EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST
Hist-122

Instructor: Leena Dallasheh
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Class time: MWF 11:00-11:50am
Room: AJCL 102

Office Hours: MW 4-5:30pm and by appointment.

Course Description
The course is an introduction to the History of the Modern Middle East. It is meant to give the student a grasp on the main events of the late 19th and 20th centuries which have helped to shape the region, as we know it today. Particular attention will be paid to the final years of the Middle Eastern Empires, the creation of the successor nation-states and the changes in the political systems over the course of the 20th century, colonialism and the struggle for independence, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We will explore the living experience of history in the region; highlighting issues such as representations of the Middle East in the media, gender, immigration, and other socio-cultural issues. While building a basic knowledge of the Middle East, this course also aims at strengthening critical thinking skills and interrogating contextual understanding of the role of religion and culture in the region.

Readings:
Each lecture is accompanied by readings, which must be completed before the class for which they are assigned. The readings are from both textbooks as well as other primary and secondary sources. They do not necessarily present summaries of the lecture topics. They provide information and analysis that the lectures may build upon, question, or refute. The lectures can be followed only if you have done the reading, and your understanding of the readings may change as a result of the accompanying lectures and in class discussions. The following books are required and are available for purchase at the Oberlin Book Store:


In addition: these are recommended:
- One of the books assigned for book report/presentation – TBD first day of class.
- All other readings will be accessible online or posted on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Evaluation
It would hard to over-emphasize the necessity of doing the reading ahead of time and to come to class ready to discuss the material. The importance will be reflected in the discussion grade, which counts for 10% of the overall class grade. In addition, attendance is mandatory. Please bring copies of all assigned readings, including articles and primary sources posted on Blackboard, to class so that we can discuss them in detail. In addition, considering the unprecedented events taking place in the Middle East (Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, etc…) short news items (video and text) will be assigned in order to facilitate a productive discussion of current events in class.
Each student will be assigned a book from the “Book Review/Presentation” books listed below. The student will be responsible to prepare and deliver a short class presentation about the book and to hand in a short book report on the same book. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the books, all of which are works of historical fiction or personal memoirs, are situated in the context of the material we are reading and discussing in class. The student will hand in his/her book report at the end of his/her class presentation. The presentation and book report will count for 20% of the overall grade. A midterm exam (30%) and a final exam (40%) will round up the grade for the class.

Grade breakdown summary:
Active class discussion and participation (10%)
Presentation and book report (20%)
Midterm Exam (30%)
Final Exam (40%)

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be available on the course’s Blackboard site.

Additional Ground Rules:

1) Due dates and page-limit requirements are to be taken most seriously. I am not in the business of persecuting students if a genuine problem exists, but in principle I strongly dislike giving extensions. Normally, I take off 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24 hours a paper is overdue.

2) Three excuses for requesting extensions will never be acceptable: 1) a self-defined character flaw of procrastination; 2) extracurricular activities, including political activism; 3) work in other classes.

3) Papers must be double-spaced and have 1-inch margins. They must also be typed or word-processed (Times New Roman or similar, 12 point) with near letter quality resolution. I will return unread any illegible paper. No written work may be submitted electronically.

4) All written work at Oberlin College is covered by the Honor Code. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with its provisions.

5) All written work for the course must be completed in order to pass it. That is to say, a student who receives an A on the first three papers and does not take the final will fail the entire course.

6) Computers should be used in class only in matters pertaining to the class. It is remarkably easy to tell when students are fixating on whatever happens to be on their computer screens rather than paying attention in class. Students are also advised not to engage in any activities in class not related to the class. This includes text messaging.

7) No permission is granted to upload ANY materials from this course on to a third party website. Such materials are for the use of students in this class only.

8) Students with learning or other disabilities are advised to make proper arrangements with the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the term.
WEEK I - FEBRUARY 6-10: THE “MIDDLE” “EAST”: A BIRD’S EYE VIEW

Introduction


In class for discussion
• Film: Axis of Evil Comedy Tour, selections.

