I. Critical Historical Junctures
II. Governance and Policy-Making
III. Representation and Participation
IV. Political Economy
V. Iranian Politics in Transition
The Islamic Republic of Iran
1. Critical Historical Junctures

- Safavids and Qajars
- Pahlavi Coup – Reza Khan (1921)
  - Shah Reza Pahlavi (1925-41)
- Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi (1941-79)
- Mossadeq and CIA-backed coup
- 1979 Iranian Revolution
- US Embassy Hostage Crisis
- Iran-Iraq War (1980-88)
- Post-9/11

US-Iranian relations circa 1979
II. Governance and Policy-Making

• Theocracy and Sharia
• Religious Authorities
  ▪ The Supreme Leader
  ▪ The Council of Guardians
  ▪ Assembly of Experts
  ▪ The Expediency Council
• Secular Authorities
  ▪ The President
  ▪ The Cabinet

The Supreme Leaders: Ayatollah Khomeini
Ayatollah Khamenei
Cat’s cradle
Iran’s formal constitutional power structure

- **Electorate**
  - **President**
    - Muhammad Khatami
      (elected for four years; max. two terms of office)
  - **Assembly of Experts**
    - 86 clerical members
      (elected for eight years)
  - **Parliament**
    - (majlis-e shura-e eslami)
      290 representatives
      (elected for four years)
  - **Council of Ministers**
    - 22 ministers
      (confirmed by parliament)
  - **Supreme leader**
    - Ali Khamenei
      (lifetime appointment)
  - **Council of Guardians**
    - 12 members

- **Head of the judiciary**
  - Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi
- **Six clerical members of the Council of Guardians**
- **Expediency Council**
  - (31 members)
- **Voice and Vision**
  - (radio and television)
- **Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**
- **Commander of the regular armed forces**
- **Chief of the general staff of the armed forces**
- **Commander of the law-enforcement forces**

- **Head of the Supreme Court**
  - (five-year term)
- **Chief public prosecutor**
  - (five-year term)
- **Six lay jurists in the Council of Guardians**
  - (appointed on advice of parliament)

*Dominated by the right
III. Representation and Participation

- The Majles (legislature)
- Guardian Council approval of legislation
- Guardian Council approval of candidates
- Suppression of Political Dissent

The Majles in action...or not
IV. Political Economy

- An Oil-Dependent Economy
- State-Owned or Controlled Industry
- The Demographic Problem

![Graph showing Iran’s GDP per person, real terms, 1974-100.](chart.png)

*Source: World Bank*
V. Iranian Politics in Transition

- Iran and Iraq
- Iran and Terrorism
- The Nuclear Question
- The Stability of the Regime

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad