A
93-100	A+

### Grade Conversion Chart

Course Letter Grade	Quality Points
A+	4.3
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
F	0.0

Note: The GPA at AUB is capped at 4.0

I	P	PR	W	NP
Incomplete	Pass	In Progress	Withdraw	No Pass

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assessments
1	Tues. 27/08/2024	Introduction	JR, Ch. 1	
	Thurs. 29/08/2024			
2	Tues. 03/09/2024	Historical Perspective	JR, Ch. 2	
	Thurs. 05/09/2024			
3	Tues. 10/09/2024	International Trade, Natural Resource Rents and Foreign Direct Investment	JR, Ch. 3	
	Thurs. 12/09/2024			
4	Tues. 17/09/2024	Human Resources	JR, Ch. 4	
	Thurs. 19/09/2024			
5	Tues. 24/09/2024	Gender Gaps	JR, Ch. 5	
	Thurs. 26/09/2024			
6	Tues. 01/10/2024	Income Inequality, Poverty, Migration, and Unemployment	JR, Ch. 6	
	Thurs. 03/10/2024			
7	Tues. 08/10/2024	Environmental Challenges	F & T, Ch. 7	
	Thurs. 10/10/2024			
8	Tues. 15/10/2024	Revision and Q&A for Midterm Exam		
	Thurs. 17/10/2024	Midterm Exam		60 minutes exam
9	Tues. 22/10/2024	Government Spending: Infrastructure, Energy Subsidies, and Military	F & T, Ch. 8	
	Thurs. 24/10/2024			
10	Tues. 29/10/2024	Political Economy	F & T, Ch. 9	
	Thurs. 31/10/2024			
11	Tues. 05/11/2024	Some Proposals for Policy	F & T, Ch. 10	
	Thurs. 07/11/2024			Slide deck due

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assessments
12	Tues. 12/11/2024	Group Presentations	F & T, Ch. 11	In-class presentations
	Thurs. 14/11/2024			In-class presentations
13	Tues. 19/11/2024	Group Presentations		In-class presentations
	Thurs. 21/11/2024			In-class presentations
14	Tues. 26/11/2024	Group Presentations		In-class presentations
	Thurs. 28/11/2024	Revision and Q&A for Final Exam		
Reading Period	29/11/2024 - 02/12/2024			
Exam Period	03/12/2024 - 14/12/2024	Final exam		120 minutes exam