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Democracy in the Middle East

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Med Bouzidi, an expert on political development in the developing world, will deliver a public lecture on "Democratic transitions and democratic promotion in the Middle East and North Africa" at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 18, in Sears Hall, Humanities Building. The event is free and open to the public.

"There is no independently democratic state in the Middle East other than Israel and Turkey," Bouzidi said. "Yet the Middle East and North Africa are not immune to democratization."

Foremost among the challenges confronting democracy in the region is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Bouzidi said. Opponents of democracy use the conflict as a means of resisting the West and resisting change, while a lasting peace would boost support to democratic movements throughout the region, he said.

Other factors that must be addressed include economic inequality, illiteracy and basic human rights.

"The conditions necessary for democracy and just what is meant by that term are perennial questions in political science, going all the way back to Aristotle," said Jason Pierce, chair of the political science department. "Contemporary scholars have identified three waves of democratization: the first in North America and Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, a second following the Second World War and a third wave coming with the end of the Cold War. Dr. Bouzidi tackles a critical question: Are the Middle East and North Africa regions that will remain immune from these forces?"

Bouzidi is a faculty member at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco. This semester, he is at the University of Dayton as a distinguished international visiting professor in the political science department, teaching courses on the politics and economics of the Middle East and North Africa, human development and human rights.

He earned a bachelor's degree in public law from Mohammed V University in Morocco, a master's degree in political science from Utah State University and a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of Denver.

The University of Dayton has been an exchange partner with Al Akhawayn University since 1999.

The College of Arts and Sciences, the Center for International Programs and the political science department are sponsoring Bouzidi's lecture and visiting professorship.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.