

The Historian's Craft: Technology and Revolution in the Middle East

History 201-008, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Spring 2020

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Stolz (dastolz@wisc.edu)

Course meetings: Mondays, 8:50-10:45am / Humanities 5257

Office hours: M 10:45-11:45am, Th 1-2pm / Humanities 5110



Social and political upheaval has often been linked with new technologies. In recent years, this connection has been especially prominent in the Middle East, where many characterized the uprisings of 2009-2011 as “Facebook revolutions.” This course will explore the history of such connections between technological and social change in the Middle East, focusing on the region's major revolutions since the nineteenth century. Specific topics include: the telegraph, steam power, and the end of the Ottoman era; dams, highways, and the nationalist regimes of the mid twentieth century; audiocassettes and the Iranian Revolution; and social media in the “Arab Spring.”

*Image: Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser observes construction of the High Dam at Aswan, 1963.
nasser.bibalex.org*

Overview

Learning Objectives

This course has two related sets of learning objectives: one that is specific to its topic of technology and revolution in the Middle East, and one that it shares with all History 201 The Historian's Craft courses.

Students who take this class will be able to summarize and compare key features of major revolutions in the twentieth-century Middle East, and to analyze the relationship between these political transformations and technological change.

In tandem with these objectives, this course helps students to develop the skills of historical inquiry and writing. As defined by the History Department's goals for History 201, these skills include the ability to ask historical questions, find and evaluate appropriate sources of information, develop and support an original argument, plan further research, and present findings orally and in writing.

The skills of the historian's craft overlap with skills of general communication, such as the ability to assess the credibility of information, to critique an argument, and to persuade an audience of your own point of view. In other words, your learning in this class will serve you well not only as a historian, but also as a citizen and as a member of an "information society." (In other words, it meets your Comm-B requirement.)

A document is available on Canvas that provides more detail on the History Department's goals for this course and for the history major.

Explanation of credit hours

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Course Materials

The following materials will be used throughout the course. The book is widely available for purchase, the course packet will be available from the L&S Copy Center, and both will be available on reserve in College Library.

- Storey, William Kelleher. *Writing History: A Guide for Students*. 5th ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0190238940.
- Course Packet for our course from L&S Copy Center, Sewell Social Sciences Building, Room 6120, 1180 Observatory Drive
- Additional materials to be made available on Canvas

Learning Needs

Digital Devices

You may use a laptop or tablet for in-class writing exercises and to take notes on the (brief and infrequent) lectures that I will give. However, much of this course relies on your active listening, engagement with each other's ideas, and thoughtful contributions to discussion. To enable your success in these areas, I will often ask you to put away laptops or tablets. Please **bring a hard copy of any readings or notes** that you wish to consult during class, rather than relying on digital copies.

If the digital device policies for this course will pose a challenge for you, whether for financial reasons or because of a specific learning need, please let me know. We will figure something out.

Accommodations

You are welcome to discuss your learning needs with me. If you plan to request accommodations in this course, please register with the McBurney Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. Please note that the McBurney center is now sending notification emails to faculty, rather than relying on the "VISA" cards. I am guided by the university's policy, as formulated by the Committee on Access and Accommodation in Instruction:

"The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA."

Writing Resources

The *History Lab* is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process — choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts — the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Drop by Humanities 4255 or schedule a one-on-one consultation at <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>.

The *Writing Center* is a campus-wide resource offering help with any writing assignment in any course. They offer drop-in as well as by-appointment options, at eight different locations. Visit writing.wisc.edu to learn more.

Academic Integrity

I expect you to know and abide by the university's policies on academic integrity. This course includes instruction on the basic principles of academic integrity. However, as in every course, you are responsible for potential violations throughout your enrollment, not only once we have addressed the topic in class. I follow the university's policies for suspected violations.

For more information, see: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

Assessment

Components of Course Grade

Four brief writing assignments (totaling 3 pages): 10%

Research proposal (1-2 pages), due 3/23: 7%

Review essay on a secondary source (3 pages), due 3/30: 10%

Annotated bibliography (2-3 pages), due 4/6: 8%

Interpretation of a primary source (2 pages), due 4/13: 10%

Draft of your independent research paper (8-10 pages), due 4/20: 10%

In-class presentation (5 minutes), 4/27: 5%

Final draft of your research paper, due 5/2: 15%

Your class participation: 25%

Standards

You will receive assessment criteria for each writing assignment. For "class participation," your grade will reflect the quality of your engagement in discussions and exercises. Strong engagement includes: preparing for class by taking notes on assigned readings; actively listening to me and to classmates; asking questions and offering observations that advance our analysis of course materials and our practice of course skills; formulating and respectfully defending your opinions with reasoned interpretation of evidence; keeping an open mind to other views; completing in-class assignments such as brief presentations and writing exercises, including the peer review exercise in April.

Late, Incomplete, and Missing Work

Assignments will be due at dates and times listed on Canvas. A late penalty of one half-grade will be imposed beginning one hour after an assignment is due. An additional half-grade will be deducted down to a "D" for every additional 24-hour period that passes. However, you may hand in late work up to the last class day of the semester for "passing" credit. Work that remains missing as of the semester's study day (May 2) will receive no credit (as opposed to an F, which is reserved for work that is submitted but that wholly fails to address the terms of an assignment.)

I am willing to grant reasonable extensions as personal circumstances require. However, many of the writing assignments in this course are cumulative, so falling behind on one can have a cascading effect on the rest. If you think you won't be able to adhere to the schedule of writing assignments, please discuss your situation with me as far in advance as possible so that we can work on a solution. Please note that other coursework will not serve as a reason for an extension in this course.

