

The Middle East in World Affairs since 1900

Semester I, 1987-88

Course Description

Since the middle of the last century, the Middle East has been a focus of conflict and rivalry between the leading powers of the day - Great Britain, France, Russia, and Germany down to 1918; Great Britain and France between the wars; the United States and the Soviet Union since 1945. Middle Eastern states and peoples have not been passive victims of this game, however. On the contrary, they have sought to manipulate the Great Powers for their own ends, and have often been remarkably successful.

In this course we will examine a few of the more persistent and important problems created by this perpetual jockeying for position over the last century: 1) the slow disintegration of the oldest and most prestigious state in the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire; 2) the nature of British paramountcy in the region and the reasons for its abrupt collapse after 1945; 3) Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the very model of an insoluble problem, and one which reflects the whole array of tensions between the West and the Middle East; 4) the emergence of powerful nationalist movements in the region - Zionist, Arab, Egyptian, Palestinian, Iranian, et al.; 5) the Lebanese Civil War, reflecting both the internal dissolution of Lebanese civil society and the intervention of major external interests; 6) the complex roots of the Iranian Revolution - an event which is simultaneously nationalist, populist, and Islamic.

One of the major themes of this course is that a country's foreign policy becomes intelligible only insofar as we understand the concerns, values, and aspirations of its people. Hence the reading for the course will emphasize the perspectives of Middle Easterners rather than the "objective facts" of wars and treaties. The latter type of material will be presented chiefly in the lectures. It will be up to you to integrate the readings and lectures so as to achieve an integrated interpretation of the forces governing the international relations of the Middle East in the 20th century.

Lectures

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:25 - 3:40.

In addition, all students are expected to attend a TA-taught section for one hour per week. These sections will be assigned the first and second class meetings.

Written Assignments and Examinations

For 3-credit students:

- 1 5 to 7-page paper, due Tuesday, Oct. 13.
- 1 10 to 12-page paper, due Thursday, Dec. 10.
- Final examination (2 hours, in class)

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For 4-credit students:

As above, plus 15 to 7 page paper, due Thursday, Nov. 19.

The topics for the papers will be assigned early in the semester by the instructor. The final paper (10 to 12 pp., due Dec. 10) will be based on the Middle East-related articles in the Christian Science Monitor published during the autumn semester, so keep up with your reading.

Required Readings:

L. Carl Brown, International Politics and the Middle East (Princeton, paper)

Fouad Ajami, The Vanished Imam (Cornell, cloth)

Roy P. Mottahedeh, The Mantle of the Prophet (Pantheon, paper)

"Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict" (an anthology of documents, available through Kinko's. Still in preparation.)

The Christian Science Monitor (a three-month subscription, which you may share with one or more classmates. Subscriptions will be arranged in class, in order to obtain a substantial classroom discount.)

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

1. Thurs., Sept. 3 - Organization Meeting
2. Tues., Sept. 8 - Introduction to the Course: requirements and themes
3. Thurs., Sept. 10 - The Middle East: Regions, Peoples, Cultures (slides)

A - The Nineteenth Century

Readings for Section A: Brown, International Politics, 3-81

4. Tues., Sept. 15 - Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, 1700-1879
5. Thurs., Sept. 17 - The Ottoman Empire under Abdulhamid II and the Young Turks, 1876-1914
6. Tues., Sept. 22 - Egypt under British Occupation, 1879-1914.

B - World War I and the Post-War Settlement

Readings for Section B: Brown, International Politics, 85 - 151

Arab-Israeli Reader (to be assigned)

7. Thurs., Sept. 24 - The War Aims of the Great Powers: Great Britain as Broker

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8. Tues., Sept. 29 - The Mandate System and Britain's Informal Empire in the Middle East, 1918-1939
9. Thurs., Oct. 1 - Zionism and the Balfour Declaration
10. Tues., Oct. 6 - The Progress of British Policy in Palestine, 1920-1945

First Paper (5-7 pp.) due: Tuesday, Oct. 13

C - World War II and the End of British Hegemony, 1939-1952

Readings for Section C: Arab-Israeli Reader (to be assigned)

11. Thurs., Oct. 8 - Labour and the Devolution of Empire, 1945-1951
12. Tues., Oct. 13 - Palestine, 1947-48: Civil War and the Independence of Israel

D - The Arab World, 1952-1982: the Era of Egyptian Paramountcy

Readings for Section D: Brown, International Politics, 151-277

Arab-Israeli Reader (to be assigned).

13. Thurs., Oct. 15 - U.S. Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1987.
14. Tues., Oct. 20 - Nasser and the Climax of Arab Nationalism
15. Thurs., Oct. 22 - The June War, 1967
16. Tues., Oct. 27 - The Rise and Decline of the PLO, 1964-1982

E - Lebanon: from Consensus to Chaos

Readings for Section E: Ajami, The Vanished Imam (entire)

17. Thurs., Oct. 29 - Religion and Political Community in the Middle East
18. Tues., Nov. 3 - The Origins of Modern Lebanon, 1788-1943
19. Thurs., Nov. 5 - The Troubled Politics of Consensus, 1943-1975
20. Tues., Nov. 10 - The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1987

Optional Paper (4-credit students), due Thurs., Nov. 19

F - Twentieth-Century Iran: Monarchy, Democracy, and Theocracy

Reading for Section F: Mottahedeh, Mantle of the Prophet (entire)

21. Thurs., Nov. 12 - Politics and Society in Qajar Iran, 1790-1892

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22. Thurs., Nov. 19 - The Constitutional Revolution, 1905-1911
23. Tues., Nov. 24 - Autocracy and Modernization: the Reign of Reza Shah, 1925-1941
24. Tues., Dec. 1 - Mossadegh and the Oil Crisis, 1945-1953
25. Thurs., Dec. 3 - The White Revolution of Muhammad Reza Shah, 1953-1978
26. Tues., Dec. 8 - The Islamic Revolution, 1978-1979
27. Thurs., Dec. 10 - The Islamic Republic, 1979-1987

Final paper (10-12 pp.) due, Thurs., Dec. 10.