WEEK II- FEBRUARY 13-17: THE REPRESENTATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

• Edward Said, “The Clash of Ignorance.”
  http://www.mediamonitors.net/edward40.html
  o Video: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6705627964658699201

In class for discussion
• Reel Bad Arabs– sections from film
• Riz Khan – AJE program: Discussion of Image of Arabs in Middle

WEEK III- FEBRUARY 20-24: ISLAM, DOGMA AND PRACTICE

• *William Cleveland and Martin Bunton, Chapter 1, History of the Modern Middle East, pp. 1-18.

In class for discussion
• Film: Islam: Empire of Faith (2000) PBS documentary – Parts 1,2

WEEK IV- FEBRUARY 27- MARCH 2: THE OTTOMAN AND QAJAR EMPIRES: AN OVERVIEW


- Book Report / Presentation
  - Amin Maalouf, *The Rock of Tanios.*

**WEEK V: MARCH 5-9: THE END OF EMPIRE: CONSTITUTIONALISM AND REFORM?**


• Gelvin, Chapters 8, 9 & 10 (including documents), pp123-67.


• *Mervat Hatem, “Aisha Taymur’s Tears and the Critique of the Modernist and Feminist Discourses on 19th Century Egypt” from Lila Abu Lughod, Remaking Women pp. 73-86.

- Book Report / Presentation

**WEEK VI- MARCH 12-16 : THE AFTERMATH OF WWI AND THE NATION-STATE**

• Gelvin, Chapters 11, 12, & 13, pp. 171-205.

• Abrahamian, Chapter 3, pp. 63-96.


Primary Sources:
  - The Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916).
  - Sharif Husayn letter to MacMahon.
  - MacMahon letter to Sharif Husayn.
  - Balfour Declaration
  - Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”

Additional Primary and secondary sources to consult:
  - The US Department of States study on the boundary between Syria and Iraq (1970).
  - Franco British Convention on Certain Points related to the Mandate of Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine, and Mesopotamia
  o John McTague Jr., “Anglo-French Negotiations over the Boundaries of Palestine 1919-1920,” *Journal of*  


➢ **Book Report / Presentation**  
  o *Ports of Call* by Amin Maalouf  
  o *Pillars of Salt* by Fadia Faqir

**WEEK VII- MARCH 19-13: COLONIALISM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE**


➢ **Book Report / Presentation**  
  o *Seasons of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih

➢ **Midterm Exam**

**MARCH 26- 30: SPRING RECESS**

**WEEK VIII: APRIL 2-6: PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

- Gelvin, Chapter 14, pp. 206-14.

➢ **Book Report / Presentation**  
  o Ghassan Kanafani, *Palestine’s Children: Returning to Haifa and Other Stories*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000) (Returning to Haifa only)  

In Class for discussion:
  o *Route 181: fragments of a journey to Palestine*. Selections from the Film
**WEEK IX: APRIL 9-13: POST WWII ERA**

- Gelvin, Chapter 15, pp. 233-55 and Chapter 18, pp. 283-93.
- Abrahamian, Chapter 4, pp. 97-122.
- Smith, Chapters 7: War and the Search for Peace in the Middle East.

In Class for discussion:
  - *The Battle of Algiers. Selections.*

**WEEK X: APRIL 16-20: IRAN SINCE 1970**

- Abrahamian, Chapters 5 and 6.

In Class
  - Film: *Divorce Iranian Style* (1998)

- Book Report / Presentation

**WEEK XI: APRIL 23-27: POLITICAL ISLAM**


- Book Report / Presentation
  - *The Yacoubian Building* by Ala‘a al-Aswany

**WEEK XII: APRIL 30- MAY 4: GULF STATES AND OIL**

- Gelvin, Chapter 16.
WEEK XIII- MAY 7-11: UPRISINGS, REVOLTS, AND THE NEW AGE?
Might change according to situation and new publications.

- Gelvin, Chapter 20, Conclusion, pp. 319-326.
- *Asef Bayat, “The "Street" and the Politics of Dissent in the Arab World” Middle East Report, No. 226 (Spring, 2003), pp. 10-17
- *Cortni Kerr, A Revolution Paused in Bahrain, MER Online.

➢ Final Exam