Missed class

My first concern when you are absent is that you understand the material that you missed, in terms of both content and skill development. As for participation credit, I generally excuse absences for serious illness, personal emergency, religious holidays, or team travel. In other situations, you may earn up to 50% of a day's participation credit by submitting a one-page response to a question about the day's readings.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week of 1.21: Sign up for a meeting with me later this week (see Canvas)

M 1.27 The Middle East at the Dawn of the 20th Century

Focusing your interests, developing a historical question, working with search engines and bibliographies.

- Quataert, "The Nineteenth Century," in *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, pp. 54-72.
- Gelvin, "Defensive Developmentalism," in *The Modern Middle East*, pp. 71-86.
- Storey, *Writing History*, sections 1C→1J

M 2.3 Steam Power, Transportation, and Labor Unrest in the Late Ottoman Era

Identifying an argument, working with citations, asking questions with primary sources.

- Quataert, "The Port Worker Guilds and the Istanbul Quay Company," pp. 97-120.
- Quataert and Duman, eds., "A Coal Miner's Life during the Late Ottoman Empire," pp. 153-179. I will specify passages on which you should focus.
- Storey, *Writing History*, section 2A

- Due on Canvas: 1-paragraph assignment on port worker reading
- Due in class: follow-the-footnote exercise
- Prepare for class: questions on coal miner reading

M 2.10 Communication, Revolution, and the End of the Ottoman Empire

Summarizing an argument, oral presentation, paraphrasing, quoting, and citing.

- Storey, *Writing History*, 3C→3I
- Maza, "The History of Whom?" (pp. 10-44)
- ONE of the following:
 - Group 1: Rogan, "Instant Communication: The Impact of the Telegraph in Ottoman Syria," pp. 113-128.
 - Group 2: Minawi, "Telegraphs and Temporality in Ottoman Africa and Arabia during the Age of High Imperialism," pp. 567-87.
 - Group 3: Barak, "Counterclockwise Revolution," pp. 175-204.

- Due on Canvas: 1-paragraph assignment on your group reading
- Prepare for class: questions on Storey and Maza readings

M 2.17 The Cold War, Development, and Arab Nationalism

Critiquing an argument; contextualizing and interpreting a primary source; working with English-language news archives.

- Waterbury, "International Hydropolitics: The Dam as Symbol: Funding," pp. 98-115. (Pp. 87-97 are also available for background reading.)
- Krushchev's toast, 1958 (4 pages)
- Maza, "Nature and Other Nonhuman Actors," pp. 108-116. ****On Canvas****

- Due on Canvas: 1-page assignment on Krushchev reading
- Prepare for class: questions on Waterbury and Maza readings

M 2.24: Technical Aid and the U.S. in the Middle East

Locating and interpreting a primary source; using digital archives of diplomatic papers.

- Adalet, "Modern Roads, Mobile Subjects," pp. 121-157.
- Storey, Chapter 4: skim.

- Due on Canvas: 1-page assignment on a primary source that you find
- Prepare for class: present your primary source; questions on Adalet reading.

M 3.2: Theorizing Revolution: Some Perspectives from Sociology and Political Science

Recognizing and engaging with other disciplinary perspectives; working with "hard copy" collections in the UW libraries.

- Goldstone, Introduction to *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies*, 2nd ed., pp. 1-17.
- Prepare for class: questions on Goldstone
- Meet with me this week to discuss your prospective research topic

M 3.9: Technology and Social Change: Some Perspectives from "STS"

Crafting a thesis statement; clarifying your ideas through writing; developing a research proposal.

- Cowan, "The Consumption Junction: A Proposal for Research Strategies in the Sociology of Technology," pp. 253-272.
- Storey, *Writing History*, 5A

- Prepare for class: questions on Cowan reading

M 3.16: SPRING BREAK!

M 3.23: "Small Media" and the Iranian Revolution

Strategies for common research challenges.

- Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*, 214-239.
 - Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*, pp. 119-135.
- Due on Canvas: research proposal with preliminary bibliography
- Prepare for class: questions on Sreberny-Mohammadi and Maza; be ready to share your research topic

M 3.30: Media and the "Islamic Revival" in Egypt

Outlining and drafting effectively; clarifying your ideas through writing.

- Aaron Rock, "Amr Khaled: From Da'wa to Religious Leadership," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (2010): 15-37.
 - Storey, *Writing History*, 5B→5N
- Due on Canvas: three-page review of a major secondary source on your research topic
- Prepare for class: questions on Rock reading

M 4.6: Social Media and Iran's "Green Movement"

Drafting and revising; clarifying your ideas through writing.

- Golkar, "Liberation or Suppression Technologies? The Internet, the Green Movement and the Regime in Iran," pp. 50-70.
 - Storey, *Writing History*, Chapter 6.
- Due on Canvas: annotated bibliography for your research paper
- Prepare for class: questions on Golkar
- Meet with me this week to discuss the progress of your research and writing

M 4.13: Social Media and the “Arab Spring”

- Wael Ghonim, *Revolution 2.0*, pp. 58-81.
- Wael Ghonim's 2013 TED Talk.

- Due on Canvas: two-page contextualization and interpretation of a major primary source for your research paper.
- Prepare for class: questions on Ghonim

M 4.20: Peer Review

Offering and receiving effective criticism; strategies for revising.

- Due on Canvas: Draft (8 to 10 pages) of your final research paper
- Due during class: peer review worksheet .

M 4.27: Research Presentations and Course Conclusion

- Prepare for class: five-minute presentation on your research project
- Meet with me this week to discuss the revisions for your final paper

Final draft of your paper due Tuesday, May 5.